



Bulletin

A PUBLICATION OF FOCUS ON THE FAMILY®

JULY
2022

HOORAY FOR SUMMER!

PASSING ON YOUR VALUES

BY JIM DALY

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHRISTIAN parenting is passing on your faith to your children. It can also be one of the most challenging.

At the 2008 summer Olympics, both the US track and field men's and women's relay teams were expected to compete for gold medals. But in a shocking turn of events, *both* teams exited competition in the first round instead. Within hours of each other. And for the same reason: fumbling the final exchange of the baton on the back curve of the track.

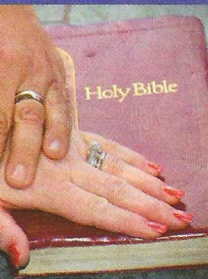
Runners almost never drop the baton in the middle of a relay leg when the race is in full sprint. It's in the exchange—handing the baton to a teammate—that things fall apart.

The exchange is where things often go wrong for parents who hope to pass on their faith to their children. Without your loving influence, your child's values will primarily be shaped by friends, the entertainment industry and social media.

Deuteronomy 6 encourages a different approach: intentionally passing on your wisdom about God and faithful living in Christ. How? By infusing truth into everyday life. At the dinner table. In the car. On walks through the neighborhood.

Running a race for yourself is only one part of achieving victory. The other is making sure that the values you hold dear are firmly within your child's grasp.

Want to know more? Visit www.focusonthefamily.com.



Tough
Questions
from Kids

When we're
bad, can we
still pray?



DISCOVER WHAT REJUVENATES YOU ... AND YOUR MARRIAGE

After speaking at a weekend marriage seminar, I was exhausted. As soon as I boarded the plane home, I put on my noise-canceling headphones, closed my eyes and listened to my favorite music. When we landed, I felt refreshed, because music is one of the things that helps me rest.

The next morning, I woke up at 5 o'clock and drove two hours into the mountains. I hiked to 12,000 feet so I could fish in a mountain stream. It was as if I were in heaven! To be sure, trout fishing in the mountains of Colorado is not a "restful" activity. I'm usually worn out after a day of wading through rushing water—but my heart had come alive.

Rest is more than a good night's sleep. It is any activity that rejuvenates you and brings life to your soul—whether that's relaxing at home with a good book or trout fishing in the Rockies.

Rest is often misunderstood and seen as laziness. Some even view it as a form of spiritual deficiency, misapplying King Solomon's statement that "idle hands are the devil's workshop" (Proverbs 16:27, TLB, a paraphrase).

But Jesus knows that we need rest. He said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28, NIV).

Taking time to rest—physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally—is in the best interest of you *and* your marriage. God doesn't want you to be an empty, exhausted person with nothing to give. Rest empowers you to love your spouse from a place of abundance.

We must be careful, however, that we don't settle for counterfeits. What do you do when you're tired? Do you drink coffee, veg out in front of the TV, guzzle an energy drink, peruse social media or devour a bag of Doritos? Unfortunately, these survival behaviors rarely rejuvenate and often leave you jittery or feeling guilty.

Discovering true rest means pursuing experiences that refresh our tired minds and bodies. We must identify and devote time to things that inspire passion, hope, healing, creativity and joy.

A few activities that I consider restful are sleeping, laughing, gardening, meditating on God's Word, painting, reading and watching movies. What experiences bring *you* rest?

—Greg Smalley



TEACHING KIDS ABOUT YOUR PLACE IN GOD'S BIG STORY



Take a moment to think about your own story. How did God use the circumstances in your life to bring you to Himself? When did you realize that there was more to life than living for yourself? How did that affect your decisions? How can you lead your child to Christ? This is all the essence of who you are—it is a story your kids need to hear.

At an early age, our children can begin to hear parts of our story and to be eyewitnesses to how God is continuing to shape it. I enjoy telling my children aspects of my own faith story in the context of the age they are, the experiences they are facing and how I felt God guided me when I was encountering similar situations.

Even parents who did not experience a relationship with God as children or teenagers can share how the events of their lives led them to faith or how they could have benefited from knowing a God who loved them and had a place for them in His big story.

—Michelle Anthony



FREEDOM AND FAITH

The Fourth of July offers the perfect opportunity to introduce children to the Judeo-Christian principles on which our country was established, and I have found that reading the Declaration of Independence with my family is a great place to start. Print out a transcript and ask your children to circle the references to God and Christian

principles; then talk about each sentence together.

Another great point of discussion for my family has centered on the Christian influence found in so much of our rich American history. Great resources can be found at wallbuilders.com, outlining everything from the Scriptures and prayers engraved on national monuments to the prayers and favorite Bible verses of our nation's presidents.

If you can't visit monuments or government buildings in person, consider an "online scavenger hunt," where family members can race to see who finds the most Scripture references by researching American history online. If your children are too young to browse the web, another option is listening to *Adventures in Odyssey: For God and Country*. This CD is designed for children and includes humor, inspiring real-life stories and fantastic audio dramas.

—Rebecca Hagelin

FAMILY MATTERS

Answers to your questions...

How can I teach my kids about repentance?

ANSWER:

Teaching our kids how to repent when they mess up and hurt others can be difficult. It can be a challenge to help our kids see a need for forgiveness.

But even if your child has yet to express faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior, learning how to repent and forgive can help them understand God's love for us. And for kids who have already accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior, repentance is still essential to their lives.

Throughout the Bible, repentance is commonly mentioned and reinforced as an important practice. On multiple occasions, Jesus encourages his

followers, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2) and "Repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

Paul commends his followers, "I rejoice . . . because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief" (2 Corinthians 7:9). He also advises Timothy to deal with his opponents with the hope that "God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth" (2 Timothy 2:25).

Whether we are repenting to God to receive salvation or because we've sinned against our friends, repentance involves awareness and intentional change. In the New Testament, the word *repentance* directly translates to the idea of "change of mind"

or "turning from our sin."

This means that learning how to repent depends on an awareness of our disobedience and sin. Then, we must realize there is a need for change.

Use dirty laundry as an illustration. Help your kids see that just as dirty clothes begin to smell the longer they go unwashed, so too does their sin, the longer it goes without repentance.

Going further, when dirty clothes are hidden, soon enough the smell will start to get worse. The same is true when you hide your sin or avoid repentance. At some point, something will reveal your sin.

Learning how to repent and seek forgiveness can equip your kids for the rest of their lives.

—Jackson Greer

TOUGH QUESTIONS FROM KIDS

ANSWER:

When we do bad things or make mistakes, we need God more than ever. When we do something wrong, we need to talk to God about it—to admit we were wrong, say we're sorry and ask Him to forgive us. God knows we aren't perfect, and He wants to give us the wisdom to change so we can do better next time.

For more information on any of the topics in this bulletin, go to FocusOnTheFamily.com or call 800-A-FAMILY (232-6459). To reach Customer Service regarding your subscription, please call 1-800-692-9912. To check out more ministry resources, please visit us at www.tyndaleperiodicals.com.

FOCUS
ON THE
FAMILY.

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY BULLETIN (ISSN 0897-537X), vol. 35, no. 7, July 2022. Jim Rustak, editor; Shirley Ree, designer. Published monthly by Tyndale House Publishers, 351 Executive Drive, Carol Stream, IL 60188 in cooperation with Focus on the Family, Colorado Springs, CO. © 2022 Focus on the Family. Used by permission. All rights reserved. *Focus on the Family* and the accompanying logo and design are federally registered trademarks of Focus on the Family, 8605 Explorer Drive, Colorado Springs, CO 80920. Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version,® NIV® Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. Scripture quotations marked TLB are taken from *The Living Bible*, copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved. Cover image of family © Iakov Filimonov | Dreamstime.com. Image of hands on Bible © Laq Hill | Dreamstime.com. Image of kid couple © Olesia Bilkei | Dreamstime.com. Image of couple on mountain © Anna Dudko | Dreamstime.com. Image of kids on floor © Nagy-bagoly Iлона | Dreamstime.com. Image of declaration © Michael Filippov | Dreamstime.com. Subscription \$16.00 per month per 100 copies. Canada: \$18.00 per month per 100 copies, payable in Canadian funds. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Focus on the Family, Subscription Services, P. O. Box 405, Mt. Morris, IL 61054.