

“God Filled Moments”

Deuteronomy 6:5-9

January 21, 2018

How many of you were here last Sunday? How many of you remember what we talked about? It was what Jesus said was the most important thing in life. Someone had asked Jesus what the greatest commandment was and Jesus answered that out of everything that is found in the scriptures, it all comes down to one thing. He referenced a verse that is found in the Old Testament, book of Deuteronomy and he said this is the most important thing in life. To love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be with your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Then the passage goes on to say that the first action step to living out the greatest commandment is to “impress them on your children.”

Jesus said to love God with everything you have; your total being, and make sure your kids do too. So, how do we do this? We bring them to church every Sunday. That is good, I believe regular worship attendance is important. But let me demonstrate the reality of its significance. If you stretch a 168 inch rope that represents the number of hours in a week, the time spent at church for an hour on Sunday is the width of a 1 inch piece of scotch tape on the rope – not a very large part of it.

The greatest earthly influence in people’s lives is what they experience in the homes where they are raised. This is the reason God created families. God created families to be the primary place to learn how to love Him. He created your family to be a spiritual transformation center. It is the primary environment where faith and character are formed and shaped. You are together as a family so that you might help each other discover Christ together, grow in Him together, and together make a difference in the world for Him.

So how do we do this? How do we live out this responsibility and calling to impress the hearts of our children with a love for God? Thankfully God doesn’t leaving us hanging. He never gives us impossible assignments. Nor does He require us to look high and low for the instructions. There is no magical mysterious formula for imperfect moms and dads, to help their kids love God. What is God’s super strategy for achieving this? Where do we start? Talk to them! What a radical, revolutionary concept! Parents and children talking about spiritual things; and the Bible even tells us when the best times to do this is. Let’s read it together. Let’s go back and start with verse 5. Read Deuteronomy 6:5-9

God gives us four specific times that are prime opportunities to reach our kids. Let’s break it down. The first critical time for spiritual training is “When you sit at home.” You know, those times each night when everyone in the family is relaxing together, gathered around the dinner table, or just sitting in an unhurried manner, chatting in the living room. What? You mean to tell me you do not have times like that? You are not alone. Life is moving faster than ever. Few families are ever simply “sitting at home” anymore. We are busy, busy, busy. Might I just say, don’t be too busy. If you are never able to just be together as a family, you may want to re-evaluate your weekly schedule. Find a space when you can just be together. Try to protect your meal time together.

The first key moment for spiritual conversation is when we “sit at home”. The text then goes on to give us the second key moment to talk about spiritual things with our kids, “when you walk along the road”. In Bible times when you needed to get somewhere you walked. Today we don’t walk anymore. We drive. God’s Word says that these are prime moments to talk to kids about spiritual things. How many of you take your kids to school, or pick them up after practice? Or on cold mornings sit with them at the bus stop? These are great times to pray for their day or to let them share how things went for them at the end of the day.

The third and fourth key times to talk to our kids about faith are “when you rise up and when you lie down.” In other words, the first few moments of the day and the last few moments of the day carry great potential as times to touch the hearts of our kids.

Imagine the impact on your children if the first word they heard from you each morning pointed them towards Christ. It may be as simple as “Good morning. God loves you”. Even if you are in a hurry, and we almost always are, we can have someone pray out loud for breakfast and specifically ask the Lord to bless the day. Unfortunately not everyone is a morning person. Instead of saying “Good morning, Lord,” we say “good Lord, it’s morning.” We stay in bed until the last possible minute and then move immediately into our to-do list, with no time for God in prayer or Bible reading. Don’t cheat yourself in the morning, give yourself a moment to spend with God. It makes the day go better.

Have you ever noticed that some of your best conversations with your kids happen around bed time? It’s not an accident. God told us in His Word that this was a special moment for deepening our heart connection with our children.

Try not to rush it. Don’t miss it. Sit down on the bed next to your sons and daughters. Let them hear you pray out loud for them. Invite them to pray too. Ask them if there is anything they would like to talk about before they go to sleep. You never know what windows of opportunity God will open.

Which of these four God-given, God-filled moments would be the place for you to start increasing your spiritual life with your children?

- a. Sitting at home together
- b. Drive time
- c. At the start of the day/morning moments
- d. At the end of the day/going to bed

I hope you are not feeling overwhelmed by all of this. I believe that God wants us to share spiritual life with our children and grandchildren multiple times every day. But the reality in your home may be that it has been months since we have prayed together and even longer since you read the Bible together.

Don’t be discouraged. The past is the past. We cannot go back, but we can move forward. God has a new future for you and your family. Take a moment and ask God where He would have you start. Which of the four God-filled moments of the day would He have you give special attention this week? Choose one. Start small. Build a new habit.

Then prepare yourself for battle, because Satan will do everything in his power to distract you from your plan. He would love to convince us that our job, or interest in sports, or your daily exercise program is more important than the souls of our children. Satan knows that

God's primary plan of evangelism and discipleship is from parent to child. Don't allow anything to discourage you. God never calls us to do something and then abandons us when we seek to be obedient.

Earlier Rob read the passage from Malachi chapter 4. This is the very last verse recorded in the Old Testament. "Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Mt. Horeb for all Israel. See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, or else I will come and strike the land with a curse." Malachi 4:4-6

The final words of the Old Testament call parents to turn their hearts to their children and then in the New Testament says the same things.

The first chronological event recorded in the New Testament finds Zechariah lighting the incense in the temple when an angel appears to him and tells him that in his old age he is going to have a son. "And he will go on before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous – to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." Luke 1:17

Do you want the hearts of your children to be prepared for the Lord? Turn your heart to them. Ask God to make it the passion and mission of your life to impress their hearts with a love for God.