

## ***How to...Build a Strong Family***

May 3 & 4, 2008

***Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.***

*Deuteronomy chapter 6 verses 4-9 (144)*

Listen, Bethel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.

- In order for any family to work well, God must be at the center of it
- God is the only one who deserves this position
- He's the only one wise enough to be in this position
- As parents, if we choose not to do this, our family pays the price

You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.

- Your spouse/kids need to SEE that you love God with all your heart
- There can't be any areas of life that I intentionally keep from God
- I need to be real & intentional about my on-going growth towards full-devotion in Christ
- Parents must model what it "looks like" to put God first in life
- How much of a priority is church in my life? In my kid's life?
- ***You must warn each other every day...so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. Hebrews chapter 3 verse 13 (921)***

You must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today.

- My spouse & kids need to see that I am committed to following God's plan for my family
- Being committed means I actively work on the areas of life God asks me to work on
- God wants me to do this willingly...& with a smile! ☺

Repeat them again and again to your children.

- PARENTS are responsible to train their children spiritually
- God knows what parents eventually figure out...kids learn through repetition!
- So repeat using words AND actions!!!!
- This only works when I "do life with" my kids (*my kids are not a distraction or interruption to my life! As a parent, my kids are my life... ☺*)

Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.

- God expects parents to spend LOTS of time with their kids
- Parents must be INTENTIONAL about this & use this time to point their kids to God
- The way kids learn to love God is by doing life with parents who love God
- Parents, your kids aren't a distraction; rather, God wants you to immerse yourself in their lives to teach them about Him!
- Grandparents...PLEASE don't check-out of your grandchildren's lives!!!!

Tie them to your hands...

- What I DO is crucial to my spouse / kids
- The life I live in front of my family MUST match what God asks of me!
- None of us is perfect, so don't pretend to be! Live openly & honestly with your spouse / kids
- Does my family see me trying to live-out what God is teaching me?
- Do I model consistency to my family?

Wear them on your forehead...

- What I THINK is crucial for my spouse/kids
- Only God can change the way I think...so give Him every opportunity to do this through church, teaching, music, what I read, etc.
- With what I feed my mind, am I cooperating with God so that His thoughts become my thoughts?
- I need to interact with other committed Christ-followers who will challenge me to keep thinking biblically

Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

- God expects my house to be filled with Him
- I do this by making sure everything in my house honors God & communicates my desire to grow towards full-devotion in Christ
- I do this by praying and reading the Bible with my kids & spouse
- I do this by setting the spiritual example in my home!

Some thoughts for single-parents...

- Being the only parent makes parenting more challenging, NOT impossible
- Remember your priorities...God first, your kids second
- Take care of yourself so you can take care of your kids (*but don't be selfish!*)
- Notice that your love-life is NOT a priority to God. Your kids are!
- Lean hard on Bethel's kids classes, youth groups, small groups, etc.

More...

- What are the key areas in this that God is asking me to concentrate on?
- What will I do differently this week as a parent than I did last week?
- What do I need to do differently in order to better set the spiritual example in my home?
- What do I need to add to my family routine in order to honor God as a parent?
- What do I need to remove from my family routine in order to honor God as a parent?
- How involved are my kids in their classes / youth group here at Bethel? What will I do to help them get more involved?

Next week: How to honor your parents