

3 Keys to Raising Spiritually Strong Children

My baby girl got married recently. As I lay awake many nights prior to the ceremony contemplating my role as the father of the bride and beyond, I also did a lot of reflecting.

God is the only one capable of being the perfect father. Much of my time, life and ministry, is spent helping equip churches to help parents—biological or spiritual—to learn from His example and biblical missives as they raise the next generation to be able to stand strong spiritually. And what a battle they must wage against the magnetic pull of Satan's wiles, often disguised as cultural norms!

Because we have worked with millions of children around the world and done the research, we *know* that a successful formula exists to raise spiritually strong children. In a culture that strives to feed our kids *the* most nutritious foods, access to *the* best education, expose them to *the* most diverse experiences and not deprive them from growing up to be *the* most well-rounded individuals, I don't understand why parents wouldn't be as meticulous and intentional in their children's spiritual growth and development. The global *Attitudes and Behaviors of Youth* (ABY) survey clearly showed three main influences that allowed young people to stand strong against the negative influences the world throws at them.



We call this the “trifecta.” Intentionally providing access to and activity in these three areas of your child's life will help them resist negative behaviors and engage in more positive ones instead. Yet each one takes intentionality. Family, Faith community (church) and the Bible (religious texts).

Spiritual discipleship of our children is not an option; it's a command. Positive family experiences Do you have to be a pastor to disciple children spiritually? No. God has given us all we need.



Involvement in a faith community is imperative. It is extremely important for children to be plugged into a faith community, like their church, that helps develop their spiritual training.

Yet the church has a much more limited amount of time with a child—as illustrated below. While a faith community is key, the most important entity in a child's life is a parent—biological or spiritual. A church only has about 40 hours in a given year to directly influence a child. On average, a parent has closer to 3,000 hours in the same year.



Engagement in religious texts is important too. We believe the only way a life can be transformed is through believing and accepting the Truth found in the Bible. *God's Word is more than enough for any situation we face.* It is beyond what each of us deserves (Rom. 6:23). God's Word is powerful and alive (Heb. 4:12).

"The primary purpose of reading the Bible is not to know the Bible but to know God." —**James Merritt**

"You Christians look after a document containing enough dynamite to blow all civilization to pieces, turn the world upside down and bring peace to a battle-torn planet." —**Mahatma Gandhi**

"A thorough understanding of the Bible is better than a college education." —**Theodore Roosevelt**

The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts. –A.W. Tozer

Just as the intentional parent providing access to instruments, training and encouraging practice, we ought to do the same with God's Word. A lot of great resources are available to you as your children grow through different ages and stages of life, here are just a few:



While Bible reading seems to be trending downward, 62 percent of Americans wish they read their Bible more. People say they're too busy to read the Bible, and yet—**people want to read the Bible.** As Christians, we are responsible to instill a sense of destiny in our children. We must do everything in our power to invite them to carry on the torch of their spiritual legacy, training them to become faithful Christians. This type of spiritual growth and maturity happens when they become students of the Word, engage in regular Christian fellowship and take part in positive family experiences.

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