

Family Discipleship - Time

REVIEW: We are in the middle of a series on what discipleship looks like in a couple of things: in the family, and in the midst of a busy life. So far we have looked at the fact that all Christians are disciples. There is no dual class to the Christian life. There are not Christians in one group and disciples in another. They are one and the same. It is a modern phenomenon that has been created to separate into two different categories.

We have also seen that the Bible talks about disciples as people that hold to Jesus' teachings, are known for their love for each other, and bear fruit for God's glory. These are the ways the Bible speaks of disciples - the things that we know should be present in our lives as a result of our relationship with Christ.

Last week we looked at Deuteronomy 6. We saw three circles of discipleship. The first is us - we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart soul and strength. The next circle is our family. The final circle is the community. We made the point that we have to start with the first circle. You cannot start with the community. You can't start with your kids. You can't model what you don't have. You have to start with loving the Lord with all you have. Then you can teach that to your kids, and the community will see it as well. So last week was largely about modeling our love for the Lord.

INTRO: Today we are going to talk about time. If you remember from last week God was realistic about time. He did not say, "Here are 12 things you need to add to your schedule to please Me." He said "talk about [these commands] when you sit at home, or drive in the car, before bed, in the morning before your day begins." In other words, reorient yourself around the things of God. Out of your love for the Lord, be intentional with making Christ a topic of your conversation.

TRAN: I remind you again that this series is based on a series from the Village Church. The handout they created is unchanged at their request. Some things may not match up with our church because we don't do everything the way they do. And that is okay. That actually is as it should be. The sermons are based on the ideas presented by their pastor, however changed to match my manner of speaking. To start talking about time today, I want to start with four things.

- I. The first thing regarding time is consistency
 - A. Have you ever met anyone, adult, child, anyone that needs to be told something only one time and they got it?
 1. Before you adults give me all your examples about your children
 - a) "You are so right pastor! I tell my kids literally a million times to put their stuff where it belongs"

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- b) "I tell them night after night to get their homework done so they can get to sleep at a good time."
- c) "I tell them to take out the trash. I have said it so much I think my kid may actually be deaf because the trash is still there."
2. Those are all great examples adults - but before you point the finger at the kids, remember you do that with your spouses too
 - a) "What do you mean you don't remember that we are having dinner with the Jones', I told you a hundred times"
 - b) I was searching for what a husband might tell his wife again and again and couldn't come up with one, so I asked Debbie - and Debbie forgot.
3. And one more example of forgetting something that has been said over and over again
 - a) There are times when the church puts things in the bulletin, puts it on the screen, announces it in the service, puts up posters, even emails to everyone we have emails for
 - b) And I will still get someone that I know has been here for weeks come up and ask, "Why didn't you announce about that?"
 - c) Ya'll wonder why the Pastor's hair is turning gray"
- B. Here's the point - spiritual conversations are not one shot deals
 1. Spiritual conversations need to be consistent
 2. Think about what you talk about with your kids - grades, sports, the cleanliness or lack thereof of their bedroom
 - a) These are probably conversations that are going on regularly
 - b) And these are not bad conversations
 3. You are already having regular conversations with your kids - you may need to reorient yourself to having spiritual conversations
- C. And consistency doesn't necessarily mean the same time every week - Like Tuesdays at 6:00 pm
 1. When you do that, everything in the universe will be gunning for Tuesdays at 6:00 pm
 2. Practices moved, business trips, all sorts of crazy things will try to take over Tuesday at 6:00 pm
- D. What you can do is make spiritual conversation a regular part of your family life and vocabulary
 1. Make a goal of 10-15 minutes during the week
 2. Look for questions to help spur spiritual conversation along
 3. Let me give you two that should become a regular in your life
 - a) What has God been teaching you this week?

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- b) How have you been seeking this week to be a godly person, not just a good person?
 - (1) I love that question because too often we settle for good kids
 - (2) My heart's desire is that the teenagers in the YG, that the adults aren't just good people - they are godly people
 - (3) It takes more effort to be godly people, but if you are a godly person, you are a good person
- II. The second component for time is clarity
 - A. Clarity is such a key
 - 1. People often hear what they want to hear
 - 2. I actually keep a record of all my text messages with people, but particularly the teenagers
 - a) I want the record to reflect Your Honor
 - b) I want it to be simple and clear what I said in a text
 - c) I have even had to use that once or twice because people heard what they wanted to out of a message
 - B. So here are some good things to do when you are having spiritual conversations (which you are having consistently) with your child, or anyone for that matter
 - 1. Ask for them to repeat back what you just talked about
 - a) This allows you to make sure the point was very clear
 - b) It allows you a peek into their souls
 - c) They may look different for each child, each person, because God has wired each soul a little differently
 - 2. Another good practice is open ended questions
 - a) Most of you parents know this
 - b) You know if you ask yes/no questions that is all you will get
 - c) If your questions are open ended at least you have a shot at your child's heart
 - (1) Try questions like, "How does that make you feel?"
 - (a) Every man in the room just got that glassy-eyed panic stricken look on their face
 - (2) Or another question, "Tell me more about that"
 - (a) You just said you want to try out for the school play, tell me more about that. What play? I didn't know you liked acting?
 - 3. Allow yourself to be a safe place for your children's doubts
 - a) How many of you have gone through a time when you struggled to make sense of what God was doing and it caused you to doubt?
 - (1) Probably a common experience to all of us

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- (2) Someone dies and we can't understand God's plan; or someone is sick and there seems to be no cure - what are you doing God?
 - (3) All of us have felt that
 - b) Your kids need to have a safe place to express and explore doubts
 - (1) Seek to point them to the positives in their doubts
 - (2) I have often said that when my dad died shortly after retirement, I never understood why God took him, but I could see God's hand in it - from the timing, from the way he took my dad - all markers that God was in the middle of it
 - (3) The less you freak out about doubts, and gently direct someone's heart to Jesus in the midst of doubt, the more likely they will be to trust you with spiritual things in the future
- III. The third component of time is creativity
- A. What I mean by this is you can make the Bible a fun thing
 - 1. The Bible talks about God being our fortress
 - a) Anyone every made a fortress in the living room with their kids?
 - b) Think of how you can direct their hearts by pointing out the safety they feel in the fortress is the same safety they can feel in Christ
 - 2. Anyone like to go camping, or lay in the grass and look at the stars on a clear summer evening?
 - a) Psalm 8:3-4 "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?"
 - b) Think of how you can direct your heart, your child's heart, your friend's heart toward God
 - (1) I remember being out on the lake with the Pastor's son in Vermont, sitting in the canoe staring at the stars
 - (2) A song came to mind from Rich Mullins, *Sometimes by Step*
 - (a) It talks about the sky seeming to be so close you could touch it
 - (b) The it says "Sometimes I think of Abraham; how one star he saw had been lit for me..."
 - (c) The smallness of life and the greatness of God came rushing over me, and it is a moment I will never forget
 - (3) Think about how you can weave some of God's Words into the life of your children with a little creativity
 - B. If you are thinking, "I'm just not that creative or smart, Pastor Keith"
 - 1. Look, I am neither creative, or smart, but it does not take that much to read a couple of verses around the campfire one night and talk about how awesome God is

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2. Go for a walk and sing some worship songs in God's creation
 - C. Here is another thought for getting conversation going - highs and lows
 1. Simple, your high point for the day and your low point for the day
 - a) You may have had an awesome day, so your low point might be that you had to get out of bed
 - b) Or maybe you had an awful day and you are just happy to be home with your kids
 2. Deniz started this with the girls last year at YG
 3. And when we had to combine guys and girls for a night, one of the girls would invariably say, "Hey, we want to do highs and lows"
 4. This is something you can do at the dinner table, or in the car, or out walking
 - a) Or how about when you are out to eat
 - b) GREAT time to teach your kids about how great God is that He provides money for you to be able to do this
 - c) Many families cannot do that
 - D. Here's another conversation starter - the ABC's of praise
 1. When you are together - maybe for a longer car ride some place - praise God for something God has blessed your family with
 2. Start with A, the next person gets B, and so on
 3. I'll let you decide what you will do with Q and Z
- IV. The last component is counsel
- A. Look for a family devotional you can use a couple of times a week
 1. As kids we used to roll our eyes when mom would pull out the family devotional before dinner
 2. I kid you not, those devotional books are the one thing I swear my sister and I will fight over when my mom passes away
 3. We may have rolled our eyes back then, but we realize that by them, by those times, we were well trained - and I love my mom so much for standing her ground that way
 4. Find a family devotional you can use at meal times, or keep in the car and can pull it out to use for 10-15 minutes on a drive to go see grandma in Grand Rapids
 - a) Or even the rides between practice and something else
 - b) Be creative with it - as you are living your life, talk about the truths of God and the love of and for the Lord
 - B. A second thing I would love to see us do, and this could be a new ministry opportunity for someone
 1. If someone is willing to take this on, you will do more for children's ministry and family ministry than you possibly know

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2. I would love to have a person or couple of people to write up questions based on the lesson for children's church that parents can use on the drive home, or to the restaurant, or wherever you are going after church
 3. The curriculum is generally set in advance, so you can look over the lesson, and come up with 6-10 questions about the lesson that parents can use to reinforce the lesson with their children
 4. Here is the best part about this ministry opportunity: You don't even have to like kids!
 - a) I've told you that children's ministry is a huge factor in churches growing
 - b) Many hear that and think, "But I hate kids!"
 - c) Keep on hating kids, this is a ministry for kids and their families that you don't even have to talk to a kid!
 5. I am being facetious here, but seriously, this is a ministry you can do from your home, and you can affect the lives of children and families
 - a) See me if you think you are interested
- V. There are four enemies to seeing this actually come to fruition in our lives
- A. The first enemy is misplaced loves
1. How this works for family discipleship is that dad and mom, are you giving yourselves to cultivating your own heart to love Jesus?
 - a) I am not asking if you are perfect - I know the answer
 - b) Are you cultivating your own heart to love Jesus
 2. If you are not filling your heart with the things that help you love Jesus, your kids will pick up on it - they will know what you love the most
 - a) I was witness to an interesting conversation from some of the kids in the YG one time
 - b) They were discussing what their father's favorite beer was
 - (1) Nothing wrong with enjoying a cold brew responsibly - so I am not here to condemn dads as a bunch of drunks
 - (2) This is the question that came to my mind after: These kids know their father's favorite beer - do they know their father's favorite Bible verse; why he loves that verse
 - (a) Do they know if he has a life verse and what it is, and why
 - (b) Or their dad's favorite Bible story, and why
 - c) I came into this series of messages not wanting to do fly over guiltings
 - (1) It's easy, being the single pastor to make family discipleship sound like a breeze
 - (2) I know it's not

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- (3) But this little story illustrates the point well - are you doing what you should be doing to cultivate a love for Jesus so deep that your kids see it in your life?
3. So the first enemy is misplaced loves - are we doing what we should be doing to cultivate a love for Jesus
- B. The second enemy would be weak marriages
 1. When I say this I want to tread lightly, but directly
 2. If your marriage is characterized by any of the following things, there are problems
 - a) So I do not mean these happen on occasion
 - b) Everyone experiences times in their marriage where these might be true
 - c) I am talking about extended periods or this is what your marriage is like
 3. So if your marriage is characterized by any of the following things:
 - a) Consistent coldness
 - (1) If your spouse is more your roommate than your spouse, there are problems that need to be addressed
 - (2) One of the greatest gifts my parents ever gave to us was grossing us out with their affection
 - (3) It showed us that they loved each other, and what a loving marriage should look like
 - b) Consistent boiling point
 - (1) If there is consistent fighting, stress, etc
 - (2) If everyone has to walk on eggshells because you never know when dad or mom might explode - problem
 - (3) Everyone can have a moment where they explode - but if this is a constant in your home - there is a problem, and get help
 4. The best gift you can give your kids is to have a strong, loving marriage
 - a) Its back to that modeling thing we talked about last week
 - b) They will learn infinitely more from watching you than anything else
- C. The third enemy is non-present presence
 1. Sadly, even adults can be torn away from their families by things like their phones
 - a) We hear that special sound and we know we have email, or a call, or a text, and we feel important
 - b) Again, this is modeling a behavior
 2. Gratefully, I don't see it in this congregation as much as perhaps other areas of the country
 - a) We value our time with our families

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- b) However, this non-present presence is a big issue in our day, and will get worse if we are not careful in what we do, and what we model
- D. The last enemy is a lack of being intentional
 - 1. Greatest thing you can do, and dads, husbands, you want to score points, here ya go...grab the calendar and tell your wife you want to look at the upcoming week where you can spend a little time talking over the things of God as a family
 - 2. Find that half hour window in the schedule and say, "That's it for this week! Go tell the kids, its in the calendar now"
 - 3. Be intentional about discipleship
 - 4. You have a time for the week to meet as a family, and then during the rest of the week, be intentional as you go from school to practice to the library, or running errands
- E. Lastly, and this is really for those that may have grown children - it's not too late in Christ to do this in different ways with them
 - 1. If you feel as if your moment has passed you by, your kid is now 40, I can't do this
 - 2. Sure you can - it will just look differently
 - 3. Instead of family night, maybe you call them up and tell them how much you love them, and how proud you are of them
 - a) Then tell them what we have been going over in church, and how that has affected you
 - b) If you are feeling like, "Man I wish I had known God better when you were younger so I could have helped you more to know Him too"
 - (1) Tell him or her that
 - (2) Let them know that you are excited by your faith and you wish you would have known God sooner, or handled things differently
 - 4. What you are doing is living out the gospel
 - a) You are owning your sin, or failures
 - b) You are pointing your child to the one who changed your life
- F. This family discipleship thing is something you can do
 - 1. With a little bit of intentionality
 - 2. With a focus on your own heart, you can see great things happen in your child's heart and spiritual life
 - 3. Let's pray for God to give us what we need to accomplish it