

Lesson #1: Four Fundamentals from Psalm 66

Psalm 66 points to four fundamentals of how we try to teach the children and how we encourage our parents in their spiritual nurturing of their children.

Fundamental One: Live joyful lives

"Shout for joy to God, all the earth." Psalm 66:1, ESV

We can live joyful lives in light of what God has done. True joy is a gift of the Spirit. It is remarkable. It cannot be reproduced by any other religion. It reflects the Spirit of God working within us, giving life where there was death. It is living in faith, despite trials and despite having to let go of what the world holds to be true and dear. And so, as we teach and parent, we ask God to make our joy in Him evident. It is a very potent witness of the truth and power of the gospel to the children watching us.

Fundamental Two: Live to glorify God in all things...regardless of the outcome!

"Sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise! Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds! ... All the earth worships you and sings praises to you; they sing praises to your name." Psalm 66:2,3,4, ESV

We live to glorify God in all that we do. We do not have control over the conversion of the children who we love, parent and teach. Their conversion is a work of God's Holy Spirit that we pray for and yearn for, but we cannot use it as the measure of success. On the other hand, seeking to glorify God in how we teach, raise and live among the children is a "success" we can strive for. This is freeing! We can strive to please God as we declare the greatness of His name to these children. We can strive to please God as we do, to the best of our ability, all He calls us to do, including raising these children. It makes teaching and parenting yet another venue for glorifying God, regardless of who is converted. And, it makes conversion a matter of trust in God...just where it should be.

Fundamental Three: Teach the children God's awesome works, as revealed in the Bible

From before the creation of the world, God has had one, big plan to redeem His people as a magnificent display of His glory. We read of it in the Bible—the record of "His awesome works on man's behalf." And so, the Bible is our primary "textbook" for teaching our children about God, and for how we parent. The Bible is central to all we do and long to teach the children.

Fundamental Four: Tell the children the gospel that has saved us and can save them

"Bless our God, O peoples; let the sound of his praise be heard, who has kept our soul among the living and has not let our feet slip... Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul. I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened. But truly God has listened; he has attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, because he has not rejected my prayer or removed his steadfast love from me!"

Psalm 66:8-9,16-20, ESV

As Christians, God has given us grace to hear and believe the gospel. We have repented of our sins and trusted in Him as our Savior. We have the testimony of His good work in our lives...and so, as we teach and parent, we want to testify to the children of God's work in our own lives. This is not a God only of history and past acts. This is the living God who is at work today...and in us! What a story we have to tell to these children every day, of the God whose mercies to us are new every morning!

Lesson #1: Questions for You in Your Ministry Setting:

1. How can we show the joy we have in the Lord to our children at home or in the classroom? Why is this so important? Why can this be so compelling?
2. How does teaching children to glorify God free us up in the classroom and/or as parents? Does it mean that we no longer care whether the children are converted or not? Why or why not?
3. Why is it so important that the Bible, not simply moralistic, character-building lessons, be central to all we teach? Does the curriculum you use reflect this? How or how not? If not, how could you help it do this?
4. What is the difference between sharing the gospel with the children and sharing the gospel that saved us with them? How would that difference show up in how you teach or share with the children?