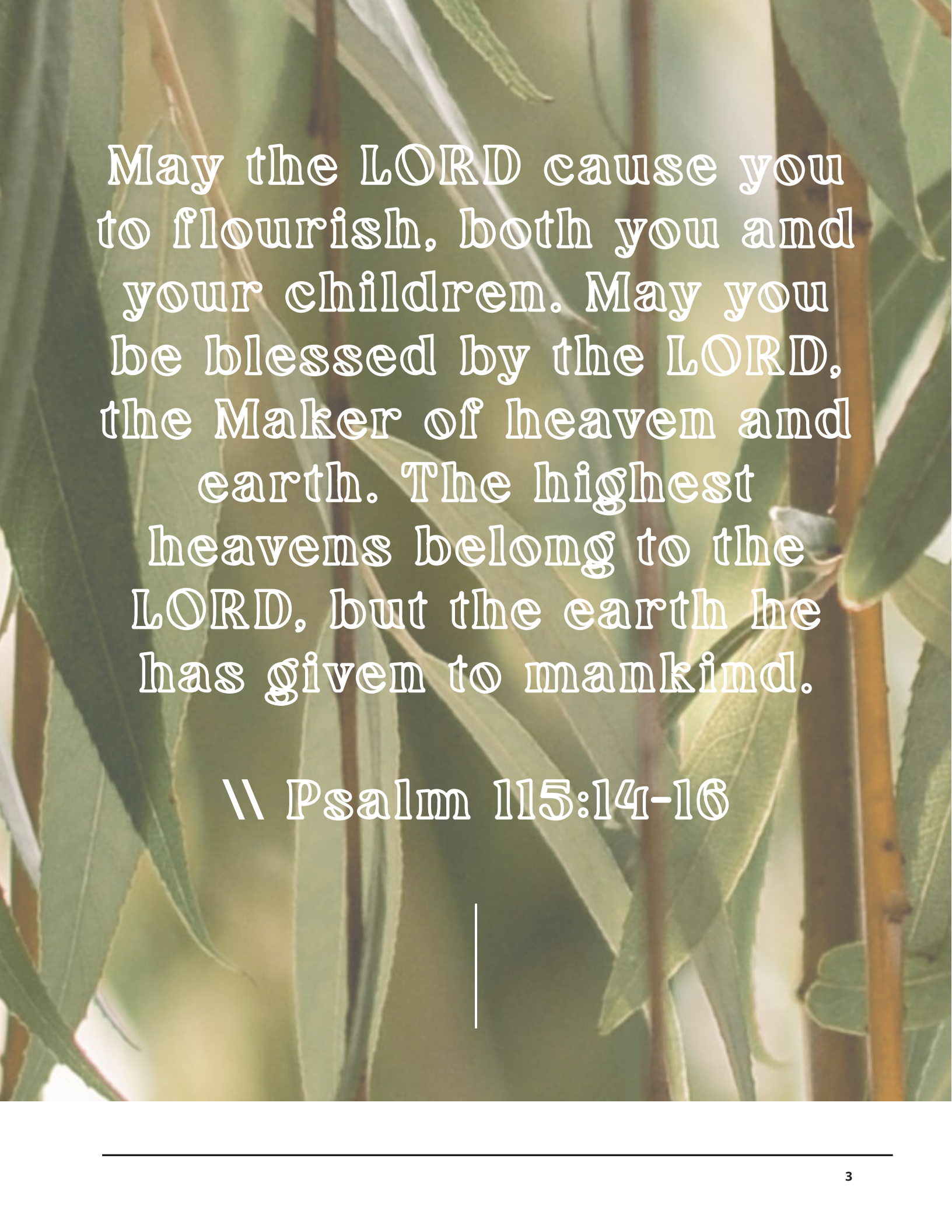




Flourish

A TEN DAY DEVOTIONAL
FOR MOMS

GRACE DRISCOLL
& ASHLEY CHASE



May the LORD cause you
to flourish, both you and
your children. May you
be blessed by the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and
earth. The highest
heavens belong to the
LORD, but the earth he
has given to mankind.

\\ Psalm 115:14-16

PREFACE

As a mom of 5 Jesus-loving and following kids, there are many things I wish I had done personally to make me a better parent. My greatest excuse was “I don’t have time to invest in myself with 5 little kids!” They were and are a blessing, but they also require a lot of intentional love, time, energy, training, and wisdom. While this is true, it is also true that if we don’t care for our own spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being, we will not have enough to pour into our marriage first and our kids second. I was constantly running on empty and not refueling with the Lord like I needed to. I became a Christian at age 3 and had a simple but genuine relationship with Jesus. I thought I wasn’t smart enough to understand the Bible and had to be taught by others what it REALLY said, which is a lie from the enemy. It is important to get good Bible teaching, but it’s also important to read it for ourselves and learn to ask the Holy Spirit who wrote it to help us understand it and apply it in our lives. My naivety (and the lie from the Enemy) kept me from going deeper until my adult years. Spending time with the Lord needs to be a time that we enjoy, anticipate, need, and get filled back up by! It’s not a “have to” it’s a “get to”.



Prayer and Bible reading are like 2 oars in a boat: we need them both to keep moving forward or we will get stuck in the same place going around in circles. Praying and spending time in God's Word help us develop a deeper relationship with Him! In any relationship, in order to get to know the other person, we need to spend time with them. Our God is relational and created us in His image to be relational with Him. As moms, do we generally have 5 hours per day to study and pray? Maybe not, but we do have more time than we often think. As a young mom, I started asking God to show me when I had time or when I was wasting time doing less important things. Yikes! He did, and sure enough there were moments in each day that I could pause (and teach my kids to pause) and pray or ponder a section of Scripture. When I was consistent in taking those times, I had more energy and wisdom to pour into my marriage and kids...there was a difference between running on fumes and running on faith that God would better order my day to get time with Him and accomplish my priorities too! The common myth is that there is balance, but with kids we often don't know what each day will look like (sickness, tantrums, fighting, extra-curricular activities). When we make God the priority, He will help us keep our other priorities in order.

I want to encourage you that our main priorities as moms are to teach our kids about Jesus (both in words and actions), keep them safe, love them, and enjoy them! I'm excited to share this with you and give my wonderful, pregnant daughter, Ashley, opportunities to join the conversation of spending time with the most important person in our life...JESUS, so we can be better wives and moms! Thank you for joining us in our 10-day devotional, so we can start or continue healthy habits together.

Holy Spirit, we ask for guidance and insight as we prioritize time with our Father. Thank you Jesus for making the greatest sacrifice of your own life so we could know you, learn from you, be forgiven when we fall short, and know what love is so we can freely give it to our families! Lord please give us your heart for our kids. In Jesus' Name!

Grace Driscoll

A person wearing a light-colored, long-sleeved button-down shirt is shown from the chest down, sitting and reading an open book. Their hands are clasped together over the book. The background is a soft, out-of-focus greenish-grey. The overall mood is calm and focused.

01

HOW TO PRAY FOR YOUR FAMILY

01

HOW TO PRAY FOR YOUR FAMILY

Answer me when I call, O God of my righteousness! You have given me relief when I was in distress. Be gracious to me and hear my prayer! -Psalm 4:1

I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High. -Psalm 9:1-2

Prayer is something we probably all admit we should do more of, but guilt, shame, condemnation, or comparison aren't good motivators to create a healthy habit. Sometimes it is helpful to just start praying, "Lord, teach me to pray so that I can know you and discern your voice." Since good habits can be hard to start, "habit stacking" can be a helpful way to begin. We already brush our teeth, get ready, do laundry, cook meals, etc., so if you stack prayer onto those times, it can get you going. I like to pray before my feet hit the floor in the morning, so I can start my day with God. As He reminds of things or people to pray for throughout the day, I pause and pray.

The most important thing is just to remember that prayer is talking to the Father. It's not anything fancier than that. It doesn't need a formula. If you're feeling the call to pray, just start praying. Tell Him what's going on in your life. What are you struggling with? What are you thankful for? What are you fearful of?

The Psalms are helpful to read through as we see David being really honest. When he's having an awful day and wants to kill everyone, he tells God. The next day, he's singing a song on his harp and telling God how grateful he is. It's real life!

Prayer is simple, but we like to overcomplicate it. In any relationship that we have, if we aren't talking to the person, it's not really much of a relationship. If you don't talk to your husband or kids, then you're not having a deep personal relationship. The Lord is the same. He's your Father. He's a perfect Father.

We all come from different backgrounds, but if you have any father wounds, maybe that's what you're struggling with. Maybe you had a bad dad or a dad that was a perfectionist. You had to do everything a certain way, so it makes you afraid to approach God as Father. He's a perfect Father and IS love, so be honest about your wounds and fears and ask Him to walk you through healing from those. David had fears too and he was bold and raw about those in Psalms. You can even pray the Psalms and make them a personal prayer.

Your spiritual walk will go through seasons. As a mom, sometimes early mornings are chaotic and it's hard to start the day with a long period of time to read the Bible and pray. Although it's good to start the day talking to the Lord, He doesn't mind if you set aside time in the afternoon or evening to spend time with Him instead. There is no prescriptive way to pray. In the Gospels, we see Jesus pray at all times of day, alone and in groups, sitting, standing, walking, and in basically every environment.

Sometimes you'll want to focus on praying for yourself, your own heart, and things you're struggling with. Sometimes you'll feel a burden for your husband or kids. The Lord may give you a verse to pray over them or an encouraging word to share. The timing and topics of prayer will all ebb and flow, but what God cares most about is spending time with you so that He

can show you His will and design.

Praying for specific requests will help you discern His plan and see Him provide in miraculous ways. It may take a bit, but prayer is designed to build our faith that God truly is in control, good, and sovereign, and we are not.

If this is an area you'd like to grow in, here's an example of a prayer you can bring to your Father:

Dear Lord, thank you so much for the gift of prayer: the ability that we have to speak to You whenever we want to. You're always there, You always listen, You never reject us, You never shame us. You just want to be close to us. I pray for peace to know that I can connect with You no matter how long it's been or how little I know about You. You just want to hear from me and start today. I pray for the initiative to begin this habit, and that there would be fruit as a result of it. I pray that as it feels strange at first and the enemy tries to discourage me that you would bring fruit as a result of pushing through that and learning how to communicate in a way that grows my faith and that of my family, as well. Show me your heart for them as I pray to be the mother and wife you've called me to be. In Jesus' Name, Amen.



APPLICATION

PRAYER WALK

Sometimes in the messiness, chaos, and familiarity of our own homes, focusing on prayer can be challenging. I often find my mind wandering to chores that need to be done and messes that need to be picked up, making it hard to focus on the Lord. I have learned that taking prayer walks is incredibly beneficial as they remove distraction. Even if you're pushing a stroller or walking a dog, there is something soothing about walking while talking to the Lord. We encourage you to schedule a prayer walk to focus on praying for your family, even if it's just around the block a few times.



02

HOW TO TEACH KIDS HUMILITY

02

HOW TO TEACH KIDS HUMILITY

And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. -Luke 2:52

Luke's Gospel speaks of how Jesus grew in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man. He was mature at each stage of His childhood, but He still made mistakes, had to learn things the hard way, and failed (not sin). It's important to distinguish the difference between sins and mistakes so you are only disciplining for sin.

There are many phases to childhood, and a child should grow in selflessness, humility, and serving as they also grow physically. We must have realistic expectations of our kids at each age, making sure they're developing their own godly identity, seeking the Lord on their own, and not seeing themselves more highly or lowly than they ought to. It's easy to get annoyed with their immaturity or having to "tell them again" how to act, but it is our responsibility to train them in each stage and give them grace and guidance how to learn and grow. We are their teachers **and** we are students, because we need to be taught by the Holy Spirit so we know how to teach our kids.

Some kids will struggle with over-confidence and pride, while others will struggle with insecurity and self-awareness. It can be tempting to believe that if a child struggles with one or another that they are just in a phase that will pass with age. That is not usually the case. It is important to have age-appropriate conversations about staying humble and seeing themselves the way God sees them.

As parents, we should always encourage our children, but we can go overboard by not also helping them see their weaknesses and things they need to grow in. They can begin to be condescending towards others if they see themselves as better, which can be remedied by reminding them that everything we have is a gift from the Lord and although Jesus was fully God and fully man, He didn't brag or use his power to hurt people.

Sometimes it's easy to go overboard with encouragement, and sometimes it's hard not to default to being critical. It's especially hard not to compare kids to each other, which can discourage them from having individual giftings, desires, and goals. We need to find the balance between affirming the good to an appropriate degree and correcting the bad so that they become more like Jesus.

TIP: Help them find their gifts and talents as 1 Peter 4:10 (NLT) says,

God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.

What are they good at and what do they enjoy? Encouraging others, organizing things, creating, talking about Jesus, leading...the list goes on, but they need help using it "to serve one another". You can teach them to be thankful for the gift God has given them and using it encourages them not to be selfish.

Ultimately, to have humble kids, it is important to be a humble mom. Our kids learn so much from what we model to them, so how we serve others is a huge example to them. It's also important to model repentance to our kids. Admit when you do something wrong and ask for their forgiveness. That is the deepest form of humility. Only Jesus is perfect and it's healthy for them to see us repent and confess when we aren't.

In the same way that we shouldn't compare ourselves to other moms or look to them for approval, we don't want our kids falling into the fear of man trap that makes them more afraid of what others think than what God thinks. It is important to consider who your kids are surrounded by that are helping them form their identity. Do they have good examples of godly friends, family, pastors, babysitters, and teachers? Are these people reinforcing the messages you're trying to teach your kids or undermining them? If they haven't had good influences, pray about who you can put in their lives instead, what boundaries you need to have with unhealthy influences, and have conversations about the things they've been shown that don't line up with God's plan. Use bad influences to graciously instruct and teach forgiveness.

APPLICATION

REPENTANCE

Repentance is an ongoing practice as we sin against God and others every day. When we repent, we are sorry for what we did, confess it to God (and others that might be involved), turn from the sin (change direction) and walk a new path toward righteousness and what is right in God's eyes. Today, ask God to reveal to you any ways that your own pride has affected your kids, ask God for forgiveness, and apologize to your kids if He puts it on your heart. This builds an honest relationship with God and your kids, but also teaches your kids to do this with God and others. It's humbling to know we are wrong, to admit it, and to change. We want our kids to do this so we must model it in our own lives. It also actually takes the pressure off if we or our kids struggle with performance. Peace comes when we repent and know we are forgiven.

Prayer: Dear Lord, please forgive me for _____. I sinned against you and I sinned against _____. I ask for help to turn from this sin and walk in a new direction with you. Please heal any hurt I have caused in my life or my family. Thank you for your forgiveness and strength to model this to my kids so they can experience closeness with you too. In Jesus' Name.



03

HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH LITTLE KIDS

03

HOW TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH LITTLE KIDS

“...but Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven.’” -Matthew 19:14

We all have different experiences with Christianity growing up that shape—whether we know it or not—how we portray faith in Jesus to our kids. I hear many stories of moms from religious households who don’t want to “impose” beliefs on their kids. Others didn’t grow up with Christian parents, so they never had anyone share the gospel with them when they were young.

No matter what background you come from, God will equip you to raise and disciple your own children by His grace. It is ultimately the parents’ duty to train a child in the way they should go. Schools, church, and friends can all help point them in the right direction, but as parents, we are the spiritual head over our children and the caregivers for their souls by the wisdom the Holy Spirit gives us. If we truly believe that Jesus is our Lord and Savior and is preparing a place for us in Heaven to spend eternity with Him, we should be sharing this Good News with our kids often from a young age so that they grow to love Him as we do.

Even when they’re so little, they can still sense the Holy Spirit and develop a love for the Lord. They don’t have to fully understand theology in order to have a regenerate heart and experience the love that the Lord has for them.

Discipling our kids looks different at different ages, but here are some principles we’ve found helpful in raising our own kids.

1. Buy your kids their own Bibles. We will not know all the answers no matter how much we study, but teaching our kids to have a joy for studying the Word and talking to God was crucial. We made sure we had Bibles that were age-appropriate. The boys liked boyish Bibles while the girls wanted pink ones, so we let them pick whichever one they would be proud and excited to read.

2. Ask your kids questions. We made fun games out of Bible trivia, adjusting the difficulty to their age level. For the younger, we'd ask them how many Gods there are (1) and why Jesus died (for our sins, to be in relationship with us). For the older, we would ask them to name the prophets or explain the difference between the Old and New Testaments.

3. Let your kids ask questions. After we asked questions at dinner or at a family meeting, we would let the kids come up with some of their own. We would write them in a journal and then whoever wanted to research would try to find an answer for the next meeting. You can also use Bible flashcards to help them learn.

4. Teach your kids to memorize verses. Each of our kids would read their Bibles on their own, and sometimes a verse or story would stand out to them, so they would share it with us and choose to memorize it or act it out. Explaining it or acting it out really helped make it stick in their long-term memory. Learn one word or line at a time and in a week you can memorize a verse. That's 52 verses per year if you keep it up!

5. Pray together. When our kids were all at home, we often had family meetings where we would share prayer requests and spend time praying for each other.

6. Go to church as a family. It can be challenging to find a church that fits the needs of the entire family, but we would encourage you to start with one

that has solid biblical teaching and loving people. If certain aspects are less than stellar, have some grace and remember that no church is perfect. Ask them what they are learning so you can make sure it's accurate. It is important for kids to grow up learning the importance of healthy community, and especially for them to watch their dad worship and love Jesus.

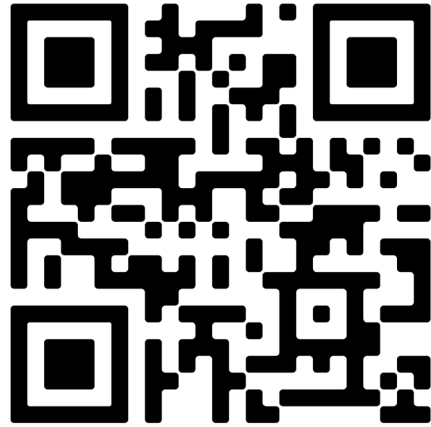
7. Do what you ask your kids to do. Perhaps most importantly, parents must also do what they ask of their children. Make sure you are in the Word, prayer, and community. Try to create a home environment where Jesus is talked about so that faith isn't just associated with a church building but instead permeates every area of life.

Your kids will learn things from various places that don't align with the Bible, so have lots of open discussions so they want to talk to you when something seems "off". For example, if you are watching a tv show together and something ungodly happens, stop and discuss why you disagree with it and let them ask questions. Teach them **how** to think not just **what** to think, so they can navigate the world they live in. These are just some principles we tried to follow so that our kids would develop their own faiths before leaving our house and heading out into the world. We allowed them to wrestle, modeled behavior for them, and to this day they all love serving the church and pursuing the Lord. We made many mistakes, but we're thankful for God's grace to ultimately direct our kids in His path. Remember that before they are your kids, they are His kids.

APPLICATION

VIDEO

Watch this video for help learning how to discuss the gospel with young kids.





04

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT MOTHERHOOD?

04

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT MOTHERHOOD?

Just like building a house needs a plan and every step matters so the house will stand, God gives mothers instructions on how to build our home environment. We each have gifts that will make it more “natural” but we also will need to struggle to learn the things that don’t come naturally to us. The culture tells us the opposite of the Bible, so we need to know God’s instruction manual for raising up a godly lineage. God created women with a motherhood role, but sometimes we fight against that, sometimes we are wounded and can’t fathom being a healthy mom, and sometimes we can’t physically conceive so we become spiritual mothers. It’s who God created us to be, and when we embrace it, He blesses our calling. To find some truths about who God calls us to be as mothers, let’s start at the beginning where God starts:

1. God’s plan, identity, blessing, and order are set in advance for us to follow

Genesis 1:27-28 - So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it...”

2. We are given a name, a purpose, a calling, a husband

Genesis 3:20 - The man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living.

3. We are not to support our children’s’ sin

Genesis 27:14 - So he went and took them and brought them to his mother,

and his mother prepared delicious food, such as his father loved.

Judges 5:28 - "Out of the window she peered, the mother of Sisera wailed through the lattice: 'Why is his chariot so long in coming? Why tarry the hoofbeats of his chariots?'..."

4. We are to be honored and honorable

Deuteronomy 5:16 - Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

5. We are chosen to carry life

Psalms 139:13 - For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb.

6. We are to teach and instruct

Proverbs 6:20 - My son, keep your father's commandment, and forsake not your mother's teaching.

7. We are not to be too overprotective of our kids or think too highly of them

Matthew 20:20-21 - Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him [Jesus] with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something..."Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom."

8. We are to follow God's plan for our family, not our own

Psalms 127:1 - Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain...

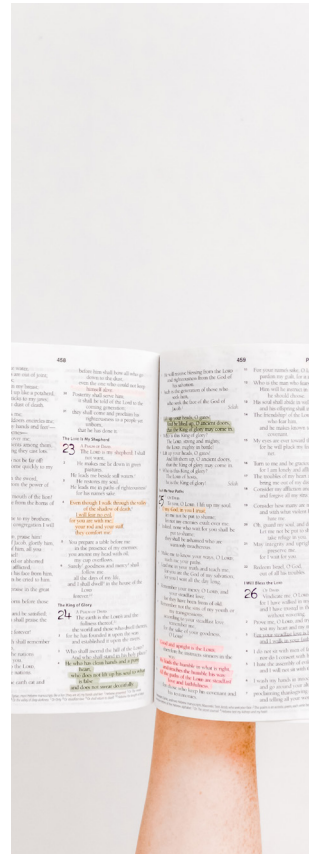
9. We need to see the long view of parenting and obey in the waiting

Proverbs 31:28 - Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also and he praises her...

APPLICATION

VERSES TO STUDY

If any of these roles or concepts stands out to you as something the Lord would have you work on, read the verses surrounding the ones we listed to try to understand more of His design and desire.





05

HOW TO FIGHT ISOLATION AS A MOM

05

HOW TO FIGHT ISOLATION AS A MOM

Only be on your guard and diligently watch yourselves, so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen, and so that they do not slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and grandchildren.

-Deuteronomy 4:9

Being a mom can feel very lonely, especially if you're an extrovert or a perfectionist or a single mom or have kids with special needs or a husband who travels. Every family is different, and I remember feeling very alone many times when Mark would travel to speak or even when I had just brought home another newborn and didn't have energy to leave the house.

We often have an idea of "balance" in life, but I hold an unpopular opinion that that doesn't exist. Each kid has different needs, challenges, and strengths, so we are constantly adapting to be the mom they need, not to mention the wife our husband needs. Your first priority is your husband—who should also be your best friend—then your kids, and then relationships outside of that. Social media tries to tell us that we're missing out on social events, friendships, experiences, and fleeting happiness, but at our core, that's not what God made us for.

The truth is that no one knows how to raise their kids perfectly apart from God. You can read as many books and listen to as many podcasts as you want, but in the end, His Word and Holy Spirit guide us, and He gives wisdom when we ask. Comparison will absolutely rob us of the joy that the Lord has set before us and cause us to focus on what we don't have instead of what

He's given us. It's great to get wise counsel or ideas from other godly moms, but ultimately we have to pray about what is best for OUR kids.

As women, we need to remember that whether we're a mom or not, whether we're married or not, whether we are serving in the church or not, our identity is given to us by God in Genesis 1, when he says that we are created in **HIS** image and likeness. So, that is steady whether or not we have other roles in our life. First of all, I really needed to get a handle on my identity. When **we** don't have a firm identity in Christ, then **we** try and put **it** in, "I need to be a good mom. I need to be a good wife. I need to be a good servant in the church. I need to be doing all these things to have the appearance of a good identity." That's not what identity is. God gave you your identity. If you're a Christian, you're a woman of God, you're His child, you have His image and likeness. And out of that we go to the Holy Spirit, who gives us wisdom, and ask, "How do I think and live out of that image that you have given me? How do I be a good wife? How do I be a good mom? How do I be a good servant in the church, someone who loves and serves other women?" We are to live out of the identity God gave us, not trying to gain an identity through what we do. This is a lifelong, step-by-step journey.

There is no more important role you can hold than being a godly wife and mother. Having a marriage is a ministry on its own! Having kids is another! Every day you are discipling God's kids and reflecting the covenant of marriage to them and the world, which so desperately needs examples of godly families right now.

God says He will never leave us or forsake us, so as we spend time with Him the vastness of His love and presence will fill our loneliness. We still need adult conversation, but ask the Lord what healthy people to spend time with rather than waste it on people that discourage you from God's calling as a mom. When we have the long view of raising the next generation to love Jesus, the sacrifices are worth our kids walking with Him. There were many

trips, dinners, outings, gatherings, and fun things I missed out on in the early years of being a mom of 5, but I can tell you now it was worth every big and little sacrifice. God has given me even bigger opportunities to use my gifts outside of the home now that I've spent the younger years investing in my family. Don't give into the lie that there are more important or fulfilling things you could be doing. The Enemy tries to lie to us and tell us that we're alone or we're not doing enough, so something I do to combat that is listen to the Bible like an audiobook. When I start to feel my mind spiral, I turn on a passage that I know will remind me of His goodness, sovereignty, and presence. We've provided some examples for you on the next page.

APPLICATION

VERSES TO MEMORIZE

"...Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go."

Joshua 1:9

*Nevertheless, I am continually with you;
you hold my right hand.
You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will receive me to glory.
Whom have I in heaven but you?
And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you.
My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*

Psalm 73:23-26

*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
"The Lord is my portion," says my soul,
"therefore I will hope in him."*

Lamentations 3:22-24

Trust in the Lord with ALL your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In ALL your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 4:5-6

Proverbs 31:1-31



06

HOW TO CREATE HEALTHY FAMILY RHYTHMS AND TRADITIONS



HOW TO CREATE HEALTHY FAMILY RHYTHMS AND TRADITIONS

"...While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease." -Genesis 8:22

Being a mom requires thinking in hours, days, weeks, and years. Many days feel long as we change diapers and do laundry, but then we blink and our kids are grown up and going off to college. It is important to keep a long-term mindset about habits and traditions that make up your family.

While raising little kids, I often got so caught up in the day-to-day tasks that I had a harder time thinking about traditions, fun outings, vacations, and special events. I handled birthday parties, playdates with friends, and outings during the month, and thankfully Mark enjoyed everything else. Our main goal was for our kids to have a balance of rhythm, routine, and fun so that they experienced both stability and special things to look forward to.

We tried to make every holiday point back to Jesus, like practicing gratitude on Thanksgiving, studying the crucifixion and resurrection on Easter, and sharing encouraging words and prayers on birthdays. We did some silly things like make Jesus a birthday cake or act out the Christmas story from Luke 2. Not everything has to be overtly spiritual, as we didn't want to burden our kids with religious rituals or unnecessary piety. One of our favorite things to do was choose a single mom every Christmas to "adopt" and buy presents for. This way our kids learned to give, not just receive, and shifted their minds during a very consumeristic time.

Now that we have older kids, our traditions have changed, as not all of our kids come to every single holiday. We allow them freedom to start their own families, as the Bible instructs, instead of forcing them to conform to our nuclear family. We always leave the invitation open for our kids to join us, but never have the expectation that they will want to celebrate in the same way we do. They get to enjoy their own traditions as a family. Our door is always open, but if we want to spend time with them, we go when we are invited. This season of life tests how well we did at building a relationship with our kids in the earlier years. If it was all about the extremes of constant discipline or letting them raise themselves, then a relationship may not have been nurtured in a healthy way. Don't get me wrong, our kids need training and discipline as they're growing up, but it should always build trust and a deeper relationship. It's like a bank account, as we put in deposits of encouragement, trust, love, empathy, and being present then when we need to make withdrawals it won't bankrupt the relational account. Think and pray about what kind of relationship you are building with your child and center it around joy! Brain science has shown that when we form joy bonds and attachment with our kids, they will be more emotionally and relationally healthy adults.

In terms of weekly rhythm, the idea of Sabbath is something we unfortunately didn't practice regularly until more recent years. God made us with internal rhythms of 6 days of work and 1 day of rest, just as He did when He made us. The Sabbath provides a day to slow down, reflect, spend quality time as a family, and evaluate how to spend the next week. We find that our family is most healthy when we give God our time each day in prayer and reading the Word, spend a day resting in Him each week, and plan fun activities that honor him above and beyond our normal routines. We provide more insight on the Sabbath on the next page.

APPLICATION

S A B B A T H

The Sabbath seems like an ancient ritual that may not apply to our modern day, but Jesus Himself says in Matthew 12:8 that God made the Sabbath for man. We are so quick to gain our self-worth through what we do and accomplish, but that's not how God designed us. He didn't design us to know who we are through actions but through knowing Him. When we know Him, we know who we are in relationship to Him. Sabbath teaches us to trust Him to bring the fruit of our labor from days 1-6 so we can rest on day 7. So how should we Sabbath? Here are some principles:

- In order to take a 7th day of holy rest, we need to work hard for 6 days. We must honor God in both our work and our rest.

- We must leave the week behind and be satisfied with what has been completed in order to fully focus on worship and thanksgiving. God looked at His work and said it was "good". When God sees you, He sees Jesus' finished work.

- We must keep the Sabbath holy as Exodus 20:8 says. Holy means set apart for a specific purpose (in this case for the purpose of glorifying God). It is best to set aside an entire 24-hour period, to focus on spiritual disciplines, rest, community, study, and any other fun activities that still your inner murmur and reconnect you to God. This isn't a legalism but a true benefit that God gave us for physical, mental, and spiritual health.



07

HOW TO TEACH YOUR KIDS DISCERNMENT

07

HOW TO TEACH YOUR KIDS DISCERNMENT

Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it. -Proverbs 22:6

As parents, the Bible tells us to train up the child in the way they should go (the way Jesus lived), and we do a lot of instructing as good parents. Unfortunately, we can get caught up in instructing without it being to build a relationship and trust with our kids. We get them to obey for the moment but forget to help them feel loved by the correction. Our kids, like us, want to be known and understood, not just told what to do. They want to know that our instruction brings the fruit of connection and love for them. Part of discernment is discerning ideologies, theologies, and beliefs. Asking them questions to learn how to think, not just what to think, is a key part of parenting. This helps them learn discernment with relationships, decisions, false teaching, and anything they encounter as they walk through the challenges in life. Jesus modeled this as He taught and gave instructions to the people around Him, often asking questions to get people to think, instead of just giving them an answer. Discernment comes from the Holy Spirit; it's that "feeling in your gut". Regularly ask Him to give it to you and your kids, and He will help you learn from your circumstances and relationships.

Another aspect of discernment is discerning people. Often in Christian homes, we are taught that you have to be friends with everyone, but that's actually unsafe and unhelpful advice. Jesus chose who to bring close (disciples, Mary, Martha, Lazarus), who to reject (Pharisees, religious leaders), and who to help but not make a best friend (woman at the well, woman caught in adultery,

Zaccheus). I grew up not understanding that boundaries are actually godly, so I suffered harm from evil people because I didn't practice discernment. We taught our kids to be friendly toward all (except evil people), but friends with a few. Some of our kids were introverts, some were extroverts, and some were a combination. I've found that most kids have better discernment with people than we give them credit for. It's important to listen to them if they have fears around someone and not dismiss it. We encouraged our kids to talk to us about their friendships and asked a lot of questions about what they liked or disliked about people. Being in ministry, we had many different types of people around us so we had numerous opportunities for discussion. We had most playdates at our house so we could observe how kids interacted in various relationships. While it can be nice to get "time off" as a mom during playdates, it is important to stay close by and watch so you can continue to instruct and ask questions.

When kids sin or make mistakes, it can be helpful to explain (when time allows) our response. As they get old enough to make little and big decisions, ask them what they would decide and walk them through the process of making a good decision. They will fail, just like we do, as they learn what decisions were right and wrong. We can also ask regular questions to give opportunities to speak into their lives. This is key in teaching them discernment.

These are some questions that we use in our Parenting 101 class at Trinity Church:

- What is God teaching you right now?
- Is there any burden I can lift for you?
- How can I pray for you? (then pray with them)
- How can I help you right now?
- What can I do to be a better parent? (don't argue)
- What is your biggest stress/fear right now?
- What are you most excited about?

- How are your friends doing?
- What makes you feel loved? (read *5 Love Languages* book on resource page)
- What do you want to do together?
- Is there anything you want to ask me or know about me? (upbringing, wisdom etc)

This helps to leave the lines of communication open and show you are interested in their lives, not just taking care of all the things in our life that keep us busy. Building a relationship with your kids in each phase is vital for having a lasting relationship and experiencing the fruit of your labor! If this is challenging for you, you might not have had a relational upbringing. Ask the Lord to heal that and help you be a better parent to your kids. Our parents usually do their best but if they didn't heal from their past wounds then they pass them on to us...and we do the same with our kids.

APPLICATION

GET YOUR KIDS AGE - APPROPRIATE BIBLES

Here is a list of suggested kid-friendly Bibles with approximate ages, although each kid is different. It is important for children to learn to rely on the Holy Spirit as early as possible!

0-5:

The Child's Story Bible by Catherine Vos, *The Big Book of Bible Stories for Toddlers*, *The Rhyme Bible Storybook for Little Ones*

5-8:

The Jesus Storybook Bible

8-12:

NIV, NIV Adventure Bible

12-18:

NIV, ESV Student or Teen Study Bible, NLT





08

HOW TO HONOR YOUR HUSBAND



HOW TO HONOR YOUR HUSBAND

One of the best ways to love our kids and create a safe environment for them is to have a healthy marriage in which we honor and respect our spouse. Wait, don't turn the page yet; hear me out! A woman's value does not increase or decrease if she submits, because her value comes from being created in God's image! (go back to Day 5) In the same way, my kids don't have any less value than I do just because they submit to me as a parent. A husband and wife are equals on the same mission with different roles and responsibilities, and both reliant on God's grace. As husbands and wives we are commanded in Deuteronomy 6, which is restated by Jesus as the first and second **greatest commandments**:

"...love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength...[and] love your neighbor as yourself..." (Mark 12:30-31)

We are to repeat this again and again to our children, talk about it at home, on the road, when going to bed and getting up, affix it to our bodies and doorposts and gates! (Deut. 6:7-9) Our spouse is our closest neighbor, with our kids next in line. This is GOD'S design of ultimate blessing, not my opinion of how marriage and family should be. If we want a blessed family, we need to do it God's way! (As a side note here, we know many single moms have challenging circumstances and God will honor and bless them as they pursue God).

When we are willing to be in submission to God's plan and work WITH our husband to accomplish God's mission for our marriage, there is nothing

more beautiful for our kids to witness. When they see this unity and mutual submission to God and honoring each other, it will be much easier to ask them to respect us as parents. Submission, helping, respecting, and honoring don't need to be bad or trigger words for us as women, rather life giving, God-intended, freeing words when lived out. If you don't like these words, you need to ask yourself "why"? Are there wounds that need to heal from a bad relationship? Did your parents have an unhealthy relationship? Does it scare you or make you think this is being a doormat? Be willing to let God heal any broken areas of your life that keep you from connecting with your husband. Seek wise counsel from mutually trusted Christian friends or Bible-integrated, Christian counseling.

What does respect look like? First, we follow the **greatest commandments**, daily doing our best to get time with the Father who created and loves us. When we spend time with Him in prayer and reading the Bible, we grow to trust Him more with His plan for our lives. When we get married, the goal is a lifelong journey of joyfully becoming one and not living solo or independently under one roof. The husband initiates and leads with love, "as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" to sanctify her with the word of God (Eph. 5:25-26), and the wife respects her husband who loves her. We both submit to God, then surrender to and serve each other. As a side note, this is why God's plan is to be equally yoked as believers so we can both submit to God together. Respect is to notice, honor, defer to, encourage, love, regard, admire, and prefer. Sometimes as women we have an easier time respecting other women than our husband, but it just means we need to spend more time asking God and our husbands how to be respectful. You might argue, "he isn't respectable!" but I would ask you, "are you always loveable?" We want and need to be loved whether that's easy for someone or not, and the same goes for our husbands with respect. We were created to flourish when we are loved, and they were created to lead well when they are respected. It's not always easy but it's necessary to build trust and unity in marriage. It's a command because we don't naturally do it.

When our kids watch us communicate, listen, consider each other, and pray together, we are teaching them to honor us, their siblings, and others. If we are modeling disrespect, division, and disobedience to God, then they will be encouraged to act that way as well. When Mark and I are making decisions in our marriage, we have learned that we need each other's point of view. Mark is good at researching and looking at every angle, including pros and cons, while I am gifted in discernment and relational consideration, including how the kids are affected. We need to talk and pray through all of those things to come to a unified decision in God's will...we are better together. When we submit to the power of unity and agreement with a common vision, the enemy can't get in there and divide us! Our kids have seen us do this right and wrong, so now that they are getting married we've had to apologize for the times we confused them. Repentance is a lifelong process in our marriages and parenting, but the earlier you implement God's way, the less you have to repent of later.

APPLICATION

PROCESSING LETTER

If you are struggling with respecting your husband, ask the Lord to show you where the root of that struggle is. Often there is fear because of something that happened to us.

Did you watch your mom get run over rather than loved by your dad?

Did you date/marry a guy that told you often to submit but didn't protect or consider you?

Did you see a Christian marriage end in adultery that you thought was doing things God's way?

Try writing a processing letter (you won't send it) to whoever you were emotionally or spiritually hurt by.

1. Be honest with the Lord about your pain, confusion, lies you believed, anger, frustration, bitterness, and fears. Write it all out so that you can unload the baggage you've been carrying around.

2. Ask God to forgive the ways you didn't trust Him but lived opposed to His plan because of this root.

3. Ask God to cancel in Jesus' Name any footholds the Enemy took and bring healing from the Holy Spirit.

4. Commit that area of your life back to the Lord and ask the Holy Spirit to show you new ways to think and act that line up



with a godly marriage and family.

5. If there's anything you need to talk through or confess with your husband, pray that he would receive it and forgive you.

6. If there is anything you need to talk through or confess to your kids, pray that they would receive it and forgive you.

7. Pray 2 Timothy 1:7 (NLT): *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.” Dear Lord, please remove our fears that the Enemy uses to keep us from living under your plan and blessing. Replace them with the fruit of the Spirit, give us love for our husband and kids, and show us when we aren't submitting to You and respecting our husband. In Jesus' Name.*





09

HOW TO BUILD HEALTHY, INDIVIDUAL
RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OF YOUR KIDS



HOW TO BUILD HEALTHY, INDIVIDUAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH EACH OF YOUR KIDS

Each phase of our children's lives requires us to pay attention and learn all we can about how to best love them individually. The newborn years are full of diaper changing, sleepless nights, figuring out what each cry means, getting them to experience joy in basic ways, and figuring out all the non-verbal things they are trying to tell us. Brain science tells us it is essential to bond with them in these early years so they can experience attachment, security, and love.

The toddler years are full of tantrums, messes, giggles, learning how to do every "first" thing, mistakes, and disciplining over and over in love (even when we are exhausted and can't say "no" another time!).

The elementary school years require re-learning what we learned over a decade ago, paying attention to friends they make, navigating good and bad friendships, encouraging them when they are sad, correcting them when they sin, and affirming who God made them to be as we see their gifts and abilities start to blossom.

The preteen years are full of insecurity and awkwardness, trying to figure out how to get to the teen years but testing boundaries in the process, and needing our guidance still when they don't think they do.

The teen years don't have to be bad (really!) but it's the time when all you've trained them in gets tested, mistakes are allowed so they learn how to succeed, your love and support needs to be constantly reinforced, and

there's a temptation to be the "cool" mom but you will lose respect if you try to blend in.

The young adult years are fun, but as they practice "flying" keep the lines of communication open, don't take things personally, continue to ask questions that show interest in them, offer to spend time with them, and be willing to repent of things you didn't do well as a parent so humility is encouraged.

In all the years of our kids' lives, especially when there were 5 young ones, it was tempting to treat them as a group all the time. Be intentional to invest in each of them and what they each enjoy doing. Mark used to take the girls on separate "daddy dates" to a café or museum or theater performance. I liked to take the girls to Christmas tea or separate trips to shop, see animals, flower fields, or the bookstore. As you start to see what they enjoy, go do those things and build joyful memories. Each season of parenting has challenges because we are learning as we go, but when we determine to have an attitude that they are a blessing from the Lord and we are building a legacy, it alters how we parent.

Here are some guidelines from our Parenting 101 class at Trinity Church:

0-3 Years – Obedience Training

- 0-18 months** – You just want to keep them alive and teach them what they can and cannot do to not get hurt.
 - A practice in patience – These years of intensive training are exhausting, but lay the foundation of their character.
- 18 months - 3 years** - You are training behavior that is foundational to their future. This is when you start using discipline. The goal of discipline is to reach the heart of your child. Don't use consequences to control their behavior.
 - Teach them to have a heart of obedience and self-control: attitudes and actions.

- If you only deal with behavior and not their heart, you are not getting to the root cause of the behavior and missing the bigger issue that will go un-addressed. (Proverbs 19:18a)

4 - 10 years – Lead your kids to a right relationship to God

- Introduce them to Christ
- Teach them to pray
- Teach them to know and love Christ
- Teach them Bible stories
- Teach them to obey Christ
- Teach them to be kind to others
- Teach them to respect authority
- Teach them responsibilities
- They must begin to have more personal responsibility and must begin to understand natural consequences of daily disciplines

11 - 13 years – Teach them their identity in Christ

- Teach them their individual value as a child of God
- This is a critical time to **build them up!**
- This is when their insecurities begin
- Other kids will undermine and hurt them. Other kids' opinions become more important to them than their parents!
- Teach them about the world and its evils
- Teach them the dangers of disobedience
- Teach them cause and effect of life choices
- This is when you oversee all inputs in their life!
 - TV, movies, video games, Internet, music, friends.
- This is the time for “Helicopter parents!” FROM A DISTANCE!!!
- Install spy ware on computers and be sure to TELL THEM YOU DID.
 - Install protective software on their phones and monitor their activities and text messages.
 - Help them choose wise friends. (Prov. 13:20)

- The “Freedom Illusion” – for adolescents
 - Let your kids make more decisions about their lives, even if you have to override them in the end

14 – 18 yrs. – Adolescent Children

- In many ways, this stage is the most emotionally taxing.
- Kids tend to experience high drama with friends and “petty” things get magnified by their hormones and the pressures of adolescence.
- This takes incredible patience and a lot of time, usually late at night.
 - Take these opportunities to calmly but diligently listen, learn and teach them wisdom.
- This is the time for the shifting balance of control when it either is forever extinguished or it transforms into influence.
 - Controlling parenting leads to greater distance from your child’s heart and reduces the influence you will be able to enjoy as they grow up.

DON'T forget to ENJOY your kids in every stage. Don't get so serious about life that you don't laugh, cry, and play with them!!



Proverbs

10

HOW IS PARENTING ADULT KIDS UNIQUE?

10

HOW IS PARENTING ADULT KIDS UNIQUE?

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. - Hebrews 11:1

Families are years in the making and parenting takes faith. We can't see the future, but we can trust that God will guide us daily to create the future He has for our families. Currently, Mark and I are the parents of two married kids, one graduated and engaged, one in college, and one in high school. We have transitioned to having all adult children, which means new challenges, joys, and questions.

I often say when kids are young they take a lot of physical energy, but when they are older they take a lot of emotional energy. When kids are little, you can physically pick them up, discipline them, and manage their outbursts and emotions a bit more easily than when they become teenagers, which is the true test of your relationship with them. It is incredibly important to build relationship with your kids from the time they're young so that when they become more independent, they don't feel a need to rebel against or reject their family. We need to be aware of not over-parenting kids as they get older, as well, and instead let them make mistakes and feel comfortable talking to us about them.

When talking with our daughter Alexie recently, she had some insight on the best way for parents to support their kids as they graduate high school. She expressed the challenge in learning to make your own decisions instead of having your parents make them for you, and the importance of having

godly accountability, mentors, and friends. We believe it is the job of the parents to help choose these people with our kids since we know them best and can provide wisdom. Ideally the more decisions we release them to make while at home (starting small and moving into age-appropriate decisions), the less harmful choices they will make later.

Teaching them how to think rather than just what to think gives them tools to make godly decisions on their own. This is done by asking them a lot of questions as they make decisions, so they look at all the angles. For example, our boys wanted to get expensive sneakers in their teen years but my frugal thinking said, “they will grow out of these in a year after spending hundreds of dollars for each pair.” I explained this to them, and as we went to thrift stores they found great deals on cool sneakers that were next to new. They decided to learn how to clean, repaint, whiten soles and even reglue sneakers by watching videos. Eventually they started a business buying and reselling sneakers and have **earned** thousands of dollars rather than spending thousands on shoes that last a year. They learned skills for redoing shoes, managing a business, budgeting money, and much more. They also learned to work together rather than fight so they could use their unique gifts to make money in different parts of the business.

Also, sharing our own faults, failures, and struggles with our kids as they transition to adult life can be incredibly healing to them. When kids are little, they often think their parents know everything and can do no wrong, only to find out that's not true in their teens, which can lead to resentment. When we open up about our childhoods with our kids, it can reveal bad habits we've passed down, or even good things we learned that encourage them. Beware if they try to use your testimony later to excuse their sin, but you can tell them you caused pain in your life with that decision and have walked the repentance process.

More than anything, we must pray that the Holy Spirit guide our children's lives, whether young or old. We're not going to be parenting them in a day-to-day capacity forever, so teaching them to rely on prayer and the Lord's voice is crucial. Ask your kids what they're learning from the Lord and what they're praying for.

Once our kids got married, our relationships with them shifted as their relational priorities rightly changed. When you have a healthy relationship with your adult kids, they will still ask for wise counsel from you as they need it. We have a monthly family dinner that everyone is invited to but they're not required to attend. We meet with our kids regularly to continue to invest in the relationship. We have made it clear we are available to them, but we won't push our way in. When we see them making a decision we might not make but it isn't going to wreck their life, we pray for the Holy Spirit to guide them and protect them. We look back and remember all the foolish decisions we made as young adults, but also see all God taught us and how He remained faithful. It can be difficult to not speak into everything they do, but it's important to trust that God loves our kids even more than we do and wants to grow their relationship with Him.

APPLICATION

PRAYER FOR YOUR ADULT KIDS

Pray for your adult kids every day! Ask God for a verse or word for your kids that you can turn to when you are worried. Write it in your journal and track how God answers your prayers. Trust God to speak to them and protect them and teach them. Continue to share your testimony (age appropriately) and what God has done in your life, letting them see you aren't perfect but want to walk in God's plan and blessing. Repent to them if God shows you something you did that was hurtful or harmful and don't argue with them, just apologize. Model healthy relationships to them by assessing needed boundaries if there are people in your life that are not encouraging you to build your relationships with God, husband, and children in that order of priority.



BIOS

GRACE DRISCOLL

As a mom of 5 kids and 2 upcoming grandsons, she adores kids and was humbled a lot in raising hers, often saying, “God gave me 5 because He had a lot to teach me!” Grace loves to talk about Jesus, and her life reflects it. Since her early years as a pastor’s daughter, Grace has had a passion for sharing the hope of the gospel with others, including a young high schooler named Mark Driscoll who didn’t know Jesus from a hole in the ground. She gave him a Bible, and they have been together ever since. One faithful marriage and five Jesus-following kids later, their ministry is thriving, and Jesus gets all the glory!

Born and raised in Seattle, Grace holds a B.A. in Communications from Washington State University, which she put to use in interviews on *The View*, *Fox and Friends*, and *Loveline*. She currently oversees the women’s ministry, *Real Women*, at Trinity Church, which she helped plant with Mark and their kids, and has also co-authored three books, *Real Marriage*, *Win Your War*, and *Real Romance*. She also provides content on *RealFaith.com* in the *Real Women* and *Real Marriage* sections.



ASHLEY CHASE

The oldest of the Driscolls’ five children, Ashley grew up traveling with her dad as he preached God’s Word—and Mark’s passion for the gospel rubbed off. Ashley’s heart to reach the nations for Jesus and gift in speaking Spanish led her to study theology at Capernwray Bible School in Costa Rica, as well as pursue studies in Linguistics and a Master’s in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages from Arizona State University’s Barrett Honors College. While at ASU, Ashley helped organize a prayer tent that has prayed night and day since 2004 for the awakening of a generation to God.

Ashley now serves as Executive Director of *RealFaith Ministries*. She co-authored the book *Pray Like Jesus*, hosts the weekly program *RealFaith Live*, and contributes to her mom’s *Real Women* content. Married to Landon Chase, Executive Pastor at *RealFaith*, since 2020, Ashley loves how God has centered her family around the singular calling to reach others for Christ. She is excited to be a mom this year and put these devotions into practice!

ABOUT REALFAITH

RealFaith is truly a family ministry, founded by Pastor Mark Driscoll and his wife Grace as well as their daughter Ashley. Together, they cover topics for the whole family from leadership to marriage and parenting, Spanish resources, and beyond. As always, it's all about Jesus, so at realfaith.com you'll find Bible-centered teaching, daily devotions, classes, videos, study guides, and more, created for real people with real questions about real life with Jesus. You can even sign up for emails so all these resources are delivered to your inbox. We hope and pray that God transforms your life and legacy as you discover His Word and are empowered by His Spirit.



FURTHER READING FOR PARENTS AND KIDS

Bedtime Prayers for Little Ones by Max and Denalyn Lucado

Pray Like Jesus by Mark Driscoll and Ashley Chase

Loving the Little Years by Rachel Jankovic

Peace Pirates by Ashley Willis

The 5 Love Languages of Teenagers by Gary Chapman

Honey for a Child's Heart by Gladys Hunt

God's Design for Sex Series by Stan & Brenna Jones

Teach Them Diligently by Lou Priolo

Parenting with Scripture by Kara Durbin

Raising Passionate Jesus Followers by Phil and Diane Comer

Big Truths for Young Hearts by Bruce Ware

Big Thoughts for Little Thinkers by Joey Allen

Heroes of the Faith books for young readers

Light Keepers Series by Irene Howat

Trailblazers Series by various authors (on the lives of John Calvin, George Muller, Martin Luther, Charles Spurgeon, John Knox, Jonathan Edwards, William Wilberforce, John Bunyan, Jim Elliot, Gladys Aylward, CS Lewis, Corrie Ten Boom, Augustine, Amy Carmichael)



\$14.99
ISBN 979-8-9877121-5-3
5 1499 >
9 798987 712153

