

3 Easy Steps to Start Your Spirit-Led Parenting Journey

If we're honest as parents, we'll all admit that we fall short of what we want to be. We start our parenting journey with high hopes to avoid the shortcomings we've seen in others. But we soon find that life is hectic, decisions are made in real time, and we come to make peace with our limitations. Over time, we learn to live with low-grade regret.

Sometimes the dissonance we feel between what we hope and what we deliver is not a problem to fix but a tension to manage. But there are others times when we've failed not just our own expectations but God's.

What should we do? How do we begin to change when we realize that we've not set the pace for spiritual leadership in our family? Where to start?

Accept Responsibility

God has made it clear that whenever we fail to keep his Word, our next response should be repentance—turning back to the Lord, turning from our own way. We should stop and pray something like: “Father, I’ve sinned against what You’ve commanded me to be. I’ve fallen short. Please forgive me.”

When we have failed to be the spiritual leaders in our families, then we should also make things right with our families. We might say something like: “I’ve not led our family well in the things of the Lord. Please forgive me. With the Lord’s help, I want to change. Will you pray for me that I will set a better example for our family?”

Start Small

The next step toward spiritual leadership in the family might

also become a misstep. It's easy to stomp the accelerator and try to go from 0 to 60. For example, you might be tempted to schedule family devotions—seven days a week, 45-minutes each. This might start well, but it's likely to fizzle out.

Instead, set the bar low. Plan to meet two to three times per week, for only five to 10 minutes. Find something attainable and sustainable.

Psalm Food for Thought

Years ago, my wife and I adopted an idea that we had read. In our family Bible time with our young children, we started to read one of the shorter psalms aloud. At first, we would just read it to them a couple times, then pray and be done. Then after a couple days, we might invite them to try to say it with us. And within a few weeks, even children who couldn't read would be able to say it with us from memory.

Once the words of a particular psalm become second-nature, you could take a few minutes to focus on one portion of the psalm. Take a few minutes to share what you've learned about God from that psalm.

Here are some psalms you may want to consider memorizing together. Every psalm is worth committing to memory, but ones that our family has enjoyed learning include: Psalm 1, Psalm 23, Psalm 100 and (though it's a little longer) Psalm 103.

Remember, God gave you to your family, and he gave your family to you. You (and your family) may not be perfect, but God's plan always is. {eoa}

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