

## How to Disciple Your Children (Part 2)

Series: How (Part 4 of 8)

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3 John 1:4

### 1) Introduction

*Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain.*

*Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.*

*<sup>2</sup> It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest,  
eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.*

*<sup>3</sup> Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.*

*<sup>4</sup> Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth.*

*<sup>5</sup> Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!*

*He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.*

Psalm 127 ESV

*"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth."*

3 John 1:4

#### **Consider this:**

Have you ever considered what an amazing job someone did in Daniel's life prior to his being taken into captivity by the Babylonians?

### 2) Review of Part 1 of How to Disciple Your Children

-Scripture is very clear that parents are given the primary responsibility for the spiritual nurture of their children.

-However, this does not mean this is SOLELY the responsibility of parents. The Body of Christ, the spiritual community we call "the church," also has a VERY IMPORTANT ROLE in a child's faith development.

### 3) So what is the role of the church in a child's discipleship/faith development?

A) The church's role is to SUPPORT, ENCOURAGE, and EQUIP parents in the discipleship of their children.

B) The church is called to make disciples of all people...and this includes children.

*Go therefore and make disciples of **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. Matthew 28:19-20 ESV*

*Jesus said, "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me." Mark 9:37*

*Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. Colossians 1:28–29*

#### **4) Why is it SO IMPORTANT for us to TAKE SERIOUSLY the SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT of children?**

The probability of people accepting Jesus Christ as their savior for a lifetime relationship. Research by George Barna and the Barna Institute of over 1,000 adults in May 2001 puts the probability at...

- 32% for children between 5 and 13 years old,
- 4% for children between 14 and 18, and
- 6% for people 19 years and older.

Barna's research on faith development and discipleship also found that the moral development of children is complete by age 9.

George Barna states:

*"The research is very clear: if Jesus is not already part of their lives by the time they leave junior high school, the chances of them accepting Him as their Lord and savior is very slim (6%, to be exact). With children, it is just the opposite. Because of the challenges and insecurities they face in life, they are very open to being a part of a community of like-minded people who grow together. Children have a tremendous influence within their families and on the choices they make in all areas of life...The greatest evangelical window currently available is among young children."*

R. S. Lee, the author of *Your Growing Children and Religion* says it this way: "**The first seven years [of life] constitute the period for laying the foundations of religion. This is the most important period in the whole of a person's life in determining his later religious attitudes.**"

Research has clearly substantiated the Bible verse, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6)

#### **5) The Church's Responsibility to PARTNER WITH PARENTS**

The church is to SUPPORT, ENCOURAGE, and EQUIP PARENTS to DISCIPLE THEIR CHILDREN.