

1. **GOD LOVES YOU** and wants you to have **eternal life with Him**.

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

But most people aren't experiencing a meaningful life and aren't sure that they have eternal life because...

2. Man has a **SIN problem** which **SEPARATES** him from GOD. Every one has sinned.

Romans 3:23 "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

3. The **good news** is that **JESUS CHRIST** is God's **solution** to your sin problem. He is the **ONLY way** to heaven.

1 Peter 3:18 "For Christ also died for sins once and for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God..."

4. Therefore you must **REPENT** of your sins and place your **FAITH** in **JESUS alone** to **save** you.

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the GIFT OF GOD; not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

5. Upon believing and receiving Jesus, you have a **NEW LIFE** with complete assurance of **SALVATION**.

1 John 5:13 "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."

The Calling of Fatherhood: Shepherding of the Home

There is a wide-spread perception that ineffective parenting is the cause of the decline of the family in the post-modern world. Despite numerous publications on parenting, however, the family remains to be in trouble. Equally alarming is the exodus of young people leaving their faith. According to writer and pastor Greg McCombs, roughly 65% of church youth leave their faith by the completion of high school.

There is hope. And this requires a radical decision on the part of the father and the mother to take the primary role as shepherds of the family and return to the biblical ideals of parenting. When the home becomes the beacon of the gospel, there could be a reversal of the trend of young people leaving their faith.

Knowledge and Fear of God begins at home.

Whose job is it really to teach the children and youth knowledge of God and fear of Him? Deuteronomy 6:4-7 lays the foundation that knowledge of God and fear of Him takes place primarily at home.

It is the parents, especially the father, who play the lead role in the birthing, shaping, and nurturing of faith in the home.

Parents are commanded by God in Deuteronomy 4:9, 6:4-9, and 11:18-21 to be the primary teachers of Scriptures to their children at home, not the priests. Against such backdrop of biblical mandate, studies conducted by The Barna Research group indicate that only about twenty percent (20%) of parents interviewed believe that they are living out their calling to train their children in matters of "morality and spirituality". No wonder the family is in crisis!

The spiritual practices in the lives of parents as teachers are vital.

Given the divinely appointed role of parents as "bishops, apostles, and priests" to their own families, it is fitting that parents conscientiously practice the daily reading and meditation of Scripture and prayer for two reasons. **First**, as parents, these practices of daily reading and meditation of Scripture and prayer are essential to the nurturing of our own faith and our continuing transformation as we abide in Christ. **Second**, our children watch if our lives match our faith. A transformed life involves authenticity, vulnerability, as well as vibrancy. Our transformation can become a catalyst that draw our children to the transforming power of the gospel.

A look at the Howard Family: Worship of God through Scripture and Prayer at Home

Elizabeth Elliot, a Christian author and speaker, described how his father, Philip Howard, together with his wife, lived out the biblical mandate in Deuteronomy 6:4-7 to their family. Elisabeth recalled how the words of the hymns brought solace and encouragement to her during distressing times. "How thankful I have been in the dark hours that my parents saw to it that hymns became fixed in our minds and hearts, through what was to us at that time was merely a family routine."

The Interplay of Individual and Community Practice in the Home

Opportunities for worship through Scripture and prayer abound in the home and this opportunity brings mutual accountability. This interplay between individual quiet time involving bible reading and prayer and family prayer and devotion enhances genuineness and authenticity.

Divine love is the end goal of individual and collective bible reading and meditation and prayer.

The apostle John reminds us that "God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them." (1 John 4:16a, NIV). In shepherding the hearts of children, parents must do so in love to point them to God.

