**Autumn School: The Disciple-making Parent (Week 3)**

**Summary**

* The Great Commission is for parents; parents are the primary teachers and disciple makers
* The power of example: we are always being observed, a lot of behaviour is caught
* The power of discipline: gives sense authority values consequences, right behaviour, love
* The power of gospel words – tell your children the gospel
* The challenge and opportunities in families where both parents are not Christians
* Invite feedback: www.theapollosproject.com/why-dont-we-invite-input/

*What have you talked to your children about in the last 48 hours?*

*What would someone who observed your family for 48 hours think was important to you as parents?*

*If I could become one of your children for 24 hours what would I learn?*

1. **Teaching the Bible**

Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9Write them on the door-frames of your houses and on your gates. (Deut 6:4)

… let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation. (Joel 1:3)

do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (Eph 6:4)

* Teaching is duty and delight

Research: family experiences most tied to greater [spiritual] maturity were the frequency with which an adolescent talked with his mother and father about faith, the frequency of family devotions and the frequency with which parents and children together were involved in efforts, formal or informal, to help other people

* To know the scriptures so they
  + know Christ
  + get the whole bible story and the gospel
  + Develop a love of learning the Bible
* only the Holy Spirit can bring true knowledge of God but we can make sure they are at least acquainted.

**So we need to…**

* Humbly but obviously delight ourselves in the Lord
* Humbly but obviously delight ourselves in the word of God
* Actively teach our children the Bible using every possible means

**By…**

* Formal teaching by us
* Teaching they receive at church meetings, clubs, Christian events, conferences
* Conversation: talk about the scriptures

**In a normal family week we could do this at…**

* Start of day (“when you get up”)
* Chilled out times (“when you sit at home”)
* Bedtime (“when you lie down”)
* Travel time (“when you walk along the road”): and serve with them – train them in self-denial
* Memorising texts (“tie them write them”)
* Family bible times: (N.B. 90% Christians in US don’t do them… do you?)
  + Simple and consistent beats the elaborate
  + Expect 1,000 restarts – regroup; take a break
  + Men – take a lead
  + Ideas: Read book of the bible; memorise; read Christian book; listen Christian testimony
* Start whilst family eating or bedtime; make it real but not big deal’ reward but don’t make it an endurance to be compensated for
* Small deposits work best

*Have you/would you tell your children: what read today; how word affected you; a bible story; why/why not?*

* Always gospel of Christ not dead law
* Apply the scriptures
  + Repent and believe
  + Be holy: enjoying life but not loving the world – affections directed towards God
  + Younger children rules; middle, less rules, more principles; older principles/encouragement
* Have confidence: Our words are powerful

Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (Proverbs 12:18)

* + Your words can pierce those you love, or they can bring healing. How you speak matters
  + Jesus words bring eternal life (John 6:63, Philippians 2:16).
  + Words give grace to another person (Ephesians 4:29)
  + Communion and community never happen without communication.
* Ask questions invite our children to explain what they know: Articulation deepens comprehension
* Questions about the gospel
  + Who made us? Why? Who is God? What is the Bible. Who is Jesus? What did he do? What is a Christian? What is grace? What happens to people when they die? How do I know God loves me? Why do we go to church gatherings?
* Questions about holy living (for older children)
  + Does this help you love Jesus more… or maybe helps you forget him?
  + Do you think God is pleased with what you are doing? Why/why not? Are you addicted to this activity. What is motivating you – lust, peer pressure, selfishness…?

1. **The power of prayer**

* Praying ***for*** your children
  + Pray as parents
  + Pray with other people
  + Pray for devotion; wisdom for you
  + Pray for understanding the message and love of God; repentance; heart change
* Praying with your children
  + Let them see you pray – as you lead; significant moments; food time; birthdays…
  + Pray in family groups
  + Pray 1:1

*Would you get your children praying – why/why not?*

* Get them to pray
  + Give them a structure, method; thing to praise, thank, request
  + Teach them to connect their prayers to the gospel
  + Seek the Lord in crisis
  + Record answers and deal with disappointments
* Encourage them to pray for you and for the family