

Date : 2 March 2025

Theme : Visionary Parenting

Topic : Parents as Disciple-makers

Passage : *Deuteronomy 6:1-9*

Key Verse: *...Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up... Deuteronomy 6:7*

Introduction

The vision of making a lasting impact with our God-given talents starts at home.

In the family, everyone can either build or pull down the home.

Building is hard work – it requires daily work, love, patience and wisdom.

Those who are foolish and are untutored end up tearing it down. But God clearly wants to help us succeed and to come to Him for help. *Psalms 127* warns us that unless the Lord is building our house we labour in vain. There is no chance of success in our building efforts unless we engage God's help promised to those in covenant relationship with Him.

Today, we look at how parents who are Christ's followers can be visionary parents.

(Recommended book *Visionary Parenting* by Rob Rienow).

Visionary parents begin with understanding God's purpose for the family. God's purpose for every family is to raise "godly offspring", children who will grow up to be true worshippers and disciples of Jesus. Christian parents must therefore be effective disciple makers. A disciple maker must first know what a disciple is.

1. Why make disciples in our home context?

Why must we help our children to become disciples of the Lord?

- The Lord said *...Suffer little children to come to me for theirs is the Kingdom of God...*
- Children however are heavily exposed to the false worldviews everywhere, from the internet, TV, even ungodly philosophy which conflicts with biblical truth.
- Every succeeding generation is at risk of departing from the Lord.

Judges 2:7 tells of a people who served God in Joshua's generation.

But in *Judges 2:10*, the new generation that arose after Joshua, did not know the Lord.

Why did this matter?

For that new generation, it did not go well with them. They followed other gods *Judges 2:12*.

Their future ended in disaster. Just as God had warned them in *Deuteronomy 28:47*: they would serve their enemies in hunger, nakedness and abject poverty.

So to ensure our next generation has a great future, they must learn to obey the Lord.

2. What is a disciple?

- A disciple is a learner. He learns to follow Jesus by faith.
Jesus is alive! And our children want to experience His reality.
To our children, all the faith-filled stories we read in the Bible with them are faith building.
But these 2-dimensional accounts on paper must be brought down to a 3-dimensional experience in real life, so that children see how we live out our faith in real life.
- Obey God's Word
Parents need to show the wisdom and the benefits of knowing and obey God's Word.
So reading and having conversations on God's Word is a must.
- Love one another
Build the culture of love, so that our children will love and serve one another and bring glory to Jesus.
- Disciples are fruitful
There is no greater joy for a discipling parent then when their children become fruitful disciples. Fruit includes Christlike character and winning their friends for Christ.

3. What does discipleship in the home look like?

**Application
My response**

a) By Personal example

To model discipleship, parents must be practising discipleship ourselves.
...these words that I command you today shall be on your heart... Deuteronomy 6:5-6
How do we show this love for God's Word?

- *Deuteronomy 6:7* commands us to teach and talk His Word.
 - The father shows his submission by
 - providing *1 Timothy 5:8*
 - loving mum *Ephesians 5:25-33*
 - instructing children *Ephesians 6:4*
 - The mother she submits by
 - respecting husband *Ephesians 5:22-24*
 - loving children (include reproof, rebuke)
 - prioritising her family *Titus 2:3-5*

b) By Prayer (family altar)

Praying at home with our children is modelling how we depend on God.

- Training our children to experience the power of prayer.
 - handle life's tough situations
 - eg 1 Facing traffic policeman in a foreign country asking for a bribe.
 - eg 2 Praying for neighbours' salvation (especially neighbourhood kids)
- Consistency by setting times for prayer.
(The family altar time is carried out daily for young children and weekly for upper-level kids).

c) Physical discipline (teaching children discipline)

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- Very young children should be trained to obey.
Sulking, pouting, whining, complaining, etc should be dealt with promptly and firmly.
...Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline drives it far from him...Proverbs 22:15
- What does folly mean?
It means that children do not know what is best for them. We should not leave choices concerning education, entertainment, nutrition, health, etc up to them.
- Physical discipline
 - the earlier the rod is used, the less it is needed.
 - by explanation for the punishment and then restoration. This is to ensure children feel loved, not rejected.
- Prepare children for the gospel *Proverbs 23:13-14*
- Teach self-care habits, cleaning up, tidiness
- Teach manners – greeting elders, respectful

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d) By Personal time

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- Personal prayer and word time with each child periodically
- Personal time out with each child individually
(Topics to talk with upper primary children include protecting them from sexual predators, bullies, internet scammers, etc).
- Self-protection

e) Play and fun (training life skills)

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- i) Outdoor fun
 - survival skills
 - living skills
 - physical danger assessment
 - useful skills eg carpentry
- ii) Dinner time – anecdotes, story-telling, listening, scripture memory
- iii) Relating with neighbours
 - initiating conversations with neighbours
 - hosting an activity with neighbours
 - joining neighbourhood seasonal celebrations

vi) Inviting neighbourhood children home to our house to play.