

EVANGELIZING YOUR CHILD

Having practical conversations with your children about faith and salvation may be intimidating. Because you are an authoritative figure in their life you may fear pressures of emotionally manipulating them. But it's about allowing the Holy Spirit to do the work of conversion. It's more than just praying a prayer, raising a hand, or coming to the altar. It's about life transformation, and that is something that can't be manufactured or manipulated into existence.

Three things from this text come to mind for your family. **Philippians 2:12-**

13 *"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."*

1. **Much more in my absence** - Meaning you want them to understand Christianity and steward their own faith because one day they will move out and have to choose for themselves what they want to do in following Jesus. Statistically, a lot of church kids in this generation have walked away from the church and faith, because a lot of them never had regular conversations about faith at home. Christianity then is too inconsistent to become anything of a pattern to follow. For us, it becomes much more apparent as our children get older they have a choice and, yes, it's scary. They hopefully gleaned from our practices and values for so long, but soon they could choose to walk away from that. The comfort we have as parents is that we did have regular talks about Jesus, faith, and other values we hold with them. We incorporate our faith in our personal way of living that they see Monday-Saturday, life lessons, finances, discipline, and plans. Our time is almost gone where we have great influence over them, so we lean into Proverbs 22:6 "train up a child in the way they should go..." The best kind of training can be experiential learning. To let them see lived out on a day-to-day basis. That gives a point of reference when you are not around them anymore. They will mature as adults from the positive and, yes, even the negative examples.

2. **Work out your own salvation** - Be clear about what following Jesus means but remind them regularly that it's OK to ask questions about faith. Even if the questions or comments are hard. One thing that will help them feel comfortable is for both of you to be authentic and transparent in how you've wrestled with your faith. Salvation is not just a one-time prayer that happens but is a life-long experience to be practiced. Yes, we are justified the moment we put our faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus and choose to make Him the Lord of our lives, but that is the catalyst for sanctification--a messy process of being more like Jesus, holy. Then a hope of glorification--to be complete spiritually, mentally, and physically in Jesus (this is heaven). People need to see faith from more than a lens of when things are easy and good, but even more when they are hard and bad. Read through 1 Peter and Philippians and you'll see a story of Christian struggle. The hope is that God is with us in all of it and that our faith isn't circumstantial or convenient. If not, people will always walk away from faith in Jesus when any trial comes their way. Let them see you practice that. Give them space and grace to practice that too.

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3. **For it is God who works in you** - Point 2 is about our part and Point 3 is about God's part. Trust that even when we are unfaithful, God is faithful. This helps relieve a lot of stress on us as parents because we are not the ones justifying, sanctifying, and glorifying; God is. We totally trust that before they were ever our children, they belonged to their Creator first. This is why we do child dedications. It's a public display to honor God by recognizing children are a gift from God and declaring we will be good stewards with all we have, especially our children. I love what Matthew 7:11 says, "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" God's grace is that He would be involved in my children's life, whether I am or not. He is a Father to the orphan, praise God!

Here are some other resources:

- GotQuestions.org is a simple but helpful website you can seek some basic answers to questions you or your children may have. I don't always agree with every article, but it's a good starting place if you don't know where to go theologically.
- Here's a link to a basic way to share the gospel with children: <https://gospelcenteredfamily.com/blog/how-to-share-the-gospel-with-your-child>
- Search on YouTube: Bible Project with a topic or book of the bible. Tim McKie is a brilliant bible teacher and scholar. Their content is good for adults and children. They story tell themes of the bible visually through artwork. Here's an example: [Kid Video](#) and [Non-Kid Video](#).
- Books from Paul David Tripp are excellent! <https://www.paultripp.com/parenting>