

Taking It Home:

John 15:5 Jesus says, "I am the vine; you are the branches. The one who remains in me – and I in him – bears much fruit." To pass on a spiritual heritage to emerging generations you have to have one to pass on. This doesn't mean you have to possess a degree in theology, simply that you are living in regular fellowship with the Savior. From the list below circle some activities that will encourage your personal relationship with Jesus:

Meditate on Deuteronomy 6:4-7	Write a journal entry thanking God for those who have passed on a Godly legacy to you	Meditate on Proverbs 1:7-8
Pray daily for your children to love God with their whole heart, soul, mind, and strength	Meditate on Ephesians 6:4	Find a place of solitude where you can ask God to impress upon your heart His personal love for you
Spend time confessing to God your great need for Him and the sins that have separated you from Him	Practice the spiritual discipline of fasting as you pray for children who have walked away from their faith	Write a personal faith biography, tracing the moments where God moved in your life

Now, take some time to circle activities you can do this week that will encourage the spiritual growth of your children, grandchildren, or children around you:

Write a note to a child expressing the godly traits you've seen in them	Take your child out to breakfast and share with them your spiritual journey	Pray with your child before you drop them off at school
Share a meal together as a family at least 5 times this week	Play catch with your son	Take a walk with your daughter
Before bed, ask your child what the highlight of their day was	Introduce yourself to your child's Sunday School teacher. Ask them how you can pray for them	At least once this week have a family devotional

Resources:

It Starts at Home by Kurt Bruner and Steve Stroope

Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids by Kara Powell and Chap Clark

For a restatement of Pastor Matthew's sermon points, visit pastormatthew.net and click on the "Write This Down" tab.

@ Home-Building Strong Families
A Legacy Begins at Home
Proverbs 1:7-8

Dr. Matthew R. St. John
Bethel Church
April 15, 2012

A Legacy Begins at Home

Notes:

For more information about Growth Groups, Growth Group homework, and a podcast of sermons with homework, visit www.bethelhc.com.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of April 15, 2012

Proverbs 1:7-8

Quick Review: A recurring theme throughout the text of Scripture is one of disciple-making. Today, Pastor Matthew spoke of the necessity and the expectation throughout the Bible that this very disciple-making process begins at home. But beyond the expectation is the conviction that there is power in the disciple-making process when parents impress upon their children a legacy of faith.

My Story:

- Jonathan and Sarah Edwards had 11 children. Daily, Sarah prayed for her children and disciplined them with gentleness and firmness. Together Jonathan and Sarah raised their children in a gospel-centered home, leaving a legacy that would last for generations. Over four hundred descendants of Jonathan and Sarah Edwards have been traced. Of these, fourteen became college presidents, roughly one hundred became professors, another one hundred ministers, and about the same number became lawyers or judges. Nearly sixty became doctors, and others were authors or editors.
- Max Jukes, a contemporary of Edwards, lived a radically different life. As an adult, Jukes had a drinking problem that kept him from holding a steady job. It also kept him from showing much concern for his wife and children. He would disappear sometimes for days and return drunk. He made little time for loving and instructing his children. Benjamin Warfield has also charted Jukes' descendants. He was able to trace 540 of Jukes' ancestors. They offer a stunning contrast to the Edwards' legacy. Of Jukes' known descendants, 310 died in poverty, at least 150 were criminals (including 7 murderers), more than 100 were drunkards and half of his female descendants ended up as prostitutes.
- In your own experience, how has the faith of your parents shaped your personal faith journey?
- Parents: What scares you the most about passing on your faith to your children?
- Grandparents: How has your faith impacted the faith journey of your grandchildren?
- Married/Engaged without children: Whether you intend to have children or not, what steps can you take in your marriage to model a faith that will impact the faith journeys of emerging generations of children?
- Singles: Who are the mature Christ-followers (parents, grandparents, significant adults) that have significantly influenced your faith journey?

Growing Deeper:

- Read Proverbs 1:8 and Ephesians 6:4. Both of these passages speak of a balance between correction and encouragement; between discipline and guidance. What are the consequences when these get out of balance? In other words, when there is too much correction and not enough encouragement or when there is too much discipline but not enough guidance?
- Read Deuteronomy 6:4-7. This passage has been called the magna carta of family ministry, but a closer look reveals that this isn't just a mandate for parents, but for the entire faith community. Moses writes, "Hear, O Israel!" What roles can the following groups have in passing on a faith journey to the emerging generations?
 - Parents
 - Grandparents
 - Young couples
 - Singles
- British poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge once had a discussion with a man who firmly believed that children should not be given formal religious instruction, but should be free to choose their own religious faith when they reached maturity. Coleridge did not disagree, but later invited the man into his somewhat neglected garden. "Do you call this a garden?" the visitor exclaimed. "There are nothing but weeds here!" "Well, you see," Coleridge replied, "I did not wish to infringe upon the liberty of the garden in any way. I was just giving the garden a chance to express itself."
- How do the previous passages of scripture amplify the point of Samuel Taylor Coleridge?