

Reaching Children for the Lord Jesus Christ

Preacher: David Dunlap

Date: August 29, 2026

Church: 16th Avenue Gospel Chapel

References: **Matthew 18**, 2 Timothy 3:14-15; 2 Timothy 1:5; Matthew 19:14; Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Psalm 78:4-7; Ephesians 6:1-2; Genesis 14:21; John 3:16; John 16:7-8; Ephesians 6:4

...to the book of 2nd Timothy, 2nd Timothy. So in this session, it is about how to reach children for the Lord Jesus Christ. And how to reach children for the Lord Jesus Christ. And I want to point your attention to chapter 3 and verse 14, 14 and 15. It says in verse 15,

[2 Timothy 3:14-15 NKJV] - ¹⁴ But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, ¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

—which have helped to lead you to a living faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 15, it says, and make you wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus. His mother and grandmother, Lois and Eunice, we read about them in the first chapter. They poured their lives. We don't read about a father. I'm sure there was a father somewhere, maybe he passed away at this time. But a mother and grandmother—grandmothers have a great impact. Mothers have a great impact.

Timothy, if you could ask him, "What was the greatest impact on your life?" probably he'd say, "My mother and grandmother," because it says, "from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures." This word child, the Greek word here means a child of five years old, a young child. It says from a young child you have known the Scriptures, able to make you wise unto salvation.

Now, it says something else in verse 14 that is very important. Look at verse 14. Yes, we have a world around us that we're battling. The church is battling. Families are battling. Young people are in a battle with them. But we have some weapons. We have some great weapons. And I think a godly mother and father, godly influences around us, are great weapons. I was raised in a Christian family. If I wasn't saved, I was saved in college, surrounded by ungodly influences. But I had a godly mother and father and some other influences. Look what it

says. Paul's writing to Timothy and says, "But continue in the things which you have learned." Right?

The Value of Reaching Children

The Lord Jesus says:

[Matthew 19:14 NKJV] - But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew's Gospel, chapter 19, verse 14. A little bit later, we're going to look at Matthew 18. And this is, for me, a very powerful verse. It is the Father's will that every child be saved. Matthew 18:14:

[Matthew 18:14 NKJV] - Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

He's talking about children—perish, spiritually perish—not one of them. That's one of the goals we should have. That's one of the driving forces as elders, leaders, teachers, believers within a local church: doing everything we can possibly do. And I know 16th Avenue is part of that. They're having a VBS next week. They're pouring energy and life into that: Sunday school, kids clubs, Friday nights, camp. Because we want young people to come to saving knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. We want to change lives. We want a generation of young people saved and living for the Lord Jesus Christ and influencing their generation for the Lord Jesus.

In Deuteronomy 6, verses 6 and 7, it says:

[Deuteronomy 6:6-7 NKJV] - ⁶ "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

That's a lot of times that we remind our children about the Word of God. You should do that in the car, traveling somewhere. We read the Bible to our children. We would do that. Sometimes we're driving up from Florida to Pennsylvania, about sixteen, seventeen hours in the car. And we would get out the Bible, and we would ask the kids what chapter they would want, or we would pick a chapter and we would read the chapter. And I would ask Faith the answers to the questions, and she would give her answers. I'd give my answers. And we would have talking along the way—talking and speaking and questions and answering. That's very good.

We don't do it just at church. We just don't do it one hour a week. We just don't do it Wednesday night. We should be talking. We should be sharing with our children. We should see that it's important to us as parents; it's very important to us that they understand these things, that they begin to learn and love the Lord Jesus Christ with all their hearts, minds, and souls.

I encourage you to read Psalm 78, verses 4, 5, 6, and 7:

[Psalm 78:4-7 NKJV]

- ⁴ We will not hide them from their children,
Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD,
And His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.
- ⁵ For He established a testimony in Jacob,
And appointed a law in Israel,
Which He commanded our fathers,
That they should make them known to their children;
- ⁶ That the generation to come might know them,
The children who would be born,
That they may arise and declare them to their children,
- ⁷ That they may set their hope in God,
And not forget the works of God,
But keep His commandments;

We want to pass this on after dinner. We call it a family altar. We had home Bible studies in our home. We had a family altar as a time to read scripture after dinner, praying before dinner, reading and talking about scripture all through the lives of our children. We continue to do that. Christmas morning, we didn't just gather the children and dive into the presents. We did this: we spent time reading a chapter, chapter and a half of the message of how the

Lord Jesus Christ came into the world. Even now that they're thirty-five years old, we do the same thing when they come. We read the scriptures. Every opportunity we have, we read the scriptures. We pray.

It says in Ephesians chapter 6:

[Ephesians 6:1-2 NKJV] - ¹ Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.
² "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise:

It's important to teach our children these things.

In the Old Testament, in Genesis 14:21, Lot and his family and many of the people in the city of Sodom were taken as captives by the five kings of the north, the kings of the mountains. And Abraham went and rescued them all, rescued them back. And the king of Sodom, which is a picture of Satan, comes to Abraham and he says this to Abraham:

[Genesis 14:21 NKJV] - Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself."

He says, "You can have all the goods. You can have all the cloth and the money and all that was stolen. You can have all of it. But give me the people. Give me the people." You know, Satan doesn't want the money. He doesn't want the wealth. He doesn't want Wall Street. He wants people. He wants to have the people.

Sometimes I'm shopping and I see somebody with tattoos all over their faces and more metal in their face and their nose and their ears, and I think Satan has that person. Don't think they're a Christian. Satan has that person. Was it the music? Yes. Was it the media? Yes. Was it friends? Yes, yes, yes, yes. All these things. The world has gotten them. Satan, the one who's behind all these things, he has got a hold of that person. Now, can he be saved? Of course he can be saved! I've seen people transformed who are like that. Yes.

Five Key Factors for Retention

Now, I came across this graphic. I think it's a very important one. I share this very often—Faith will tell you—in our local church, our local assembly. We have a baby dedication, I put this on the screen. Other times I put it on the screen. Every Sunday before Vacation Bible

School, usually I do the preaching and I talk about how we lead kids to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I put this on the screen.

It seems that seventy-five percent of our kids in North America—evangelical kids from all evangelical churches, between eighteen and twenty-nine—they say seventy-five percent leave the church. But twenty-five percent stayed. Now, why did the twenty-five percent stay? That's what this graph is about: why did the twenty-five percent stay? These are kids who went to church, but there was something special about the twenty-five percent of kids. And that's a large number—twenty-five percent of all the churches in North America, that's a fairly large number.

1. **Number one:** One of the reasons they stayed is they ate with their families five out of seven times a week. They ate together. We have a lovely Christian family in our chapel, and I've been discipling him. And he's got two lovely children, and I told him it's very important to eat together. And he said, "We almost never eat together. Almost never eat together."
2. **Number two:** Serve in the local church. Serve in some way as a family within the local church. What's that? Oh, I didn't share it? I thought it was shared. Share again. Can you see that? Okay. So, one: eat together. Number two: serve in the local church together.
3. **Number three:** Have some spiritual exercise, something during the week in your family. A Bible study, reading of Scripture, doing something during the week in your home. Praying, have a prayer time together, something in your home with your children every week. Going to church on Sunday mornings, Wednesdays, yes, but having a time in your home—maybe a prayer time before dinner, whatever it may be within your own schedule.
4. **Number four:** Giving responsibility to a young person in the local church somehow in a ministry. That a young person has some responsibilities within the local church—some spiritual responsibility. Teaching Sunday school... We started something seventeen years ago; it was a retreat. But we said to them, "We want you to lead the entire retreat. You do the social media work, you advertise it, you plan it, you serve it, you work at it. I get the speakers—that's all I do is get the speakers. You do everything else. You get as many people there as possible." In the very beginning, the first time we did it, I said, "I'll send out flyers to all the local assemblies in the area." And they said to me, "No, that will never work. It will never work. We will contact people and we'll get people there." And they got eighty—we had eighty people the first time. They had their social media connections. And they had connections, they had connections. We've been having 120 kids for seventeen years! And then we began to have what was called a

retreat at our church, at our chapel itself. And people would come from other areas, and we would host them in homes. But the kids are all involved in this. It's their responsibility. They are pouring their lives into it. And when they see God work in it, they say, "We were a part of that. It wasn't David Dunlap that did it. It wasn't the elders who did it. We were a part of that." When we saw a blessing is we had ownership of that; we were a part of it. And when you go door-to-door, when you have some outreach, whatever you're doing, when you're working at camp, when they have responsibility, that's a very important thing. They go out and take a risk for God. It's very important. So they have some responsibility. This picture here is serving, picking up things, cleaning up—they doing that kind of thing.

5. **Number five:** And then the last part is that there's someone in the local church who takes an interest in a young person. They get together, they pray, they get together, and they begin to say, "I'm going to pray for you. I'm going to disciple you." I'm going to do something where they invest their lives in the life of that child. Might not be every week, maybe once a month: sending cards to them, sending emails to them, encouraging them, encouraging them to go to camp, encouraging them in different ways. Someone outside of their parents pouring their lives into that child's life.

These are some things we can do. Maybe you can't do all five; maybe you do six or seven other things. You're pouring your life into the life of that child.

Now, this was a survey of a lot of people who passed away. These are all pictures of people who were saved under ten years old, who for the rest of their lives went on for the Lord: James Dobson. I don't know if you know who that person is—that's Corrie ten Boom, saved as a young child, had a great, great, great impact for the Lord. I don't know if you know who that is—that's Ruth Graham, Billy Graham's wife. They asked Billy Graham's wife one time when he was preaching somewhere, did she ever think of divorcing Billy Graham? She said, "Divorce, never; murder, a few times!" She was a godly woman serving alongside her husband. This is a daughter, daughter of Ruth Graham, also now a very influential young woman in North America, the world. This is Matthew Henry. You probably don't recognize him—saved at a young age.

Principles from Matthew 18

Now, I want you to come with me to Matthew 18. Look at Matthew 18. And Matthew 18, I encourage you to spend time reading Matthew 18. I think sometimes it's a skipped-over chapter, I guess a neglected chapter in some ways. But as far as children are concerned, it is very, very important. We're going to look at some principles in this chapter.

One of the first principles is: **a child can be converted**. Converted. I think there's many people that don't believe that children can come to faith at a young age. They think they've got to be fifteen or eighteen, or I don't know what age they think, but they think they've got to be much older. Look with me at Matthew 18. We'll begin to read at verse 1:

[Matthew 18:1-4 NKJV] - ¹ At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" ² Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, ³ and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

So He says, be like this little child: converted in a humble faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So one of the first principles, I think, is young children can be converted, come to a real faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

A child can also understand spiritual truths. He says, be like this child, humble yourself like this child so you can understand spiritual truths.

Now look with me down at verse 6:

[Matthew 18:6 NKJV] - "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

What He's saying: children, don't hinder them from believing. And those who do believe, don't be an obstacle, stumble them from believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Look at verse 5:

[Matthew 18:5 NKJV] - Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.

I think He's saying here Christians should be active in reaching children for the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 5: "Whoever receives one little child..." Gospel going out and receiving that

person and coming to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ receives Me. We should be extremely active in our own families, but in ministries and Vacation Bible School and Sunday school and camp work and all kinds of work, we should be very engaged in seeing children come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Nothing thrills my soul more when you have a camp or we have a weekend and you see young people come—thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen—coming, doing quiet time, studying their Bibles, bringing their Bibles, marking their Bibles, taking notes about their Bibles. Sometimes I go to certain chapels and to the Bible hour, kids are lined up on the first two rows, all their friends, sometimes taking notes, opening their Bibles or asking questions afterwards.

Verse 6: none should offend, cause to stumble. Make sure we don't ever cause young people to stumble concerning their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. "Whoever causes one of these little ones..." The word offend means stumble, cause to stumble. "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe..." Watch that we nurture young lives, encourage young lives. I love to say yes as an elder, and our other elders as much as possible, to any kind of ministry, any kind of thing that could help young people grow in the Lord Jesus Christ. During COVID, a man came up to us and said, "All the camps are closed, all the weekends are closed, all the kids would have at camps. Why don't we have a weekend here at our church?"

Now, notice something in verse 10. Here it's used about children. Look what it says. Verse 11:

[Matthew 18:11-12 NKJV] - ¹¹ For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. ¹² "What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying?

Now, the context of this chapter, all through from the beginning to verse 14, it's all about children. He's using the sheep as the illustration of children. The Lord Jesus goes; He leaves the ninety-nine in the wilderness, He goes and seeks after one that is lost. He wants to reach that one soul for the Lord Jesus Christ. Thank you. He wants to reach them for the Lord. This is the passion; this is the interest of the Lord Jesus Christ. He wants every single child to come to faith in the Lord Jesus. He is the great evangelist to go and reach children for the Lord Jesus Christ. He labors that lost sheep might be saved. And if He labors so intensely in

giving His heart to reaching children for the Lord Jesus Christ, we should do everything we can do to do that.

Look at verse 14. Verse 14:

[Matthew 18:14 NKJV] - Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

Even so—so He's using this illustration that He just gave—even so, it's not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones would ever be lost.

So I read all these things and I tell you all these things so we would give everything we can give to reach children for the Lord Jesus Christ. Children in their own families: do everything you can do to reach them for the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't just bring them to church. Bring them to church, but don't just bring them to church. Do as much as you possibly can. Influence them for Christ. Pour your life, pour your example, pour teaching. Talk about the great issues. If it's transgenderism, if it's whatever the issue is of the day, pour your life and teach them about what is right, what is wrong. Teach them what pleases Christ. Teach them. Use apologetics.

One of the great things that are happening today is an opposition to Scripture. As much as possible through the transgender ideology, through everything that are taught in public schools... Used to be we would think about evolution and other issues; today it's a hundred more new issues, and all of those issues are attacking the truth of the Bible: get people away from believing in the Word of God, living out the Word of God, teaching it to others, making the Word of God a measure and a standard in our lives, and seeking God, take the Word of God and transform our lives.

Reaching the Heart of a Child

Here the Lord Jesus says, "I want every child to be saved and come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." So how do we do that? What are some of the ways we do that? A couple of things:

- **Children are more easily reached for Christ than full-grown adults.** They are more trusting.
- **They're more easily convicted of sin.** When you talk to a child about sin, they realize, yeah, they've done some things. They might not be real bad things in our minds, but they feel the conviction of sin. A child feels that.

- **They're more easily taught about the Lord Jesus.** Yes. Children usually have real love for Christ. And they read about and are told stories about the Lord Jesus and His love for them and what He has done for them on the cross of Calvary. Some of the great Bible stories in the New Testament, the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, they respond. They love to hear teaching about the Lord Jesus. I want to encourage you as a young parent, if you have young children—maybe many of you do not, but if your children do—read them Bible stories. It's one of the things we did. We got books upon books upon books, picture books full about teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, and they developed a love for God and a love for Christ. They saw His power. They saw His might. They saw what He could do. They saw what God was like and His attributes by reading some of these stories.
- **They respond more easily to the gospel presentations.** When a child trusts Christ, not only is the soul saved, but potentially a life is saved. You're changing the direction where that life will go. The life may be going this way, but when that person comes to salvation, sins are forgiven, but life's course can be changed completely.

D.L. Moody, famous gospel preacher in the United States years ago, after a meeting, someone asked him how many people were saved. He said, "Two and a half." He said, "What do you mean, two and a half people were saved?" He said, "Well, there were two children, and there was an adult who lived half of his life already. The course of his life is already half gone. But the course of the two other ones have it all before them." All before them! When you save a life, they've got that whole life before them. Never know what God is going to do with that whole life before them. And so we say that we seek to go out and win souls for Christ. So there's great truths about winning children for Christ.

Practical Guidelines in Leading Children to Christ

Now, I want to mention this. Let's go back. Sorry about all that.

Now, children sometimes want to get saved over and over again. This is something we want to talk about for a little bit. Children want to get saved over and over again because, in some ways, it's a pleasant experience. There may be a camp and there's a campfire and the other children are getting saved, and it's a pleasant experience. The first time, the parents are very happy. Others maybe greeted them and gave them hugs that they came to faith in the Lord Jesus. It's a very pleasant experience, so they want to repeat that sometimes. Sometimes they want to please the person that has been speaking to them. Sometimes they want to get genuinely saved. Sometimes they make a profession when they're younger, and sometimes that's very real. My sister was saved about five or six years old, and the course of

her life never altered; she kept on living for the Lord. I made a number of professions, and then I didn't feel it was real. I felt I needed something more, and so I made a profession when I was in my college, in my twenties, where I feel that that's when my life's course was really changed. Some desire to get the assurance of salvation, but some don't feel they're saved, and so they want to get saved again. They want to make a profession of salvation.

Now, my son was saved—I'm not sure what age he was, but as a young, under ten years old—made a profession of salvation. And he was baptized, and he served the Lord and went to camp, and even worked at camp and served at camp. And when he was sixteen, we were at the same camp; I was speaking at that camp. And after the campfire, he came into our room at sixteen and he said, "I got saved tonight." I said, "You got saved tonight? I thought you were saved when you were seven or eight years old." He said, "No, tonight I got saved. I got saved tonight." So sometimes that earlier conviction... He said, "I don't remember when I was five or six years old. I don't even remember that event." So sometimes that happens. But I don't think it's a wrong thing. If someone doesn't feel like they're saved, they can make that profession for the Lord Jesus Christ. If they feel a lack in their lives, sometimes they rededicate their lives.

Now, some things to remember:

- **Don't play God.** So watch we don't use the phrase, "God wants you to get saved." Okay? Well, God does want them to get saved, but for you to say that to them gives the idea of pressure to them: "God wants you to get saved," "Daddy wants you to get saved," or anything like that. You're playing God at that particular situation. Let God work in their lives. Let God bring conviction. Let them sometimes feel a sense of need in coming to faith in the Lord Jesus.
- **Don't ask leading questions.** "You want to go to heaven, don't you?" "You don't want to go to hell, do you?" Watch we don't ask some of those kinds of questions.
- **Don't overemphasize fear.** You can speak about fear because it's reality in Scripture. You can talk about it, but don't overemphasize it. Don't overemphasize judgment and hell and punishment, and so by fear they come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- **Use the Bible.** Show them Bible verses:

[John 3:16 NKJV] - For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

—other passages in Scripture.

- **Allow the Holy Spirit to work in their lives.**

[John 16:7-8 NKJV] - ⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. ⁸ And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

—of sin, because they do not believe on Me. Allow the Holy Spirit to bring conviction of sin. Work along with the convicting work of the Holy Spirit.

- **Be available and accessible when a child wants to talk about spiritual things.** Any questions they have, any thoughts they have, any concerns they have, be accessible to them. Be available to them. Stop whatever you're doing and talk with them.

- **Do correct incorrect or inadequate understanding about the gospel.** There are things they don't understand about the gospel, or wrong understanding of the gospel. Sometimes they have a wrong idea: "If they'll be good, they'll go to heaven." I remember my son came home once from a neighbor's house, and the neighbor's father said when a person dies, they turn into an angel and go to heaven. That was wrong, wrong teaching about the Bible. If you were to watch, there's a movie out, a very old movie, it's called It's a Wonderful Life. At Christmas time they show it. Well, in that movie there's a man—I forget his name now, this character—but he says when you die, you turn into an angel and get your wings and you turn into an angel and go to heaven. Well, that's not biblical teaching. We have to watch; there's inaccurate teaching. Give proper teaching about the gospel.

- **Stress the urgency of the gospel.** Today is the day of salvation. We can stress urgency. It's important for everyone to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior.

- **Bring children to meetings of the church:** evening meetings, morning meetings. In our local church, local assembly, kids go to Sunday school until they're twelve years old. At twelve years old, they come up to the meeting upstairs where all the adults are. And sometimes when they hear teaching for all of the adults, they come to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Get saved downstairs as well in Sunday school. Sometimes it's good; they get saved when they hear teaching presented to everyone in the local church.

I'm going to stop there. I'm going to stress again: do everything we can. We have a world that is saying, "Don't believe the Bible. Don't believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't believe in the Scriptures." Telling our children the Bible is evil. Used to say the Bible was old-fashioned, but now it's racist, and it's sexist, and it's against homosexuality. All of these

things, more and more, it's driven into the lives, the minds, and the hearts of people: this Bible is a dangerous book. It is a dangerous book if you don't want to get saved. But if you want to get saved and you want to see your life changed, it's a powerful book. It's outlawed, I think, in fifty-two countries of the world—countries that are closed to the gospel. It's outlawed. It's a powerful book. And Satan wants us to have a closed book, that no one reads it, no one thinks about it. But more and more people are coming to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I think more and more young people are getting saved.

At our Bible camp in Florida—I'm going to close with this and take some questions. At our Bible camp in Florida, it was fifty years ago—two years ago, fifty-year anniversary two years ago. And so they decided to lower the price to \$50 for the first year. \$50—that's pretty good! We say you can't feed your kids at home for \$50, but you can go to camp for \$50. And so our camps were exploding with people wanting to go to camp. We had everybody who went to camp, and we had a waiting list of a hundred people wanting to go to camp. So now they're adding another week so they can accommodate all the kids who are going to camp.

And God did some miraculous things to provide financially for the camp. All the needs were met—all the electricity and all the food and everything, everything was met, almost miraculously sometimes. And so I said, "Let's do the same thing this year: \$50." So they did, and the same thing happened: kids poured in, parents bringing their kids to camp. It's wonderful to see that kind of thing. You don't want to hinder any kids, young people, from coming to camp. So I asked some leaders, "Are you going to do it next year?" Said, "Yeah, well, we'll have to see, year by year." But we want to get as many kids there, as many kids that are saved, and many young people that are saved.

So we'll stop there. I'm going to ask Roy to come up. I'm going to take some questions. They can be on this subject or any other subject, and we'll go for about fifteen minutes if there's questions, and then I'm going to invite Harold up to close the time off.

Questions & Answers

Moderator: So we'll stop there. You can ask questions. You can ask questions about the topic he's talking about. You can ask any questions. Any questions? Any questions about reaching our children for the Lord Jesus Christ?

Questioner: You may cover this in another session, but in your last session, you told us that we should be praying for our children. What about praying with our children?

Moderator: So you heard what he said: You may have talked about this at the last session. You said we should pray for our children. How about praying with our children?

David Dunlap: I think that's an excellent question. I think, yes, we begin at a young age to have devotions with our children and have our children pray. We certainly go around a circle and have our children all pray at a dinner table or some other time, get them to pray, get them to give prayer requests, and get them to pray, get them to be involved. What are the things that we need to get our kids involved in the spiritual life? Praying, worshiping, coming, serving—all of those things. That's what's so very important.

My life was changed, I feel, was changed when I was beginning to be challenged to serve and to live and to do things for the Lord Jesus Christ, and given opportunities and having to go out and take a certain risk in doing those kinds of things. And I think praying is the beginning of that, and continue to do those kinds of things. So praying with others, praying with your parents.

One little thought: what we do is we have sometimes a morning of prayer. So in the morning of prayer, we get together and we have forty minutes or so of praying individually. When we break up into little groups, children are encouraged to come and be in those little groups. So groups of three or four; sometimes there are two children and one adult, sometimes two adults, two children. We encourage the children to pray. Divided into men and women, young men and older men. And it's wonderful to see the children praying with the older men, going in circles, praying.

Moderator: At home, he often prays with his children. For example, when they eat dinner, they will hold hands and pray. They will go in circles, or ask them to pray, or ask them to ask some spiritual questions. So praying is very encouraging to him. After praying, he goes out to do other things. Spiritual things are also very important. Good comment. Any other thoughts? Any answer to that, or questions? Yes, Vic?

Questioner (Vic): In Matthew 18, it talks about offending one of these little ones. What are some of the major stumbling blocks that should be prevented?

David Dunlap: I think there's a couple. I think you have to watch for inconsistency. So I think one of the stumbling blocks is to tell our children that going to church is very important, or we have a commitment to go and to be a part of worshiping, and then we don't follow through. We don't do what we say.

I think legalism is a problem. I think when we begin to make up rules that aren't in Scripture... Now, there's a lot of good rules in Scripture, but we begin to make up certain kinds of rules of certain kinds of things. You have to watch that. Remember, our kids went to a Christian school, and they made rules about what color shoes you have to wear, and what

you can't wear and what you can wear. You have to be careful, I think, in the legalistic aspect when we raise our children.

Moderator: We have to be careful, I think, in the legalistic aspect when we raise our children. After we read the Bible, we see that the Bible has a lot of good principles, and there are a lot of things that we think are good. Then we gradually make up certain rules, like what he said: in some Christian schools, they have rules about what kind of shoes you have to wear and what kind of clothes you have to wear. So he said, "Don't get into the legalistic aspect when raising your children."

David Dunlap: So those are some things. I think probably sometimes legalism is a problem depending on the parent. But I think inconsistency: you tell them one thing, "Let's read our Bibles," and we don't read our Bibles; tell them to pray, we don't pray. We are inconsistent in that area. When we are consistent, that's a powerful testimony. So I think we need to watch our inconsistency.

Moderator: Legalism is a big problem, but being inconsistent is a bigger problem. If you tell them you want to read the Bible, you go and pray. You tell them to pray, you go and pray. If you are consistent, that's a powerful testimony when you teach your children. So you need to be consistent.

David Dunlap: Vic, are there some areas you could think of?

Vic: I'm wondering the verse:

[Ephesians 6:4 NKJV] - And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

I think that might be another area that often in many Christian families is a problem.

David Dunlap: Yeah, it can be too hard. Good, good, good. I think we'll take one more question, and then we invite Harold up.

Moderator: So in this session you talk about that twenty-five percent of children stay in the church, so seventy-five percent of them drift away. So her question is, do some of those seventy-five percent come back?

David Dunlap: Yeah, they do come back. They do. Some come back. I don't know how many, but the twenty-five percent are the ones who never go away. Because of the way they were

raised, they continue to come, and they continue to go on for the Lord. What we'd like to see is a second generation continuing in the local church.

But I do think some of that seventy-five percent come back. Sometimes they come back and they're wounded. Sometimes they come back and they've got problems: they've got drug addictions and they've got other addictions and they've got other problems; they've got marital problems because they got away. It's like the prodigal son. Now, he came back, but he came back with a lot of experiences that he could have avoided if he had never left the father's house.

Moderator: He said he came back after he had wandered around. If he hadn't left the father's house, he would never have experienced the pain of wandering. Thank you, everyone. Now I will hand this over to Harold. We will see how to eat lunch.