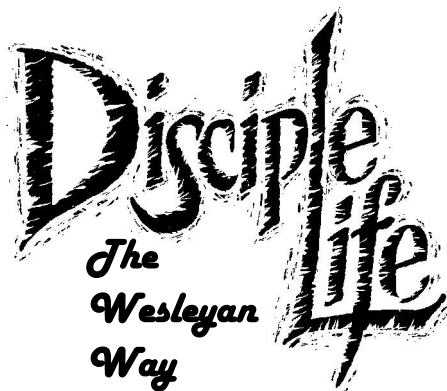


I continue with prayer and focus on teaching children to pray. This week I use the article: "How Adults Can Nurture Children in the Christian Faith" by Mary Alice Gran former Director of Children's Ministries for the General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, Tennessee Director of Children's Ministries for the General Board of Discipleship in Nashville, Tennessee .



Week # 28

Adults can nurture children in the Christian faith. Below are listed some of the ways:

In Families:

- Read Bible stories together.
- Talk about pieces of their faith journey and your own faith journey.
- Make a regular habit of doing good for others and talk about "why."
- Pray together.
- Read the Bible and pray at times when children can see you.
- Include God and the use of religious ritual at special family celebrations.
- Stop and pray together when having a family disagreement.
- Sing songs of faith.
- Practice spontaneous prayers together — when hearing a siren, seeing the first bird in the spring, after a joy-filled moment, or when feelings are hurt.
- Work at keeping religious holidays religious (Christmas, Easter, Pentecost).
- Write letters to children who are away, telling them about God, your faith, your prayers for them, their importance to God. Include something of your faith in each letter (or e-mail). Include age-appropriate Christian symbols, Bibles, Bible storybooks, or Christian music when giving gifts.

In the Church Family:

- Learn children's names and use their names when having conversations with them.



**Start the
Conversation:
Provoke One
Another in Love**

PROVOKING QUESTION:

This week, you are encouraged to ask a church member the following:

Do you have any children in your sphere of influence? What do you do to share the message of Christ with them?

- Seek out children to include in conversations.
 - Sit with families at church dinners. Visit with the children as well as the parents.
 - Smile at children during worship. Encourage their attendance and inclusion in worship.
 - Plan for the inclusion of children for every event.
 - Offer to share your interests and talents with children and youth in the church. (Take a small group fishing, help them make wooden crosses, teach them needlework, share your backyard for a Sunday school class outing, tell Bible stories, and so on.)
- Become a mentor for a child or youth who is not related to you. Develop an ongoing, supportive relationship.

With Neighborhood Children:

- Be a loving, caring neighbor.
- Invite children (and their parents) to join you in attending a church event.
- Bring children with you to Sunday school and church every Sunday. (Make certain you have a parent's permission.)
- Share Bible stories with children, as appropriate.
- Share Christian gifts with children, as appropriate.

Write prayers for children, and give the prayers to them (particularly important for a life event — birth, death, marriage, first day of school, getting driver's license, losing first tooth).

Carry the cross and follow me.

Luke 14:27, NRSV

WEEKLY VERSES

A Week's Worth of God's Word

as found at Crosswalk.com

Monday

This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. --Romans 13:6 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...Ouch! I hate taxes. But I have to admit, I enjoy many of the privileges and blessings that those taxes afford. Paul keeps reminding us in Romans 13 that civil authorities are God's tools to hold back anarchy, chaos, and lawlessness. As a Christian, I'm immune to most laws because my faith in Jesus is going to regulate my behavior far more strictly than a legal code. But I do have a responsibility (I owe it, Paul says) to be a good citizen, a good financial manager, a nice respectful neighbor, and a person who willingly honors those who have merited it.

MY PRAYER... Almighty God, I pledge allegiance to you. You alone are Sovereign, Ruler, and King. But because you call me to honor my government, because you have so richly blessed me to be in a land such as this, because you have lavished your grace on me so richly, I will live today in a way that honors my allegiance to you, my citizenship in my country, and my respect toward those whom I meet this day. In Jesus I pray. Amen.

Tuesday

He made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment - to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. --Ephesians 1:9-10 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...Jesus is Lord! God's plan was purposed in Christ. It centered on Christ coming at the right time. God's plan was to bring unity in Christ by making him Lord of all! What's more, this plan that brings our salvation brings God great pleasure. God is the only saving God and Jesus is both our Savior and Lord. So the real issue we face today is this: What area of our lives, our hearts, our secrets, our sin, our rebellion, have we not submitted to his lordship?

MY PRAYER...O Precious Father, I know my heart can be deceitful. At times I can even fool myself. But when I kneel in your presence and am convicted by your Word, I find myself reminded of the areas I have not yet fully submitted to your control and Jesus' lordship. Please, dear Father, use the Holy Spirit to

gently show and convict of my self-deception so that I may be wholly lost in your will. Through Jesus, Lord of lords, I pray. Amen.

Wednesday

I urge, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone - for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. --1 Timothy 2:1-2 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE... God wants us to be a praying people. But more than that, God wants us to pray for people. The blessing of that kind of prayerful life is that we get to live peaceful and quiet lives full of godliness and holiness. So pray, dear friend in Jesus, pray as if world peace depends upon it, because it does!

MY PRAYER...Majestic and Holy God, your greatness is beyond my mind to grasp but your grace reaches me and teaches in a new way each day. Forgive me when my prayer life has not been passionate. Forgive me for letting my prayers focus only on what is wrong. Use your Spirit, O God, to ignite a hunger in my soul so that I come to find satisfaction only in you and your presence. Through Jesus Christ and the intercession of the Holy Spirit, I pray. Amen.

Thursday

If serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.... As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. --Joshua 24:15 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...While we can't speak for everyone in our family, we can commit to what everyone in our family should desire: We will serve the Lord!

MY PRAYER...Give me wisdom, O tender Shepherd, on how to lead my family to love you more. Please bless my parents, and thank you for their faith. Please give me courage and sensitivity so that I can effectively share your truth with my children. O God, please bless those parents who are seeking to raise godly children who will someday marry the children you've given me. I want my house to be a place where you are known, appreciated, honored, and loved. Through Jesus I ask it. Amen.

Friday

'Come now, let us reason together,' says the Lord. 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.' -- Isaiah 1:18 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...Nothing stains quite like sin. It not only leaves a stain in our heart but a residue in our minds. But God's grace is shown in that he doesn't just forgive

our sins, he doesn't just forget our sins, he banishes them. They are gone. The stain is removed, the guilt is taken away. We are clean by his grace.

MY PRAYER...O the joy your grace gives me! I can never thank you or praise you enough for rerouting my life so that it will end, and begin again, in you. Through Jesus I pray. Amen.

Saturday

God's voice thunders in marvelous ways; he does great things beyond our understanding. He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth,' and to the rain shower, 'Be a mighty downpour.' --Job 37:5-6 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...Isn't that a beautiful phrase! "God's voice thunders in marvelous ways; he does great things beyond our understanding." Rather than spending a lot of time talking or thinking about how marvelous God is, let's praise him in prayer.

MY PRAYER...Holy, Righteous, and Eternal God, You alone are truly and fully holy. I cannot comprehend the distant outskirts of your ways. But I love you. You are so far beyond me on my best days, I can't quite understand why you would pay such a cost to redeem someone like me. But, Dear God, I thank you. In Jesus name. Amen.

Sunday

Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boasting of what he has and does - comes not from the Father but from the world. --1 John 2:15 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...Love for things, especially temporary ones, can sure get us in trouble. Even worse, we can begin to think they will make us happy or fill the empty places in our hearts. But if we really place our hopes and dreams in our Abba Father, we are attached to eternity, and what we need most is always with us!

MY PRAYER...Give me wisdom, Holy God, to invest in you and things that matter. I confess to you that my eyes and my heart are often distracted by the glitzy stuff that is temporary. By your Spirit, O Father, stir my heart to yearn for you. Through Jesus I pray, Amen.