

Biblical Children's Ministry

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Text: 2 Timothy 1:1-9

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Series: Family

Introduction: Reaching our children is a massive responsibility. We all need to take it seriously. We are starting a new and exciting program tonight called "Kids 4 Truth". I'm excited because I believe it is thoroughly biblical. I want to show you how ministry ought to occur for our children tonight.

Let's read in **2 Timothy 1:1-9**, "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. 3 I thank God whom I serve, as did my ancestors, with a clear conscience, as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. 4 As I remember your tears, I long to see you, that I may be filled with joy. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. 6 ¶ For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. 8 Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, 9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began."

Introduction: In 1998, my wife and I visited Barcelona, where there is an exact replica of the Santa Maria there in the port. If you went down into the belly of the ship, you would find a multitude of oak barrels, rim to rim. These oak barrels served a very important purpose for those who journeyed in that ship.

- ❖ Before they took the journey, they filled them with good clean drinking water-water that they would use for their cooking, and for their refreshment. These barrels were called "ballasts." Without these barrels filled with water, they could not have lived on this journey.
- ❖ But then every time one of the barrels was empty of drinking and cooking water, they filled it with sea water, because the barrels filled a second function: they were "ballasts" there in the bowels of that ship.
- ❖ What is a ballast? They are the heavy weight put in the lower part of the ship to balance the ship and give it stability. Once it gets out to sea and meets those gigantic ocean waves, and begins to know something of the turbulence of the sea, without ballasts, the ship would capsize!

It is the weight down in the middle of the ship that allows it to make its way through the turbulent sea, to keep it on course, and to arrive safely at its destination.

This evening we are going to look at three "ballasts of the soul" that will firmly establish our children in their walk with God. They will also establish every one of us. Without these ballasts deep down in the belly of your soul, you will capsize, and your life will be a shipwreck outside of the grace of God.

This evening we come to a letter where Paul is trying to encourage Timothy. This is the second of two letters Paul writes, and Paul's whole motive is to establish Timothy in the faith, and that is my goal this afternoon.

How can you and I be a useful vessel for the Lord? Let us look at verse 5:

I. Biblical children's ministry begins in the **home** (vs. 5). Why is that?

A. God stirs up our faith through the **family** (vs. 5).

Paul says to Timothy, "I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well." (verse 5).

A person can look like he has all the success in the world, but if he does not have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, all that he accomplishes will be nothing. All is nothing in the end if God is not in our lives. He lasts forever. Everything else passes away.

And that faith begins in the home! If you have children, remember, it is not ultimately this churches responsibility to evangelize your children. It is yours. We will do our part. But the most powerful missionaries in the world are missionary mom and dad.

The real key to Timothy's faith was not just missionary Paul. It was Missionary Grandma and Mom! The greatest mission field in all the world is not the distant lands of the world. ***The greatest mission field is your HOME!***

JILL'S TESTIMONY: I think of the testimony of Jill's family. She is the eighth generation in her family to accept Christ as Saviour. Eight generations back, her ancestors were Anabaptists. They were actually from a royal family in Switzerland. Three brothers had to flee because of persecution of their faith in Christ. Where would Jill and I be without Jill's faithful mother and father? What about her faithful grandmother and grandfather. What about those before that, and so on? Are you faithful in your family? The greatest mission field in all the world is the FAMILY!

B. God also stirs up our faith through the **faithful** (vs. 1-2).

In **verses 1 and 2**, Paul writes: "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God according to the promise of the life that is in Christ Jesus, 2 To Timothy, my beloved child". It seems that the mother and the grandmother were involved in exposing Timothy to godly ministers.

Where does God's call from? It comes from God, but it is through a human voice proclaiming the Word of God. The Word can convert our children.

- **Romans 10:17**, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ."

But the call of God must first come through a human voice. **Romans 10:14**, "But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?"

Paul looked at Timothy as a son in the faith. We must thank God for those who I call "the faithful," those who preached the Gospel to us. The Bible says in **Acts 14:6-7** "they

learned of it and fled to Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the surrounding country, 7 and there they continued to preach the gospel.”

Every presentation of the Gospel is a divine appointment. Paul was preaching in Timothy’s back yard. If Paul never would have gone to Lystra and Derbe, there never would have been a 1st and 2nd letter to Timothy. Timothy was the pastor at the church of Ephesus.

Do you remember the one who pointed you to Christ?

- **Psalm 126:5**, “Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!”
- **Acts 16:1**, “Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek. 2 He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium. 3 Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.”

Transition: So, God engenders faith through the Faithful, those that preach to us the Gospel. And of course, He uses the family. Mom and Dad promoting the Gospel and godliness in the home. But ultimately, and truly, our salvation comes “from the Father!”

With that in mind, let’s look at **verse 9**.

C. Ultimately our faith is stirred up through the **Father**. “God...called us” (vs. 9).

Biblical children’s ministry begins in the home. It is in the home where we find believing parents to teach their children. Parents, God is going to use you to lead your children to Christ. You are either a door or a wall. You can’t be both. Is there enough reason in you for your children to believe that Christ is real?

I trust it is the case. Ultimately though, God calls us. We cannot save our children. We can point them to Christ. But they must go to Him for themselves so that He might save them. It’s something between them and God. We’ve got to do everything possible for them to see their need of Christ.

2 Timothy 1:9 “Who [God] saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.”

- **1 Corinthians 3:6**, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth”.

It's not us who can bring faith to a person! We can plant, we can water, but **GOD GIVETH THE GROWTH!**

II. Biblical children’s ministry must be centered on the **Word** (vs. 5; 2 Timothy 3:15).

The Word is saturated in the children through the family (vs. 5; 2 Timothy 3:15). Paul says to Timothy, “I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.” (verse 5).

Look also at **2 Timothy 3:15**, “from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”

It is the Word of God that will rescue our children from death and hell. **Romans 1:16**, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”

In order to understand what Timothy would have experienced in his home, we need to turn back to Deuteronomy 6.

A. Parents need to be diligent in **modeling** the Word before our children.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7a, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them **diligently** to your children...”

Application: It is easy to check out of our children’s lives. We let them go with the flow. We allow the TV, radio, friends, school, teachers, and others influence our children. We are called to take responsibility for our children. If you have children, they are your children. They are not mine or the person sitting next to you. They are your responsibility.

We are influencing them at all times. We say that a lot, but it is for good reason. If you lose your child’s heart, and you no longer have your child’s trust, your child may go straight into the world before every coming to Christ. Be diligent! Keep your child’s heart and your heart knit together! Don’t let them stray.

How are we to do this?

1. Parents are to live and love the Word ourselves and put the Word in our own hearts. **Verses 5-6**, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.”

Francis of Assisi is attributed as saying, “Preaching the Gospel at all times. If necessary, use words.” Are you living out the Gospel at all times?

2. Only after we are ourselves faithful disciples of Christ can we effectively teach and model the Word to our children. **Verse 7**, “You shall teach them **diligently** to your children...”

B. Parents need to be diligent in **molding** our children’s hearts with the Word of God. Look at **verses 7-9**, “You shall teach them **diligently** to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

How do we model the Word?

- A. In **Communication** in the Home, (7) “and shall talk of them when you sit in your house”. You need to make God your conversation. You need to talk! You are in other words a teacher! You are a preacher in the home every morning of every day. Now
- B. In the **Common** Duties of Life—spend time with your children and converse with them! , (7) “and when you walk by the way”. Of course this passage requires that you spend vast amounts of time with your children.

I hear some people say, I don't have time for church activities because I have to be with family. Good! Be with family! But if you cut out all the vain empty time wasting activities in your life, you

- C. **Continually**: (7) “and when you lie down, and when you rise. Holiness is a dawn till dark kind of thing! In fact it is a dawn till dawn kind of thing. It is something that takes place all the day and all the night! As David said in **Psalm 1:2**, “...his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law does he meditate day and night...”
- D. **Creatively**! “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” Be creative about the Word! You might want to put verses on your mirrors. You might want to put them in their lunch boxes. Have it hanging around your house.

Application: Let me just say that a practical way that parents have fulfilled Deuteronomy 6 is through catechism. That is through a question and answer method in learning God's Word. That is what we have begun tonight with Kids 4 Truth.

Let me encourage you to take the K4T lessons home and help your children memorize the Word of God. We want to see our children converted! We want to see them serving God.

Conclusion: Your home is the best environment for your children to come to Christ. Nothing is more important. In introducing Kids 4 Truth tonight, we want to give you a practical way to fulfill this.

Perhaps when you saw the title of the message you thought I was going to give you a method. Do you understand that evangelism CANNOT be reduced to any program, technique, or marketing approach? Salvation is repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a broken and a contrite way of living from the heart. No one can generate that intellectually. It is a spiritual transformation. Yet it is the simplest thing in the world. Christ has His loving arms open to children. He says in **Mark 10:14**, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God.” The littlest may come. His arms are open. Are we hindering them in any way?