

How can I raise my kids to love God?

Few things mean as much to parents' hearts as raising their kids to love God. But in this day and age, how is that accomplished? When the Israelites first entered Canaan, the pressures of a pagan world threatened constantly to lure them and their children into sin. God's words to them for parenting and life apply just as much to us today as ever.

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-12 and Mark 12:28-34.

You will never succeed in raising children to love God by using rules. Paul stated clearly in Romans 7:4-6 that the law brings death and only the Spirit brings life. You may succeed in temporarily curbing their outward behavior, but capturing their hearts requires much more.

True love for God is more "caught" than taught. Notice the sequence of God's command to Israel. Fill in the blanks:

Deuteronomy 6:5 "Love the Lord your God with all _____ heart, all _____ soul, and all _____ strength" (NLT).

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 "And you must commit yourselves _____ to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your _____."

In the New Testament, Jesus affirmed that the greatest commandment of all is to love God with your whole self. If you really want your children to love God, you must begin by taking an inventory of your own love for Him. Consider the following questions:

- Is your love for God a love of words or actions? (See 1 John 3:18.)

- Do you really know *Him*, or do you just know *about* Him?
- Do you depend on Him? Does His opinion mean more to you than anyone else's?
- Do you hunger to spend time with Him, and do your children see that hunger played out?
- Are *you* as in love with Him, truly, as you want *them* to be? Is your love sincere?

If not, what should you do? Where does love for God come from?

Prayer is always a good place to begin. I have a friend who says, "Everything must begin with God."

You will never succeed in raising kids to love God if you do not wholeheartedly love Him yourself. Instead, you will be modeling before them a hypocrisy they will see through, or worse still, learn to imitate perfectly.

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