

The Top Lesson to Teach Your Children

The pressure put on Christian parents today is enormous. Most of us feel the unreasonable expectations that our kids be successful in practically everything they do. They must be liked by everyone (which can be dangerous), display high moral character (which they will never measure up to), be excellent at sports (which most are not), and make perfect grades (for if they don't, they won't get into the right college, and their lives will be ruined). No wonder most parents are exhausted.

While many kids are aware of these pressures, it is the parents who carry the greatest burden. And sadly, it is parents who often place these adult-sized pressures on the backs of our tender young. We care about these things, so our kids must be made to care about these things.

But what if parents are caring about all the wrong things?

It might be a good idea for followers of Jesus to look to Him about what objectives deserve our focus. In a well-known incident we read about in Luke 10, Jesus found Himself dealing with a conflict between two sisters. One, Martha, found herself overwhelmed with a long list of important tasks that needed to be done. The other, Mary, was sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to His voice. The response of Christ was succinct and clear: "Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary."

The "one thing" that is necessary for any believer is that we learn to listen to the voice of Jesus. If He declares this as true in the lives of His followers, then why do we continue to focus on staying busy pursuing everything *but* that? If being with Jesus—talking to and listening to Him—is truly the most

important thing in our lives (according to Him), then shouldn't *that* be the core focus of our parenting?

The most important thing a parent can do is teach his or her children to talk God.

Most Christians talk a good game about having a "personal relationship with God," yet few actually have the experience. We treat God like a distant judge who wants to keep us in line. Or as a spiritual Santa Claus whose job is to give us what we ask for. I know of few Christians who freely talk about a love relationship with a God who is near. One we can talk to openly. And one who speaks to us, just as you might do with a good friend. Our kids learn what they see in us. If we don't have an intimate relationship with Jesus, our kids won't have a clue what it looks like. They will miss out on the thing Jesus said was the only thing that is necessary.

We can verbally affirm the value of prayer in our lives, but we have to model it, teach it and help our kids to boldly approach God with the things that matter to them. We have to teach our kids to talk to God.

There's a brand-new resource designed to help kids learn to pray.

I am blessed to serve on the board of a ministry based in Texas called PrayerCare. They are committed to "encourage and equip you to begin and develop a deeply personal relationship with God—one that is increasingly intense, intimate and interactive." Their newest project is called KidsPray. It is just getting started, but they are striving to create videos and tools (created by kids and for kids) to help children learn to pray.

You can visit their website at [or](#) find their first video on YouTube. It is great to watch with your children. Timothy, the young man in the first video, has a call to preach and is already using his gifts to encourage kids to talk to God. The

KidsPray strategy of . stands for “Stop Now And Pray.” This is a simple and clear way that parents can help their kids regularly talk to God and develop a “pray without ceasing” relationship with Him.

Our families live crazy, busy lives. The way our culture is moving, I don't see any of us slowing down any time soon. But in the midst of the madness, Christian families have the opportunity to be different. No ... opportunity is the wrong word. We have the imperative obligation to be different. We know a God who loves us and who is pursuing an intimate relationship with us. As parents, we must teach our kids that talking to Jesus and listening for His voice is the most important thing in their lives. KidsPray is a tool that can help you do that.

Please check it out and share it with others!

*Adapted from , a ministry founded by **Barrett and Jenifer Johnson**. After serving in the local church for 25 years, Barrett and Jenifer launched INFO for Families as a ministry designed to encourage people through speaking, personal coaching and resource development. Barrett served for 15 years in youth ministry before serving for 8 years as the Family Minister at Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Atlanta, one of the largest churches in the South. He has degrees from Texas A&M University and Southwestern Seminary, but he and Jenifer have received their best education through the no-holds-barred nature of everyday family life.*