

The Best Time to Prepare Your Kids

I. Reevaluate Your Family Schedule

- Explanation We are too stinking busy.
- We're doing too much.
- The world and the flesh have convinced us that we have to be involved in everything at school and take our work home with us and keep up on all the hit shows and get involved in club sports and music lessons and participate in every ministry and own every pet and the list goes on.
- And when the day or week or month is done, when we look back, we're accomplishing a lot of *things* . . . but we haven't matured through the process. In fact, we're more tired and cranky and our relationships are more strained and brittle than before.

II. Acknowledge Our Tendency to Be Fire-Fighting Parenting

- Proverbs 1:8-19
- The fire-fighters in that city will spend all their time putting out industrial fires. There's nothing else they can do. They don't own the buildings, they're not the police, their job is to extinguish fires that explode without a moment's notice.
- Now, let's compare that to our parenting. Your children are the warehouses — born with a sin nature that is constantly lusting for their own pleasure. It's a powder keg of destruction. And then Satan and the world are on a perpetual quest — like the arsons — to burn your kids' lives to the ground.
- And all we parents feel like we can do is share fire-safety tips a few times a week like a weary fire-fighter at a school where none of the students are really listening, and then wait for something to go wrong so we can be there as quickly as possible to minimize the damage. There's going to be damage, we just hope we're close enough to take the edge off before something *really* bad happens.
- But imagine if we weren't just fire-fighters. Imagine if we also managed the property. Imagine if we were able to secure it from negative influences.
- We need to understand that — as parents — that's our God-given responsibility too. Wouldn't it be far better to invest our day emptying the warehouses of their toxic waste and flammable chemicals while we set up defenses in their lives to protect them from dangerous influences? That way, there would be far fewer fires that need extinguishing. There would be less loss. There would be more blessing!

III. And Then Work to Prepare Your Kids *before* They Encounter Them

- Yes, have them in church. Encourage their personal devotions, and have family devotions. That's a great start!
- But there's more we can do, and it's going to start with us intentionally and premeditatedly reevaluating our family schedule. It's going to include us putting time in to know our kids and their potential struggles so we can prepare them before they're in the middle of the temptation. It's going to involve us knowing what Satan and the world are trying to cram down our kids' throats on a daily basis so we can equip them for that as well.
- We need to take another step in becoming an intentional, premeditated, disciple-making Ambassador Parent. We need to invest more time in teaching, interpreting, counseling, and training our kids.