

# BIBLICAL PARENTING 101

## Week 7: Evangelizing Your Children (Part 1)

Matt 19:14 “Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

Matt 18:4-6 “Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.”

### ***Children are Sinners***

Dead in trespasses and under God’s wrath (Eph. 2:1-3)

Heart that loves darkness more than light (John 3:19-20)

Heart inclined to evil from birth (Gen. 8:21; Psa. 58:3)

On the road to destruction and hell (Prov. 22:27; Matt. 7:13)

### **DO NOTS of Evangelism**

- ***Do not Oversimplify or Distort the Gospel.*** DON’T TELL your children to “ask Jesus into their heart” or to pray the sinner’s prayer. Don’t focus on some moment in which a decision was made. Look at the fruit.
- ***Do not Force a Response*** – genuine faith and repentance will come naturally from them if you are consistently pointing them to the gospel. Do not put words in their mouth. Do try to get them to say the right thing because they are easily manipulated.
- ***Do not Assume that They are Saved*** – Many Christian parents assume their children are saved and start treating them that way. If they profess Christ, then give them the benefit of the doubt but continue to emphasize gospel truths. Children tend to be immature (1 Cor, 13:11; 14:20), naïve (Prov. 1:4), foolish (Prov. 22:15) capricious (Isaiah 3:4), inconsistent and fickle (Matt. 11:16-17), and unstable and easily deceived; easily be tossed about from one belief to the next (Eph. 4:14). They think they have understood the ramifications of a given commitment when they have not. Their judgment is shallow. They can’t see the implications of their decisions. Despite the best of intentions, they seldom can think far beyond today, nor do they perceive how their choices will affect tomorrow. This makes children more vulnerable to self-deception and being led astray. This makes it more difficult for a parent to discern God’s saving work in their hearts. Children are easily influenced/ manipulated/ pressured into doing or saying something of which they have no understanding. They want to please their parents and not disappoint them. They easily trust others without knowing why. Therefore, we cannot take a child’s profession at face value. We mistake their sincerity and innocence (naivety) for a genuine profession. Parents are often vulnerable to believing the best of the children without evidence. They are often desperate to believe their child’s profession of faith is true.

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- ***Do not Give False Assurance*** – If a child makes a profession, not assume they are saved and there is no longer a need to press the gospel. It is the role of the Holy Spirit to give assurance, not the parent. Wrong reasons for salvation include (*The Faithful Parent*, p. 222):
  1. Doing God a favor that is deserving of his grace – "I'm so special."
  2. Only for fire insurance (to avoid hell at death) – "I don't want to suffer forever."
  3. Adding a good and helpful thing to my life – "Why not, it can't hurt?"
  4. So I can go to heaven with my family – "I want to see and be with them."
  5. Wanting to become a better person – "I'm already good and this can make me better."
  6. So Jesus can give me what I want, but I'm still living for my advantage.
  7. Wanting to be saved "in my sin" and not "from my sin."
- ***Don't Discourage Signs of Conversion*** – Don't openly question whether their faith is genuine. Time will tell if their faith is genuine. The fruit may take some time, even after they leave home. You are an evangelist throughout their growing up years. Hold a balancing act on the tightwire in your mind between affirmation of the signs of true faith and concerns that they are not there yet.
- ***Do not Rush to Baptize*** – Note the Bar Mitzvah ("son of the commandment") for Jewish boys takes place at age 12.