

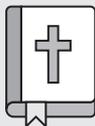
PARENTING *resources.*

PARENTING MATTERS: SPIRITUAL MILESTONES

OWNING YOUR FAITH

LIFE LOOKS A LITTLE LIKE...

...consistently defining what freedom looks like in your family. Do you push personal Bible reading, or let them find it naturally? What do you say when they express doubts or claim different beliefs? Do you make them go to church, or let them decide? How do you integrate faith into your life and your family so that it starts being a together-thing, not a you vs. them thing? This milestone is an opportunity to guide your child in defining their faith and helping them own what they believe.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OWN YOUR FAITH

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO OWN YOUR FAITH?

The choice to believe and follow Jesus as a dedicated disciple is not something that you can decide for another person, even for your own child. Salvation is deeply personal, and so is every decision that is made to glorify God from that point on. When you don't have ownership over your own beliefs and your own faith journey, it is easy to lose your way or even to leave intentionally. The power and beauty of a relationship with God is that it's something truly and solely yours. Owning your faith is about making faith personal and living out your unique role in God's story.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT IT?

When you help your child find ways to resonate personally with the Bible and point them toward the bigger picture of who God is, you help give them solid roots to grow their own unique faith. The diversity of the Bible inherently connects with many different types of people. There is poetry, history, genealogy, storytelling, and intellect, as well as men and women with unique personalities, struggles, and strengths. Throughout it all there is a consistent message encouraging you examine yourself regularly and determine if you are being faithful and realizing who Jesus is (2 Corinthians 13:5). There is also the constant reminder that God is bigger than our human experience, that emotions and stress and struggles pale in comparison to God's power for those that believe in him (Ephesians 1:19).

WHY IS IT SIGNIFICANT TO US?

The ability to own your faith and be active in your journey is what makes Christianity beautiful. It is not a set list of rules to follow that are cookie cutters for everyone. It is a deeply personal and unique adventure for each individual person. As a parent, your role is to guide your child through all of these milestones while keeping in mind that they are a unique and wonderfully made being. Allow your child to speak into their own journey, but come along side them to offer support, prayer, encouragement, challenge, and love.

ENGAGE YOUR FAITH BY...

TELL YOUR STORY

A huge part of helping your kids own their faith is being transparent and vulnerable about your own faith walk. Take time to share your own faith journey with your kids. There is power and influence in your testimony! Consider sharing things like...

- When you first heard about God
- Your favorite Bible stories or verses
- Who influences your faith (think pastors, authors, mentors, etc.)
- Your experience with salvation, baptism, prayer, worship, and other significant elements of faith

HELP THEM TELL THEIR STORY

Use these five questions to build a culture of testimony-sharing. With small tweaks, these questions can work for any age. Try posting them on the fridge and asking one a day, or write them on cards or popsicle sticks and draw one at dinner every night.

- 1) How have you seen God working in your life lately?
- 2) How are you spending time with Jesus?
- 3) Do you have any big questions about your faith, God, or the Bible?
- 4) On a scale of 1 to 10, how close do you feel to God? Why?
- 5) Have you had the chance to talk to anyone about Jesus and your faith this week?

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 4:18-20

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." At once they left their nets and followed him.

PRAYER FOR PARENTS

Dear Lord, thank you for all that you are. I praise you because faith in you is worth fighting for. Thank you for calling us to believe in you and to follow you. I know that my family must choose to follow you on their own, and I pray that they will. Help me lead them well and point them toward you whenever I can. Put a call on their lives so big, so beautiful, and so intentional that they can't help but listen and follow. Thank you for creating us all to serve and glorify you. I pray that my family would own their faith and pursue you passionately. Amen

RESOURCES

Living 'So That': Making Faith-Filled Choices in the Midst of a Messy Life
by Wendy Blight

Journal Bible (search on Amazon for your preferred translation)

Sticky Faith: Everyday Ideas to Build Lasting Faith in Your Kids
by Kara Powell and Chap Clark

Emp.org - How Can Parents Encourage Kids to Own Their Faith as They Grow Up?



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