

Family Connection

"Love GOD, your God, with your whole heart: love him with all that's in you, love him with all you've got! Write these commandments that I've given you today on your hearts. Get them inside of you and then get them inside your children. Talk about them wherever you are, sitting at home or walking in the street; talk about them from the time you get up in the morning to when you fall into bed at night. Tie them on your hands and foreheads as a reminder; inscribe them on the doorposts of your homes and on your city gates." Deut. 6:5-9—The Message Version

As we look to God's Word for guidance on how to discipline our kids we see that instruction happens through both formal and informal ways. On the informal side we need to recognize that every action and reaction our kids see and hear from us teaches them something—either positively or negatively. Most of the things that kids "pick-up" from their parents come from these everyday events, which is huge motivation for us to "watch our life and doctrine closely" (1 Tim 4:16).

On the formal side parents are called not just to model for their kids, but to all instruct them. This formal instruction happens at church, but it should also happen in the home. A common tool for formal instruction in the home is a regular time for family worship - also called a family devotion. The basic elements of a family devotion are the members of the family gathered together, prayer, and Biblical instruction. One may also include singing songs of praise, confession, and time focused on

memorizing scripture and/or basic doctrines of the faith.

Our hope is that families would have times of worship or devotion on a regular basis that would include, but not be limited to Sunday mornings at church. Can you imagine the spiritual benefit to our children if they received consistent biblical instruction from those that they were closest to - namely their parents. While the thought of this may be inspiring to some, it may also be intimidating. How do you start? What do you read? How do you ask questions of your kids to help them understand the scriptures?

These and other questions immediately come to mind as we begin to think about how to lead our families so this edition of the Family Connection is meant to be a template for you of how to lead your family in a Bible study. We will use the passage in Deut 6 that appears at the top of this page for our example.



A Template for Family Bible Study

- **Prayer** - Open by asking God to bless and lead your time. This invitation to God will remind you and your children of your dependence on God and recognizes the supernatural power of God to open our eyes so we can see wonderful things in His Word (Psalm 119:18)
- **Read a Passage of Scripture out-loud**— Our instruction must come God and his Word. By reading out of the Bible your family will recognize that the authority and wisdom of the study comes from God.

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. ⁷ 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. ⁸ Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹ Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. ~ Deuteronomy 6:4-9

- **Ask Questions for Discussion and Application** - God's Word is powerful on its own, but we want to make sure we
 - How much are we told to love God? (With every part of us and everything we have)
 - Is this commandment easy or hard for us to do? What other kinds of things do we love with our hearts, minds, souls, and strength? Are these things in competition with our love for God? If so, what should we do about that?
 - Where are we to keep God's commandments and what is the meant by these places? In our hearts (what we love) in our homes (where we live) our heads (what we think about) on our hands (what we do)
 - Parents are told to impress this love for God on their children while they are "sitting at home, walking along the road, lying down, and getting up". What are modern day expressions these in our families (i.e. When are we parents supposed to talk about God with their kids)? What things are we currently doing as a family that helps you to love God more? Is there anything we are doing that keeps you from loving God?
 - Why do you think God told them to write down his commandments and hang them up in there homes? Are there some things we can do around our house to help us remember who God is and what he asks of us?
 - What is one thing we can change as individuals or as a family that will help better live out this passage?

and our children understand the passage and know how to apply it to there lives.

- **Close in Prayer** - After you have been instructed by God's Word take some time to pray again. Pray for wisdom and courage to live out the Word of the Lord. Also, give family members an opportunity to express concerns or prayer request. What a blessing for a child to know that both God and their parents care about the details of their lives.