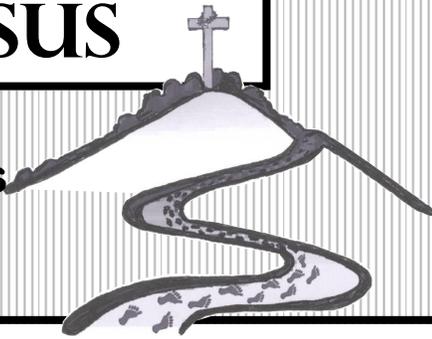


TO BE LIKE JESUS

Parent Resource Pages

Introduction



What is the Christian life all about? For many children who are growing up in Christian homes and attending church regularly, this question may seem to have an obvious answer. But does it? How well do our children understand the gospel message? Has it been carefully explained to them in words that they can understand? Have we given them the whole gospel or just bits and pieces? Have we simply assumed that they are saved because they are well-behaved and they do all the right things—pray, read the Bible, memorize verses, attend Sunday school?

As the above paragraph points out, there are many important questions that we need to examine in regards to our children. We often make two common errors: First, we assume that our children have been presented with a clear explanation of salvation—especially concerning justification—and we then assume that they have responded in belief simply because they know how to “talk the talk.” Because of this, we often treat our children as believers and press on to teach them about following Jesus’ commands. Children often come to think that it is good behavior that makes someone a Christian. In other words, we inadvertently steer our children down the deadly road of legalism. The second error is that we present children with a watered-down gospel—one that is easily responded to because it makes no demands and carries no life-changing effect. As long as the children acknowledge a few basic gospel facts, they are deemed saved by grace, and it becomes a secondary concern as to whether or not their profession is followed by true Christian obedience. In this scenario, we inadvertently lead our children down the dangerous road of licentiousness.

To Be Like Jesus was written to carefully steer children down the true, biblical road of the gospel message as summarized in Ephesians 2:8-10 and Luke 9:23:

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

And He said to all, “If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”

Please do not see the lessons as a “to do” list for the Christian life. Being a Christian is not a “to do” list (or a “don’t do” list). It is about having a real, heart-felt relationship with a living and reigning Savior and Lord. The Christian life is about having Jesus as your heart’s treasure and delight. It is about the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit and the Word in the life of every true believer. How does this happen? By grace alone, through faith alone, in Jesus alone!

Parental Responsibility:

Clearly the responsibility (as well as the privilege) of nurturing the faith of children rests

primarily on parents. Parents have the most opportunity for teachable moments: everyday situations in which the truth of God's Word can be applied. Faith nurturing should not be seen primarily as a classroom experience, but rather should be seen as a consistent weaving of spiritual truth into everyday life. In order for the church and the home to partner together in nurturing the faith of children, Parent Resource Pages are provided.

Using the Parent Resource Pages:

Every lesson in this curriculum has a corresponding Parent Resource Page. You will find the following information listed: Lesson title, key themes, Scripture presented in lesson, and one or more memory verses. Use this information to ask your child questions about the lesson. Encourage your child to memorize the memory verse. All memory verses are printed in the ESV version. The ESV is a version that is both readable and accurate. So a child using the ESV because it is readable can someday become an adult using the ESV because it is accurate. Since there is no need to switch versions as a teen or adult, verses memorized as a child will still be reviewed in adulthood. These verses have been carefully chosen to give children a strong Bible-based theological foundation. We cannot overemphasize the significance of memorized Scripture in the walk of faith.

After the memory verse, you will notice a section titled, **Take it to heart**. This title is very intentional. This particular study must be presented very carefully. The majority of lessons focus on specific commands of Jesus. The fear of legalism should be a very real one. As a parent you must be discerning. Listen carefully to how your child is responding to the lesson content. You must keep directing the focus to the response of the heart! The Christian life is about having a living, ongoing, heart-felt relationship with Jesus. Christian obedience is not about external acts that are done apart from faith in Jesus. Sanctification is growing in grace, evidenced by loving obedience to our Savior and Lord. The questions listed in this section are to assist you in getting to the heart of the matter—not merely seeing if your child has come to an intellectual understanding. Hopefully these questions will encourage further spiritual discussion between you and your child along with practical suggestions for putting faith into action.

Finally, you will find a section titled, **Pray about it**. As 1 Corinthians 3:7 states, *“So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.”* We are totally dependent on the Holy Spirit for giving us new spiritual eyes that see, trust, and treasure Christ. And it is only by His ongoing power, transforming the heart and mind, that we and our children can grow in grace. Prayer is the means by which we can come before our heavenly Father and cry out to Him for daily help. Praying with and for your child will encourage him to continually fix his eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

Deuteronomy 6:5-9 says, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”