

Copyright © 2014 Jacob Bowen Harris

All rights reserved. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary has permission to reproduce and disseminate this document in any form by any means for purposes chosen by the Seminary, including, without limitation, preservation or instruction.

TEACHING FAMILY WORSHIP TO PARENTS WITH
YOUNG CHILDREN AT MT. VERNON BAPTIST
OF GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA

A Project
Presented to
the Faculty of
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry

by Jacob Bowen Harris

December 12, 2014

APPROVAL SHEET

TEACHING FAMILY WORSHIP TO PARENTS WITH
YOUNG CHILDREN AT MT. VERNON BAPTIST
OF GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA

Jacob Bowen Harris

Read and Approved by:

Bruce A. Ware

Timothy Paul Jones

Date _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
PREFACE	vi
Chapter	
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Purpose of the Project	1
Goals of the Project.....	1
Ministry Context.....	2
Rationale.....	3
Definitions.....	6
Limitations and Delimitations.....	7
Research Methodology	7
Conclusion.....	9
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF FAMILY WORSHIP.....	11
Introduction	11
Deuteronomy 6:1-9	13
Psalm 78:1-8	17
Ephesians 5:22-6:4	22
2 Timothy 3:14-15.....	30
Conclusion.....	35

Chapter	Page
SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES ON THE FAMILY: WHY LEADING YOUR CHILDREN IN WORSHIP MATTERS AND HOW TO DO IT.	37
Introduction.	37
Parents Are Not Teaching Their Children to Know and Love God.	37
Parenting for Biblical Ends through Family Worship	41
Parents Underestimate Their Influence	45
The Benefits of Leading Your Children in Family Worship	46
Practical Helps in Implementing Family Worship	50
Read, Pray, Sing.	52
Conclusion.	54
PROJECT DETAILS AND METHODOLOGY.	56
Introduction.	56
The Preparation Phase.	56
The Family Worship Teaching Series.	57
Conclusion.	65
EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT.	66
Introduction.	66
Evaluation of the Project’s Purpose and Goals.	66
Strengths and Weakness of the Project.	73
What I Would Do Differently.	77
Theological Reflections	79
Personal Reflections	81

	Page
Conclusion.....	83
Appendix	
1. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS.....	84
2. PRE-POST SURVEY PART 1: RESULTS.....	89
3. PRE-POST SURVEY PART 2: RESULTS.....	92
4. TEACHING SERIES EVALUATION: RESULTS.....	96
5. TEACHING OUTLINES.....	99
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	129

PREFACE

I would like to express my thankfulness to all who have supported and encouraged me through the process of this project. It has been a long and arduous journey, but well worth it. The Lord had placed a burden on my heart years ago to work on this topic, and by his grace, I have completed this chapter in my life. His grace has once again proven to be sufficient, and he alone deserves the praise. Much of God's grace that I have experienced throughout this process was given through my family, especially through my wife, Kelli. Without her encouragement and strength, this would not have been possible. This project has challenged me to be a better husband to her and a better father to Jani, Juli, Ali, and Jake.

I also had many friends who labored alongside me. Their willingness to read, talk for hours, and push me to work hard was greatly appreciated. I dare not mention their names, but they know who they are. I am also grateful for the new friends that were made through my time at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. My life has been enriched through these new relationships.

I would also like to thank my pastor, Don Runion, who helped me think critically throughout this project and who allowed me the time necessary to complete my work. He pastors a great church at Mt. Vernon Baptist, and he has faithfully served that congregation for nearly thirty-five years.

Lastly, I would like to thank Dr. Bruce Ware for his willingness to supervise this project. Dr. Ware has continually been a source of encouragement and joy from the first time we met. May the Lord bless his continued service to Christ's Kingdom.

Jacob Bowen Harris

Glen Allen, Virginia

December 2014

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project will be to teach the biblical principles of family worship to families with young children ages 4-12 at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church, Glen Allen, Virginia.

Goals of the Project

This project sought to accomplish three goals which served as the criterion for the overall effectiveness of this project.

The first goal of this project was to evaluate the knowledge and practice of family worship among the participants. This goal was measured by a pre-project survey¹ that was administered to the participants in order to determine their current understanding of the Bible's teaching on family worship and also their current practice of it. This goal was considered met once the pre-project surveys were administered to the participants, and were assessed by the researcher.

The second goal of this project was to develop a teaching series for the purpose of equipping parents to lead family worship. The aim of this teaching series was to increase the participants' biblical knowledge of family worship. On a secondary level, the teaching series was designed to encourage the participants to practice family worship.

¹See Appendix 1; Family Worship Survey.

The teaching material was evaluated the five members of Mt. Vernon's pastoral staff in order to determine its strengths, weaknesses, and overall effectiveness.² The goal was met once the curriculum was produced and received an 85 percent satisfactory evaluation by each evaluator.

The third goal of the project was to teach the eight-week series on the biblical principles of family worship. This goal was measured by administering a post-project survey.³ The post-project survey data was compared to the pre-survey data in order to determine if the participants' knowledge and practice of family worship increased or remained unchanged. This goal was considered met when the pre-project surveys and the post-project surveys were compared and a positive, statistically significant change in the understanding and practice of family worship occurred. A dependent samples *t*-test was used to measure the change between the pre and post-project surveys. A separate teaching evaluation form⁴ was administered to the participants at the completion of the series that provided feedback on the project as a whole.

Ministry Context

In order to understand the impact of this project on Mt. Vernon, it is important to know the context in which it was carried out and the needs that this project sought to meet. Below is a brief summary of Mt. Vernon that includes its current ministries followed by a rationale for why this project was beneficial to this church.

²See Appendix 1; Pastoral Staff Teaching Series Evaluation.

³See Appendix 1; Family Worship Survey.

⁴See Appendix 1; Participants' Teaching Series Evaluation.

Mt. Vernon is a large church in Glen Allen, Virginia. Glen Allen is located in Henrico County, which is one of the largest counties that make up the city of Richmond. According to its annual church profile, Mt. Vernon has over 3300 members and an average worship attendance of 1100. Due to Mt. Vernon's size and staff structure, a multitude of ministries are offered. Mt. Vernon's educational staff includes an Associate Pastor for Adult Education, an Associate Pastor for Students, and a Minister to Children. Mt. Vernon offers a plethora of Sunday school classes for all ages and walks of life. There is also a children's ministry and a student ministry that meet on Sunday mornings, Sunday evenings, and Wednesday evenings. Mt. Vernon offers adult discipleship classes, college/singles classes, as well as a Mother's of Preschoolers ministry, Women's Ministry, and Men's Ministry throughout the week. Each of these ministries has been designed to equip and challenge those participating to follow Christ.

Rationale

Mt. Vernon is a church that is built around its worship services and its Sunday school program. It currently has three Sunday morning worship services and two Sunday school hours. This schedule is due in large part to a desire to reach as many people as possible. The worship services are friendly, well designed, and thoughtfully planned. The Sunday school classes, likewise, are meant to be open and relational. These two aspects have led to congregational growth and many evangelistic opportunities. However, focusing most of the church's resources on these two areas has led to other shortfalls, specifically, equipping parents to disciple their children.

Mt. Vernon has many couples who attend faithfully with their children. While parents attend worship and Sunday school, no discipleship opportunities are aimed at

equipping them to train their children to know and love God. The discipleship program at Mt. Vernon does offer three to four classes on Wednesday nights for men or women. However, with no offerings to equip families specifically to disciple their children, there was no expectation for families to be equipped to lead their families in their homes in worship. This project sought to offer help in this specific area.

While Mt. Vernon seemingly has a program or ministry designed for every person, there is a large deficiency in the area of family discipleship, particularly equipping families to participate in family worship. Once a family arrives at Mt. Vernon they are usually separated and placed into a small group that will provide good biblical study but falls short of equipping families to carry out the primary work of discipleship. There was a great need to train and equip families, especially parents, to be the primary disciplers of their children. To put it simply, the current ministries of the church were not built or designed to facilitate this type of family discipleship through family worship.

One of the problems with the current ministry structure was that it is very easy for families to fall into a passive discipleship mode. Families could believe that they were carrying out the Bible's command to bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:4) by simply dropping their children off once or twice a week for a class. Training children spiritually under this premise relegates family discipleship to the place of an extracurricular activity with little or no participation from the parent. Biblical family discipleship, however, must be active, intentional, and it must begin in the home.

The purpose of this project was to teach the biblical principles of family worship among families with young children. The teaching series sought to equip parents

to be able to lead their children in family worship. This project hopefully led to a ministry mindset shift. For this mindset to change, it took more than simply training parents to do better. It took modeling family worship in front of them and commending it to them in a way that demonstrated its benefits, joys, and worth. Discipling our children through family worship is the privilege of every Christian parent. It should be carried out with the hope that our children, by God's grace, will continue to worship Christ and to walk after him.

A mindset change of this magnitude will take time and patience. It will necessitate an approach that has a view to the next generation of Christians. Thus, this project focused on families with young children (ages 4-12). Firstly, because equipping parents to be the primary disciplers of their children was the area of greatest need, and secondly, because this group of parents had the greatest potential to begin changing the inherent inertia regarding family worship.

Changing the Status Quo

Mt. Vernon's college ministry also demonstrated the need for better equipping families to be the primary disciplers of their children. While the student ministry averaged over 120 students each Sunday morning, the college ministry was usually less than ten. Some of the differences in attendance can be accounted for due to some students moving away for college. However, it was telling that even during the summer months and holidays that number did not significantly increase. The drop-off in college participation seemed to reveal that the current configuration of the children's ministry and student ministry was ill-equipped to close this gap. A possible solution to this problem could be found in leading the parishioners of Mt. Vernon to carry out their

biblical responsibility as the primary disciplers of their children by faithfully practicing family worship. Donald Whitney argues,

Having your family in a good, Bible-teaching local church is crucial to Christian parenting. But this is not enough for conveying to your children all you want to teach them about God and your beliefs. Moreover, it is unlikely that exposure to the church once or twice a week will impress your children enough with the greatness and glory of God that they will want to pursue Him once they leave home. This is why family worship is so important. But even more importantly, God deserves to be worshiped daily in our homes by our families.⁵

Faithful family worship led by loving parents will provide the biblical framework that will allow children to learn and love the greatness and glory of God. It will demonstrate to children with clarity and consistency the reason humanity exists, namely, to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.

Definitions

Family. For the purpose of this project a family will be defined as a household with at least one parent and one child living communally.

Family worship. Family worship is defined for this project as the regular and intentional gathering of a family for the purpose of moving Godward together.⁶ It is an occasion set aside for offering praise and thanksgiving to God. Family worship may incorporate means such as Bible reading, reflection, prayer, singing, a catechism, and other devotional resources.

⁵Donald Whitney, "Family Worship: Why?," accessed June 24, 2012, <http://www.christianity.com/Home/Christian%20Living%20Features/11636446>.

⁶This definition is a combination of the definitions from the following sources: Joel Beeke, *Family Worship* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2002), 3, and Tony Kummer, *The Beginner's Family Worship Handbook*, 3, accessed February 2, 2013, <http://ministry-to-children.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/family-worship-guidebook.pdf>.

Limitations and Delimitations

The primary limitation of this project was that it would be limited to fifteen weeks. Another limitation was that other variables will not be measured that might have an influence on the results, either positively or negatively. These could have included the pastor's sermon series or other family discipleship classes that possibly overlapped with the purpose of this project. This project sought to teach the biblical principles of family worship to families with young children at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church. A delimitation was that the focus group was limited to families with children between the ages of 4-12. Families with children that fell outside the ranges of four to twelve years of age were considered beyond the scope of this project.

Research Methodology

This project sought to accomplish the three goals previously mentioned. These goals were to evaluate the current knowledge and practice of family worship, to develop a teaching series in order to equip parents to lead family worship, and finally, to teach the series and test for changes in knowledge and practice. In order to determine if these goals were reached, there was a pre-project survey taken by the participants, an eight-week family worship course, a post-project survey, and an evaluation of the teaching series by the ministerial staff and the project participants. The pre and post survey included statements with a Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree in order to gauge the participants' current understanding and practice of family worship. At the end of the project there was a statistical analysis of the collected data to determine whether or not there was an increase in the knowledge and practice of family worship. This analysis involved matching the pre-project survey and the post-project survey and

using a dependent sample *t*-test to determine the statistical change. An increase in the knowledge and practice of family worship was desired. The teaching series evaluation was used to identify the strengths, weaknesses, and effectiveness of the teaching materials. The evaluation was used to make adjustments to the teaching series and strengthen it for future use.

Pre-project Survey

The pre-project survey provided a basic understanding of the participants' knowledge and practice of family worship. This survey was designed to assess two main areas among the participants as it related to family worship. Those areas were the biblical and theological understanding of family worship and the current practice of family worship in the home. The participants were enlisted using the church website, bulletin and Sunday school classes to ensure the largest possible participation.

Eight-Week Family Worship Teaching Series

After the focus group completed the pre-project survey they participated in an eight-week family worship teaching series. The goal of this series was to increase the participants' knowledge and practice of family worship by explaining the biblical principles of family worship. The pre and post surveys were administered at the beginning and end of this series. Each week of the teaching series included a lecture on family worship, a student handout, and homework for the participants to complete during the week, with eight main lessons. Lesson 1 was an introduction to the topic of family worship. Lesson 2 was the theological assumptions of family worship. Lessons 3 through 5 covered family worship in the Old Testament. Lessons 6 through 7 outlined

family worship in the New Testament and lesson 8 offered practical helps on family worship. The outlines for the teaching series are included as an appendix.

Post-Project Survey

Upon completion of the series a post-project survey was administered to ascertain several pieces of data. First, the survey measured whether or not there was a change in the knowledge and practice of family worship among the focus group. Secondly, the post survey included an evaluation of the teaching series. This evaluation determined the strengths, weaknesses, and the effectiveness of the teaching series.

Data Collection and Analysis

Participants in this project were administered surveys and evaluations in order to determine the project's overall effectiveness. The data collected through the pre and post-project surveys was analyzed to determine whether or not the goals of this project were met. The pre-project survey and the post-project survey were identical with the exception of the teaching series evaluation portion of the post-project survey. The data collected demonstrated whether or not there was an increase in the knowledge and practice of family among the participants.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to teach the biblical principles of family worship to families with young children at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church in Glen Allen, Virginia. This project was carried out over the course of fifteen weeks and sought to accomplish three main goals. The project sought to evaluate the current knowledge and practice of family worship in the focus group. The second goal of this project was to

develop a teaching curriculum for the purpose of equipping parents to lead family worship in their respective homes. The final goal was to implement the curriculum and determine its overall effectiveness. Surveys and evaluations were used to measure these stated goals.

CHAPTER 2
BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS
OF FAMILY WORSHIP

Introduction

Human beings were created for worship, to enjoy God, to see his glory, and to love him. As the Westminster Shorter Catechism states, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.”¹ Therefore, worship is the outflow of enjoyment and satisfaction in God. Worship is ultimate and will continue forever and thus the enjoyment of God will continue forever.² Family worship is an extension of this conviction. Family worship is above all a blessing to be enjoyed and not an obligation to be met.

It will be helpful to begin with a definition of family worship. Family worship is defined for this project as the regular and intentional gathering of a family for the purpose of moving Godward together. It is an occasion that is set aside for offering praise and thanksgiving to God, for enjoying him together and growing in Christlikeness. Family worship, however, is not merely a divine suggestion. Family worship is part of God’s design for families.

¹“Westminster Shorter Catechism,” accessed February, 2013, <http://www.reformed.org/documents/WSC.html>.

²John Piper articulates this point well in *Let the Nations Be Glad* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 17-18.

The thesis of this chapter is that God intends for parents to raise their children to know, love, and worship Him. This thesis assumes several foundational truths. The first truth is that God has created humanity for his glory (Isa 43:7); and secondly, he has commanded them to make his glory known to all peoples (Hab 2:14) throughout all generations (Exod 3:15). What will be argued is that God has ordained certain means for accomplishing these purposes. One of the primary means is families raising their children to know and love him. It should be understood that while parents bear this responsibility to raise their children to know and love him, they are wholly dependent upon God's grace and the power of the gospel to bring their children into a relationship with Jesus. Children born to Christian parents are not born Christians. Christian parents should raise their children in a worship-filled, gospel-saturated home where the glories of Christ shine brightly, and there is anticipation for God to draw their children to Christ as he is rightly exalted.

From the beginning of the book of Genesis it becomes apparent that God has a plan for humankind. God creates a perfect world filled with life and wonder and then says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness 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,'" (Gen 1:26-28). There are several things in this text that key us in on God's intentions for humanity, and in particular, families. One of God's purposes for man and woman is that they are meant to image and reflect the God who has created them. God also intends for men and women to join together and obey God's command to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth. A few verses later Scripture says, "Therefore a man shall

leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Gen 2:24). From this text it seems to be clear that God intends for marriage to be the means of a man and woman becoming a family in order to fulfill his command to fill the earth. Marriage, then, and consequently the family, is the oldest institution in Scripture. Marriage and the family is the building block upon which communities, society, government and the church are to be built. It will be argued later in light of this truth, the family should be seen as the normal school for spiritual and social development.

In order to argue that God intends for parents to raise their children to know and love God, several biblical texts need analysis. Those texts are Deuteronomy 6:1-9, Psalm 78:1-8, Ephesians 5:22-6:4 and 2 Timothy 3:14-15. Each of these texts was chosen because of their emphasis upon parents raising their children to know and love God. While many texts could have been selected, these four offer what could be considered the biblical foundation of family worship. These four texts not only give instructions to parents, they also offer some level of theological insight into raising our children to know and love God.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 is one of the clearest attestations in Scripture to the role and responsibility given to parents to lead their children in the knowledge, love and worship of God. In this section of Deuteronomy, the children of Israel preparing to enter into the Promised Land. Moses is preparing them for their journey with a reminder of God’s covenant to them. Verses 1-3 serve as an introduction to verses 4-9. Moses begins this section by reminding the Israelites that the Lord has revealed himself to them and has given them explicit commands, statutes and rules to follow (v. 1). Moses also reminds

the Israelites that God has commanded him to teach these commands to the people before they take possession of the land. Next, Moses informs Israel how God plans for these commands and statutes to be propagated. He says, “that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life” (Deut 6:2). The commandments that Moses are about to give are intended to awaken a reverent and holy fear of the Lord as they are taught from parent to child for generations to come. H. D. M. Spence states, “The reason for this announcement of the Law was that the people might fear the Lord, so as to keep all that he enjoined, they and their children, from generation to generation.”³ God’s commands are meant to lead to Israel’s blessing as God promises the Israelites long life, prosperity, and a land flowing with milk and honey (vv. 2-3).

Moses moves from his introduction in verses 1-3 to his primary command in verses 4-9. This section is traditionally known as the Jewish *Shema* as verse 4 begins with the command for Israel to “hear” (*šāma* ִ). According to Eugene Merrill, “‘To hear,’ in Hebrew lexicography, is tantamount to ‘to obey,’ especially in covenant contexts such as this. That is, to hear God without putting into effect the command is not to hear him at all.”⁴ This command to hear is followed by a theological statement of God’s unity and uniqueness depending on which emphasis the translator chooses (e.g. “The LORD our God, the LORD is one” in the ESV and NIV, or “The LORD our God is one LORD” in

³*Deuteronomy*, ed. H. D. M. Spence-Jones, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 118.

⁴Eugene H. Merrill, *Deuteronomy*, The New American Commentary, vol. 4 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994), 162.

the KJV).⁵ Peter Craigie rightly asserts,

As one God (or the “Unique”), when he spoke there was no other to revoke that promise; when he warned, there was no other to provide refuge from that warning. He was not merely first among the gods, as Baal in the Canaanite pantheon, Amon-Re in Egypt, or Marduk in Babylon; he was the one and only God who imposed on Israel the charge to love.⁶

This statement is intended to teach that the God of Israel has no rival(s) and his people are not allowed to live as though he does, further clarifying what God had said in the previous chapter of Deuteronomy. “You shall have no other gods before me,” and “You shall not make for yourself a carved image . . . for I the Lord your God am a jealous God” (Deut 5:7-9). The reason for these prohibitions is that there are no other gods beside Yahweh (see Isa 45:5). The children of Israel are to hear this command that the Lord is one and then to live in such a way that no person or thing are perceived to be a rival of the Lord.

Verse 5 provides the main thrust and the overarching command of this text, stating, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” The main covenant command given to Israel is that they are to love the LORD their God. It could be argued that the entire book of Deuteronomy is a commentary on this very command.⁷ Jesus explains in the New Testament (Matt 22:34–39; Mark 12:28–31; Luke 10:25–28) that this command sums up all of the Law and the Prophets. Keil and Delitzsch state plainly, “Even the gospel knows no higher

⁵Ibid.

⁶Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing), 169.

⁷Ibid., 169-170.

commandment than this.⁸ It should be clear from verse 5 that God commands his people to love him. They are instructed to love him with all of who they are and with all the power and energies that they possess.⁹ The Lord is not interested in disaffectionate worship from his people.

What is important for this study is the connection between verse 5 and verses 6-9. In verses 6-9 Moses explains how God's covenant and this command are to be obeyed. The very words that Moses commands the Israelites are to be on their hearts.¹⁰ Moses commands parents to take the words of this covenant and to "teach them diligently to your children, and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise" (Deut 6:7). What Israel hears from Moses they are to obey and pass along to the next generation, in particular their own children. The children of Israel were meant to know God and love God from the testimony and lives of their parents. Craigie avers,

Having understood the commandments for themselves, the people were then responsible for their children: *you shall repeat them to your children* (a theme already familiar; see Deut. 4:9). The commandments were to be the subject of conversation both inside and outside the home, from the beginning of the day to the end of the day. In summary, the commandments were to permeate every sphere of the life of man.¹¹

Ronald Clements adds, "A further aspect of the deuteronomic teaching is evident in the injunction to teach 'these words', which must refer to the Ten Commandments, to

¹⁴Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996), 885

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Deuteronomy 6:6-9 demonstrates a connection between knowing God rightly and loving God rightly. People know God primarily through his revelation to them, his final revelation being his Son, Jesus. Jeremiah 9:24 also points to this truth. Thinking right thoughts towards God would be part of what it means to love him with our minds.

¹¹Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, 170.

children. The inference is clear that those who are addressed . . . will carry out such instruction in their homes.”¹² From this text it seems that God expects parents to be the primary leaders in their children’s spiritual development and training. Parents are to know and love God and their children are to follow in their footsteps. Interestingly, God assigns no other persons or institutions to stand between parents and the training of their children to know and love him. Moses as the leader does not place himself between parents and their children, nor does he place the priests or Levites in that position. God sets parents alone in this place. Moses’ words further demonstrate that God expects parents to be the primary leaders in their children’s spiritual development and training. This commandment does not remove a role for other educators in training children. Pastors or other church leaders certainly are called to assist. However, God does not allow parents to abdicate this responsibility. Parents are accountable to God as the primary communicators of God’s Truth and his commands to their posterity.

Another text that demonstrates God’s intentions for parents to raise their children to know, love, and worship him is found in Psalm 78.

Psalm 78:1-8

Psalm 78:1-8 is a psalm of Asaph that offers instruction to the people of Israel to remember the things that they have heard and learned from their fathers. While Psalm 78 includes seventy-two verses, this section will focus on verses 1-8. Psalm 78 is written as a historical recounting of Israel’s past. It is not a history in the modern sense of the word. Asaph picks and chooses what he wishes to include, but he does so with a

¹²Ronald E. Clements, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, in vol. 2 of *The New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abington Press, 1998), 343.

purpose.¹³ His main purpose is to recount what he has learned and to pass it on the next generation so that they will in turn place their trust in God. The point at hand for this paper is that God expects parents to teach their children greatness of God's so that generation after generation will know and worship him. Craig Broyles agrees when he comments, "Each generation must hear the story of salvation and so choose to trust God."¹⁴ Asaph, in Psalm 78:1-8, highlights the necessity of parents obeying the commands of Deuteronomy 6, so that their children will come to know and love God. Psalm 78 demonstrates the thesis that God expects parents to teach their children the greatness of God so that generation after generation will know, love and worship him.

Asaph begins by saying, "Give ear, O my people, to my teaching" (v. 1). Asaph is directing his attention to the people of Israel, who have descended from the Patriarchs and have a special covenant relationship with God. These are the same people who in Deuteronomy 6 were instructed to love the Lord with all their heart, mind, soul and strength. He continues in verse 2, "I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings from of old." Most likely a parable here indicates a comparison. J. Clinton McCann comments, "The word here translated 'parable(s)' connotes literally a comparison, and it communicates the desire for the psalm's hearers to compare themselves to their ancestors in order not to make the same mistakes."¹⁵

In verse 3 Asaph reveals the source of his parables when he adds, "things that we have heard and known, that our fathers have told us." The items that Asaph intends to

¹³J. Clinton McCann, Jr., *The Book of Psalms*, in vol. 2 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck (Nashville: Abington Press), 989.

¹⁴Craig C. Broyles, *Psalms*, Understanding the Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Books), 319.

¹⁵McCann, *The Book of Psalms*, 990.

recount in the rest of Psalm 78 are part of Israel's written history, things that he and the people of Israel have learned from their fathers. Asaph is able to recount all of God's dealings with Israel precisely because of his parents. In this case it was his father who took seriously his charge to raise up Asaph to know, love and worship God. According to verse 3, Asaph not only heard (שמע), which hearkens back to Deuteronomy 6:4, but he knows (ידע). He has received the testimony of his father as reliable and trustworthy because that testimony is tied to God's revelation in verse 5.

In verses 4-8 Asaph lays out his conscious choice to continue to obey God's commands and teach his children to know and love God. In verse 4 he exclaims, "We will not hide them from our children, but tell them to the coming generation." Asaph is calling the faithful of Israel not to abdicate their responsibility as parents but to raise their children in God's ways. John Calvin sees the importance of fathers faithfully raising their children:

We will not conceal them from our posterity, implying, that what we have been taught by our ancestors we should endeavour to transmit to their children. By this means, all pretence of ignorance is removed; for it was the will of God that these things should be published from age to age without interruption; so that being transmitted from father to child in each family, they might reach even the last family of man. The end for which this was to be done is shown—that they might celebrate the praises of Jehovah in the wonderful works which he hath done.¹⁶

Asaph's main purpose in recounting Israel's past ("the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done [v. 4]) is to encourage the coming generations to hear of God's faithfulness, learn of his character and respond in loving and serving God. Keil and Delitzsch posit,

¹⁶John Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. 3, trans. James Anderson (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2010), 230.

The following generation, the children, which shall be born in the course of the ages, were to know concerning His deeds, and also themselves to rise up (יָקוּמוּ, not: come into being, like the יָבֵא of the older model-passage 22:32) and to tell them further to their children, in order that these might place their confidence in god (שִׁים לְבָבָם, like שִׁית מִתְקָה in 73:28), and might not forget the mighty deeds of God (Ps. 87:12), and might keep His commandments, being warned by the disobedience of the fathers.¹⁷

In verse 5 Asaph points to the source of his father's knowledge, namely, God's Law. Asaph would have been able to compare his father's teaching with what God had revealed to his covenant community in order to check the veracity of his father's teaching. Asaph writes, "He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel which he commanded our fathers to teach their children" (v. 5). While human teaching will always have its faults and struggles, God still uses human means. Parents are the primary means of discipling their children. Calvin argues,

It is, therefore, not without cause that the prophet, after having spoken of the things which he had heard, at the same time, refers in confirmation of their truth to undoubted testimony. He adds, that the knowledge of these subjects had been communicated to the Jews by their *fathers*. This does not imply, that what is taught under the domestic roof is always faultless What is to be principally observed is, that all fathers are not here spoken of indiscriminately, but only those who were chosen to be God's peculiar people, and to whom the care of divine truth was intrusted.¹⁸

Asaph received proper instruction from his father and now he intends to pass it along to his children. He has a sure word, a sure testimony, and he intends to obey God's commands.

Asaph offers two additional reasons for teaching his children the glorious deeds of the Lord in verses 6-7. In verse 6 he says, "that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children." God's program

¹⁷Keil and Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*, 524.

¹⁸Calvin, *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, 229.

for raising children to know and love him seems to have a generational horizon. God does not simply want first generational believers. He intends for his lovingkindness to be extended from generation to generation through the faithful testimony and teaching of parents. Jason Helopoulos argues,

The psalmist envisions a cascading waterfall of truth, where the generation before tells the generation that comes after it the glorious truths of God. And that generation relays the truth of God and His working to the following generation and so on until the end of time. This is our charge. This is the call that has been placed upon our Christian homes.¹⁹

The second reason is given in verse 7 when Asaph adds, “so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.” Asaph’s main goal in teaching his children about God’s deeds, and conversely not hiding them from his children (v. 4), is so that they will set their hope in God. Asaph is not merely interested in teaching his children theological truths or philosophical maxims. He intends to teach with the purpose of awakening hope. He tells them of God’s mighty deeds of deliverance and faithfulness, and salvation for his people. Asaph instructs his children to stand in awe of God and place their hope and trust in him because he is trustworthy.

Finally, Asaph offers a warning in verse 8 of the dangers of not heeding God’s commands to raise our children to know and love him. He writes, “that they should not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.” A quick perusal of Israel’s history makes it clear that many fathers were indeed stubborn and rebellious. They were stubborn and rebellious coming out of Egypt, and they were rebellious in the wilderness.

¹⁹Jason Helopoulos, “Family Worship and Its Benefits,” accessed December 3, 2013, <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/family-worship-and-its-benefits.php>.

Their entire history is a pattern of rebellion followed by God's judgment, graciously leading to repentance and renewal. Asaph is warning his children not to follow in the footsteps of those who did not set their hope in God and proved it by their disobedience and unfaithfulness. Asaph is urging his children to follow his example and not the example of others who did not obey God's commands. In laying out this warning, Asaph models what a godly parent does, namely, teach his children to know and love God.

Psalm 78:1-8 has laid out several important concepts for family worship. It has demonstrated that God intends for parents to tell of his glorious deeds and faithfulness to the next generation so that they will set their hope in him. God wants parents to teach their children from generation to generation in order that our children's children will by God's grace come to know, love and worship him. The next text that will demonstrate God's intentions for parents to raise their children to know, love, and worship him is found in Ephesians 5:22-6:4.

Ephesians 5:21-6:4

Ephesians 5:21-6:4 includes some of the New Testament's clearest exhortations to families, pointing out the specific ways that fathers and mothers are to relate to Christ, one another, and their children. This text also zeroes in on the specific ways that fathers are to lead their children to know and worship God through Christ.

Before looking at Ephesians 5:21-6:4, it would be helpful to look at the immediate context of Ephesians 5, particularly verses 18-20, but also Ephesians 3:14-15. Both of these sections will help to strengthen our understanding of family and how parents are to relate to God, one another, and their children.

Paul writes in Ephesians 3, “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named” (Eph 3:14-15). Paul introduces a prayer for the Ephesian church with verses 14-15 that extends through verse 21. Paul prays because of what the Father has accomplished for us through Christ in chapter 2.²⁰ Christ has torn down the dividing wall between Jews and Gentiles and has made them one (Eph 2:11-22). Paul indicates in verse 3:15 that he can bow before the Father because he is the Father of every family. God is a father and has a family.

William Klein rightly asserts,

Paul uses expansive language to assert that God named every conceivable grouping—human and nonhuman. “Derives its name” refers not merely to assigning a name to each one, but to God’s creative act of calling them into existence and ruling over them. When Paul prays for his readers, he prays to the Lord who is above all orders of beings; all owe their very existence to the Father of every family. God is the cosmic potentate.²¹

Therefore, parents are to relate first to God as Father. All families, especially Christian families, belong to him.

Secondly, it is important when looking at this section of Ephesians not to separate it from 5:18-20. Paul writes,

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Eph 5:18-20)

Paul’s overarching command is for Christians to be filled by the Spirit, or to be driven and controlled by the Spirit. He then lists several ways that Spirit-filled believers are to

²⁰William W. Klein, *Ephesians*, in vol. 12 of *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 96-97.

²¹*Ibid.*, 97.

live in a God-exalting community with one another that is characterized by worship and gratitude for what the Father has done through Christ.

Following verses 18-20 Paul writes, “submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ” (Eph 5:21). Ephesians 5:21 serves as a transition into verses 22-6:4.²² According to Klein, “Grammatically, the participle ‘submitting’ functions as the fifth outcome for those filled by the Spirit. That is, the filling of the Spirit produces all these, and mutual submission,²³ the final effect, results in specific behaviors within the household—precisely what 5:22-6:9 describes.”²⁴ Ephesians 5:21-6:4 can be summarized in this way: Spirit-filled individuals are to relate to one another in God-ordained roles and in Christ-honoring ways. Paul lays out these specifics in the rest of this section of Scripture. It is important to remember that how Christians relate to one another is ultimately out of reverence for Christ. All relationships must be oriented toward Christ.

Husbands and Wives and the Church

Ephesians 5:22-33 deals with the way that husbands and wives are to relate to each other reflecting the mystery of Christ and the church. Paul establishes in verse 23 that “the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body.” Verse 23 is the reason Paul gives which brings clarity to his command in verse

²²See George W. Knight III, *Husbands and Wives as Analogues of Christ and the Church*, in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2006), 167-68.

²³Mutual submission in Eph 5:21 (“submitting to one another”) should not be taken to imply that wives should not submit to their husbands, or churches to Christ. Paul immediately moves from this statement into the ways that Spirit-filled believers are to relate to one another within these God-ordained roles. In an editorial note on Knight’s chapter, Piper and Grudem in *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood* add, “Ephesians 5:21 would be paraphrased, ‘being subject to one another (that is, to some others), in the fear of Christ’” (493).

²⁴Klein, *Ephesians*, 146-47.

22, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.” A. Wood rightly comments, “It should be noted that all Paul says is within the context of a Christian marriage. He is not implying that women are inferior to men or that all women should be subject to all men.”²⁵ Spirit-filled wives, out of reverence for Christ, are to willingly submit themselves to their husbands as the church is to willingly submit herself to Christ. Paul reinforces the husband and wife relationship in verse 24: “Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands” (Eph 5: 24).²⁶ In this text husbands are called upon to be the heads of their homes as Christ is the head of the church. Klein rightly explains, “In calling the husband the ‘the head,’ Paul views him as the leader of the family, though in the verses that follow he radically (for his culture and ours) redefines to what use the husband should put his headship in a marriage, namely, self-sacrificing love.”²⁷

In verse 25 Paul turns to the role and responsibility of Spirit-filled husbands. He writes, “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” The way in which a husband must measure his care, nurture, and love for his wife is the cross of Christ. Paul further explains why Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her in verse 26-27. Christ’s self-sacrifice was to sanctify his bride “having cleansed her by the washing of the water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor . . . that she might be holy without blemish” (Eph 5:26-27). Therefore, one of the main purposes of marriage for a spirit-filled husband is to lead his

²⁵A. Skevington Wood, *Ephesians*, The Expositor’s Bible, vol. 11(Grand Rapids: Zondervan), 75.

²⁶For a full discussion on what submission means and does not mean see *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood* chapters 2-4 and 8.

²⁷Klein, *Ephesians*, 150.

wife and home in such a way that most promotes holiness. Family worship is a helpful means in fulfilling this admonition from Paul.

In verses 28-31 Paul exhorts husbands to love their wives in the same way that they would care for themselves. In verse 32, Paul quotes Gen 2:24 as his linchpin argument when he says, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become flesh.” Because a husband and wife are one flesh in the eyes of God, then the husband must selflessly give of himself for the good of his wife. He must nourish her both physically and spiritually. He must provide and protect her as he would himself. He must do as Christ does for the church (v. 29). How Christ acts towards his bride, the church, a spirit-filled husband must act toward his wife. It will be demonstrated below that this responsibility extends to children. Paul concludes by revealing to the Ephesian church that marriage finds its deepest meaning in the mystery of Christ’s union to his church (v. 32). In a real way Christian marriage should reflect Christ’s love and sacrifice for his Bride.

It should be clear at this point that Paul sees Christ as the centerpiece of a Christian marriage. Spirit-filled husbands and wives are to relate to one another in a way that reflects Christ’s relationship to the church. Next, Paul turns his attention to how a husband and wife’s relationship to Christ impacts the way they are to view bringing up their children.

Parents and Children

Paul shifts his focus in Ephesians 6:1-4 from the relationship of husbands and wives to the relationships of parents to children. Paul begins in verse 1 by commanding the children (τέκνα) to obey (ὑπακούετε) their parents. It would seem that Paul is

addressing children who are clearly old enough to be believers, but not living out from under their parents' authority.²⁸ Klein argues:

Whereas the relationship between husbands and wives is more reciprocal, a clear hierarchy separates the roles of children and parents, and slaves and masters. The phrase "in the Lord" modifies the verb "obey," not "parents." The point is not that Christian children must obey only Christian parents, but rather that Christian children must obey their parents in keeping with their commitment to Christ.²⁹

In other words, children who know Jesus have a responsibility to act out their Christian identity in their homes by obeying their parents. Paul offers his reason in verses 2-3 when he quotes from Exodus 20:12. Children are to obey and to honor their father and mother because God promises that it will go well for them.

Fathers Are Not to Provoke

Verse 4 contains Paul's explicit command for fathers and how they are to relate to their progeny: "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph 6:4). Paul specifically addresses here the role of the father in the home. Paul's command should not be taken to discount the role of mothers in raising their children. Paul has just commanded children to obey their parents (v. 1) and to honor both father and mother (v. 2). Paul is, however, pointing to the special role of Christian fathers in their respective homes.³⁰ Verse 4 contains both a positive and a negative aspect for fathers. Wood argues,

²⁸Paul addresses the letter to the "saints who are at Ephesus" (Eph 1:1) so he must consider at least some children to be old enough to be believers. Also, he commands the children to obey their parents "in the Lord" (Eph 6:1) which must mean that they are positionally in Christ.

²⁹Klein, *Ephesians*, 156. While I agree that the husband and wife relationship is more reciprocal, I do not agree with Klein's conclusion that there is not distinction of roles within the husband and wife relationship.

The child-parent relationship is not one-sided. It is a feature of Paul's treatment of these domestic categories that the stronger have obligations to the weaker. The gospel introduced a fresh element into parental responsibility by insisting that the feelings of the child must be taken into consideration. In a society where the father's authority (*patria potestas*) was absolute, this represented a revolutionary concept.³¹

A spirit-filled father should avoid exasperating or provoking their children. Peter O'Brien offers help as to what his means. He argues,

Now specifically within the family, fathers are urged to avoid those attitudes, words, and actions which would provoke their children to anger (has the 'your' been inserted to remind fathers that the children belong to them?). Effectively, the apostle is ruling out 'excessively severe discipline, unreasonably harsh demands, abuse of authority, arbitrariness, unfairness, constant nagging and condemnation, subjecting a child to humiliation, and all forms of gross insensitivity to a child's needs and sensibilities'. Behind this curbing of a father's authority is the clear recognition that children, while they are expected to obey their parents in the Lord, are persons in their own right who are not to be manipulated, exploited, or crushed.³²

In Paul's instructions a father should avoid doing things in the home that will ultimately be more harmful than helpful. However, Paul knows that parenting is more than simply avoiding the pitfalls. A father must seek to bring his children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Fathers are to Discipline and Instruct

Having warned fathers about provoking their children, Paul now commends them positively at the end of verse 4. Fathers are to "bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Eph 6:4). In Paul's mind, a Christian father provides discipline

³⁰Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans Publishing, 1999), 445.

³¹Wood, *Ephesians*, 81.

³²O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 446.

(παιδεία) or training and instruction (νουθεσία). Klein writes concerning these two terms,

The first denotes instruction or instructive discipline. Paul uses *paideia* in 2 Timothy 3:16 of the “training” that the word of God provides The second term, *nouthesia*, while overlapping the meaning of the first, also means “counsel about avoiding or stopping an improper course of conduct”; “rebuking, admonishing (cf. BDAG, 679; see also 1 Co 10:11; Tit 3:10). Good parents employ discipline that both instructs in the right ways to live and counsels against the harmful ways. Though Paul does not specify the content of such parental “instruction,” at the least it includes the admonitions in this letter.³³

While these two terms provide insight into Paul’s mind concerning how fathers are to bring up their children, the phrase “of the Lord” is central. Fathers are to discipline and instruct their children in a way in which the Lord would approve. This discipline and instruction must be Godward, or toward God’s purposes. O’Brien rightly argues,

This training and admonition which fathers are to give is further described as ‘of the Lord’. The phrase could be understood as a subjective genitive, indicating that behind those who teach and discipline their children stands the Lord himself. Ultimately, the concern of parents is not simply that their sons and daughters will be obedient to their authority, but that through this godly training and admonition their children will come to know and obey the Lord himself. Theologically, this interpretation makes good sense, and it is consistent with the Old Testament reference, ‘the discipline of the LORD’ (Prov. 3:11). But if ‘training’ is to be understood more broadly, then ‘of the Lord’ is probably a genitive of quality, indicating that the training and instruction is in the sphere of the Lord or has him as its reference point. In other words, it is truly Christian instruction.³⁴

This understanding is crucial for parents to have the right goals in raising their children. Even in the least possible interpretation of this text it can still be said that Paul expects Christian parents to be actively involved in disciplining and instructing their children. Christian instruction includes a view of who God is and what He has done for us.

³³Klein, *Ephesians*, 157.

³⁴ O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 446–47.

Deuteronomy 6:1-8 argues that God expects parents to be the primary leaders in their children's spiritual development. Psalm 78:1-8 demonstrates that God expects parents to teach their children God's greatness so that generation after generation will know and worship Him. Ephesians 5:22-6:4 concludes that God expects spirit-filled husbands and wives to model Christ's relationship to the church and to fulfill their special role in bringing up their children with Christian discipline and instruction. We will now discuss the last text for this project, 2 Timothy 3:14-15.

2 Timothy 3:14-15

In 2 Timothy 3:14-15 Paul³⁵ commands to Timothy to continue in the things that he had learned from his childhood. In this text Paul is acknowledging and commending the normal pattern of spiritual development for children of Christian parents. Christian parents are to give a reliable testimony and Christian witness to their children by continually pointing them to a reliable source, namely, the sacred writings.

Before this section of Scripture is looked at in detail, a few remarks concerning the context are in order. In Acts 16:1-3, Timothy is mentioned for the first time. He apparently is from Lystra and is the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. It is most likely that Timothy and his mother and grandmother were converted during Paul's first visit to the area which is mentioned in Acts 13:49-14:25.³⁶

³⁵Some question the Pauline authorship of the Pastorals, but it will be assumed here. For a good overview of the arguments, see George W. Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans; Carlisle, England: Paternoster Press, 1992), 21-51.

³⁶Gordon Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, Understanding the Bible Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1988), 1-2.

Because Timothy was reputable (Acts 16:2), Paul decided to invite him along on his journey.

Paul also considered Timothy trustworthy, therefore he was given several assignments, one to Thessalonica (1 Thess 3:1-10), one to Corinth (1 Cor 4:16-17) and another to Philippi (Phil 2:19-20).³⁷ Paul refers to Timothy several ways in his epistles from “fellow worker” (Rom 16:21, 1Thess 3:2, 1 Cor 16:10, Phil 2:22) to “beloved and faithful son” (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2, 2 Tim 1:2).³⁸ Paul’s love for Timothy and his desire to see his ministry flourish in Ephesus, despite the opposition of false teachers, is no doubt the reason for him penning the two letters that bear his name.

A Heritage of Faith

In 2 Timothy 3:14 Paul writes, “But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you have learned it.” The command here is for Timothy “to continue” (μένε) or to “hold to” or “to remain” in what he has learned and believed. According to Lea and Griffin, “It demands more than merely continuing in orthodoxy. It called for a commitment to live and abide in what Timothy had learned.”³⁹ The reason Timothy continued in what he has learned is given in the second half of verse 14, “knowing from whom you have learned it.” George W. Knight rightly argues, “The encouragement to remain in such teaching is based on Timothy’s knowledge of whom he learned it from.”⁴⁰ Who is Paul referencing here?

³⁷Ibid., 2.

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Thomas D. Lea and Hayne P. Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 233.

⁴⁰Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 442.

Gordon Fee points out,

There are two reasons for Timothy to stay by what he has learned: First, you know those from whom you learned it. This curious plural, changed to the singular in the majority of the later manuscripts, may reflect the plural of 2:2 (“through many witnesses”). More likely it refers both to Paul (vv. 10-11) and to Timothy’s mother and grandmother (1:5), who had taught him from infancy . . . (sic) the holy scriptures. Thus Paul reminds him that what he is to continue in has deep roots in his own past and that he can trust those, his family and closest friend, whose legacy he is to carry on.⁴¹

Lea and Griffin agree:

An incentive for remaining in these truths was the personal impact of his teachers upon him. The reference to the “whom” who had instructed Timothy is a plural pronoun in the Greek. Paul was thinking of the moral impact made on Timothy’s life by his mother Eunice and grandmother Lois (1:5) as well as by Paul himself. Perhaps the term also included a reference to other godly Christian instructors such as some of the “many witnesses” of 2 Tim 2:2.⁴²

Clearly, Paul intends for Timothy to continue in what he has heard and learned from his mother, grandmother, and Paul. Timothy has a heritage of faith that was taught to him as a child. What he was taught has now become cemented belief. Paul has already pointed to this earlier in 2 Timothy 1:5, “I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.” Paul was urging Timothy to continue in his heritage of faith. Timothy had become convinced of the veracity of what he had learned from his mother, grandmother and Paul. For a Christian parent this should be the normal pattern for the spiritual development of their children. Paul does not stop with Timothy’s heritage of faith learned from his family. Paul points out that what Lois and Eunice taught was important because they consistently pointed Timothy to the “sacred writings.”

⁴¹Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*, 278.

⁴²Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 233.

Pointed to the Holy Scriptures

Paul instructs Timothy to continue in the things that he had learned and believed (v. 14) and he continues in verse 15, “and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.” Paul is clear that Timothy has been instructed from childhood with the “sacred writings” or the Old Testament.⁴³ Eunice and Lois have consistently taught Timothy from the Old Testament from an early age. Knight comments,

This verse adds another object of the participle εἰδώς (v. 14), as the conjunctions καί and ὅτι indicate (cf. Ellicott). Timothy also knows that (καὶ ὅτι) he has known (οἶδας) from childhood not only his teachers but also the source of the teaching itself, the “holy scriptures.” βρέφος** is used of both the “unborn child” (Lk. 1:41, 44) and the “infant” (Lk. 2:12, 16; 18:15; Acts 7:19; 1 Pet. 2:2). ἀπὸ βρέφους, used in Greek literature with the meaning “from childhood” (see BAGD s.v. 2; cf. Mk. 9:21), implies that Timothy has known the scriptures from then until now.⁴⁴

To Paul, Timothy’s learning and spiritual development was no accident, but directly tied to the commitment of his mother and grandmother to teach him from a young age. It is the combination of Lois and Eunice’s godly lives and their scriptural instruction that is key. Knute Larson rightly makes that connection when he states,

Paul also wanted Timothy to consider those from whom you learned [truth], and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures. Once again he had Timothy’s mother and grandmother in mind (see 2 Tim. 1:5). Timothy was schooled in the Old Testament writings and had learned the need for forgiveness, the provision of God, and the necessity of faith. He had also been discipled by Paul,

⁴³Knight, *The Pastoral Epistles*, 442.

⁴⁴Ibid., 443.

learning Christ and the church. In each case, Timothy had not only been given knowledge; he had been witness to godly lives.⁴⁵

Timothy's mother and grandmother demonstrated lives of conviction and constantly pointed Timothy to the "sacred writings," and this is to be commended in Paul's eyes. R. C. H Lenski concludes, "Timothy learned these things from his mother and his grandmother and knew who they were; but the main point is that from early childhood these dear persons led him to know sacred letters, the divine source of all spiritual wisdom."⁴⁶

Wise for Salvation through Faith in Christ Jesus

Paul articulates why the sacred writings were essential to Timothy's spiritual heritage and journey when he says that they "are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." In the mind of Paul, all of the Old Testament is a testimony pointing to Christ. Jesus said himself in John 5:39, "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me." In Luke 24:27 Jesus is on the road to Emmaus with two disciples and Luke records, "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." The most important component of Timothy's spiritual upbringing was that his mother and grandmother consistently pointed him to God's revelation, which was ultimately pointing to Christ. Lea and Griffin assert,

The aim of the content of the sacred writings is to relate God's saving purpose in Christ. Timothy's study of the Scriptures had grounded him in that wisdom and

⁴⁵Knute Larson, *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 9 (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 305.

⁴⁶R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937), 838.

enlightenment that leads to faith in Jesus Christ. The Scriptures lead to salvation but only as they point to Christ. The Scriptures themselves do not provide salvation, but they do point to the Savior who can provide it. The phrase “through faith in Jesus Christ” shows how the Scriptures make individuals wise. They enlighten them to the necessity for faith in Jesus Christ.⁴⁷

The sacred writings are not salvation in and of themselves; they point to the salvation that is through faith in Christ.

Paul commands Timothy to continue in these things that he had learned and has firmly believed. The spiritual instruction that Timothy received from Lois and Eunice following the pattern already demonstrated in Deuteronomy 6 and Psalm 78. They consistently pointed him to the Holy Scriptures which in turn pointed him to Christ. Pointing our children to Christ is the main goal of Christian parenting. This is why Paul reminds Timothy of his spiritual heritage and charges him to continue in what he has firmly believed. Timothy has believed on Christ and he is to continue to follow Christ as Lord. Lenski offers this insight for parents, “Children do receive the Word from and on the authority of parents, but intelligent parents always lead their children to rest their faith independently upon the Word and not upon them as parents.”⁴⁸

Conclusion

This essay has sought to lay out four texts that serve as the biblical and theological foundations of family worship. The thesis of this chapter is that God intends for parents to raise their children to know, love and worship Him. Each text that has been examined has added flesh to this thesis. Deuteronomy 6 argues that God expects parents to be the primary leaders in their children’s spiritual development and training. Psalm 78

⁴⁷Lea and Griffin, *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, 234.

⁴⁸Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s*, 837–838.

demonstrates that God expects parents to teach their children of God's greatness so that generation after generation will know and worship Him. Ephesians 5:22-6:4 points out the specific ways that fathers and mothers are to relate to Christ, one another and their children. This chapter also examined in this text specific ways that fathers are to lead their children to know and worship God through Christ. Finally, 2 Timothy 3:14-15 argues that parents are to give a reliable testimony and Christian witness to their children by continually pointing them to a reliable source, namely, the sacred writings.

God expects Christian parents to intentionally bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. God expects parents to be reliable witnesses who point to a reliable source, namely, God's Word. Ultimately, God is worthy to be worshiped with each moment of each day. Family worship, properly understood and practiced, is a means by which parents can carry out their God-given responsibilities. This chapter is an effort to move parents toward that end.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIOLOGICAL STUDIES ON THE FAMILY: WHY LEADING YOUR CHILDREN IN FAMILY WORSHIP MATTERS AND HOW TO DO IT

Introduction

Chapter 2 sought to lay the foundation of parental responsibilities when it comes to raising children to know and love God. God has given parents the primary responsibility of disciplining their children and bringing them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. This chapter builds upon that foundation and establishes that parents have a major impact upon the spiritual development of their children. This chapter has three main sections. The first section examines research that demonstrates how parents are largely ignoring their spiritual responsibilities. The second section establishes why parenting for biblical ends is crucial, and how family worship is a means to those ends. The third section lays out practical helps for parents seeking to start or strengthen family worship in their homes.

Parents Are Not Teaching Their Children to Know and Love God

Chapter 2 of this project demonstrated that God intends for parents to raise their children to know and love him. Not surprisingly, parents who abdicate this responsibility place their children in spiritual harm's way. Research demonstrates how parenting approach dramatically affects children. What parents do or do not do will ultimately influence the thoughts and feelings of their children, especially in the realm of

spirituality. The data presented in this chapter further demonstrates the importance of family worship in the spiritual development of children.

Disengaged Parents

Research shows that Christian parents are not taking seriously their responsibility to teach their children to know and love God even though they have the greatest impact on their children's spiritual development.¹ In 2006, the Barna Group began surveying over 600 participants who described themselves as "Evangelicals" who were born again, and maintained a Christian worldview based on seven criteria.² The purpose of this particular study was to determine the spiritual challenges that parents faced with raising their children. The results indicated that parents were not really concerned with their children's spiritual upbringing. Barna argues,

This was a study exclusively of Christian parents with young children in their household. Given companion surveys showing that such parents often convey dismay over the eroding cultural environment for raising children, and how difficult parenting is these days, we anticipated a broader emphasis upon the challenges related to bringing up spiritually whole and healthy children.³

Barna found that while many Christians valued their faith, they did not feel as though they faced any spiritual challenges in regard raising their children. Barna's study showed that only one out of seven, or 14 percent, indicated that the main spiritual struggle was raising children with a strong faith.⁴

¹The Barna Group. "Americans Not Concerned About Their Spiritual Condition," accessed February 18, 2013, https://www.barna.org/barna-update/faith-spirituality/98-americans-not-concerned-about-their-spiritual-condition#.UusCn_ldXEY.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

It seems that parents are not concerned with raising their children to know and love God because that is not their personal highest priority.⁵ The root of this problem is a worship problem. God must not have any rivals in the lives of parents. Barna states,

In addition to making parenting a 24/7 priority, we found that parents must have an authentic and vibrant faith in order to provide meaningful spiritual guidance to their children. Children rarely embrace spiritual principles and practices that their parents fail to demonstrate in their lifestyle.⁶

Family worship will not become a priority for parents until they themselves see their highest purpose in life as the worship of God. Barna rightly concludes concerning Christian parents, “[They] focus on what they consider to be the most important matters; faith maturity is not one of them.”⁷ As long as parents ignore personal worship of God as the highest priority, family worship will continue to be largely ignored. Only when a parent decides that their personal worship of God is central to their lives can they begin to cultivate that mindset among their children.

Faith Commitments in Parents Have Little Impact on Parenting Outcomes

Research also indicates that parenting approaches are similar for Christian and non-Christian parents.⁸ The Barna group interviewed 707 adult parents in 2004 which included 366 born again Christians.⁹ Barna surveyed these parents to determine what

⁵Timothy Paul Jones, *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples* (Indianapolis: Wesleyan Publishing House), 27-30.

⁶The Barna Group, “Americans Not Concerned about Their Spiritual Condition.”

⁷Ibid.

⁸The Barna Group, “Parents Describe How They Raise Their Children,” accessed February 18, 2013, <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/184-parents-describe-how-they-raise-their-children?q=parenting>.

⁹Ibid.

qualities they believed would make a parent successful. He also asked what parents believed were the most desirable outcomes that they wanted to facilitate in their children.¹⁰ According to his research, the attributes of successful parents included patience (36 percent), demonstrating love (32 percent), and enforcing discipline and being understanding both receiving 22 percent respectively.¹¹ These responses were the basically the same for Christian and non-Christian parents.

Barna also cites the top rated goal of parents was providing their children with a good education at 39 percent. The second rated outcome was helping the child feel loved (24 percent). Only 22 percent indicated that helping their children have a meaningful relationship with Jesus.¹² LifeWay Research corroborates these findings. LifeWay surveyed 1,200 adults with children at home under 18 and found,

While the vast majority (83 percent) believes parents should be most responsible for a child's spiritual development, only 35 percent say their religious faith is one of the most important influences on their parenting, according to the study. This leaves nearly half (48 percent) who acknowledge their role in their child's spiritual development, but fail to consider their own religious faith among the most important influences on their parenting.¹³

Barna similarly concludes,

You might expect that parents who are born again would take a different approach to raising their children than did parents who have not committed their life to Christ – but that was rarely the case For instance, we found that the qualities born again parents say an effective parent must possess, the outcomes they hope to facilitate in the lives of their children, and the media monitoring process in the

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³LifeWay Research, "LifeWay Research Looks at Role of Faith in Parenting," accessed October 20, 2014, <http://www.lifewayresearch.com/2009/03/24/lifeway-research-looks-at-role-of-faith-in-parenting>.

household was indistinguishable from the approach taken by parents who are not born again.¹⁴

Barna goes on to say:

Only three out of ten born again parents included the salvation of their child in the list of critical emphases Parents cannot force or ensure that their kids become followers of Christ. But for that emphasis to not be on the radar screen of most Christian parents is a significant reason why most Americans never embrace Jesus Christ as their savior.¹⁵

Parents should care about the education that their children receive. However, it seems wholly inconsistent for Christian parents to not be concerned about the spiritual education of their children. Parents cannot raise children to know and love God unless they realize that this responsibility rests upon them. Parents must learn and embrace what the Bible says about their responsibilities to raise their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

These two studies indicate that parents, even Christian parents, are generally disengaged from their biblical responsibilities to teach their children to know and love God. They also indicate that Christian parents have the same agenda in raising their children as non-Christians. There must be a clear difference in how Christian parents view raising their children compared to non-Christians. Christian parents must aim for biblical ends in raising their children, namely, raising them to know and love God. If parents do not intend on worshiping and serving God on a daily basis then they will never see a need to teach their children to worship and serve him. Parents who are captured by God's glory and find their joy in him above all things must seek to direct their child's

¹⁴ The Barna Group, "Parents Describe How They Raise Their Children."

¹⁵Ibid. While I agree that the salvation of their child must be on a parent's radar screen, I do not necessarily agree with Barna's conclusion. Just because a child's salvation is not at the top of a parents' "critical emphases" does not provide the main reason that most Americans never embrace Jesus Christ as their savior. That answer is likely more complex than the scope of this one piece of research.

affections accordingly. Parents must see their responsibility toward their children biblically.

Parenting for Biblical Ends through Family Worship

God does not leave parents in a lurch when it comes to his designs for families. Chapter 2 of this project looked at four biblical texts that dealt directly with what God has required of parents in regards to raising their children. Parents must take this responsibility serious and see the importance of raising their children to know and love God. Research shows that parenting approach has a marked effect on how children grow and learn. One Barna study argues that parenting approach can determine whether children become devoted Christians or not.¹⁶

In 2007, the Barna group released a new study on the practices of families, particularly the intentions with which parents seek to raise their children. Barna was seeking in this research to identify young adults who met five key standards. Those standards were,

1. Knowing, loving and serving God was identified as their top priority in life.
2. They described their faith in God as being of the highest importance
3. Each of these young adults possessed a “biblical worldview,” based on their responses to a series of questions about their view of life. In essence, they contend that absolute moral truth exists; such truth is defined in the Bible; God is the all-knowing and all-powerful creator and ruler of the universe; faith in Jesus Christ is the only means to salvation; Satan is a real being; Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; and all of the principles taught in the Bible are true and accurate.
4. They believe that their main purpose in life is love God with all their heart, mind and strength

¹⁶The Barna Group. “Research Shows Parenting Approach Determines Whether Children Become Devoted Christians,” accessed February 18, 2013, <http://www.barna.org/family-kids-articles/106-research-shows-parenting-approach-determines-whether-children-become-devoted-christians>.

5. They are currently active in a vibrant community of faith, as demonstrated by their consistent engagement in worship, prayer, Bible study and spiritual accountability.¹⁷

Barna discovered that less than 10 percent of young adults in the U.S. meet these standards.¹⁸ This stat alone demonstrates the need for parents to take seriously their responsibilities to raise their children to know and love God.

Barna did discover that among all of those surveyed three dominant parenting approaches emerged. Barna labels the most predominant form of parenting as Parenting by Default.¹⁹ The second approach is Trial-and-Error Parenting, followed by the least common approach, Revolutionary Parenting.²⁰

Barna describes Parenting by Default as the “path of least resistance.” He argues, “In this approach, parents do whatever comes naturally to the parent, as influenced by cultural norms and traditions. The objective is to keep everyone—parent, child, and others—as happy as possible, without having the process of parenting dominate other important or prioritized aspects of the parent’s life.”²¹ This approach seems wholly inadequate based upon the conclusions drawn in chapter two of this project. Parents are to aim for biblical ends in parenting.

Barna rightly names Trial-and-Error Parenting. He states,

This approach is based on the notion that every parent is an amateur at raising children, there are no absolute guidelines to follow, and the best that parents can do is to experiment, observe outcomes, and improve based upon their successes and

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

failures in child rearing. In this incremental approach, the goals of parenting are to continually improve and to perform better than most parents.²²

This approach is also untenable due to the fact that the Bible does give clear guidelines to follow. Parents are not to gauge their success by seeking to simply do better than most parents. Parents are to look to God's Word for their directions and are to measure their successes by its standards alone. It would be far better to fail in the world's standards of parenting while seeking to fulfill God's purposes than to succeed by the world's standards and fail by God's.

According to Barna the third approach is Revolutionary Parenting which is wholly different. It is also the least common approach among those that were surveyed.²³

Barna states,

Parenting by default and trial-and-error parenting are both approaches that enable parents to raise their children without the effort of defining their life Revolutionary parenting, which is based on one's faith in God, makes parenting a life priority. Those who engage in revolutionary parenting define success as intentionally facilitating faith-based transformation in the lives of their children, rather than simply accepting the aging and survival of the child as a satisfactory result.²⁴

Parenting with biblical ends in mind is indeed revolutionary in light of these findings.

Parents who take God at his Word must see that their responsibility is more than simply going with the flow or trial-and-error. Parents must seek to raise their children to know and love God. They must accept their role as the primary disciplers of their children.

This research confirms that what is crucial for parents is how they view the world around them. For parents who believe that God has spoken to us in his Word, it

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

seems clear that they will take a radically different approach to parenting than those who do not. Christian parents who believe that their primary purpose in raising children is to teach them the greatness and glory of God will parent with different outcomes in mind. It is clear that parents who do not aim at anything will hit their mark. Biblically, parents must aim at raising their children to know and love God above all else. It should be the outflow of parents loving God with all their heart, mind, soul and strength.

Parents Underestimate Their Influence

Another factor that impacts how parents go about raising their children is how parents see their own influence. Many parents do not realize the influence and impact they have on their children. For this reason, many end up squandering the time they are given with their children. Much of the research already discussed has indicated that parents underutilize their influence. Research compiled by Steve Wright demonstrates, contrary to this sentiment, that children see their parents as the biggest influence in their lives. Wright gathers studies from eight secular sources and argues,

Today we have unparalleled access to information and research about parenting, and it shouts so loudly that it cannot be ignored . . . These studies obviously contradict cultural misconceptions that peers and media are the primary driving force for young people. Parents have that distinction. Josh McDowell sums it up perfectly: “Parents carry more weight—for good or bad—than they give themselves credit for.”²⁵

It should not come as a surprise that children listen to their parents. God designed the family to function with children listening and learning from their parents. Wright argues,

Why are parents commanded over and over again to talk to their children about spiritual things? It’s because children listen to their parents—God wrote this on their

²⁵Steve Wright with Chris Graves, *Apparent Privilege: That the Next Generation Might Know* (Wake Forest: InQuest, 2008), 18-21. Wright and Graves quote Josh McDowell, *The Last Christian Generation* (Holiday, FL: Green Key Books, 2006), 304.

hearts. If God knew that we had no influence on our kids, the Bible would have no reason to tell us parents to spend time teaching our children.²⁶

It has already been demonstrated in chapter 2 that God's Word explicitly commands parents to teach their children of God's greatness and to raise them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. God commands it because God knows the influence parents are to hold over their children. Once parents realize that God has placed them in a place of influence over their children for the purpose of teaching them the greatness of God, they should embrace their responsibility with joy. God did not trust any parent's child with another parent; God gave them to each family individually as a gift and a treasure with precise instructions on raising them.

Having examined research dealing with the impact of parents on their children's spiritual development and having discussed how parents have the greatest influence over their children, attention will now be given to practical helps in leading children in family worship.

The Benefits of Leading Children in Family Worship

Family worship has been defined for this project as the regular and intentional gathering of a family for the purpose of moving Godward together. Family worship is more than a definition or a theory; it must be put into practice. This section lays out practical helps for parents in implementing family worship, including strategies, tools and resources that parents need to either strengthen or begin leading their children in family worship. Family worship is a tool that parents are encouraged to use in order to help them fulfill their responsibility to raise their children to know and love God.

²⁶Wright and Graces, *Apparent Privilege*, 21.

Many parents already know that it is their duty and responsibility to raise their children to know and love God.²⁷ In 2003, Barna conducted a study and argued, “Parents believe that they are primarily responsible for the spiritual development of their children, but few parents spend time during a typical week interacting with their children on spiritual matters.”²⁸ What this indicates is that parents need help in carrying out what they many know to be their responsibility. Many know they are failing but do not know what to do. Helping establish family worship in the home should go a long way in addressing this issue. Family worship, properly understood and implemented, will be an invaluable tool that parents can use to carry out their responsibilities of raising their children to know and love God.

The Blessings of Family Worship

Often it is not enough to merely tell people of their duties and obligations when it comes to family worship. Family worship must be commended in a way that shows its great joys and benefits. Above all family worship must be seen as a blessing to be had and not a duty to be discharged. There are many blessings that come with obeying God’s commands, but here only a few will be mentioned.

Family worship brings glory to God. According to “A Simple Guide to Family Worship” made available by The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Alabama, “The ultimate goal of family worship is the glory of God. God is most

²⁷The Barna Group. “Parents Accept Responsibility for Their Child’s Spiritual Development But Struggle With Effectiveness,” accessed February 1, 2014, <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/5-barna-update/120-parents-accept-responsibility-for-their-childs-spiritual-development-but-struggle-with-effectiveness>.

²⁸Ibid.

glorified when his people value him above all other things.”²⁹ Worship is why people were created; therefore, worship is why families were created. Donald Whitney adds, “The worthiness of God to receive your family’s worship each day is reason enough to start practicing family worship today.”³⁰

Family worship promotes a clear conscious. There is a great blessing in the peace that comes through knowing that one is obeying Christ to the best of his or her ability by the grace he has given. Regularly practicing family worship promotes a clear conscious. J. C. Ryle argues,

Fathers and mothers, I charge you solemnly before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, take every pains to train your children in the way they should go. I charge you not merely for the sake of your children's souls; I charge you for the sake of your own future comfort and peace. Truly it is your interest so to do. Truly your own happiness in great measure depends on it.³¹

If parents are genuinely concerned about their conscious and future comfort then they must take seriously God’s commands about raising their children.

Family worship, by God’s grace, impacts generations. God reveals himself in the Old Testament as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is a God who keeps his promises. God says to Moses in Exodus, “God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.’ This is my name forever, and thus I am

²⁹The Church at Brook Hills, Birmingham AL, “A Simple Guide to Family Worship,” accessed February 28, 2014, http://www.brookhills.org/files/1780/guide_to_family_worship_2014.pdf.

³⁰Donald S. Whitney, *Family Worship: In the Bible, in History, & in Your Home* (Shepherdsville, KY: The Center for Biblical Spirituality, 2006), 23.

³¹J. C. Ryle, *The Duties of Parents* (Conrad, MT: Triangle Press, 1993), 45.

to be remembered throughout all generations” (Exod 3:15). If parents knew what they did today would impact the spiritual heritage of their grandchildren, would that not change their thoughts and feelings regarding family worship? It should because it does. Parents should not only want to worship and serve the Lord themselves; they should teach their children to as well so that they will be ready and prepared to teach their children.

Just like any other movement or cultural shift, the change must begin at a certain point in time. For a shift to take place that will alter the trajectory of generations to come it will take parents making a decision to begin family worship so that the next generation of their family, their children and grandchildren, will worship the God of their fathers. Mark Driscoll argues,

Christians worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They are a father, son, and grandson. In the same way, my father’s name is Joseph, my name is Mark, and my sons’ names are Zachariah, Calvin, and Gideon. We are all praying that when my grandson is born to Zac one day (for example), he will worship the God of Joseph, Mark, and Zac. As a Christian father, we should long to see our children worship the same God we do. To pursue that goal, we must worship that God first.³²

Family worship helps fulfill the Great Commission. Another blessing of family worship is that it will help parents intentionally take part in the Great Commission. Jesus commands his people in Matthew 28, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of

³²Mark Driscoll, *Pastor Dad: Scriptural Insights on Fatherhood*, accessed February 22, 2013, http://theresurgence.com/files/2011/03/02/reliit_ebook_pastordad.pdf, 7.

the age” (Matt 28:18-20). Children are not born Christians. They must be evangelized. They must be taught the gospel. They must see their need of Jesus and come to him in faith. If parents will not make disciples of their children, then most likely, they will not make disciples of others. God has placed children under the care of parents so that they can start fulfilling the Great Commission in their homes. By doing so, believers will be teaching their children, as they come to know Jesus as Lord, the importance of reaching their friends and family with the gospel.

Family worship is meant to be a joy and a blessing for Christian homes. It will help our children realize that God is worthy to be praised each day. It will promote a clear conscience for parents who know that they are called to be the primary disciplers of their children. It will also, by God’s grace, steer the trajectory of your family for generations. It will also allow parents to take part intentionally in the Great Commission.

Practical Helps in Implementing Family Worship

As parents begin with the prospect of implementing family worship they must remember several practical things and avoid several pitfalls. First, family worship is about intentionally gathering one’s family to move toward God together. That is what family worship is about: worship.³³ It is about demonstrating to one’s family that God is the most important person in the life of the family. The main aim should be to worship and make much of God. One’s aim should be to awaken wonder and awe in the heart of

³³See James M. Hamilton, Jr., *That the Coming Generation Might Praise the Lord: Family Discipleship in the Old Testament*, in *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*, ed. Randy Stinson and Timothy Paul Jones (Grand Rapids: Kregal Academic & Professional, 2011), 33-44.

children as they think about who God is and what he has done. These things are the essence of worship.

Second, parents must prepare for family worship, praying for one's children and for wisdom in leading them.³⁴ Parents should seek the Lord, and in turn, lead their children to seek Him. Also, parents can prepare by having what they need for family worship in place and ready, whether that is Bibles, hymnals, or other items.

Third, one must aim for regularity in family worship.³⁵ As with any other discipline or practice, consistency is the key. No family will be able to practice family worship every day, but they should seek to do it regularly and intentionally, picking a time and a place and sticking with it. Missing worship will occasionally happen. Then parents must diligently resume worship as soon as possible.

Fourth, one must avoid unrealistic ideals. Joel Beeke argues that parents should avoid, "an idealistic approach that is beyond the reach of even the most God-fearing home, and a minimalist approach that abandons daily family worship because the ideal seems so out of reach."³⁶ In other words, parents should not over think or under achieve with family worship, setting realistic goals and making the most of the time with their children.

Fifth, parents must be creative and their family's gifts as well as their own to enhance worship. Parents can use crafts, colors, and even service projects as their

³⁴Joel Beeke, *Family Worship* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2002), 12.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 14.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 12.

children get older. Most people learn in a variety of ways; therefore, one should not be afraid to experiment as to which learning methods are best for their children.

Sixth, parents should use the Christian calendar and holidays to reinforce family worship and build traditions into their homes, paying special attention to major Christian holidays like Advent and Lent, Christmas and Easter. One of the benefits of consistent family worship is that it will be what your children remember around each of these holidays as they begin their own families.

Finally, one must be brief.³⁷ Family worship need not be tedious or overly long and drawn out. If it is a regular practice in the home then parents will have hundreds, if not thousands, of opportunities to gather together. One need not cover the entirety of scripture during each family gathering. Having covered some practical helps, attention will now be given to the key ingredients of family worship.

Read, Pray, Sing

Family worship need not be difficult for parents. It should consist primarily of three parts: read, pray, sing. Family worship could also include scripture memory, devotional resources, and a catechism,³⁸ but these three are primary.

Read the Bible. Jesus says, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away (Matt 24:35). God’s Word is central in the worship of His people. Tony Krummer asserts, “Worship begins when *God speaks to us through his Word*

³⁷Ibid., 14.

³⁸See John Piper, *A Baptist Catechism*, accessed February 2, 2013, http://cdn.desiringgod.org/pdf/blog/A_Baptist_Catechism-new.pdf.

(emphasis his). So, family devotions should include a time of reading the Bible.³⁹ Read chapter by chapter through books and for children especially read through narratives. Whitney explains, “Read enthusiastically and interpretively. Explain words the children may not understand. Clarify the meaning of key verses. To improve their understanding, ask the children to explain a particular verse or phrase to you.”⁴⁰

Pray as a Family. When families read the Bible together they hear from God through his Word. When families pray together they are acknowledging Him as Provider and Protector. Family prayers should include praises and petitions. If possible pray about something that the passage just read suggested. One should keep a prayer list for their family and gather prayer requests. Families should also pray through the Psalms or memorize the Lord’s Prayer together, allowing family prayers to develop and expand by encouraging children and family members to participate.

Sing Together. The Bible is filled with exhortations to praise the Lord and especially to sing unto Him. The book of Psalms mentions singing over 350 times alone. Psalm 47 exclaims, “Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!” (Ps 47:6). Psalm 33 commands, “Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright” (Ps 33:1). Parents need not be musicians. God desires a joyful heart more than a professional singer who does not delight in Him. Parents should find some old hymnals at their church or use online resources and recordings. If a family

³⁹Tony Kummer, *The Beginners Family Worship Handbook*, accessed February 2, 2013, <http://ministry-to-children.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/family-worship-guidebook.pdf>.

⁴⁰Whitney, *Family Worship*, 17.

member can play an instrument then allow them to lead. One should choose songs that help teach children about the greatness of God.

Conclusion

Family worship is a helpful tool for parents who wish to take their responsibility of raising their children to know and love God seriously. It is not the church's job or a pastor's job to raise other people's children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. That duty falls squarely on parents. What is crucial for a parent is how they view God and his revealed Word. If God is the center of their lives and he is worthy of worship moment by moment and day by day, then that will dramatically impact how they raise their children. Family worship is the outgrowth of personal worship. It is an attempt to fulfill our parental responsibility to raise our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. In conclusion, Whitney offers several motivations that are worth considering for parents as they consider family worship:

- What better way to evangelize your children daily?
- What better way to provide a regular time for your children to learn the things of God from you?
- What better way to provide your children with an ongoing opportunity to ask about the things of God in a comfortable context for such questions?
- What better way for you to transmit your core beliefs to your children?
- What better way for your children to see the ongoing spiritual example of their parents?
- What better way to provide workable, reproducible examples to your children of how to have a distinctively Christian home when they start a home of their own?
- What better way for getting your family together on a daily basis?
- Isn't this what you really *want* to do? (emphasis his)⁴¹

⁴¹Ibid., 23.

It would be difficult to think of a better way to lead children to know the greatness of God than that which Christians have practiced for centuries. The goal is for our children to know and love God. As Asaph reminds us, “that the next generation might know” (Ps 78:6).

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DETAILS AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter provides the details of how the project was carried out at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church in Glen Allen, Virginia. The project lasted a total of fifteen weeks and was made up of several components: a preparation phase, pre-project surveys, an eight-week teaching series on family worship, post-project surveys, teaching series evaluations, and data compilation. The final component was a separate evaluation form completed by the pastoral staff of Mt. Vernon Baptist Church. In what follows, I describe each component.

The Preparation Phase

The preparation phase of the project lasted four weeks. This phase involved the development of the teaching series material as well as participant recruitment. Once the teaching materials were completed and the participants (focus-group) were enrolled, the teaching series began. The eight-week class that was developed during this phase consisted of biblical, theological, and sociological material suitable to the topic of family worship. A student handout was also developed for each of the eight weeks, which included the outline for the class as well as homework for the week. The weekly homework assignments were designed to augment the teaching for the week and to encourage the development of family worship practice.

The preparation phase also included the finalization of the project surveys that were to be administered at the beginning and end of the family worship series. This tool was designed to measure the knowledge and practice of family worship among the focus group before and after the teaching series. Participant teaching series and pastoral staff evaluation forms were also developed. The participant's teaching series evaluation form was designed to measure the overall effectiveness of the teaching series while the pastoral staff evaluation was developed to measure the organization, clarity, and content of the teaching series. The results of the pre- and post-project surveys, as well as the evaluations, are discussed in chapter 5.

The Family Worship Teaching Series

This project had three main goals. The first goal was to evaluate the knowledge and practice of family worship among the focus group. The second goal of the project was to develop a teaching series for the purpose of equipping parents to lead family worship. The third goal was to teach the eight-week series on the biblical principles of family worship. Survey and evaluations were given in order to measure the success of these goals. The main component of this fifteen-week project was the eight-week family worship class. This class was the primary means of accomplishing the goals of the project and would not have existed without the recruitment of participants.

Building a Focus Group

The purpose of this project was to teach the biblical principles of family worship to families with children between the ages of 4 and 12. In order to recruit participants to the focus group, several steps were taken. The family worship class was marketed in two of the church's paper publications—the Sunday bulletin and Sunday

school newsletter—and on the church website. The class was scheduled to meet in our largest young couples Sunday school class. Other couples classes that fell into the general age ranges were also contacted and invited. The stated goal was to recruit 15 families to participate. This goal was exceeded as over 25 families participated in the teaching series.

Evaluating the Practice of Family Worship

The family worship class began on Sunday, April 27, 2014, during Mt. Vernon's Sunday school hour. The class included married couples with children in the desired age ranges. A few single parents participated along with 2 or 3 single adults without children.¹ The class began with an introduction and welcome before the pre-project survey was administered. The survey was designed to measure the knowledge and practice of family worship among the focus group.

Lesson 1

After the pre-project surveys were administered, an introduction to family worship handout was given to the focus group. This introduction covered the goals for the teaching series, several pieces of research into the topic of parenting and spiritual development of children, as well as a brief overview of the main biblical texts dealing with family worship. Special care was given to those participating in the class without children and those from single-parent homes. An explanation of how learning about how family worship is beneficial to all Christians was part of this special care. The class

¹While this project focused on parents with small children, several adults without children and others with older children requested to participate in the class. After a discussion with other leaders, it was decided that they could benefit from the study and should be allowed to participate.

ended with a definition of family worship and an overview of the homework for the week. The homework included a copy of Tony Krummer's free booklet, "The Beginner's Family Worship Handbook."² The participants were encouraged to read the handbook and to start small by having a family meeting to discuss its content.

Lesson 2

The second lesson was entitled "Theological Foundations of Family Worship." This lesson began by distributing the student handout and by discussing God as a triune family. Attention was given to the roles and relationship of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. One of the main thrusts of the teaching was that human families are to be a reflection of our Trinitarian God. Next, the lesson walked through the formation of the family in Genesis 1-2 and the covenantal relationships God had with families. This lesson also covered five of the Ten Commandments, each of which deals directly with protecting families. The Abrahamic Covenant in Genesis 17 and Deuteronomy 6 was discussed briefly in order to make the point that God intends for families to be the normal school of faith development for children. This assertion was buttressed with research that strongly indicates that parents dramatically underestimate the influence they have on their children's lives.

At the end of the lesson, homework was assigned that included reading "A Simple Guide to Family Worship,"³ a pamphlet made available by The Church at Brook

²Tony Kummer, *The Beginners Family Worship Handbook*, accessed February 2, 2013, <http://ministry-to-children.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/family-worship-guidebook.pdf>.

³The Church at Brook Hills, "A Simple Guide to Family Worship," accessed February 2, 2013, <http://www.radicalexperiment.org/contribute/SimpleGuideToFamilyWorship.pdf>.

Hills in Birmingham, Alabama. The homework included a challenge to families, particularly husbands and wives, to begin praying for and with each other.

In retrospect, this lesson was the most theologically difficult of all the lessons. The section dealing with the roles and relationships within the Trinity took time to develop and explain. According to the series evaluations, many found it to be helpful in clarifying their thoughts about God and their families.

Lesson 3

Lesson 3 marked the beginning of the careful study of biblical texts dealing directly with the development of family worship. The first two lessons served as an introduction to thinking about family worship and giving a theological framework for families and faith development. Lesson 3 was titled “Family Worship in the Old Testament.” The class began with prayer and by distributing the week’s student handout. The main text for this week was Deuteronomy 6:1-8. The lesson began by reviewing the definition of family worship that was adopted for this project. Deuteronomy 6 was covered in detail and careful attention was given to the theological weight of verse 1. Other texts were used to help flesh out the unity and uniqueness of Israel’s one Lord.

The next objective of this lesson was to discuss at length the “Great Commandment” of Deuteronomy 6:5 where the Israelites were commanded individually to love God. Finally, this lesson moved on to Moses’ command to parents to teach their children to know and love God. Several more Old and New Testaments texts commanding Christians to love God were also reviewed.

This class concluded with the week’s homework assignment and the distribution of another family worship resource. The homework focused on the

importance of planning ahead in family worship. Planning ahead would include utilizing a Christian calendar and emphasizing Christian holidays. It would also include taking into account vacations and other trips away from home. The homework also discussed guarding against unrealistic expectations in our homes. The resource for this was a section of Joel Beeke's book, *Family Worship*, which was entitled "Objections to Family Worship."⁴

Lesson 4

Lesson 4 was entitled "Family Worship in the Old Testament: Part 2." This lesson began with prayer and by passing out the student handout. The first section of this lesson was a journey through the covenants made with the Patriarchs. The main point of this lesson was that God is a God of covenants, he relates to his people on the basis of covenants and families are also built upon covenants. The second section of this lesson dealt with godly parents in the Old Testament who sought to leave a legacy for the next generation by training their own children to know and love God. The texts used included Joshua 24:14-15 and Psalm 71.

This lesson concluded with this week's homework assignment and the distribution of another resource. The homework challenged families to begin reading the Bible and praying together each day. The resource for the week was an online article entitled "Family Worship 101," by William Boekestein.⁵

⁴Joel Beeke, *Family Worship* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books), 2002. It is available online at <http://www.ntslibrary.com/PDF%20Books/FamilyWorship.pdf>.

⁵William Boekestein, "Family Worship 101," accessed August 9, 2014, <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/family-worship-101/>.

Lesson 5

Lesson 5 was entitled “Family Worship in the Old Testament: Part 3.” This lesson began with prayer and the distribution of the student handout. The main text for this lesson was Psalm 78:1-8 and selected sections of Proverbs. Psalm 78 was discussed as an echo of Deuteronomy 6. Special attention was given to the Psalms generational cascade. Asaph’s desire in Psalm 78 was for generation after generation to know and praise the works of God among his people. Verse 8 also contained a warning to not be like many of Israel’s forefathers who were stubborn and did not love and know the Lord.

The second half of this lesson dealt with several selections from the book of Proverbs. The main idea was that Solomon was taught to know and love God from his father and his desire was to raise his children to do the same. In Proverbs Solomon tells his children repeatedly to listen to the words of their father and to heed the instructions of their mother and to pursue wisdom with all of their hearts.

This lesson was closed with a brief discussion of how to utilize a catechism in family worship and an overview of the homework for the week. The resource that was distributed was John Piper’s “A Baptist Catechism.”⁶ The participants were encouraged to familiarize themselves with its introduction and to incorporate it into their ongoing family worship times.

Lesson 6

Lesson 6 was entitled “Family Worship in the New Testament: Part 1.” The lesson began with prayer and distribution of this week’s student handout. This week

⁶John Piper, “A Baptist Catechism,” accessed August 9, 2014, Available http://cdn.desiringgod.org/pdf/blog/A_Baptist_Catechism-new.pdf.

marked the end of looking at the Old Testament and began the look toward the New Testament. The main text for this week was Ephesians 5:15-6:4. This lesson focused on Paul's command to Christians to be filled with the Spirit and for them to relate to one another in Spirit-filled roles and relationships. Special care was given to Paul's instructions to husbands and wives and their relationship toward their children. The homework for this week included tips for utilizing a catechism as well as how to accommodate biblical stories so that a child could understand them.

Lesson 7

Lesson 7 was entitled "Family Worship in the New Testament: Part 2." This lesson began with prayer and by distributing this week's student handout. The main text for this week was 2 Timothy 3:14-15. The main point of this lesson was that Paul was commending in these verses what he considered to be the normal pattern of the spiritual development of children. Timothy had learned of Christ from his family, specifically his mother and grandmother, who had given reliable testimony of the Lord and consistently pointed him to a reliable source, namely, the sacred writings. Parents were encouraged, in spite of their own shortcomings, to demonstrate the gospel to their children by pointing them to the Scriptures because they are ultimately about Christ and his work of salvation.

Lesson 8

Lesson 8 was entitled "Practically Implementing Family Worship." The class began with prayer and the distribution of the week's student handout. This week was meant to encourage families as they were beginning the journey of family worship, to give them practical helps and tips. The first section covered several of the blessings of family worship. The next section covered items that should be remembered in regards to

family worship and listed several goals to aim for in family worship. The final section of this lesson covered the three main components of family worship—reading, praying, and singing. Each of these was covered in detail. After a demonstration of what it looked like to read, pray, and sing as a family, the lesson closed with a question and answer time and prayer.

Post-Class Surveys and Evaluations

Upon the completion of the class, a post-series survey was administered to the participants. This survey was identical to the survey given at the beginning of the teaching series. The data from the two surveys was compiled and analyzed in order to measure whether the knowledge and practice of family worship increased or remained the same. This was done for the purpose of reaching the first goal of this project.

After the post-series survey was finished, the teaching series evaluation was administered. This evaluation was used to measure whether the teaching series material was adequate for communicating the biblical principles of family worship. It also measured the overall clarity of the content as well as the material's organizational strength. The teaching series evaluation included open-ended questions that allowed the participants to speak to what they felt were the strongest and weakest aspects of the curriculum. Additional questions asked about the most helpful and least helpful as well as the most enjoyable and least enjoyable parts of the material. This evaluation tool was used to determine if the second and third goals of this project were reached.

The pastoral staff at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church used a final form to evaluate each of the eight lessons of the teaching series. Each lesson was evaluated for content,

organization, sufficiency, and clarity. This evaluation tool was used to determine if the third goal of the project was met.

Conclusion

The project was conducted over a period of fifteen weeks, and the curriculum was developed around the biblical and theological foundations of family worship. The focus group was recruited and surveyed before and after the teaching series, the teaching series evaluation was administered to the focus group and to the pastoral staff members of Mt. Vernon Baptist Church and the data was compiled in order to evaluate the goals of the project. The results of these surveys and evaluations are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5
EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to evaluate the different aspects and overall effectiveness of the project, examining the purpose and three stated goals of the project. Each of these goals incorporated a means of measurement, including pre- and post-surveys and evaluations. The data provided by these instruments is provided as support for the goals of the project being reached. The projects strengths and weaknesses are examined as well as what I would have done differently. Finally, this chapter provides an opportunity for theological and personal reflections on the overall project.

Evaluation of the Project's Purpose and Goals

The purpose of this project was to teach the biblical principles of family worship to parents with young children ages 4 to 12 at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church in Glen Allen, Virginia. This project had three main goals. The first goal was to evaluate the current knowledge and practice of family worship among the focus group. The second goal was to develop a teaching series for the purpose of equipping parents to lead their children in a time of family worship. The third and final goal was to teach a series on biblical principles of family worship to the participants. I examine each of these items below.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of the project was to teach biblical principles of family worship to parents with children ages four to twelve. The idea behind this purpose was to address the current condition in the church regarding parents being the primary disciplers of their children. This condition is that little to no intentional equipping of parents is being done. This project was developed to help address this need, especially in homes of younger children. The desire was to equip parents who already had young children in their homes so that they would begin to lead family worship and teach their own children to know and love God.

In order to accomplish the purpose of the project, a focus group was recruited. Chapter 4 of this project detailed how this focus group was gathered. Among the 47 participants in the focus group (a little over twenty couples), 38 indicated that they had children that were between 4 and 12. The goal was to recruit 15 families with children in this range to participate in the project. This participation goal was met. The other participants either did not have children or had children that fell outside the desired age range.

The main thrust of the project was to teach biblical principles of family worship. Research data indicates that the participants felt as though the purpose of the project was met. Respondents to the “Teaching Series Evaluation” answered the statement “The teaching series achieved its purpose of teaching the biblical principles of family worship” with 74 percent “strongly agreeing” and 26 percent “agreeing.”¹

¹The data presented from this point onward can be found in Appendices 2-4, pp. 87-96.

This was measured using a six-point Likert scale. The three goals that were set were designed to move the project toward accomplishing its purpose. In what follows, I evaluate each of these goals in turn.

Goal 1

The first goal of the project was to evaluate the knowledge and practice of family worship in the focus group. A pre-project survey was administered to measure the participants' knowledge and practice of several aspects of family devotional life. While several survey items dealt with the participants' knowledge of family worship, only two are necessary for this section.

Knowledge of family worship. Research indicated at the beginning of the class that many people had an idea of what family worship looked like. A previous study in this area had been conducted a couple of months earlier and most likely influenced the result. Sixty-eight percent of the focus group indicated that they “somewhat agreed” or “agreed” with the statement “I have a clear understanding of what family worship is.” The data showed that only 8 percent either “somewhat disagreed” or “disagreed” with that same statement. The pre-project data pointed out that 25 percent of the participants disagreed in some way with the statement “I have a clear idea how to lead family worship.” Forty-five percent “somewhat agreed” with that statement. The post-project research found that only 3 percent of the focus group “somewhat disagreed” with that statement with zero participants “strongly disagreeing” or “disagreeing.” Sixty-seven percent either “agreed” or “strongly agreed.”

Reading, praying, singing. Several survey items addressed the participants' practice of family worship. The main components covered here are those that dealt with reading, praying, and singing, the three that were emphasized in the teaching series. Data from the pre-project survey indicated that 19 percent of the participants answered "never" to the statement "Our family reads Scripture together in our home." Another 21 percent answered "occasionally" to the same question. Surprisingly, 26 percent indicated that they read the Bible a couple times a week together, and 22 percent indicated that they read it three or more times a week. These findings were encouraging. The post-project survey showed improvements, with 65 percent indicating that they read the Scriptures "most days/almost daily." No participants indicated that they "never" read the Scriptures together in their homes.

Data was also collected concerning the frequency of families praying together. This was the most encouraging of the pre-project data. Seventy percent of the participants indicated that they pray "most days/almost daily," while only 19 percent indicated that they either "never" pray or "occasionally" pray as a family. The post-project data revealed that by the end of the teaching series zero participants "never" prayed together as a family. It also revealed that 26 percent were praying a couple times per week, with 65 percent praying "most days/almost daily." This data seemed to indicate that most families were making a concerted effort to at least pray together during the teaching series. I am hopeful that this trend will continue.

Research also indicated that singing Christian songs as a family was not a regular occurrence in homes. The pre-project data shows that 49 percent of the participants answered "never" or "occasionally" to the statement "Our family sings

Christian songs together in our home.” The post-project data indicated an increase in families singing Christian songs together, with 20 percent indicating that they sang weekly and 39 percent singing “most days.” The number who indicated that they “never” or “occasionally” sang dropped from 49 percent to 39 percent.

In conclusion, the first goal of assessing the knowledge and practice of family worship was met. The research indicates that many parents are trying to lead their children to know and love God. The pre-survey indicates this finding, with 98 percent of the focus group answering “agree” or “strongly agree” to the statement “The primary responsibility for leading my child(ren) to know and love God belongs to me as a parent.” The post-project data shows 100 percent agreement with this statement.

Goal 2

The second goal of the project was to develop a teaching series for the purpose of equipping parents to lead family worship in their homes. The curriculum was developed and taught over an eight-week period. Each lesson was meant to present a clear biblical case for the roles and responsibilities of parents to teach their children to know and love God. It presented this case by utilizing a student handout that contained the outline for the week as well as homework and a family worship resource. The homework assignments were designed to help parents begin leading family worship in their respective homes, and the resource was meant to augment and enhance that week’s material.

The “Teaching Series Evaluation” form was used to determine whether the teaching series was effective and accomplished its purpose. This evaluation tool utilized a six-point Likert scale that ranged from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” The

pastoral staff of Mt. Vernon Baptist Church also evaluated the teaching series curriculum for its clarity and content.

As stated previously, 100 percent of the participants indicated that the teaching series accomplished its purpose of teaching biblical principles of family worship.

Research revealed that the student handouts that were developed for each lesson were an integral part of the participants' learning experience. Seventy-seven percent "strongly agreed" and another 18 percent "agreed" with the statement "The student handouts were helpful to my learning experience." Zero percent of those surveyed disagreed with this statement.

As previously stated, homework was also assigned each week in order to help equip parents to lead family worship in their homes. Research revealed that the focus group believed the homework was helpful in growing their knowledge and practice of family worship. Fifty-two percent "strongly agreed" and 23 percent "agreed" with the statement "The homework was helpful to my growth in the knowledge and practice of family worship."

The second goal was to develop a teaching series for the purpose of equipping parents to lead family worship in their homes. The research seems to reveal that this goal was met. The participants felt as though their knowledge and desire to practice family worship grew. The focus group revealed that the weekly student handouts enhanced their learning experience. They also indicated that the homework for each lesson was helpful to their growth in these two areas.

Goal 3

Goal three of this project was to teach biblical principles of family worship to the focus group. Several pieces of research that have already been discussed indicate that this goal was met. One hundred percent of the participants answered “strongly agree” or “agree” to the statement “The teaching series achieved its purpose of teaching the biblical principles of family worship.” The evaluations also revealed that the focus group believed the teaching material was presented in an organized fashion. Seventy-four percent of the respondents “strongly agreed” with the statement “The teaching material was well organized.” Twenty-nine percent “agreed” with this statement. None of the participants disagreed with this statement.

The focus group indicated that the teaching series material was presented clearly and understandably, with 71 percent “strongly agreeing” and 29 percent “agreeing.” Research also revealed that the teaching series enhanced the participants’ knowledge of family worship, with 96 percent answering “agree” or “strongly agree.”

Research indicated that the teaching series also increased the participants’ desire to practice family worship. One hundred percent of the respondents agreed with the statement “The teaching series increased my desire to practice family worship.” Sixty-eight percent “strongly agreed” with this statement. This response was welcomed, as one of the main goals in preparing the teaching series was to awaken a desire in the hearts of parents for this work. It was emphasized that this should not merely be viewed as a parental duty to be accomplished, but a delight to be enjoyed and celebrated.

In conclusion, the research points toward the third goal being met. The participants’ indicated that the teaching material was presented clearly and

understandably and in an organized manner. The teaching series enhanced the focus groups' knowledge and practice of family worship. The final piece of research that points to goal three being reached is that 100 percent of the participants' agreed with the statement "I would encourage other parents to participate in this series in the future." This overwhelmingly positive response shows that this class was a success and that the goal of teaching biblical principles of family worship was accomplished.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Project

This project was conducted over fifteen weeks at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church in Glen Allen, Virginia. At the conclusion of the eight-week teaching series, an evaluation survey was given that allowed the participants to offer their feedback on the content and clarity of the class. I discuss several of the responses below. After commenting on them, I offer the overall strengths and weaknesses of the project.

The teaching series evaluation revealed that the participants viewed the student handouts as the strongest aspect of the family worship class. Many commented on the clarity of the outline and its use of scriptural references as something that was beneficial to their understanding of family worship. Others noted that the homework and the family worship resources or "how-to's," which provided parents with ideas and goals to work on each week as they sought to lead family worship, were especially helpful.

Several participants commented that the attitude in which the material was presented was encouraging and inspiring. One participant insightfully noted that a greater emphasis was given to the future impact of family worship rather than past failures. This response was welcomed as the teaching material was designed with a view toward showing grace in one's failures and a hope-filled view of the future. It was

emphasized repeatedly in the teaching series that what parents do today in the lives of their children will impact future generations. Taking the approach of looking to the future also allowed gospel conversations to enter into the class discussion. In light of the gospel, parents can rest in Christ's provision for us in spite of our shortcomings. This allows them to be transparent and humble in our failures and still hold out the promise of Christ's presence and provision for the future. Many participants found this approach to be encouraging and helpful.

Another strength that was noted by the participants was the use of sociological statistics on parental influence over their children. Many of these statistics were utilized in the development of chapter 3 of this project. These statistics argued that parents hold the highest influence over their children, either for good or bad. Parental influence far outranks the influences of media, pop-culture, and peers. It was argued that God would not have commanded parents to be the primary disciplers of their children if children were not wired by God to listen to their parents. This truth, and the statistics provided, gave participants a newfound strength and encouraged them to parent well.

One of the strengths of the teaching series was the multi-faceted approach to dealing with family worship. Family worship from the onset is a difficult topic to discuss biblically because it is inferred from several texts and never spoken of outright, much like the term "Trinity" does not appear in the Bible. For this reason, several big ideas about God and family were discussed and then the discussion focused on specific texts.

The teaching series spent time discussing the Trinity and the Fatherhood of God, a difficult but necessary building block in discussing family worship. It was argued that God is a family, a community with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit living in a

perfect and loving relationship. It was also argued that families are to be a reflection of that reality (Eph 3:14-15).

The teaching series covered the covenants of the Bible—God relates to his people through covenants and marriages and families are covenantal as well. These theological items were discussed before moving into the specifics of texts like Deuteronomy 6, Psalm 78, and Ephesians 5-6. The teaching material also moved through the roles and responsibilities of husbands, wives, and children within the Christian home. This section allowed the class to see how families are to reflect the Trinity. Here, the roles of parents in the training of children were fleshed out further.

Another way the teaching approach was multifaceted was that it included sociological studies on parental influence and the spiritual development of children. This research buttressed the arguments that were being made from Scripture, which I felt had a positive effect on the teaching material. The participants responded well to the data that was presented. The homework section and family worship resource, as previously discussed, enhanced the class positively. It was encouraging to hear families talk of their experiences as they worked through the homework together each week. The family worship resource seemed to be a great addition each week, especially as the class was covering more of the theological foundations of family worship. In addition, the homework allowed them to read each week about how family worship is done. These resources were the single most important encouragement to the focus group during the class.

As for the weaknesses of the project, several items were mentioned in the evaluations. First, it was noted that there was not much time for discussion or for

questions in each teaching time. Several of the lessons did include discussion and a question and answer time, but not all of the eight lessons. The lack of discussion was partly due to time restraints and the length of the material being covered. Second, it was noted that the teaching series could have been shorter. I concur with this weakness; however, the parameters of this project from the onset included an eight-week teaching series. For that reason, the project utilized the time allotted. Third, the teaching series evaluation revealed that the pace at which the class moved was too rapid. Several factors most likely led to this weakness being noted, including the sheer length and breadth of the material and the fact that my natural speaking pace tends to be fast. The combination of these two elements led to too much information being disseminated in the teaching lessons.

This project also had other weaknesses that were not mentioned on the evaluations. The one glaring weakness that no one pointed out was there was never a demonstration of family worship in front of the class. How to do family worship was discussed many times at length, but there was never a demonstration of it. In hindsight, a failure to demonstrate family worship was the largest weakness and the easiest to remedy in the future. The project had many more weaknesses than the evaluations mentioned due to my own dissatisfaction with my work in general. I felt as though the outline and the materials were adequate, however, I always felt as though I could have done more. For example, I could have been more precise in my discussion of theological ideas, and I could have cut out some of the teaching material.

In conclusion, this project had many strengths and weaknesses. The teaching series evaluations were an invaluable tool in helping to determine them. In spite of the

projects weaknesses, I believe that the project still managed to attain its stated purpose and goals. Going forward these strengths can be maximized and the weaknesses minimized.

What I Would Do Differently

Having discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the project, it is appropriate to determine now what would be changed if this project was done again. In light of the evaluations and my own personal reflections, I would shorten the material to allow for more discussion time. Adults tend to learn more through interaction and discussion. An intentional and guided discussion time at the end of each class would have greatly enhanced the learning experience. A discussion time would have allowed the focus group to think for themselves through some of the more difficult sections. It would also have encouraged more communication and sharing of ideas in the group.

In the future, I would also incorporate some intentional planning and prayer time for the couples in the class. If these couples are going to lead their homes in family worship, then it would be helpful for them to plan and pray for the week ahead. A family worship planning form could be developed for this very purpose. This form could incorporate the three main components of family worship—reading, praying, singing—with appropriate space to write in the Scripture references, prayer requests, and the songs for the week. It could also have a place for creative ideas, crafts, Scripture memory, and other devotional thoughts. A tool like this would be a welcomed resource for this class in the future.

Another weakness that I would address in the future is the need for a weekly family worship demonstration. After teaching the participants how to utilize the family

worship planning form, I could bring in my wife and children in order to demonstrate a short family worship session. After a week or two, another couple could be asked to demonstrate family worship for the class. In this way, the class could see a variety of leaders and a variety of ways to lead children to know and love God. This addition would incorporate a practical aspect into the class.

If I had it to do over again, I would have started the family worship class on the Sunday after Easter, which was April 22, 2014. The class started with 47 participants and lasted eight weeks. It was extended for one week due to a previously planned international mission trip at the beginning of June. Since the class started late, it pushed into the first three weeks of the summer, which led to several families missing lessons near the end of the series. At the end of the series, the survey respondents dropped from 47 to 38 in part due to the late start date.² In the future, I would recommend a different starting date for the class. The best participation would most likely be at the beginning of the church year in September or in early January.

I would make one final change in the future, that is, devote one lesson to the impact of the gospel on family worship. The teaching series did a good job of talking about the gospel and how it relates to parenting, forgiveness, and grace-fueled effort. However, I do feel that the gospel could have been emphasized more throughout. I would most likely start with an outline of the creation, fall, redemption, and consummation and move from there into how the gospel changes the way one should view marriage, family, and parenting.

²Another possible reason for this decrease was that several couples filled out the survey as one unit.

In conclusion, though several things could be done differently, the teaching series in its current condition is a great starting point for developing a much sharper tool in the future. I hope to take up this task so that parents can continue to be equipped to lead their children to know and love God.

Theological Reflections

This project provided many opportunities for theological growth and understanding. Due to the nature of family worship, many different theological topics were in view. Much of the theological work done in this project is contained in Chapter 2; however, several reflections can be offered here. First, this project allowed a renewed study into the roles and relationships of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and how families are to reflect God as Trinity. God has designed the family with husbands and wives to function as complements to one another with equal value and worth but with differing roles. Though the fall has marred humanity and families, God in Christ has been redeeming marriage to again reflect this complementarity. It was challenging working through Ephesians 5-6 and thinking through how a husband is to reflect Christ's relationship to the church. He is to care for her, nourish her, cherish her, serve her, and be willing to die for her. He is to wash her in the word and present her holy and blameless (Eph 5:25-29). These few items alone are worthy of more reflection than space here allows.

Second, the theological foundations of family worship allowed for study of both the Old and New Testaments. The study included creation from Genesis 1-2 through the Patriarchs. The *Shema* was covered in depth as well as several sections of Psalms and Proverbs. The study also covered passages in the New Testament, including

the “Great Commandment” to love God, Ephesians 5-6, and 1 Timothy 3:14-15. I covered the formation of the family unit, God’s covenants with his people Israel, and his commands to them to train their children, generation after generation, to know him, love him, serve him, and tell of his glorious deeds. The study of Proverbs was especially helpful for me because seeing instructions specifically for training children brought new depth to my understanding of wisdom literature.

Third, this project allowed not only for the strengthening of theological orthodoxy, but also *orthopraxy*. Right thinking should always lead to right practice. As I have grown in my theological understanding of God’s commands for parents, so has my desire to obey. This project enhanced my own personal growth in the practice of family worship. God intends parents to be the primary disciplers of their children. Parents are commanded to teach their children to know and love God, and they must be intentional about this responsibility. It is not enough for a parent to affirm the Bible’s teaching on this matter, he or she must *do* it. There must be a means to accomplish God’s desire the training up of children. Family worship is that means.

Finally, the study of family worship allowed me to come into contact with many new and interesting resources. The study of God’s Word is always primary when it comes to understanding what God would have Christians to know. Yet, he has also gifted his church with people who have spent years studying and researching the scriptures for the benefit of others. This project brought me into contact with many of these people who have helped to clarify and direct many of my thoughts on family worship. It was also interesting to see that many Christians from many different times and places have addressed this issue in the history of the church. Two resources are

worth mentioning here on the subject of family worship: C. H. Spurgeon's *Spiritual Parenting* and J. C. Ryle's *The Duties of Parents*. I am grateful for these wise men who did considerable work on this topic long before this project was conducted.

Personal Reflections

One of the main reasons that I chose the topic of equipping parents to lead family worship was that I feel inadequate in this area as a husband and father of four children. I have felt wholly insufficient to the task of loving my wife as Christ loves the church. I am weak and frail when it comes to washing her and my children in the water of the Word and participating in her sanctification (Eph 5:27-28). This project was an attempt to grow in my understanding of what God requires of me as a husband and a father.

The journey to this point was long and arduous, but worth the effort. I have come to understand much more of what the Bible has to say on teaching our children to know and love him (Deut 6:1-8). I have tried to delve into what it means to raise our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph 6:4) and how fathers are to lead the way in this endeavor. Like a fresh wound, I have felt the Word of God cut into my heart in regard to my shortcomings, but like a soothing balm, I have felt the grace of the gospel pour over me as I cry out to God, "Who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Cor 2:16). I have found that Christ alone is sufficient for this task and that he has provided everything I will ever need to be the man, husband, and father he intends me to be.

I experienced other blessings from this project that are worth noting. First, simply teaching the family worship series to our largest Sunday school class was a tremendous blessing. Teaching the class afforded the opportunity to build new

relationships with many of our church members that I did not previously have. Their enthusiasm for the course and desire to understand what the Bible says was encouraging. Forming these new relationships will be invaluable as I continue to minister to young adults at Mt. Vernon in the future. Hopefully, I will continue to be able to speak into their lives and point them to Christ. I am grateful that through this my wife and I have been able to make some new friends in the class.

Second, the feedback on the class from the staff and the participants was a blessing. This project has allowed me to reflect on how I organize information and teach it to others. The positive reviews were uplifting and the suggestions for improvement were also grace-filled and helpful. I am appreciative of how the project was embraced by our staff and young couples. This project was a stressful time in my ministry, but it was also a time of great affirmation for my calling to preach and teach God's Word in the local church. This has led to a renewed sense of my calling and purpose.

Finally, there was a great blessing in the sense of community that was built through this project in the focus group. As the participants grew in their knowledge and understanding of what God expects of parents, there was a growing level of support and encouragement that took place among them. The class seemed to be knit together as each couple reflected on how family worship not only impacted their homes, but also our church family. They began to realize that if every family in our church actively practiced this discipline, it would greatly impact our congregation. Research pointed to this as well, with 71 percent of the participants in the post-project survey indicating that they "strongly agree" with the statement "Family worship can strengthen the spiritual life of my church."

It is my hope that this project will greatly impact the spiritual life of our families, and in turn our church as a whole. My greatest personal hope is that this project will impact the grandchildren of the parents in our focus group for the glory of Christ, that they will be able to say like Asaph in Psalm 78, “That the next generation might know [the commands of the Lord], the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God” (vv. 6-7). I desire this for my grandchildren as well. I have learned through this project that it is hard to imagine the impact parents can have when they take God’s commands seriously.

Conclusion

The purpose of this project was to teach biblical principles of family worship to parents with young children at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church in Glen Allen, Virginia. I believe that this was accomplished. This project was the culmination of years of study, months of preparation, and fifteen weeks of intense recruiting, data collecting, teaching, and writing. The project has helped shape in me many new convictions about being a husband and father that will continue until the end of my life. It will undoubtedly affect the course of my ministry.

Lastly, it has been a great privilege to explore the topic of family worship. It is the area of my life where I feel the greatest sense of inadequacy, but also the great sense of responsibility and joy. It is my prayer that I will continue to grow in the knowledge and practice of this discipline, not just for the sake of my family, but for the sake of my own conscience and obedience. May Christ continue to be exalted as his people seek to honor him in their lives, their families, and their churches.

APPENDIX 1

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Family Worship Survey

Last 4 Digits of Your SSN: _____

- I. This survey is to be completed by the focus group before and after the eight week teaching series.

Agreement to Participate

The project in which you are about to participate is designed to measure your understanding and practice of family worship. This project is being conducted by Jacob Harris for the purpose of collecting data for his doctoral research. In this research, you will answer the questions before and after participation in a class on the biblical principles of family worship. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.* By your completion of this survey you are giving your consent for your responses to be used in this research.

Using the following scale, please place the number that best corresponds to your practices/habits in response to the statement:

- 1 = Never
- 2 = Occasionally
- 3 = Monthly
- 4 = 1-2 times a week
- 5 = 3-4 times a week
- 6 = Most Days/Almost Daily

1. _____ Our family reads Scripture together in our home
2. _____ Our family prays together in our home
3. _____ Our family sings Christian songs together in our home
4. _____ Our family uses a catechism together in our home
5. _____ Our family uses Christian devotional materials together in our home
6. _____ Our family talks about Jesus together in our home
7. _____ Our family memorizes Scripture together in our home

Using the following scale, please place the number that best describes your thoughts about family worship:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat Disagree
- 4 = Somewhat Agree
- 5 = Agree
- 6 = Strongly Agree

1. _____ I have a clear understanding of what family worship is.
2. _____ Family worship was a regular part of my childhood upbringing.
3. _____ Family worship can strengthen the spiritual life my church.
4. _____ Family worship is a spiritual responsibility for every Christian family.
5. _____ God intends for families to worship Him in their homes regularly.
6. _____ The primary responsibility for leading my child(ren) to know and love God belongs to me as a parent.
7. _____ I have a clear idea about how to lead family worship.
8. _____ I know what a catechism is and how to use it.
9. _____ I am aware of several specific resources on the topic of family worship.
10. _____ A commitment to family worship is a qualification of being a pastor.

Participants' Teaching Series Evaluation

II. This survey is to be completed by the participants at the conclusion of the eight family worship lessons.

Using the following scale please evaluate each week teaching series:

- 1 = Strongly Disagree
- 2 = Disagree
- 3 = Somewhat Disagree
- 4 = Somewhat Agree
- 5 = Agree
- 6 = Strongly Agree

1. _____ The teaching series achieved its purpose of teaching the biblical principles of family worship.
2. _____ The teaching material was presented clearly and understandably.
3. _____ The teaching material was well organized.
4. _____ My knowledge of family worship was enhanced by the teaching series.
5. _____ The student handouts were helpful to my learning experience.
6. _____ The homework was helpful to my growth in the knowledge and practice of family worship.
7. _____ The teaching series increased my desire to practice family worship.
8. _____ I would encourage other parents to participate in this series in the future.

Please answer the following questions. If you need more space please use another sheet of paper.

1. What was the most helpful aspect of the teaching series? _____

2. What was the least helpful aspect of the teaching series? _____

3. What was the strongest part of the series? _____

4. What was the weakest part of the series? _____

5. What would you have liked to have been explained more thoroughly? _____

6. What do you think needs to be improved in the teaching series? _____

7. Any additional comments: _____

III. This survey is to be completed by the pastoral staff for each of the eight family worship lessons.

Using the following scale, please evaluate this week's teaching lesson:

- 1 = Insufficient
- 2 = Requires Attention
- 3 = Sufficient
- 4 = Exemplary

Please add any additional comments in the space provided.

1. _____ This lesson achieved its purpose of teaching the biblical principles of family worship from the Scriptures.
2. _____ This lesson's material was presented clearly and understandably.
3. _____ This lesson's material was thoughtful and well organized.
4. _____ This lesson provided practical help and application into the topic of family worship.
5. _____ The student handouts provided with this lesson were adequate and helpful.
6. _____ The homework for this week was specific to the learning goals of this lesson.
7. _____ This lesson sought to deepen my understanding of family worship.
8. _____ This lesson aimed at increasing my desire to practice family worship.

APPENDIX 2

PRE-POST SURVEY PART 1 RESULTS

Question 1: Our family reads Scripture together in our home				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Never	9	19%	4	13%
Occasionally	10	20%	15	49%
Monthly	6	13%	6	19%
1-2 times a week	12	26%	4	13%
3-4 times a week	5	11%	0	0%
Most days	5	11%	2	6%
Conclusion: The number of participants who “never” read Scripture dropped from 19% to 13%. It was encouraging that most participants were reading their Bibles together during the study at some point.				

Question 2: Our family prays together in our home				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Never	3	6	0	0
Occasionally	6	13	2	6
Monthly	0	0	1	3
1-2 times a week	4	9	5	16
3-4 times a week	1	2	3	10
Most days	33	70	20	65
Conclusion: 91% of the participants were praying with their families several times a week. This indicated an increase from 81%.				

Question 3: Our family sings Christian songs together in our home				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Never	9	19	3	10
Occasionally	14	30	9	29
Monthly	2	4	1	2
1-2 times a week	5	11	3	10
3-4 times a week	2	4	3	10
Most days	15	32	12	39
Conclusion: 19% of the respondents who “never” sang dropped to 10%.				

Question 4: Our family uses a catechism together in our home				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Never	32	67	11	36
Occasionally	4	9	15	48
Monthly	0	0	1	3
1-2 times a week	5	11	3	10
3-4 times a week	2	4	0	0
Most days	4	9	1	3
Conclusion: 67% of the participants who indicated they “never” use a catechism dropped to 36%. The use of a catechism was not a major component of our study so this result was to be expected.				

Question 5: Our family uses Christian devotional materials together in our home				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Never	7	15	0	0
Occasionally	17	35	21	68
Monthly	5	11	2	6
1-2 times a week	8	17	7	23
3-4 times a week	5	11	0	0
Most days	5	11	1	3
Conclusion: “Never” dropped from 15% to 0%.				

Question 6: Our family talks about Jesus together in our home				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Never	2	4	0	0
Occasionally	4	9	2	6
Monthly	2	4	2	6
1-2 times a week	2	4	5	16
3-4 times a week	7	15	5	16
Most days	30	64	17	56
Conclusion: These results were inconclusive. Families that frequently talked about Jesus continued to frequently talk about Jesus.				

Question 7: Our family memorizes Scripture together in our home				
Pre-Test			Post-Test	
Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Never	18	38	10	32
Occasionally	17	36	15	48
Monthly	2	4	1	3
1-2 times a week	5	11	3	11
3-4 times a week	1	2	1	3
Most days	4	9	1	3
Conclusion: This was inconclusive. There seemed to be no statistical change in the responses between the pre-test and the post-test.				

APPENDIX 3

PRE-POST SURVEY PART 2 RESULTS

Question 1: I have a clear understanding of what family worship is				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	2	4	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	1	2	0	0
Somewhat Agree	13	28	1	3
Agree	19	40	12	39
Strongly Agree	12	26	18	58
Conclusion: Those who “strongly agree” moved from 26% to 58%.				

Question 2: Family worship was a regular part of my childhood upbringing				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	8	17	7	23
Disagree	15	32	5	16
Somewhat Disagree	4	9	2	6
Somewhat Agree	11	23	10	32
Agree	6	13	4	13
Strongly Agree	3	6	3	10
Conclusion: This question was utilized to understand how many people had experienced family worship in their upbringing. Many participants indicated that they had.				

Question 3: Family worship can strengthen the spiritual life of my church				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	2	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	1	2	0	0
Somewhat Agree	1	2	0	0
Agree	14	30	9	29
Strongly Agree	30	64	22	71
Conclusion: The entire class “agreed” or “strongly agreed” with this statement.				

Question 4: Family worship is a biblical responsibility for every Christian family				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	1	2	0	0
Somewhat Agree	5	11	1	3
Agree	17	36	8	26
Strongly Agree	24	51	22	71
Conclusion: Those who “strongly agreed” moved from 51% to 71%.				

Question 5: What I think about God and His Word impacts my decisions about parenting				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Agree	4	9	0	0
Agree	15	32	8	26
Strongly Agree	28	59	23	74
Conclusion: Those who “strongly agreed” increased from 59% to 74%.				

Question 6: The primary responsibility for leading my children to know and love God belongs to me as a parent				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0	0	0
Somewhat Agree	1	2	0	0
Agree	15	32	7	23
Strongly Agree	31	66	24	77
Conclusion: There was an 11% increase in those who “strongly agreed” from the pre-test to the post-test.				

Question 7: I have a clear idea about how to lead family worship				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	2	4	0	0
Disagree	2	4	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	8	17	1	3
Somewhat Agree	21	45	9	29
Agree	12	26	10	32
Strongly Agree	2	4	11	35
Conclusion: Those who “agreed” or “strongly agreed” increased 37%.				

Question 8: I know what a catechism is and how to use it				
	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
Responses	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	5	10	0	0
Disagree	14	30	1	3
Somewhat Disagree	7	15	7	23
Somewhat Agree	15	32	12	39
Agree	2	4	7	23
Strongly Agree	4	9	4	13
Conclusion: Those who “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” decreased by 37%.				

Question 9: I am aware of several specific resources on the topic of family worship				
Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	4	9	0	0
Disagree	9	19	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	8	17	1	3
Somewhat Agree	13	28	9	29
Agree	10	21	10	32
Strongly Agree	3	6	11	35
Conclusion: Those who “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed” dropped from 28% to 0%.				

Question 10: A commitment to family worship is a qualification of being a pastor				
Responses	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	2	4	4	13
Disagree	5	12	1	3
Somewhat Disagree	2	4	0	0
Somewhat Agree	6	13	7	23
Agree	22	47	7	23
Strongly Agree	9	20	12	39
Conclusion: Those who “strongly agreed” increased from 20% to 39%.				

APPENDIX 4

TEACHING SERIES EVALUATION: RESULTS

Question 1: The teaching series achieved its purpose of teaching the biblical principles of family worship		
Responses	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Agree	0	0
Agree	8	26
Strongly Agree	23	74
Conclusion: 100% of the participants either “agreed” or “strongly agreed.”		

Question 2: The teaching material was presented clearly and understandably		
Responses	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Agree	0	0
Agree	9	29
Strongly Agree	22	71
Conclusion: 71% of the respondents “strongly agreed.”		

Question 3: The teaching material was well organized		
Responses	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Agree	0	0
Agree	8	26
Strongly Agree	23	74
Conclusion: There was 74% who “strongly agreed.”		

Question 4: My knowledge of family worship was enhanced by the teaching series		
Responses	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Agree	2	6
Agree	6	19
Strongly Agree	24	75
Conclusion: 94% of the participants either “agreed” or “strongly agreed.”		

Question 5: The student handouts were helpful to my learning experience		
Responses	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Agree	1	3
Agree	6	19
Strongly Agree	24	78
Conclusion: 78% “strongly agreed.”		

Question 6: The homework was helpful to my growth in the knowledge and practice of family worship		
Responses	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Agree	5	16
Agree	7	22
Strongly Agree	16	52
Conclusion: 74% of the respondents either “agreed” or “strongly agreed.”		

Question 7: The teaching series increased my desire to practice family worship		
Responses	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Agree	3	10
Agree	7	22
Strongly Agree	21	68
Conclusion: 90% of the participants indicated that they “agreed” or “strongly agreed.”		

Question 8: I would encourage other parents to participate in this series in the future		
Responses	Respondents	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Disagree	0	0
Somewhat Agree	0	0
Agree	8	26
Strongly Agree	23	74
Conclusion: 74% “strongly agreed” that they would encourage others to participate in this study in the future. This is probably the strongest indication of the success of the teaching series.		

APPENDIX 5

TEACHING OUTLINES

FAMILY WORSHIP SERIES

Lesson 1: Introduction to Family Worship

(Distribute the surveys and give instructions)

MY GOALS FOR THE NEXT 8 LESSONS

1. Hippocratic Oath – I want to do no harm in your home. We will all be challenged and will all see areas for growth, and that is good, but we don't want you to feel defeated as we work through this. I want us all to learn and grow together. The journey of 1000 miles begins with 1 step and you eat an elephant one bite at a time. So I don't want to beat anyone up who might not even have this on their radar screen. I don't want to harm.
2. I want to offer help and encouragement as we unpack what the Bible says about family and specifically raising our children in the discipline and the instruction of the Lord. The Bible says much more about parenting and raising children with specific goals in mind than I ever realized.
3. I want to not only encourage you but to also help us all broaden our understanding of God's plan for raising children in relation to knowing and loving Him.
4. I want to give you some really solid tools to help you carry out your responsibilities as Christian parents.
5. Lastly, my goal is to not overload your system with way too much information or statistics. I hope to spend most of our time on biblical texts and to help unpack what the Bible says about this topic.

WHAT IF I'M NOT A PARENT OR I ALREADY HAVE GROWN CHILDREN?

- You are still part of a family, and part of our church family. Therefore, you still have a stake in how children learn to follow Christ by our (meaning parents) and your example.
- You should still want to know what the Bible says about this so that you will be prepared to answer those have questions about what the Bible says.

WHY EVEN CONSIDER THIS THING CALLED FAMILY WORSHIP?

Research that Shows the Need:

- Research shows that children of Christian parents are leaving the church once they leave for college – some statistics have this as high as 88%.¹
- Research shows that parents are concerned with raising their children but not concerned enough to take any additional steps.²

¹Alvin Reid, "Raising the Bar" Available from <http://alvinreid.com/?p=16>.

²The Barna Group, "Americans Not Concerned about Their Spiritual Condition" Available from https://www.barna.org/barna-update/faith-spirituality/98-americans-not-concerned-about-their-spiritual-condition#.UusCn_ldXEY.

- Research reveals that parents accept responsibility for their child’s spiritual development but struggle with effectiveness.³
- Research shows that parents on a large scale are not going to the Scriptures to learn what it says about raising children.⁴
- Research demonstrates that parenting approach helps determine whether children become devoted followers of Christ.⁵
- Research shows, despite common assumptions, that parents have the greatest influence over their children, either for good or bad.⁶

The Bible Points to It Repeatedly:

- Gen 1-2

“God’s purpose in making marriage the place to have children was never merely to fill the earth with people, but to fill the earth with worshippers of the true God. One way for a marriage to fill the earth with worshippers of the true God is to procreate and bring children up in the Lord.” – John Piper⁷

- Gen 12:1-3
“Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”
- Gen 18:17-19
¹⁷ The LORD said, “Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do, ¹⁸ seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? ¹⁹ For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.”
- Deut 4:9
⁹ “Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life.

³The Barna Group. “Parents Accept Responsibility for Their Child’s Spiritual Development But Struggle With Effectiveness” Available from <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/5-barna-update/120-parents-accept-responsibility-for-their-childs-spiritual-development-but-struggle-with-effectiveness>.

⁴The Barna Group, “Parents Describe How They Raise Their Children” [on-line]. Accessed 18 February 2013. Available from <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/184-parents-describe-how-they-raise-their-children?q=parenting>.

⁵The Barna Group. “Research Shows Parenting Approach Determines Whether Children Become Devoted Christians” Available from <http://www.barna.org/family-kids-articles/106-research-shows-parenting-approach-determines-whether-children-become-devoted-christians>

⁶Steve Wright with Chris Graves, *Apparent Privilege: That the Next Generation Might Know* (Wake Forest: InQuest, 2008), 18-21.

⁷John Piper, Available from <http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/marriage-is-meant-for-making-children-disciples-of-jesus-part-1>.

Make them known to your children and your children's children—¹⁰ how on the day that you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, the LORD said to me, 'Gather the people to me, that I may let them hear my words, so that they may learn to fear me all the days that they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children so.'

- Deut 6:4-9
⁴“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. ⁸You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

- Joshua 24:14-15
¹⁴“Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

- Psalm 78:1-8
1 Give ear, O my people, to my teaching;
incline your ears to the words of my mouth!
2 I will open my mouth in a parable;
I will utter dark sayings from of old,
3 things that we have heard and known,
that our fathers have told us.
4 We will not hide them from their children,
but tell to the coming generation
the glorious deeds of the LORD, and his might,
and the wonders that he has done.
5 He established a testimony in Jacob
and appointed a law in Israel,
which he commanded our fathers
to teach to their children,
6 that the next generation might know them,
the children yet unborn,
and arise and tell them to their children,
7 so that they should set their hope in God
and not forget the works of God,
but keep his commandments;
8 and that they should not be like their fathers,
a stubborn and rebellious generation,
a generation whose heart was not steadfast,
whose spirit was not faithful to God.

- Eph 6:1-4
 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), ³“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” ⁴Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

WHAT IS FAMILY WORSHIP?

Family worship is the regular and intentional gathering of a family for the purpose of moving Godward together. It is an occasion that is set aside for offering praise and thanksgiving to God. Family worship may incorporate means such as Bible reading, reflection, prayer, singing, a catechism, and other devotional resources.

WHAT ARE THE BLESSINGS OF FAMILY WORSHIP?

- Family worship brings glory to God
- Family worship promotes a clear conscience (because we are obeying the Lord and taking seriously our responsibility i.e. we are living without regret)
- Family worship, by God’s grace, impacts generations
- Family worship helps fulfill the Great Commission

WHAT TO WORK ON THIS WEEK:

- Start Small – Have a family meeting to talk about it. Begin praying together before family meals, in the morning before everyone leaves and at night before bed. Then add a Bible reading time and a singing time. It may be awkward at first but I can tell you that it will be worth it.
- Set Goals – In the short term what do you need to work on? Also think long term and decide on the investment. Remember you only have your children for a very short season of your life.
- Read “The Beginner’s Family Worship Handbook” and begin familiarizing yourself with its content.

Songs for the Week:

- Traditional: “How Great Thou Art”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DcF75h4BHk8>
- Contemporary: “How Great Is Our God”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKLQ1td3MbE>
- For Younger Kids: “Jesus Loves Me”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9AAlocjo3Q>

FAMILY WORSHIP SERIES
Lesson 2: Theological Foundations of Family Worship

FAMILY BEGINS WITH GOD⁸

- God is a Family – The Trinity is a united and loving community with the Father, Son, and Spirit living eternally in loving fellowship, sharing the same being/essence/nature of God.

Ephesians 3:14-15

¹⁴For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named,

John 17:5

⁵And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

John 3:35

³⁵The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand.

- Our families are a reflection or an echo of that reality. Our families are made to image and reflect our Triune God.
- The family is the oldest institution of God. It precedes both government & the church. This is primarily because family finds its true meaning in the being of God as Trinity.
- God created the family when he put Adam & Eve together. Isn't it amazing that God made two out of one and then immediately made one out of the two.

Gen 1:26-31 & 2:21-24

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." ²⁹ And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit. You shall have them for food. ³⁰ And to every

⁸Much of this information was adapted from Joel Beeke's *Family Worship* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books), 2002.

beast of the earth and to every bird of the heavens and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.” And it was so. ³¹ And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

- A family is created when a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife

Gen. 2:18-25

²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said,

“This at last is bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called Woman,
because she was taken out of Man.”

²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

- This means for those that are married, you are husband and wife before you are mother and father.
- The family is the building block of society – one man, one woman, & their offspring (God-willing, there are other situations that are exceptions to the rule) 5 of the 10 Commandments (Ex. 20:1-17) are aimed at protecting this building block of society
 - 2nd Commandment - ⁴ "You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.
⁵ "You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶ but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.
 - 4th Commandment - ⁸ "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God; *in it* you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.
¹¹ "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.
 - 5th Commandment - ¹² "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.
 - 7th Commandment - ¹⁴ "You shall not commit adultery.

- 10th Commandment - ¹⁷ "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."
- The family is the normal school in which faith in God and obedience to his law are taught (Gen. 17:1-7; Deut. 6)
 - It is small and close. There is no bureaucratic barriers impede the recognition of need and the application of discipline
 - Authority is displayed, but its harshness is tempered with parental affection
 - Ideally two parents, two parties complement one another and are vested with joint authority
 - Mutual accountability and divine, transcendent authority are illustrated in every relationship

ENCOURAGING RESEARCH⁹ – *Apparent Privilege* by Steve Wright

- An extensive study of 272,000 teenagers conducted by *USA Today Weekend Magazine* found that 70 percent of teens identified their parents as the most important influence in their lives. Twenty-one percent said that about their friends (peers), and only 8 percent named the media.
- MVPParents.com says, “Nearly three out of four parents believe their children’s friends and classmates have the most influence . . . Yet contrary to what parents think, kids say mom and dad have the biggest impact on the choices they make.”
- In a national survey, 1,129 middle school students were asked what the greatest in their life, and parents topped the list. The results were: parents – 37 percent, friends – 22 percent, church – 11 percent, youth pastor – 7 percent, and music – 5 percent. Adult volunteers, schoolteachers, culture, and the Internet each scored 2 percent or less. A national survey of 923 high school students yielded very similar results.
- MTV and the Associated Press released a study on the influence of parents that said, “So you’re between the ages of 13 and 24. What makes you happy? A worried, weary parent might imagine the answer to sound something like this: Sex, drugs and a little rock ‘n’ roll. Maybe some cash, or at least the car keys. Turns out the real answer is quite different. Spending time family was the top answer to that open-ended question. . . . Parents are seen as an overwhelmingly positive influence in the lives of most young people. Remarkably, nearly half of teens mention at least one of their parents as a hero.”
- An Anheuser-Busch Web site supports this logic, saying “Studies have shown that parents are the primary influence on their children’s choices and decisions . . . and that is why we’re proud to offer help to parents.”
- After years of secular research, Bob Altemeyer and Bruce Hunsberger say, “we acquire our religion from our parents almost as certainly as we inherit the color of our eyes.” (Don’t misunderstand. They’re not saying that faith is genetic, but they are saying that parents have more influence on faith than any other person).

⁹Steve Wright with Chris Graves, *Apparent Privilege: That the Next Generation Might Know* (Wake Forest: InQuest, 2008), 18-21.

- Altemeyer and Hunsberger also say, “All of the different approaches to studying parental influences in the religious socialization process converge on a single conclusion: Parents play an extremely important role in the developing religious attitudes and practices of their offspring. In fact, few researchers would quarrel with the conclusion that parents are the most important influence in this regard.”
- Researchers Merton Strommen and Richard Hardel say, “We conclude our research by reiterating that the family is the most powerful institution in the promoting faith in youth. The family atmosphere allows children to enter into a love relationship with God. We say this out of a conviction that congregations have erred in allowing the focus of faith development to shift from the home to the congregation or parish.”

A VOICE FROM HISTORY:

“Would we see revival among our children? Let us remember that God often uses the restoration of family worship to usher in church revival. For example, the 1677 church covenant of the Puritan congregation in Dorchester, Massachusetts, included the commitment ‘to reform our families, engaging ourselves to a conscientious care to set before us and to maintain the worship of God in them; and to walk in our houses with perfect hearts in a faithful discharge of all domestic duties, educating, instructing, and charging our children and households to keep the ways of the Lord’” (Joel Beeke in *Family Worship*).

STUFF TO WORK ON:

- Read this week’s resource “A Simple Guide to Family Worship”
- For husbands and wives (that are agreeable to it) set aside a time this week to pray for each other and your children. Remember that you are husband and wife before you are father and mother.
- If you have not already plan a time of family worship this week

Songs for the Week:

Traditional: “Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow” (The Doxology)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FbjpG0SeXYU>

Contemporary: “10,000 Reasons”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9jYLTn4fKYQ>

For Younger Kids: “My God Is So Big”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77PP4kUsMjI>

Memory Verse: Colossians 3:16 - ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

FAMILY WORSHIP SERIES
Lesson 3
Family Worship in the Old Testament: Part 1

WHAT IS FAMILY WORSHIP?

Family worship is the regular and intentional gathering of a family for the purpose of moving Godward together. It is an occasion that is set aside for offering praise and thanksgiving to God. Family worship may incorporate means such as Bible reading, reflection, prayer, singing, a catechism, and other devotional resources.

DEUTERONOMY 6:1-8

- I. The Context of the Command – v. 1-3 (Give the context in the story of God)
- Moses has been commanded by God to teach this to Israel – v. 1
 - Fearing (reverencing) the Lord is to be taught to children by parents demonstrating their obedience to the Lord’s commands – v. 2a
 - Obedience to the Lord’s commands are to be lifelong – v. 2b
 - Our desire as a parent should be for our children to worship the God that we worship – v. 3

“Christians worship the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. They are a father, son, and grandson. In the same way, my father’s name is Joseph, my name is Mark, and my sons’ names are Zachariah, Calvin, and Gideon. We are all praying that when my grandson is born to Zac one day (for example), he will worship the God of Joseph, Mark, and Zac. As a Christian father, we should long to see our children worship the same God we do. To pursue that goal, we must worship that God first.”¹⁰

- II. The Content of the Command (Love) – v. 4-6
- The first command is to “hear” (Shama) which means to listen, hearken, or obey
 - V-4 is about the uniqueness and unity of God
 - o God is unique in that there is no other besides Him. He is not one of many gods but the only God (Deut 4:35; Isa 44:6, 8; 45:5, 14, 21)

Deut 4:35 – ³⁵ To you it was shown, that you might know that the LORD is God; there is no other besides him.

Isa 44: 6 & 8 – ⁶ Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god . . . ⁸ Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any.”

¹⁰Mark Driscoll, “Pastor Dad: Scriptural Insights on Fatherhood” [on-line]. Accessed 22 February 2013. Available from http://theresurgence.com/files/2011/03/02/relit_ebook_pastordad.pdf; Internet. pg. 7.

Isa 45:5 – ⁵ I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God;

Isa 45:14 – ¹⁴They will plead with you, saying: ‘Surely God is in you, and there is no other, no god besides him.’ ” ¹¹

Isa 45:21 – ²¹ Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me.

- The unity of God carries the idea that God has a single purpose in his creation and is not ambivalent about his will.
- V-5 is the heart of the Old Testament Law and the greatest command according to Jesus (Matt 22:34-39; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:25-28) The Lord’s unique oneness leads to the command for Israel to love him with all of who they are as his covenant people.
- III. The Charge to Teach Our Children – v. 7-9 (Notice that the command is to parents, not the elders of Israel, or the priests, or the Levites, it is to parents)
 - We are to love the Lord first and then teach our children to love the Lord – v. 7a
 - Our children learn to love the things we love. Our children pay attention to the things that we are passionate about and the decisions we make.
 - We are to do this intentionally through the normal course of our days – v. 7b
 - We are to take practical steps in helping our children to learn to love God – v. 8-9
 - These are practical ways of reminding parents and children that our primary calling is to love God and to serve him and then to teach our children this through our example.
 - Example of using the ocean to teach our children about God’s greatness from Isa 40:12
 - This is where a catechism comes in (which I will provide in the weeks ahead)
 - This is also where you can become creative with your children

THE GREATEST COMMAND: LOVE THE LORD¹²

Love is an act of the will accompanied by emotion that leads to action on behalf of its object.

Love Is an Act of the Will – “Love the LORD your God with all your *heart*” (for the Jewish people the heart was the seat of the intellect)

- Love is a choice that is made
- You can no more love without your mind than you can speak without your tongue.

¹¹*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001), Is 45:14.

¹²This section is adapted from Voddie Baucham Jr., *Family Driven Faith: Doing What It Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk with God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007), 49-68.

Love Is Accompanied by Emotion – “with all your *soul/being*”

- Love being a choice does not negate its emotional aspects. Love is not void of emotion.
- While emotion is a large part of the love equation, it must not be the sum total. Although love is accompanied by emotion, biblical love is not led by emotion.
- Why? Emotions change.

Love Leads to Action on Behalf of Its Object – “with all your *strength/muchness of force*”

- Love acts, love does, love moves

Deut 7:9 – ⁹ Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,

Deut 10:12 – ¹² “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,

Deut 11:1, 13, 22 – “You shall therefore love the Lord your God and keep his charge, his statutes, his rules, and his commandments always . . . ¹³ “And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul . . . ²² For if you will be careful to do all this commandment that I command you to do, loving the LORD your God, walking in all his ways, and holding fast to him

Deut 13:3-4 – ³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams. For the LORD your God is testing you, to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴ You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him.

See Also 30:6, 16, 20

John 14:15 & 21 – ¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments . . . ²¹ Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.”

John 15:10 – ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.

1 John 2:3-5 – ³ And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴ Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵ but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected.

1 John 5:4 – ³ For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

- Love is proved by our efforts.
- If I say I love someone, it should be evidenced by actions. This should show up in my life as a follower of Jesus, as a husband, and as a dad. Do I love the Lord? Is it evidenced in my life?
- If my actions are self-centered, I am demonstrating love for me.

WHAT TO WORK ON THIS WEEK:

- Read “Objections to Family Worship” by Joel Beeke
- Avoid unrealistic expectations – Joel Beeke argues that we should avoid, “an idealistic approach that is beyond the reach of even the most God-fearing home, and a minimalist approach that abandons daily family worship because the ideal seems so out of reach.” In other words, do not over think or under achieve with family worship. There are no perfect families but there are families who are trying to do the best they can with what they have. Don’t overthink or underachieve in family worship. Set realistic goals and make the most of your time with your children.
- Plan ahead. If you are beginning to work on family worship then look ahead to upcoming holidays and vacations and plan accordingly. Be creative and build in teachable moments and make memories for your children regarding family worship.

Songs for the Week:

Traditional: “I’d Rather Have Jesus”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u62uYEsk7o>

Contemporary: “Jesus Messiah”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4whBsh9ovI>

For Younger Kids: “God Is So Good”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J4enC172CU4>

Memory Verse: Deuteronomy 7:9 – “Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations,”

FAMILY WORSHIP SERIES
Lesson 4
Family Worship in the Old Testament: Part 2

WHAT IS FAMILY WORSHIP?

Family worship is the regular and intentional gathering of a family for the purpose of moving Godward together. It is an occasion that is set aside for offering praise and thanksgiving to God. Family worship may incorporate means such as Bible reading, reflection, prayer, singing, a catechism, and other devotional resources.

LEAVING A LEGACY: Today we are going to look at some OT texts and see how God intends for parents to leave a legacy with their children of knowing and loving God.

GENESIS 17:1-7 & 18:17-19

IV. God Is a God of Covenants

So what is a covenant? A covenant is a formalized relationship between 2 parties that is based on faithfulness and loyalty in love. It is not a contract. The Bible does have some contracts but they are not covenants. A contract is a mutual agreement with benefits for both parties that can be negotiated and has a definite end. A covenant, however, is a formal relationship that is initiated by the stronger of the two parties and it is based on grace. It is a gift and therefore cannot be negotiated and its timeframe is indefinite. The initiating party binds themselves to the other with promises and blessings. Both contracts and covenants contain obligations that can be violated or broken, but the difference is that one is based solely on the fulfillment of terms (a contract) and one is based on a relationship of love and faithfulness (a covenant). In the Bible the only way to get out of a covenant is to die. A marriage relationship is covenantal. A parent/child relationship is also covenantal. Both of these are reflections of God's covenantal relationship to us. So covenants are based on love and faithfulness and not terms like you find in a contract. I don't say to my kids, "I will only love you if you are good," or to my wife, "I will only love you if you do this or that." I have promised to love and care for my wife regardless of her flaws and shortcomings (though she has none) and thankfully she has covenanted with me to do the same.

- The Covenant with Creation – God promised in creation to care, bless, and be their God, Adam and Eve were to “be fruitful and fill the earth.”
- The Covenant with Noah
- The Covenant with Abraham
- The Covenant of the Law
- The Covenant with David
- The New Covenant in Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and brought to fruition with Jesus

- You cannot understand the story of Scripture, or the unity of Scripture, without understanding covenants. Covenants are how God chose to enter into relationship with his creation and with his people.

V. God's Covenant with Abraham Is a Continuation of God's Story of Redeeming a People for Himself

- (Gen 1:28) - ²⁸ And God *blessed* them. And God said to them, "*Be fruitful and multiply* and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

- (Gen 9:1) – "And God *blessed* Noah and his sons and said to them, "*Be fruitful and multiply* and fill the earth."

- (12:1) – ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will *bless* you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing."

(17:2, 6, 8) - ² that I may make my covenant between me and you, and may *multiply* you greatly." . . . ⁶ I will make you exceedingly *fruitful*, . . . I will give to you and to your offspring after you . . . all the land of Canaan . . ."

(22:16) – "Because you have done this . . . ¹⁷ I will surely *bless* you, and I will surely *multiply* your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore . . . and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be *blessed*, because you have obeyed my voice."

(26:3) – "I will be with you and will *bless* you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴ I will *multiply* your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be *blessed*"

(26:4) – ²⁴ And the LORD appeared to him the same night and said, "I am the God of Abraham your father. Fear not, for I am with you and will *bless* you and *multiply* your offspring for my servant Abraham's sake."

(28:3-4) – ³ God Almighty *bless* you and make you *fruitful* and *multiply* you, that you may become a company of peoples. ⁴ May he give the *blessing* of Abraham to you and to your offspring with you, that you may take possession of the land of your sojournings that God gave to Abraham!"

(35:11-12) – ¹¹ And God said to him, "I am God Almighty: be *fruitful* and *multiply*. A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, and kings shall

come from your own body. ¹² The land that I gave to Abraham and Isaac I will give to you, and I will give the land to your offspring after you.”

(47:27) – ²⁷ Thus Israel settled in the land of Egypt, in the land of Goshen. And they gained possessions in it, and were *fruitful* and *multiplied* greatly.

(48:3-4) – ³ And Jacob said to Joseph, “God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and *blessed* me, ⁴ and said to me, ‘Behold, I will make you *fruitful* and *multiply* you, and I will make of you a company of peoples and will give this land to your offspring after you for an everlasting possession.’”

- So look back at Gen 17:7. God’s covenant is between Abraham and his children. He promises Abraham land and descendants but most importantly he promises to be his God.

VI. Families as a Reflection of God Are Built Upon Covenants

- When a Christian man and woman are married, they are entering into a covenant before God, the church, society, and each other. It is based on loyalty and love. Marriage is meant to be a picture of God’s covenantal relationship to us.
- Christian parents are to have a covenantal relationship towards their children. It is based on loyalty and love and not how your children perform, whether they do well or not. This is also a reflection of God’s covenantal relationship toward us.
- Now look at Gen 18:17-19
 - o V. 17-18a – God will surely bless Abraham as he has promised (because that’s what God does, he fulfills his covenant regardless of us)
 - o V. 18b – God will surely bless the nations of the earth through Abraham (this is ultimately because Jesus will be coming through the lineage of Abraham)
 - o V. 19 – God chose him to leave a legacy of faith for his children. And through that legacy God will bring about his purposes

JOSHUA 24:14-15

¹⁴ “Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness. Put away the gods that your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD.

¹⁵ And if it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

- I. Joshua was not a man who followed the crowd to do what was popular
- II. Joshua was a man of faith who demonstrated it not only publically, but privately in his home

PSALM 71:5-6, 7-9; 17-18;

- I. A Legacy of Hope – v. 5-6
- II. A Legacy of Worship – v. 7-8
- III. A Legacy of Lifelong Devotion – v. 9
- IV. A Legacy to Worth Leaving – v. 17-18

WHAT TO WORK ON THIS WEEK:

- Read “Family Worship 101” by William Boekestein
- If you are starting to read and pray together as a family then try to incorporate another element. For example, add a memory verse for the week or begin taking prayer requests and allowing your children to for them.
- Plan ahead. If you are beginning to work on family worship then look ahead to upcoming holidays and vacations and plan accordingly. Be creative and build in teachable moments and make memories for your children regarding family worship.

Songs for the Week:

Traditional: “Be Thou My Vision”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gExjYzULv9I>

Contemporary: “In Christ Alone”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qLy8ksqGf9w>

For Younger Kids: “As the Deer”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-gaT4q9eJ1U>

Memory Verse: Psalm 71:5 – “For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust, O LORD, from my youth.”

FAMILY WORSHIP SERIES
Lesson 5
Family Worship in the Old Testament: Part 3

PSALM 78:1-8

I. An Echo of the Shema – v. 1-3

- “Give ear O my people” – “Hear O Israel”
- V. 3 – Where did Asaph hear and learn these things? From his father. So his father taught him what was expected of Asaph.

II. Asaph’s Covenantal Commitment – v. 4-7

- Asaph makes a choice not to hide what he has been taught from his children, specifically, the glorious deeds of the Lord and his might – v. 4
- Asaph knows that there are community implications of obeying God’s command to teach children the greatness of God
 - o If I am leading my children to know and love God then I am able to help the children in the covenant community to know and love God. If everyone in the covenant community (that is the church for us today) is seeking to lead their children to know and love God then there will be a heightened sense of belonging, and purpose and direction within the group. There is a unity building mechanism in this. This is why the Jewish people were so good at building their identity and culture. They did this individually as families and in groups as a community.
- Notice the pattern beginning in v. 5: God has revealed himself and his Law, he commanded parents to raise their children in it so that they would set their hope in God and continue this pattern and not forget the works of God – v. 5-7

III. Asaph’s Warning – v. 8

- The warning is that we will either be faithful as parents in seeking to honor the commands of the Lord or we will be stubborn and rebellious like the Israelites coming out of Egypt.
- We should not want God to say about our generation, “a generation whose heart was not steadfast whose spirit was not faithful to God.” We got our kids a great education! We got our kids into the best colleges! We consistently gave our children great self-esteem! We made sure that they did all of the fun extra-curricular activities!

PROVERBS 1:1-10, 15

- Solomon wrote proverbs to give wisdom, instruction, and knowledge to youth, particularly, his own children – v. 2-4
- Solomon intended for his teaching and his wife’s teaching to complement each other – v. 8-9
- One of Solomon’s goals was to guard his children from sin – v. 15
- The main point is that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom – v. 7

PROVERBS 2:1-10

- Like Asaph in Psalm 78, Solomon says that true wisdom and insight comes through God's law – v. 6
- Wisdom must not only be taught (v. 1) but it must also be sought (v. 3-4)

PROVERBS 3:1-12, 21; 5:1-2; 7

- Solomon can command his son not to forget only because he has taken the time to teach him – v. 1
- Notice the language of the Shema in v. 3
- Solomon's personal devotion and experience with God is what leads him to write v. 5-6
- Solomon points his children to specific Old Testament laws and principles – v. 10-12

PROVERBS 4:1-11, 20-21

- Solomon teaching his son was not a novel idea – v. 1-4
- Solomon knew the importance of the Ten Commandments – v. 10

PROVERBS 5:1-7

- Solomon taught his children the destruction of sexual promiscuity – v. 1-6
- Solomon did not fail to warn his children of the dangers of disobeying God – v. 7-14

PROVERBS 6:1-6; 20-23

- Solomon taught his children the importance of honesty and integrity – v. 1-6
- Solomon sought to fulfill the obligations of the Shema – v. 20-23

PROVERBS 7:1-5, 22-26

- Solomon taught his children the realities of temptation and sin – v. 1-5
- Solomon taught his children the importance of guarding our hearts and our steps – v. 22-26

LEAVING A LEGACY:

More than anything in the world, Rick prized time with his children. His work sometimes took him away for extended periods of time, but he always managed to create ways to bridge the gap created by the time and distance. In fact, on one momentous trip, Rick created a videotape with 17 daily devotions on it—one for each day he'd be gone.

"I can at least talk to them over the videotape and let them know I'm praying for them," he said. There was nothing he could think of that was better than telling them about God.

His devotional from February 1, 2003, included the following words to his daughter, Laura.

"It's Landing Day and hopefully, if the weather's good, I'll be landing today in Florida. I'm certainly looking forward to seeing you, Matthew, and Mama." Rick read from Laura's devotional book and when he finished, he prayed for her. "Okay, Laura, it won't be long before I see you! I love you very, very much ... I'll see you in just a little while! I love you. Bye, Bye!"

Rick wanted both Laura and Matthew to have a daily relationship with God. It's what had changed Rick's life, and he knew it would sustain Laura and Matthew for the rest of their lives. This was Rick's highest calling.

That day, February 1, 2003, Captain Rick Husband and the crew of the Space Shuttle Columbia died when the craft broke apart over north Texas during re-entry.¹³

"I finally realized, and it became my desire, that I would be the best man that I possibly could for God, that I could be the best husband that I could for Evelyn, and be the best father that I could for my children, and to do everything I can to make sure that they know about Jesus and hope that they come to a point in their lives where they ask Jesus to be their Savior. And I thought if I could do that, and at the end of my life look back, that would be what really mattered to me, not whether or not I was an astronaut or anything else."

- Rick Husband, Commander of Space Shuttle Columbia

WHAT TO WORK ON THIS WEEK:

- Begin reading "A Baptist Catechism" by John Piper.
- If you haven't already, work on Scripture memorization as a family this week. See if everyone that is able can memorize Proverbs 1:7.
- Don't be afraid to accommodate your Scripture reading to your child's level of understanding if necessary. Make sure they understand the main idea of what the Scripture is trying to convey.

Songs for the Week:

- Traditional: "Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus"
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DdgkvnsHjM>
- Contemporary: "Before the Throne of God Above"
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0m_4TzDb_8
- For Younger Kids: "This Little Light of Mine"
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QCN893hzueQ>
- Memory Verse: ⁷ "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction." Proverbs 1:7 ESV

¹³ Story and quote from *High Calling* by Evelyn Husband, Thomas Nelson Publishing, 2003.

FAMILY WORSHIP SERIES
Lesson 6
Family Worship in the New Testament: Part 1

EPHESIANS 5:15-6:4

- I. Christians Are Commanded to Be Filled with the Spirit – v. 15-21
- Christians are to be wise stewards of our time because the days are evil – v. 15-16. There will always be the temptation to misuse our time or to not make the proper investments of it, particularly, when it comes to our families and children. Paul then exhorts us in v. 17 to not be foolish but understanding what the will of the Lord is.
 - Being filled with the Spirit means being controlled by the Spirit. Verse 18 is the crux for how Christians are to relate to one another in spirit-filled relationships. Paul begins with a prohibition, “Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery.” Then Paul gives the command, “but be filled with the Spirit.” The main idea is that we are not to be under the control or influence of anything one or anything other than God’s Spirit. If you are drunk, you are not in control of yourself and therefore cannot honor God as God. As Christians, our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and therefore, we are to be under his control and under his authority at all times.
 - Spirit-filled Christians are concerned most with making much of Christ – v. 22
 - Spirit-filled Christians are to relate to one another in God-ordained roles out of reverence for Christ – v. 21
- II. Spirit-Filled Husbands and Wives Are to Relate to One in God-Ordained Roles – v. 22-33
- Spirit-filled wives are to submit to their husbands as to Christ – v. 22-24

WHAT SUBMISSION IS NOT¹⁴ by John Piper
Here are six things it is not based on [1 Peter 3:1-6](#).

1. Submission does not mean agreeing with everything your husband says. You can see that in verse one: she is a Christian and he is not. He has one set of ideas about ultimate reality. She has another. Peter calls her to be submissive while assuming she will not submit to his view of the most important thing in the world—God. So submission can’t mean submitting to agree with all her husband thinks.

2. Submission does not mean leaving your brain or your will at the wedding altar. It is not the inability or the unwillingness to think for yourself. Here is a woman who heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. She thought about it. She assessed the truth claims of Jesus. She apprehended in her heart the beauty and worth of Christ and his work, and she chose him.

¹⁴John Piper, “The Beautiful Faith of Fearless Submission” [on-line] Accessed 4 April 2014. Available from <http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/the-beautiful-faith-of-fearless-submission>; Internet.

Her husband heard it also. Otherwise, Peter probably wouldn't say he "disobeyed the word." He has heard the word, and he has thought about it. And he has not chosen Christ. She thought for herself and she acted. And Peter does not tell her to retreat from that commitment.

3. *Submission does not mean avoiding every effort to change a husband.* The whole point of this text is to tell a wife how to "win" her husband. Verse 1 says, "Be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives." If you didn't care about the Bible you might say, "Submission has to mean taking a husband the way he is and not trying to change him." But if you believe what the Bible says, you conclude that submission, paradoxically, is sometimes a strategy for changing him.

4. *Submission does not mean putting the will of the husband before the will of Christ.* The text clearly teaches that the wife is a follower of Jesus before and above being a follower of her husband. Submission to Jesus relativizes submission to husbands—and governments and employers and parents. When Sarah called Abraham "lord" in verse 6, it was *lord* with a lowercase *l*. It's like "sir" or "m'lord." And the obedience she rendered is qualified obedience because her supreme allegiance is to the Lord with a capital *L*.

5. *Submission does not mean that a wife gets her personal, spiritual strength primarily through her husband.* A good husband should indeed strengthen and build up and sustain his wife. He should be a source of strength. But what this text shows is that when a husband's spiritual leadership is lacking, a Christian wife is not bereft of strength. Submission does not mean she is dependent on him to supply her strength of faith and virtue and character. The text, in fact, assumes just the opposite. She is summoned to develop depth and strength and character not *from* her husband but *for* her husband. Verse five says that her hope is in God in the hope that her husband will join her there.

6. *Finally submission does not mean that a wife is to act out of fear.* Verse 6b says, "You are her [Sarah's] children, if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening." In other words, submission is free, not coerced by fear. The Christian woman is a free woman. When she submits to her husband—whether he is a believer or unbeliever—she does it in freedom, not out of fear.

WHAT SUBMISSION IS¹⁵

If that's what submission is not, then what is it? I suggested a couple weeks ago from Ephesians 5 what is true here as well: *Submission* is the divine calling of a wife to honor and affirm her husband's leadership and help carry it through according to her gifts. It's the disposition to follow a husband's authority and an inclination to yield to his leadership. It is an attitude that says, "I delight for you to take the initiative in our family. I am glad when you take responsibility for things and lead with love. I don't flourish in the relationship when you are passive and I have to make sure the family works."

¹⁵Ibid.

But submission does not follow a husband into sin. What then does submission say in such a situation? It says, “It grieves me when you venture into sinful acts and want to take me with you. You know I can’t do that. I have no desire to resist you. On the contrary, I flourish most when I can respond joyfully to your lead; but I can’t follow you into sin, as much as I love to honor your leadership in our marriage. Christ is my King.”

The reason I say that submission is a *disposition* and an *inclination* to follow a husband’s lead is because there will be times in a Christian marriage when the most submissive wife, with good reason, will hesitate at a husband’s decision. It may look unwise to her. Suppose it’s Noël and I. I am about to decide something for the family that looks foolish to her. At that moment, Noël could express her submission like this: “Johnny, I know you’ve thought a lot about this, and I love it when you take the initiative to plan for us and take the responsibility like this, but I really don’t have peace about this decision and I think we need to talk about it some more. Could we? Maybe tonight sometime?”

The reason that is a kind of biblical submission is 1) because husbands, unlike Christ, are fallible and ought to admit it; 2) because husbands ought to want their wives to be excited about the family decisions, since Christ wants the church to be excited about following his decisions and not just follow begrudgingly; 3) because the way Noël expressed her misgivings communicated clearly that she endorses my leadership and affirms me in my role as head; and 4) because she has made it clear to me from the beginning of our marriage that if, when we have done all the talking we should, we still disagree, she will defer to her husband’s decision.

- Spirit-filled husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church – v. 25
- Spirit-filled husbands are to minister the word to their wives, and in turn, their children – v. 26
- The marriage relationship between the husband and wife is meant primarily for holiness, not happiness – v. 26-27
- Spirit-filled husbands are to nourish and cherish their wives spiritually just like Jesus does his church – v. 28-30
- The mystery of marriage is that it exists to picture the relationship of Christ to the church – v. 31-33

III. Spirit-Filled Families Are to Relate to Each Other in God-Ordained Ways – v. 6:1-4

- Children who come to Jesus are considered saints alongside all other Christians – v. 1:1
- Spirit-filled children are to obey their parents in the Lord v. 6:1 (notice there is no qualifier like if your parents are good, or godly, or great)
- Spirit-filled children are also to honor their father and mother – v. 6:2 (not one or the other, but both)
- Spirit-filled Fathers, and in their absence mothers, are not to provoke their children to anger. This means that the child’s feelings are to be considered as a parent. This also means that we are to avoid things that will ultimately be more harmful than helpful.

“Now specifically within the family, fathers are urged to avoid those attitudes, words, and actions which would provoke their children to anger (has the ‘your’ been inserted to remind fathers that the children belong to them?). Effectively, the apostle is ruling out ‘excessively severe discipline, unreasonably harsh demands, abuse of authority, arbitrariness, unfairness, constant nagging and condemnation, subjecting a child to humiliation, and all forms of gross insensitivity to a child’s needs and sensibilities’. Behind this curbing of a father’s authority is the clear recognition that children, while they are expected to obey their parents in the Lord, are persons in their own right who are not to be manipulated, exploited, or crushed.”¹⁶

- Spirit-filled Fathers, and in their absence mothers, are to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Good parents employ discipline that both instructs in the right ways to live and counsels against the harmful ways. Though Paul does not specify the content of such parental “instruction,” at the least it includes the admonitions in this letter.

WHAT TO WORK ON THIS WEEK:

- Begin reading “A Baptist Catechism” by John Piper. A catechism is a great orderly way to learn and teach the Christian faith to our children. Also, for those of us who were never catechized, it means that 2 generations are catechized together.
- Don’t be afraid to accommodate your Scripture reading to your child’s level of understanding if necessary. Make sure they understand the main idea of what the Scripture is trying to convey.

Songs for the Week:

Traditional: “Holy Holy Holy”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=414dGGTedpM>

Contemporary: “Revelation Song”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsiDukXIeVY>

For Younger Kids: “Jesus Loves the Little Children”
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_xdkk_sXgA

Memory Verse: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.”² “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise),³ “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” Eph 6:1-3 ESV

¹⁶O’Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, 446.

FAMILY WORSHIP SERIES

Lesson 7

Family Worship in the New Testament: Part 2

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:16-17 ESV

2 TIMOTHY 3:14-15 (As parents we are to give reliable testimony to a reliable source)

In Acts 16:1-3, Timothy is mentioned for the first time. He apparently is from Lystra and is the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. It is most likely that Timothy and his mother and grandmother were converted during Paul's first visit to the area which is mentioned in Acts 13:49-14:25.¹⁷ Because Timothy was reputable (Acts 16:2), Paul decided to invite him along on his journey. Paul considered Timothy trustworthy, therefore he was given several assignments, one to Thessalonica (1 Thess 3:1-10), one to Corinth (1 Cor 4:16-17) and another to Philippi (Phil 2:19-20). Paul refers to Timothy several ways in his epistles from "fellow worker" (Rom 16:21, 1 Thess 3:2, 1 Cor 16:10, Phil 2:22) to "beloved and faithful son" (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2, 2 Tim 1:2). Paul's love for Timothy and his desire to see his ministry flourish in Ephesus, despite the opposition of false teachers, is no doubt the reason for him penning the two letters that bear his name.

I. Timothy Had a Heritage of Faith

"Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. ²He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. ³Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek." (Acts 16:1-3 ESV)

- Timothy is to continue in what he has learned and firmly believed – v. 14
- Timothy was taught the truths of God and came to believe them himself – v. 14
- This means that he was given reliable testimony from reliable sources (So where did Timothy get this instruction?)

⁵ I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well." (2 Tim 1:5 ESV)

¹⁷Gordon Fee, *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus* Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1988), 1-2.

- Paul is commending here the normal pattern of spiritual development for children

II. Timothy Was Pointed to the Holy Scriptures – v. 15

- This is the only occurrence of the term “sacred writings”, or Holy Scriptures in the New Testament
- The term “sacred writings” refers to their divine quality. They are separate and distinct from all other writings as they reflect the nature and character of the divine Author. – v. 16-17.

“The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.” 2000 Southern Baptist Faith and Message

- The Holy Scriptures here is a reference to the Old Testament, and in the mind of Paul, all of the OT points to Christ
- In similar fashion to Deut 6 and Psalm 78, parents are commended for pointing children to God’s Word

It seems apparent to Paul that Timothy’s learning and spiritual development was no accident, but directly tied to the commitment of his mother and grandmother to teach him from a young age. It is the combination of Lois and Eunice’s godly lives and their scriptural instruction that is key. Knute Larson rightly makes that connection when he states:

“Paul also wanted Timothy to consider those from whom you learned [truth], and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures. Once again he had Timothy’s mother and grandmother in mind (see 2 Tim. 1:5). Timothy was schooled in the Old Testament writings and had learned the need for forgiveness, the provision of God, and the necessity of faith. He had also been disciplined by Paul, learning Christ and the church. In each case, Timothy had not only been given knowledge; he had been witness to godly lives.”¹⁸

¹⁸Knute Larson, *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, vol. 9, Holman New Testament Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000), 305.

Timothy's mother and grandmother demonstrated lives of conviction and constantly pointed Timothy to the "sacred writings", and this is to be commended in Paul's eyes.

III. The Holy Scriptures Made Timothy Wise for Salvation through Faith in Christ – v. 15

- The Scriptures themselves do not provide salvation, but they do point to the Savior who can provide it

“³⁹You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me” (John 5:39 ESV)

“²⁵ And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.” (Luke 24:25-27 ESV)

- As parents we should point our children to the Bible, and let the Bible point them to Christ

“Children do not receive the Word from and on the authority of parents, but intelligent parents always lead their children to rest their faith independently upon the Word and not upon them as parents.” R.C.H. Lenski

A VOICE FROM HISTORY:

Charles Spurgeon:

“Oh, that you and I might get into the very heart of the Word of God, and get that Word into ourselves! As I have seen the silkworm eat into the leaf, and consume it, so ought we to do with the Word of the Lord—not crawl over its surface, but eat right into it till we have taken it into our inmost parts. It is idle merely to let the eye glance over the words, or to recollect the poetical expressions, or the historic facts; but it is blessed to eat into the very soul of the Bible until, at last, you come to talk in Scriptural language, and your very style is fashioned upon Scripture models, and, what is better still, your spirit is flavored with the words of the Lord.

I would quote John Bunyan as an instance of what I mean. Read anything of his, and you will see that it is almost like the reading the Bible itself. He had read it till his very soul was saturated with Scripture; and, though his writings are charmingly full of poetry, yet he cannot give us his *Pilgrim's Progress*—that sweetest of all prose poems — without continually making us feel and say, “Why, this man is a living Bible!” Prick him anywhere—his blood is Bibline, the very essence of the Bible flows from him. He cannot

speaking without quoting a text, for his very soul is full of the Word of God. I commend his example to you, beloved.”¹⁹

WHAT TO WORK ON THIS WEEK:

- Begin reading “A Baptist Catechism” by John Piper. A catechism is a great orderly way to learn and teach the Christian faith to our children. Also, for those of us who were never catechized, it means that 2 generations are catechized together.
- If your children are finding it hard to follow along try to pick up the “Jesus Storybook Bible” or similar Bible for children. Go to www.jesusstorybookbible.com.
- Be intentional this week and look for opportunities to instruct your children with stories from the Bible in the normal course of your interactions

Songs for the Week:

Traditional: “All Hail the Power of Jesus Name”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZeOeNICg9o>

Contemporary: “All I Have Is Christ”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XY-idvZYF0U>

For Younger Kids: “I’ve Got a River of Life Flowing Out of Me”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-pvjjvgxFY>

Memory Verse: “¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”
(2 Tim 3:16-17 ESV)

¹⁹—”Mr. Spurgeon as a Literary Man,” in *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon, Compiled from His Letters, Diaries, and Records by His Wife and Private Secretary*, vol. 4, 1878-1892 (Curtis & Jennings, 1900), p. 268.

FAMILY WORSHIP SERIES
Lesson 8
Practical Helps in Implementing Family Worship

THE BLESSINGS OF FAMILY WORSHIP

- I. Family worship brings glory to God
- II. Family worship promotes a clear conscious
- III. Family worship, by God's grace, impacts generations
- IV. Family worship helps fulfill the Great Commission

PRACTICAL ITEMS TO REMEMBER IN REGARDS TO FAMILY WORSHIP

- I. Family worship is about your family intentionally moving toward God together. It is about worshiping God. This is why we were created.
- II. Prepare for family worship by praying for your children and for wisdom in leading them. Seek the Lord yourself and then teach your children to seek Him.
- III. Aim for regularity in family worship. Seek to be consistent. Pick a time and place and stick to it.
- IV. Avoid unrealistic ideals. Joel Beeke says, "an idealistic approach that is beyond the reach of even the most God-fearing home, and a minimalist approach that abandons daily family worship because the ideal seems so out of reach."²⁰ In other words, do not over think or under achieve with family worship. Set realistic goals and make the most of your time with your children.
- V. Be creative and use your family's gifts to enhance family worship. Use crafts, colors, and even service projects as your children get older. Most people learn in a variety of ways so do not be afraid to experiment as to which learning methods are best for your family.
- VI. Use the Christian calendar and holidays to reinforce family worship and build traditions into your home. Pay special attention to major Christian holidays like Advent and Lent, Christmas and Easter. One of the benefits of consistent family worship is that it will be what your children remember around each of these holidays as they begin their own families.
- VII. Be brief. Family worship need not be tedious or overly long and drawn out. If it is a regular practice in your home you will have hundreds, if not thousands, of opportunities to gather together. You need not cover the entirety of Scripture during each family gathering.

²⁰Joel Beeke, *Family Worship*, (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2002), 12.

READ, PRAY, SING

- I. Read the Bible. Jesus says in Matthew, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away (Matt 24:35). God’s Word is central in the worship of His people. Tony Krummer asserts, “Worship begins when *God speaks to us through his Word* (emphasis his). So, family devotions should include a time of reading the Bible.²¹ Read chapter by chapter through books and for children especially read through narratives. Whitney explains, “Read enthusiastically and interpretively. Explain words the children may not understand. Clarify the meaning of key verses. To improve their understanding, ask the children to explain a particular verse or phrase to you.”²²
- II. Pray as a Family. When we read the Bible as a family we hear from God through his Word. When we pray as a family we are acknowledging Him as our Provider and Protector. Family prayers should include praises and petitions. If possible, pray about something that the passage you just read suggested. Keep a prayer list for your family or take requests. Pray through the Psalms or memorize the Lord’s Prayer together. Allow your family prayers to develop and expand by encouraging your children or family members to participate.
- III. Sing Together. The Bible is filled with exhortations to praise the Lord and especially to sing unto Him. The book of Psalms mentions singing over 350 times alone. Psalm 47 exclaims, “Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!” (Ps 47:6). Psalm 33 commands, “Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous! Praise befits the upright” (Ps 33:1). Parents need not be musicians. God desires a joyful heart more than a professional singer who does not delight in Him. Find some old hymnals at your church or use online resources and recordings. If you have someone who can play an instrument then allow them to lead. Pick songs that help teach your children about the greatness of God.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER ABOUT FAMILY WORSHIP:

- What better way to evangelize your children daily?
- What better way to provide a regular time for your children to learn the things of God from you?
- What better way to provide your children with an ongoing opportunity to ask about the things of God in a comfortable context for such questions?
- What better way for you to transmit your core beliefs to your children?
- What better way for your children to see the ongoing spiritual example of their parents?

²¹Tony Kummer, “The Beginners Family Worship Handbook” [on-line]. Accessed 2 February 2013. Available from <http://ministry-to-children.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/family-worship-guidebook.pdf>; Internet.

²² Donald S. Whitney, *Family Worship: In the Bible, in History, & in Your Home*, (Shepherdsville, KY: The Center for Biblical Spirituality, 2006), 23.

- What better way to provide workable, reproducible examples to your children of how to have a distinctively Christian home when they start a home of their own?
- What better way for getting your family together on a daily basis?
- Isn't this what you really *want* to do? (emphasis his)²³

WHAT TO WORK ON THIS WEEK:

- Read back over the section “Practical Helps in Implementing Family Worship” above. Look for places where you strengthen your practice of family worship.
- Work on consistency. If you and your family can do something consistently for 40 days then it will become a habit or discipline. In other words, it will become part of your everyday life as a family.

Songs for the Week:

- Traditional: “I Stand Amazed in the Presence”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tOhtiLzBXdl>
- Contemporary: “Let Your Kingdom Come”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9kjMaYqhQnw>
- For Younger Kids: “I’ve Got a River of Life Flowing Out of Me”
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-pvjjvgxFY>
- Memory Verse: ⁸ Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and forsake not your mother’s teaching, ⁹ for they are a graceful garland for your head and pendants for your neck. (Proverbs 1:8-9 ESV)

²³Ibid., 23.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Alexander, James W. *Thoughts on Family Worship*. Edited by Don Kistler. Morgan, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1998.
- Anders, Max. *Galatians-Colossians*. Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 8. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1999.
- Beeke, Joel. *Family Worship*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2002.
- Beeke, Joel R., and Randall J. Pederson. *Meet the Puritans: With a Guide to Modern Reprints*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006.
- Baucham, Voddie, Jr. *Family Driven Faith: Doing What It Takes to Raise Sons and Daughters Who Walk with God*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2007.
- Baxter, Richard. *The Reformed Pastor*. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1999.
- Beale, G. K. *A New Testament Theology: The Unfolding of the Old Testament in the New*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.
- _____. *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008.
- Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. *The Cost of Discipleship*. Translated by R. H Fuller. New York: Collier Books. 1963.
- Broyles, Craig C. *Psalms*. Understanding the Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999.
- Bruce, F. F. *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984.
- Calvin, John. *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol 3. Translated by James Anderson. Bellingham: Logos Bible Software, 2010.

- _____. *Commentaries on the Epistles of Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians. Calvin's Commentaries*, vol. 21. Translated by William Pringle. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1996.
- _____. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Edited by John T. McNeill. Translated by Ford Lewis Battles. 2 vols. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960.
- Carson, D. A. *A Call to Spiritual Reformation: Priorities from Paul and His Prayers*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1992.
- Clements, Ronald E. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. In vol. 2 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Edited by Leander E. Keck, 269-538. Nashville: Abington Press, 1998.
- Craigie, Peter C. *The Book of Deuteronomy*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1976.
- Dempster, Stephen G. *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible, NSBT*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003.
- Driscoll, Mark, *Pastor Dad: Scriptural Insights on Fatherhood*. Accessed February 22, 2013. http://theresurgence.com/files/2011/03/02/relit_ebook_pastordad.pdf.
- Fee, Gordon. *1 & 2 Timothy, Titus*. Understanding the Bible Commentary. Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1988.
- Goldsworthy, Graeme. *Preaching the whole Bible as Christian Scripture*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000.
- Grudem, Wayne. *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994.
- Hammond, George. *The Case for Family Worship*. Edited by Don Kistler. Orlando: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 2005.
- Haynes, Brian. *Shift: What It Takes to Finally Reach Families Today*. Loveland, CO: Group, 2009.
- House, Paul R. *Old Testament Theology*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1998.
- Jones, Timothy Paul. *Family Ministry Field Guide: How Your Church Can Equip Parents to Make Disciples*. Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2011.
- Keil, Carl Friedrich, and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996.

- Klein, William W. *Ephesians*. In vol. 12 of *Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Edited by Tremper Longman III, 21-173. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- Knight, George W. *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. New International Greek Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids; Carlisle, England: W.B. Eerdmans, 1992.
- Köstenberger, Andreas. *1 and 2 Timothy*. Expositor's Bible Commentary, vol. 12. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.
- Kummer, Tony. *The Beginners Family Worship Handbook*. Accessed February 22, 2013. <http://ministry-to-children.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/family-worship-guidebook.pdf>.
- Ladd, George Eldon. *A Theology of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974.
- Larson, Knute. *I & II Thessalonians, I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon*. Holman New Testament Commentary, vol. 9. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000.
- Lea, Thomas D. and Hayne P. Griffin. *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, The New American Commentary, vol. 34. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992.
- Lewis, Robert. *Raising a Modern Day Knight: A Father's Role in Guiding his Son to Authentic Manhood*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2007.
- Lloyd-Jones, David Martyn. *God the Father, God the Son*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1996.
- McCann, J. Clinton, Jr. *The Book of Psalms*, in vol. 2 of *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Edited by Leander E. Keck, 639-1280. Nashville: Abington Press, 1996.
- Merrill, Eugene H. *Deuteronomy*. The New American Commentary, vol. 4. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1994.
- _____. *Life in the Spirit: In Marriage, Home and Work: An Exposition of Ephesians 5:18 to 6:9*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1973.
- Mounce, William D. *The Pastoral Epistles*. Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 46. Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2000.
- Nettles, Tom J. *Teaching Truth, Training Hearts: The Study of Catechisms in Baptist Life*. Amityville, NY: Calvary Press Publishing, 1998.
- Neufeld, Thomas R. Yoder. *Ephesians*. Believer's Church Bible Commentary. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001

- O'Brien, Peter T. *The Letter to the Ephesians*. Pillar New Testament Commentary. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1999.
- Packer, J. I. *Knowing God*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1973.
- _____. *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1990.
- Pink, Arthur Walkington. *The Arthur Pink Anthology*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2005.
- Piper, John. *A Baptist Catechism*. Accessed February 2, 2013. http://cdn.desiringgod.org/pdf/blog/A_Baptist_Catechism-new.pdf.
- Ryle, J.C. *The Duties of Parents*. Conrad, MT: Triangle Press, 1993.
- Sailhamer John H. *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992.
- Schreiner, Thomas R. *1, 2 Peter, Jude*. The New American Commentary, vol. 37. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003.
- _____. *New Testament Theology: Magnifying God in Christ*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008.
- Simeon, Charles. *Psalms*. Horae Homileticae 6. London: Samuel Holdsworth, 1836.
- Spence, H. D. M. *Deuteronomy*. The Pulpit Commentary. London: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909.
- _____. *Ephesians*. The Pulpit Commentary. London: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909.
- _____. *Psalms Vol. II*. The Pulpit Commentary. London: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909.
- Sproul, R. C., Jr. *Family Practice: God's Prescription for a Healthy Home*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001.
- _____. *When You Rise Up*. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2004.
- Spurgeon, Charles H. *Spiritual Parenting*. New Kensington, PA: Whitaker House, 2003.
- Stinson, Randy, and Jones, Timothy Paul, eds., *Trained in the Fear of God: Family Ministry in Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective*. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregal Academic & Professional, 2011.

Ware, Bruce A. *Big Truths for Young Hearts: Teaching and Learning the Greatness of God*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2009.

_____. *Spurgeon's Sermons on Family and Home*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1995).

Whitfield, George. "The Great Duty of Family Religion." In *The Godly Family. A Series of Essays on the Duties of Parents and Children*. Pittsburgh, PA: Soli Deo Gloria Publications, 1993.

Whitney, Donald S. *Family Worship: In the Bible, in History, & in Your Home*. Shepherdsville, KY: The Center for Biblical Spirituality, 2006.

_____. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1991.

Wiersbe, Warren, W. *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1996.

Wilson, Douglas James. *Father Hunger: Why God Calls Men to Love and Lead Their Families*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012.

Wright, Steve and Chris Graves. *Apparent Privilege: That the Next Generation Might Know*. Wake Forest: InQuest, 2008.

Articles

The Barna Group. "A New Generation Expresses its Skepticism and Frustration with Christianity." Accessed February 18, 2013. <http://www.barna.org/teens-next-gen-articles/94-a-new-generation-expresses-its-skepticism-and-frustration-with-christianity>.

_____. "Americans Not Concerned About Their Spiritual Condition." Accessed February 18, 2013. <http://www.barna.org/faith-spirituality/98-americans-not-concerned-about-their-spiritual-condition?q=parenting>.

_____. "New Research Explores the Long-Term Effect of Spiritual Activity among Children and Teens." Accessed February 18, 2013. <http://www.barna.org/family-kids-articles/321-new-research-explores-the-long-term-effect-of-spiritual-activity-among-children-and-teens>.

_____. "Parents Describe How They Raise Their Children." Accessed February 18, 2013. <http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/5-barna-update/184-parents-describe-how-they-raise-their-children?q=parenting>.

- _____. "Research Shows Parenting Approach Determines Whether Children Become Devoted Christians." Accessed February 18, 2013. <http://www.barna.org/family-kids-articles/106-research-shows-parenting-approach-determines-whether-children-become-devoted-christians>.
- _____. "The Spiritual Maturity of Moms Outpaces that of Dads." Accessed February 18, 2013. <http://www.barna.org/family-kids-articles/104-the-spirituality-of-moms-outpaces-that-of-dads>.
- Boekestein, William. "Family Worship 101." Accessed August 9, 2014. <http://www.ligonier.org/blog/family-worship-101/>.
- Helopoulos, Jason. "Family Worship and Its Benefits." Accessed December 3, 2013. <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/family-worship-and-its-benefits.php>.
- LifeWay Research. "LifeWay Research Looks at Role of Faith in Parenting." Accessed October 20, 2014. <http://www.lifewayresearch.com/2009/03/24/lifeway-research-looks-at-role-of-faith-in-parenting>.
- _____. "Maturing Believers Exercise Faith, Trust." Accessed February 18, 2013. <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/research-survey-maturing-believers-exercise-faith-trust>.
- _____. "Parents Look Inward Not Upward for Guidance." Accessed October 20, 2014. <http://www.lifewayresearch.com/2009/03/24/parents-look-inward-not-upward-for-guidance>.
- _____. "Obedience Not Easy Decision for Believers." Accessed February 18, 2013. <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/research-survey-obedience-not-easy-decision-for-believers>.
- _____. "Religious Convictions Not Among Most Desired Parental Traits." Accessed October 20, 2014. <http://www.lifewayresearch.com/2013/05/07/religious-convictions-not-among-most-desired-parental-traits>.
- _____. "Transformational Research Identifies Eight Attributes of Growing Disciples." Accessed February 18, 2013. <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/transformational-research-attributes-of-growing-disciples>.
- Pew Research Center. "A Tale of Two Fathers." Accessed February 18, 2013. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2011/06/15/a-tale-of-two-fathers/>.
- _____. "Being Dad May Be Tougher These Days, but Working Moms are among Their Biggest Fans." Accessed February 18, 2013. <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2007/06/13/being-dad-may-be-tougher-these-days-but-working-moms-are-among-their-biggest-fans/>.

Piper, John. "Raising Children Who Are Confident in God." Accessed February 24, 2013. <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-/sermons/raising-children-who-are-confident-in-god>.

Reid, Alvin. "Raising the Bar: Ministry to Students in the New Millennium." Accessed June 24, 2012. <http://alvinreid.com/archives/16>.

Reinke, Tony, "Learning from the Father of fatherhood." Accessed February 24, 2013. <https://www.cbmw.org/learning-from-the-father-of-fatherhood>.

Whitney, Donald. "Family Worship: Why?." Accessed June 24, 2012. <http://www.christianity.com/Home/Christian%20Living%20Features/11636446/>.

ABSTRACT

TEACHING FAMILY WORSHIP TO PARENTS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN AT MT. VERNON BAPTIST OF GLEN ALLEN, VIRGINIA

Jacob Bowen Harris, D.Min.
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Bruce A. Ware

This project taught the biblical and theological foundations of family worship at Mt. Vernon Baptist Church. Chapter 1 describes the purpose and goals of the project as well as the rationale for the project. Chapter 2 discusses the relevant biblical texts and theological underpinnings of family worship. Chapter 3 considers several sociological studies on the role parents play in the spiritual development of children. This chapter also offers practical helps to families seeking to establish the discipline of family worship. Chapter 4 outlines the three phases of the project: the preparation phase, the teaching phase, and the data collection and analysis phase. Chapter 5 evaluates the project as a whole. The purpose and goals of the project are examined and personal and theological reflections are offered.

VITA

Jacob Bowen Harris

EDUCATIONAL

Diploma, Independence High School, Independence, Mississippi, 1998
B.A., Mississippi College, 2002
M.Div., Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 2006

MINISTERIAL

Student Pastor, Immanuel Baptist Church, Olive Branch, Mississippi, 2003-2006
Student Pastor, Bethlehem Baptist Church, Clarkesville, Georgia, 2006-2012
Associate Pastor to Students, Mt. Vernon Baptist Church, Glen Allen, Virginia,
2012-2014
Pastor to Families & Young Adults, Kirby Woods Baptist Church, Memphis,
Tennessee, 2014-