

Making Your Faith Sticky

I saw the sadness in their eyes.

I was speaking at a church last Sunday on the subject of “Passing On the Faith.” Since they had spent four Sundays on “Family Matters” based in Deuteronomy 6—the pivotal passage on parenting in the Bible—I chose as our follow-up text a few verses from Psalm 78:3-4, 6-7: “Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done ... That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments”

I love the multi-generational hope extended here. I love the pattern for passing it on.

But still, I saw the sadness in some eyes out in that congregation. Many pairs of eyes, actually. And I know where it came from. It came from struggling hearts, grieving hearts. Hearts of parents and grandparents, aunts and uncles, teachers and pastors and friends. Hearts that had held out great hope for the children in their lives. Hearts that had wanted very badly to “pass it on.” But they were watching kids—teens and young adults and even not-so-young adults—make some very disappointing choices, not showing much external evidence, if any, of a life of faith.

Recently I’ve been reading *Sticky Faith*, an excellent book by Kara Powell and Chap Clark on how we can build a lasting faith in our kids. It’s a great book, based on extensive research as to what makes faith “sticky.” It’s also full of helpful suggestions and powerful strategies for parents, churches and

anyone working with kids today. I highly recommend it.

But still, the question lingers, and I see those sad eyes. Why, Oh God, do I know so many parents who have truly poured themselves out to passing on the faith—and still their kids are wandering? Or running? Yes, praise God, I also know many kids who grew up in “sticky faith” homes and churches who are shining examples of faith passed on. It’s just those others that I can’t get off my mind—and never from my prayers.

It’s that dangerous gift of free will that God gave us, isn’t it? Our kids grow up to make their own decisions. And they have to find, eventually, their own faith, and establish their own walk with Jesus.

Does this mean that there’s no point in giving our all to raising “sticky faith” kids who we pray will love Jesus above all else? Of course not. It’s our calling as parents. It simply means we never forget our highest parental call: to pray for our kids—first, last and always.

It also means we never forget who ultimately sticks with our kids, pursuing them, pursuing them, pursuing them always with His infinite love and powerful grace.

It’s why I looked out over that congregation on Sunday and reminded them of what they already know: God is not finished yet—with them or with us. And what did Paul say in Philippians 1:6? We can be confident that God finishes what He starts.

So we get out our knee pads and stick with our prayers for our kids, knowing who ultimately sticks with us.

*Reprinted with permission from Mom to Mom. **Linda Anderson** founded **Mom to Mom Ministries** and served for twelve years as the teaching leader of Grace Chapel’s Mom to Mom program in Lexington, MA – an innovative parenting outreach program that has been featured in the Focus section of The Boston Globe (May 24, 1992) as well as in local newspapers and on cable*

television.