

Setting the course for your children



Make your bed! Wash your hands! Did you put away your toys? Do not aggravate your brother!" The vernacular in our home involves a lot of "do's" and "don'ts" these days. I am told that this phase of my life is a short one and that I will regret its passing, but I have yet to see the light at the end of that tunnel.

Although I went to college and earned the degrees of my choice, I have found that my life has taken an altogether different path. When my first child was born, I noticed that it was very easy for me to become resentful over the constant demands on my body, my attention and my skills as diaper-changer extraordinaire! In fact, it was a few months into this new role in my life before I yielded all of my dreams for a glamorous career-oriented life over to God. When I was able to accept this challenge with grace, a wave of peace swept over me – even joy!

I have tried to raise perfectly socially acceptable children. I have trained them in manners, obedience, hygiene habits, etc., and I am usually quite pleased with the way that they are turning out. They are, by no means, model citizens, but they are progressing nicely.

While doing a word study on "love" once, I came across a portion of Old Testament scripture that repeats itself several times in various books:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. Deut 6:4-9 NIV

I like the phrase "Impress them on your children." When I was a child, my mother had a book called *Children are Wet Cement*. I do not know the content of that book and cannot, therefore, recommend it, but I do like the title. The Word of God uses "impress" to imply the same idea. Our children are still pliable when they are in our homes. They will accept any and all impressions that we give.

I love visiting Mann's Chinese Theaters in Hollywood to see the impressions of some of the most famous "stars" forever set in concrete. For all intents and purposes, they are permanent impressions. The impressions that we make on our children, regarding the Word of God, are eternally lasting. If we give them the tools that are available in the scripture, then they will forever have these at their disposal and will, in fact, pass them on to the next generation. In our legacy-building, it is important that our kids be "model citizens", but it is most important that they are molded and shaped into the likeness of God. This is one of my top priorities.



Check points:

Evaluate your relationship with your children. How are you impressing their lives?

Do you have a segment of time in your day devoted to Bible study with your children? If not, how can you fit this into your day?

Start a Bible verse flash card system. They can remember the Word so easily when they are young if you keep it simple and foundational.

(Ed. Note: *Children Are Wet Cement* is by Anne Ortlund.)

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Life in the Fast Lane is a part of Online Bible Studies, provided by IPHC Women's Ministries.

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