

A Parent's Final Words

In I Kings 2:1-4 David speaks his final words to Solomon.

I. We need to be honest about who we are.

- None of us are immortal. None of us are perfect. And yet so many parents try to interact with their kids as if they are. We promise we're never going to leave our kids or let anything bad happen to them, we don't confess our sins, and we don't regularly communicate our need for Christ.
- What we say — and far too often what we don't say — sends all the wrong messages.
- Instead, our children need to know that we are no different than they are. We're frail, mortal, finite beings who have a sin nature and wrestle every day with the Flesh. The only significant differences should be our ages and the fact that we're more submitted to loving and obeying God than they because we've had more practice.
- David was honest with Solomon about the fact that he was going to die. He wasn't pretending to be some immortal demi-god like many of the contemporary kinds of that time. He wasn't calling for worship. He knew he needed to prepare his son for a time when he would be gone.

II. We need to prepare our children for when we're gone.

- It's not that big of a deal that — when they're young — our kids rely on us for everything from eating to changing their clothes to wiping their behinds, but do we want it to always be like that?
- Of course not, we want them to learn all of those skills and many more — and the sooner the better.
- Whether we're preparing our kids to be Christ-honoring adults long after we've "gone the way of all the earth" or we're preparing them to make mature, Christ-honoring choices when we're not around, our parenting should constantly be focused on teaching our kids to be independent of us.
- Now, I'm not saying that our kids should be fully independent of us while we're still alive, but one day — Lord willing — they will outlive us, and then we can say with all certainty that it's God's will for them to not need you anymore.
- But I think too many parents like for their kids to be dependent on them. They like to have someone for whom to care. And they handicap their kids by not teaching them to be responsible and affluent and capable.
- Whether we're dead or in the next room, that's something for which we need to prepare our kids.

III. We need to instill in our kids spiritual strength.

- David was talking to Solomon, but is the command to "*be strong, therefore, and show yourself a man*" inappropriate for our girls?
- Interestingly enough, the sentence could also be rendered, "*be strong, therefore, and become who you were meant to be.*" The word translated "show" is a unique word that often has the idea of becoming something, and the word translated "man" can be used indefinite individuals.
- The point is, David is not necessarily calling Solomon to embody a litany of culturally-acceptable male-isms. He's calling Solomon to become the man God wanted him to be. And we can equally call our daughters to become the women God has called them to be.
- And we know exactly how David thought a man should live, because he explains it in his next breath.

IV. We need to set our children up for success by expecting them to love God and — by natural extension — the Bible.

- David could have said “obey God by doing everything written in the Scriptures,” but instead he leaves no room for confusion or misinterpretation.
- “Keep” is the word used for military guardsmen protecting something important. “To walk” in His ways is to follow His ordained path at all times in every facet of life. There is no room for turning back or stepping off the road.
- He refers to God’s charge. This refers to the solemn duty as prescribed by a commanding officer. Solomon was told to walk in God’s ways.
- And the word “keep” comes back and is applied to God’s statutes, commandments, and ordinances which are understood to refer to the three portions of the Jewish Law. There were the ceremonial laws, the moral laws, and the judicial judgments.
- Testimonies likely refers to the written and visible evidences of God’s character and deeds.
- And — for Solomon — all of this was encapsulated in the Law of Moses — which was specifically the first five books of the Old Testament.
- And if Solomon could then succeed in all his ways with only five of the sixty-six books of the Bible we have, how much more prepared will our kids be if we call them to keep and walk in God’s Word.
- And notice that this is not a simple request or hope or wish or desire. David is charging his son. The word “charge” means to appoint or command, to give an order or instruct. And his language leaves no room for misunderstanding.
- That is a clear and simple imperative sentence. It was the expectation.

V. Practical Application

- The first way to practically live this out in your home is by revisiting the first point.
- Are you honest with yourself about yourself? You desperately need God. You need Him just as much as I do. But if you try to conquer the day without spending time with the Lord, if you dedicate hours and hours to games and sports and movies and cringe at the thought of giving God more than ten minutes a day, or if you make decisions based off your feelings or the cultural “wisdom” of the day, then you’re not being honest to yourself or your kids about your own need and about life in general.
- The best way to instill in someone the important of a belief or practice is to wholeheartedly believe it yourself. Some of you have kids who root for admittedly poor teams simply because someone important in their life roots for that team.
- Some of your kids want to major in a field about which their favorite teacher was passionate.
- Your kids likely approach their family traditions the same way you do.
- If you want your children to be spiritually strong, by all means charge them to love God and obey the Bible, but if you’re not going to do it yourself . . . don’t expect too much from your kids.
- That’s the application for today. Read the Bible. Use the Bible. Speak of the Bible. Parent from the Bible. Make family decisions with the Bible. Make church a priority. Make discipleship the expectation for your family. Use The Celebration of God.
- Then when you take the time to charge your kids to love God and obey His Word so that they may become the people God created them to be and have spiritual success in this world . . . they’ll already understand what that kind of lifestyle looks like, and they will likely have experienced some of the benefits as well.