

FAMILY DEVOTIONAL TIMES

I. WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO ME (US)?

A. Age To Come Reunion

1. **I can't control whether my kids will remain faithful witnesses to the gospel message and endure to the end and be saved.** But I can do what the Word says in Prov. 22:6 and train them in the same hope the prophets and apostles had and taught, through leading them to cling to the cross, cry out to the Holy Spirit and know the Biblical gospel and it's author. A hope anchored in the restoration of all things through the Messiah's return.
 - a) Example: 1 Peter with kids
 - (1) In trials, it's the joy you have in the hope of Jesus' return that actually testifies to your faith in the eyes of others.
 - b) **Who doesn't want to see their children in the age to come, resurrected unto life for all eternity?** But that gospel must be tangible and real and can easily become a pipe dream in my own heart. A fantasy. Clouded by the busyness of life and the spirit of this age, which is strong here in the West where we live. And that then echoes into my priorities, family, etc.

B. Theology (Knowledge of God) Informs How We Live and How We Worship

1. **TESTIMONY** - Early in my parenting, I was a **work-a-holic**. My family was neglected greatly but I was praised beyond the walls of my home. Some can testify to part or all of that here at Bethany because you saw me then. Especially my wife. Much of my theology came from men, not study of the scripture (Biblically illiterate) and informed a lot of "doing" in Jesus' name for the sake of reputation, absent of listening. But not a lot of being with Jesus and knowing Him through His Word while being humbled.
2. Pursuit of comfort and fame in the name of Jesus and formed my theology around it.
 - a) e.g. Ministries of the past
3. **Our theology informs our lifestyle. And my theology was disjointed and my gospel shallow.** I treated the Bible like a buffet to pick and choose whatever would validate an easier lifestyle that still did "good things" but was absent of a solid gospel, calling me to the cross.
4. **Theology went from very disjointed**, now-centered, self-helpish, to a far more gospel, God-centered focus that waits patiently and trusts.
5. As a result, my worship, praise and rejoicing started becoming less "me" focused and more about Him and His mission. And that actually brought far deeper intimacy with the Lord than I ever had. A greater resolve to follow Him formed in me. His truth stirred my heart in

joy, even in little trials I faced. I have felt far more steady as a believer and have far less desire to be everyone's Messiah and Savior.

- a) As I actually began to read His Word, I realized it is constantly and primarily formed around the hope we have in the age to come when the Messiah sits on the throne in Jerusalem ("worship" in Psalms, etc. in Blue Letter). Salem Gil - Is. 25:8,9
 - b) **So for us, in our household, times of song or devoted focus on Him through prayer, the Word and worship, is solely to keep the gospel/"good news" in front of our eyes, that we might live according to it.** To sojourn well. Not seeking to be the Messiah but to point to the Messiah and His plan while acting justly, loving mercy and walking humbly until He returns. Knowing that everything in this dark evil age, as the Word says, is seeking to distort the gospel so that I might not live according to it. And thus not endure well, live for my own self-preservation and end on the wrong side of the fence.
 - c) Music is a serious tool to anchor truth or falsehood in children (and adults). We take it so seriously, it gains constant attention in our household. It helps us focus on the joy of God fulfilling His covenant to Creation in restoring all things at His return. And it helps keep our focus on the example Christ made to cling to the cross now that we might glory at His return.
 - d) I would venture to say that singing around the gospel and the Scriptures is similar to glue that keeps a truth sticking to my kids' (and my) hearts, so that they actually live according to the Scriptures.
 - e) If we fail at everything else, don't fail at knowing God and His gospel in the clearest way possible.
6. I share all this because you will act on what you believe. Our theology has been massively central to how worship takes a key roll in our home.

II. LEADING MY FAMILY IN WORSHIP AND DEVOTION TO GOD

A. Mess Is Best

1. Some just cringed. :)
2. Kids aren't adults. That's what I have to constantly tell myself. Some try and do everything they can to avoid the mess of kids. Others embrace it. I am no different in seeking to avoid it but realized that seeking to help my kids experience God, is better left a little messy.
3. "They can listen and learn like we can." (High expectation leading to offense and anger toward your children)
 - a) **Shepherding a Child's Heart** - There are many forms of leadership a parent can bring in the life of their children. The one it says should be the last resort is authoritative control because it pushes kids away in the long run. My Baptist background. No compassion, no love, no long suffering

4. We are a mess as parents but our gospel compelled us to need worship continually in our home.
 - a) This age is defined by darkness, wickedness, lawlessness, etc and it is going to seek to take my kids in that directory. The powers of the air are seeking a love affair with my children and in the West that can happen underground and out of my sight very quickly as my children grow up. But when facing those things, I want the gospel to inform what they do. For them to know the Spirit and His leadership. To know the importance of repentance.
5. Website - Worship with a Beetle

B. Practicals

1. Every family is different along with every kid, so find what works for your family
 - a) Reevaluate often and flex and change as needed
2. Change up the scenery
 - a) Paddle boarding
 - b) Walking with the guitar
 - c) On a trampoline, etc
3. Strengthen the attention muscle
 - a) Shorter stints of time building to larger times
 - b) Break up the time - 5/10/15 minutes of worship mixed with prayer -> little lesson -> act out the story/draw picture/etc
4. Bring variety to the different times you do it if needed - Do what works for you and change what doesn't
 - a) Possible different focus each day
5. Turn on some music (IHOP) with your phone (e.g. Grace does this a lot), Stick in a CD, sing an old hymn, etc.
6. Confidently linger in worship
 - a) Cast a little vision but linger
 - b) Give gentle leadership as distractions arise
7. Think long haul
 - a) Don't expect a lot in the short term but be ok with just going for it either way
 - (1) What should I expect from my kid?

- b) Keep expectations low throughout (especially early on) while keeping a pulse on how the Spirit wants to help you lead
- 8. Crazy what even a little bit of fractured consistency can do
 - a) It creates culture of gospel-centered worship that begins to really affect your family and draws most conversations back to Him in some way.
- 9. Invite kid's to pray a lot. Don't force them to pray through shame.
- 10. Some days kids need a toy to actually focus, other days they don't
- 11. Have fun!
 - a) Dance a little, act things out, play instruments on tables, floors, oatmeal containers
 - b) Find thrift store instruments and let them get destroyed for the sake of the gospel in your kids' lives
 - (1) Savers, Value Village, etc. Value the worship more than the stuff you do worship with.
- 12. Kids will grow so help them grow into the times you have together around worship and prayer
- 13. Anyone can sing
- 14. Just pick something and find out what works for your family. Begin and see where it goes. Shift it up.