

7 Ways to Make an Impression Upon Your Children

To impress means **to sharpen; to teach; to be pierced**. To impress something upon someone means to speak sharp statements to them with the intention that they will be quickly remembered and obeyed.

The idea of impressing your children is to make a distinguishable mark upon them. It means to inculcate or repetitively drill into the mind.

Children have a way of remembering our mantras—those pithy statements we make that have substance. It's always a great acknowledgement when someone quotes something I have said or have written, but nothing compares to hearing my children repeat something I've said. Wow! I love it when that happens.

Did you notice that to impress also means to pierce? Could it be possible that one of the byproducts of a lack of parental teaching is that young people are mutilating their bodies with piercings? They may be so desperate to be impressed by someone or something that they will readily tattoo pictures, phrases or symbolic images upon themselves.

Alternately, they may have something to say but they don't know how to express it, so they cut and mark themselves in an effort to get attention and to be heard. In either case, this could be a direct byproduct of the absence of a patriarchal influence.

Rather than allow society to mark them, here's how we can make an indelible impression upon our children with the Word of God:

1. Make it a part of the conversation in your household. This should be a daily pattern but not in a fake, religious sense.

It should just be part of the conversation during normal routines.

For an example, talk about something that is making the headlines in the news. How does it relate to the principles of God's Word? If someone is involved in a scandal, what led to it? A sexual sin? A lack of integrity in politics or business? What scriptural example could be used to explain it?

2. As you're traveling. I really took advantage of this with my family. Drive time became teaching time for me. When we got in my SUV to go somewhere, I would begin to teach about principles in the Bible. Our family had the best dialogue while we traveled.

I believe God relates to us in the daily commute. As we go, God speaks to us. Adam walked with God in the cool of the day. Enoch walked with God, and he was no more, for God took him. Noah walked with God as a righteous man during a wicked generation. Abraham's steps were ordered as he walked to inherit a new land. Moses walked barefooted on a mountain as he received revelation from God. When Jesus came to earth, He too walked with man.

As you're traveling, spend time conversing with your family.

3. Before you go to sleep. Bedtime is a vital time to impress upon your children the things of God.

When my children were young, I made it a habit to tuck them into bed each night. I would tell them faith stories that I would make up, where the main character in the story was their age and gender so they could relate. I would make up situations where a belief in a principle from God's Word would help get them through a challenge.

Then I would speak a prayer over them for their sleep to be sweet, asking the Holy Spirit to instruct them during the night.

“When you lie down, you will not be afraid; yes, you will lie down and your sleep will be sweet” (Prov. 3:24).

4. When you get up. Starting the day off with instruction and motivation is a key to training children to take action in their lives. When they get up it's the perfect time to make goals and forecast the day. Help your child with a “To Do” list. An assignment gives your child purpose and creates order for them.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish; but happy is he who keeps the teaching” (Prov. 29:18).

The Hebrew word for revelation is “chazown,” which means a vision concerning future events, or an oracle.

An oracle is often referred to as a person with whom God speaks. It refers to an authoritative and wise person who answers looming questions. You have the ability to answer questions and the responsibility to forecast your child's future for them with your words.

5. Tie them as symbols on your hands. Not long ago a small bracelet with the acronym WWJD became a huge success. Of course, WWJD stood for a question that really served as an answer, “What Would Jesus Do?” Those who wore the bracelet were reminded when they were facing a challenge or a question from the circumstances of their day that there was a higher standard to live up to.

When each of my daughters turned 13, I presented them with a ring to wear as a symbol of purity. I told them that these rings were really gifts to be given to their future husbands as tokens representing their purity for marriage. Each ring became a symbol upon their hands to remind them of their future.

I truly believe that children want to have your vision and values stamped upon them. Remember, to impress means to make a

distinguishing mark upon them.

6. Bind them upon their foreheads. It is a Jewish tradition for men to wear the “Tefillin” or phylacteries, which are small, wooden, square boxes placed upon the forehead which house four Scriptures:

And it shall be to you as a sign on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the law of the Lord may be in your mouth. For with a strong hand the Lord has brought you out of Egypt.

“It shall be as a sign on your hand and as frontlets on your forehead, for with a strong hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt” (Ex. 13:16).

“You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes” (Deut. 6:8).

“Therefore you must fix these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and bind them as a sign on your hand, so that they may be as frontlets between your eyes” (Deut. 11:18).

When a phylactery is placed upon a man, a spoken blessing is announced, “Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever.”

Unfortunately, in many cases the purpose of these symbols have become confused and they are seen as some type of “magical” amulet to protect a person from evil. (When people attach a magical equation to a spiritual principle they pervert its power and compromise its meaning.)

We should take the more appropriate lesson to use these symbolic reminders that God is the protector of our children. He delivers His people out of bondage, and His hand will continue to guide our children’s lives.

Our children need more than a rabbit’s foot or a lucky charm; they need the reality of God’s protection.

7. Write them upon your door frames and the gates of your home. As a man, you are the gate of authority to your home. The gate that you open up is the gate others walk through. This can be good or bad. To access your home, people and things must come through you. When someone knocks on the door, it is protocol for the man of the house to answer the door.

Years ago my eldest daughter, Alexandra answered the door. As I walked into the foyer, I overheard two men speaking to my daughter about her spiritual destiny. I was shocked. I walked over and took control of the conversation, excused my daughter, stepped out onto the porch to address those men. I explained to them how inappropriate it was for them to raise a spiritual conversation with my daughter.

Men, we're the gate of authority to our home. We shouldn't allow any influence into our home that does not have our endorsement.

If we're going to make an impression upon our children, it will be by intentional effort.

The words of a father, the impression that he leaves upon his children have staying power. They can become prophecies for his children's future.

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