

## TOOLS

*for passing along your faith to your children and grandchildren.*<sup>1</sup>

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**Genesis 18:19** For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD, to do righteousness and justice, that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.



Passing the faith along is not so much about ensuring that the kids and grandkids have the Bible memorized and can perform externally to certain standards. It's a heart thing. By first giving heed to the condition and governance of our own parent-hearts, we are then able to transmit information about the Lord's attributes found in His Word. His commands reveal His character, which we are commanded to emulate in every area of our lives. This is the primary lesson our children must learn. The penultimate foundational character trait of the Lord – upon which all His other attributes rest - is His eternal sovereignty. Every knee shall bow before Him at some point in history – either in this life, or at the Judgment Day (when it is too late for it to save us). Our goal as parents is to conduct our children to the point of bowing their knees to their Sovereign Lord as early in their lives as possible. Of course, the Holy Spirit is the one who convicts of sin and guides into all truth. But we facilitate this process by our examples and by teaching and training our little ones from birth.

Here some tools for leaving a godly legacy:

**The Holy Bible** (especially the book of Proverbs, Ephesians 6:1-4) “Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). We need much wisdom in training our children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Wisdom comes from His Word – so study it diligently, thoroughly.

**Prayer** - In humility, asking the Lord for wisdom, grace and patience. Graciousness comes from gratitude to our Savior for redeeming us from what we deserve – death, hell and destruction. Patience is one of the fruit of the Spirit – so walk daily, hourly in Spirit and in Truth<sup>2</sup>

**The Rod** (Proverbs 19:18, 29; 20:30; 23:13-14; 29:15) **WARNING:** This must be coupled with reproof - using the Word of God - and **must not be done in anger**. If you need to discipline your child and you are

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<sup>1</sup> We present this information with fear and trembling, acknowledging that those who teach will receive stricter judgment (James 3:1). However, we see such a crying need for these teachings and want to help you avoid some of the pitfalls we experienced. Remember, be a Berean (Acts 17:9-11). Don't trust us – search out the Scriptures to see if we're telling the truth. And if you find us in error, please lovingly correct us.

<sup>2</sup> John 4:23

angry, take time to cool off *completely*. More spiritual damage has been done by disciplining children in anger than can be known. Fathers are implored to “provoke not your children to wrath” (Ephesians 6:4; Matthew 18:6), and disciplining in anger is a surefire way to provoke them to wrath.<sup>3</sup> Our obedience to the command to “be gentle to all men” (Titus 3:2) should begin at home. Be ever mindful that your goal is to help the child be clean and at peace with the Lord. Children are hardwired to recognize proper discipline and will become angry and sullen if their parents do not discipline according to God’s design, as delineated in His Word. Remember, it is God’s kindness that leads us to repentance. This is an area that *requires much study, prayer, grace and patience*.

**Home Education**<sup>4</sup> - Home education presents the optimum venue for conveying our faith to our offspring. Interacting in the context of daily living affords many opportunities for teaching and training our children about the Lord’s character. We can reinforce what we’ve taught, as well as correct any misconceptions on their part. With every problem that arises, we should take their hands and say, “Let’s go talk to Jesus about this.” This concept gives new meaning to “leading little ones to Christ.” They will get the idea that Christianity is not about a set of rules, but about relationship. Relationship with the God who created us, and with His sinless Son, who gave His life in exchange for our own sinful one, so our sin-shattered relationship with the Father can be restored. They should come to love Him, and should not want to sin against this gracious Father who loved them first.”

**Humility** – Ask your kiddos to forgive you when you’re wrong.

**Humor** – Ya simply gotta maintain a sense of humor!

(See below for more resources.)

### **A Sample Disciplinary Scenario:**

Teaching a child from birth the importance of obeying his Heavenly Father is crucial in the discipline process. The laboratory for learning obedience is in the home, beginning with obedience to God by obeying parents. We taught each of our children very young (even before they could talk) Ephesians 6:1-3, and when they began talking, required that they memorize it and be able to repeat it to us.

God requires first time, cheerful, willing obedience. That’s what we should train our children to do. We parents must also be committed to our own personal obedience. We cannot expect more of our

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<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 6:4 & Matthew 6:13 (Putting a child in government schools can also cause them to become angry. We’ll save that discussion for another time.)

<sup>4</sup> We do not have room here to go into a full discussion of the topic of home education. We encourage you to study it out for yourselves. Here are some passages to get you started: Psalm 127:3-5; Psalm 128:3-4; Matthew 18:6; Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 13:20; Ephesians 6:4 & Matthew 6:13; Matthew 22:19-21 & Genesis 1:26; 1 Corinthians 15:33; Jeremiah 10:2; Psalm 1:1-3; Matthew 28:19-20 (discipleship begins at home!); Proverbs 22:6; 1 Peter 1:13-15; 1 Peter 2:9; Ephesians 5:5-18; Psalm 145:4; Psalm 34:11; Romans 16:19; Matthew 22:20-21; 2 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 4:6-12; 2 Timothy 2:11-26; 1 Corinthians 13:11; Matthew 5:13; James 1:27; James 4:3-8; Hebrews 3:12-13; Psalm 119:63.

children than we are willing to do ourselves. This is hypocrisy of the worst sort, and does not please our heavenly Father. Children cannot stomach hypocrisy. When those little faces turn up to ours, we will often see our own sin reflected there. This is painful, but a wonderful tool of the Lord to purify our own hearts before Him. Our humility in repenting of sin is the example our children need to see, prerequisite to disciplining our children so God will bless our efforts.

The David Kautt children are all old enough now that we've moved on in our training process. But when they were very young, and after much trial and error, we arrived at some variant of the following process:

I used Ephesians 6:1-3 and other pertinent scriptures written on 3x5 index cards when disciplining them. I punched holes in the left hand upper corners of the cards, then put them on a metal ring. Placed strategically near the usual "talking spot," they were handy when needed. I carried another set with me for off-site talks. Even better would be to have these Scriptures memorized.

Sometimes I would read these verses from the Bible so my child would understand that this was the Word of God, not simply Mom's idea.

"The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself brings his mother to shame." Proverbs 9:15  
We used a rod to spank when the child disobeyed, couched in reproof. A typical session would go like this:

"Jaden, who made you?"

"God."

"Because He created you, does He have a right to rule in your life, to be your boss, to tell you what to do?"

"Yes."

"Is there anywhere that He gives us these commands?"

"Yes, in the Bible."

"Have you disobeyed one of these commands?"

"Yes."

"Which one(s)?"

"'Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.' Ephesians 6:1."

"How did you disobey?"

"I hit Johanna."

"That was unkind. Is there any other command you disobeyed by doing that?"

[If he didn't know the exact command, I would remind him by quoting Ephesians 4:32: "And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you." Side-note: If unkindness was a continuing problem, then I would have the two children sit knee-to-knee holding hands and have them sing, "Beloved, let us love one another. For love is of God and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who loves not, knows not God, for God is love. Beloved, let us love one another. First John four seven and eight."]

"Were you practicing fidelity to the original<sup>5</sup>?"

"No."

"How's that?"

"I was not following Jesus' example of obeying His Father."

"Okay. Now I'm going to spank you." I trained our children to stand still and cry quietly. They were not allowed to argue or wiggle around.

Then I would administer the rod.<sup>6</sup> If he was resistant, then I would pray aloud, "Lord, may this discipline be effective in Jaden's heart." (I'm afraid I didn't learn until too late that that particular prayer should have been made at the very start of each session.)

Once that was finished, I did not yet hug him. I wanted him to understand that he was out of fellowship with the Lord and with me until he had completed the process. I required him to acknowledge that he had done something wrong, and that he should not have done it, and that he was sorry he did it. I tried to discern whether or not he truly was repentant. I read his eyes, his body language, his verbal inflections. If I detected any sullenness or bitterness, then I said something like, "Jaden, I'm after your heart here. Just saying the right words does not please the Lord. He wants true repentance from you. Are you truly sorry you did this?" Sometimes his bad attitude necessitated another application of the rod to his bottom and more verbal probing on my part. I persevered until I was sure he had truly repented.

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<sup>5</sup> Josh McDowell, "[How Do You Measure Truth](#)"; and Worldview Weekend DVD "[Judge Not, Lest You Be Judged](#)".

<sup>6</sup> The book of Proverbs is a rich source of parenting guidance. Research the means of and parental heart behind using the rod and reproof. It's there. A parent must not discipline in anger. If you're requiring first-time obedience and following thru in a timely manner, there is no need to get angry. Because you are human, you may not deserve your child's respect, but God commands it (Ephesians 6:2-3) and you must teach your child this and require it of him. Don't expect the neighbor or the store clerk to teach and require this – they likely won't be much help in that regard! It's up to you. If you arm yourself with knowledge from the Word, you can go into each discipline session confident of your responsibility and rights as a parent. No need for anger on your part.

Yes, this takes time, but if the parent rushes this part, the discipline is ineffective. And then what was the point?

In fact, if improperly disciplined, a child will harbor resentment. This will cause him to become even more bitter and to sin even more. We are obligated as parents to help our children clear their consciences before the Lord. Prior to their salvation, they need us to guide them in this process.

“Now, ask God to forgive you.”

(When he sins, his first offense is against the Lord God, who gave the commands.)

When the child was just learning this process, I led him in prayer, having him repeat phrase by phrase after me. He should pray something like this, “Dear God, I was wrong. I disobeyed You by being unkind to Johanna. Please forgive me.”

I then required him to go to each person he offended, starting with me and / or his father, since he disobeyed our commands. After he asked me to forgive him, then I hugged and kissed him. Now he’s back in fellowship with me. I would accompany him to make sure he followed through. He was required to get close to the offended person, even touching them. (It’s hard to stay mad at someone you’re touching!) Johanna was required to forgive him. (If she had a hard time, then I’d remind her that God would not forgive her if she didn’t forgive Jaden.) Then they were required to hug each other. Hopefully, at this point everyone’s got a clean heart before the Lord and with each other and the atmosphere is clear and harmonious. If not, then I had to go back to square one and discern whether someone involved had failed to humble himself / herself. Including me!)

In his book, SHEPHERDING A CHILD’S HEART, Ted Tripp asserts that our hearts are idol-factories. We’re always manufacturing new ones. Another of our parental responsibilities before God is helping our children root out the idols in their hearts. We as parents must be practiced in recognizing these idols in our own lives and teach our children how to do so in their own.

We hope these suggestions are helpful to you as you carry out the terrifying responsibility of guiding little ones, whose souls will reside in eternity somewhere – either heaven or hell. We welcome your feedback. Do you have favorite resources that have been especially helpful to you as a Christian parent? Please tell us about them.

*David and Julia Kautt*

Other Resources:

Audio CD - [Courageous Conversations](#) – Chris Hogan; for families with older children who are experiencing communication problems.

Book - SHEPHERDING A CHILD’S HEART – [Ted Tripp](#)

Book –[TELL ME ABOUT HEAVEN](#) – by Randy Alcorn, with stunning illustrations by one of my favorite artists, Ron DiCianni. A heartwarming story that will help young ones to not fear heaven, but to look forward to it. The Gospel is presented in a simple and understandable format. The only criticism I have

is that Alcorn omits the part baptism plays in salvation. (See Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 8:26; 22:16; Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21.)

Ebenezer Wall – This idea, based on 1 Samuel 7:7-13<sup>7</sup> is not original to our family; I forget which magazine I found it in several years back. The basic idea is to have some tangible form to remind your family of how the Lord has provided for you through the years. Some folks use photo albums or photos on the wall. Our friends, the Martins, display their Ebenezer mementos in a glass case, stationed in their living room. Our Ebenezer Wall is a simple shadow box in which I have placed miniatures. There's a toy car, a beach ball, an apple, a photo of a smashed up vehicle, a paper grocery sack, a house, the state of Texas, a head of wheat, an envelope with our name on it, a butane click lighter, and several others. Each of these represents a key moment of God's provision – either of things we needed or of protection, and each has its own story. (I hope someday to write a book, aptly titled *The Ebenezer Wall*.)

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<sup>7</sup> 1 Samuel 7:7-13 New King James Version (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> Now when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel had gathered together at Mizpah, the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel. And when the children of Israel heard of it, they were afraid of the Philistines. <sup>8</sup> So the children of Israel said to Samuel, "Do not cease to cry out to the LORD our God for us, that He may save us from the hand of the Philistines."

<sup>9</sup> And Samuel took a suckling lamb and offered *it as* a whole burnt offering to the LORD. Then Samuel cried out to the LORD for Israel, and the LORD answered him. <sup>10</sup> Now as Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel. But the LORD thundered with a loud thunder upon the Philistines that day, and so confused them that they were overcome before Israel. <sup>11</sup> And the men of Israel went out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, and drove them back as far as below Beth Car.

<sup>12</sup> Then Samuel took a stone and set *it* up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."

<sup>13</sup> So the Philistines were subdued, and they did not come anymore into the territory of Israel. And the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel.