

Applying God's Truth to Our Children's Lives

I. Know God's Truth

- You can't apply Truth you don't know, and you can't teach your children to apply Truth if they don't know the Truth.
- **Colossians 3:16** says, "*Let the word of Christ **dwelt in you richly**, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*"

II. Utilize God's Wisdom

- As I mentioned earlier, good parenting involves instructing our children in philosophy - which is why you do what you do. So, by teaching philosophy this way, you're teaching your child to be wise; you're teaching them to apply.
- **Proverbs 20:5** says, "*The purpose in a man's heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.*"
- This same truth applies to training as well. We could say, "*The application of Truth is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.*"
- Wisdom itself is application. When your child takes your instruction and correctly applies it to a situation and makes the Christ-honoring choice, you would say he's being wise or mature.
- So, if we're going to teach our children how to be wise, we're going to need to be wise ourselves.

III. Pre-answer Concerns

- In **Romans 9**, Paul unveils powerful realities that he knew his audience would struggle with.
- So he put himself into their shoes and while presenting his information, he asked questions of himself that he knew would eventually dawn on his audience.

IV. Use Dynamic Stories

- I love how Jesus taught. His parables are divine genius.
- We are story-telling people. Plot, characters, settings, and visual images resonate with us because that's how God created us. And He created us that way because He's a storytelling, narrative-building, plot-unfolding God.
- I using parables and illustrations has revolutionized my parenting, teaching, preaching, and friending.
- You can't really understand how powerful it is until you use it; it's the difference between throwing a bucket of paint against the wall while it's still in the can, and purposefully applying the paint to the wall with careful brush strokes.

V. Be More Specific

- I start by telling my child he needs to obey God.
- What I said is true, but if I left the instruction there, he's on his own to figure out what that means and then decide how to apply it to his daily life.
- So, I make my focus a little narrower. I turn over to **Galatians 5** and we discuss peace and patience and kindness and love. Now, we've gotten more specific. For example, we can see that to obey God we need to be loving.
- But, what if I stop there? Does my son know what it means to love?
- So I get more specific. I take him over to **I Corinthians 13** and we start to understand that in order to obey God we need to love and in order to love we need to stop being prideful, irritable, and pessimistic.
- But what does it look like for my child to be optimistic in his love for his sister?
- So I drill down even farther, helping him to see that when he says, "*She always breaks my stuff, she'll never change.*" he's not being loving.
- And then I can take him to **Ephesians 4** to help him put off that sinful behavior and put on the righteous responses. Instead of refusing to let her play with his things, he should gladly share his toys.
- But is that enough? Did I successfully apply Truth the best I could?
- I think many parents make it to this level in their parenting, but if you were paying attention, you realize that I missed a step from **Ephesians**.
- Many of our children do the right things in the right ways. My son may let his sister play with his toys, but but doing the right thing in the right way isn't necessarily obedience if you're not doing it for the *right reason*. Remember, philosophy is "*why you do what you do.*" That's the core. Wisdom is taking God's Truth and applying it to life because the wise man *fears the Lord*. That should be the motivation.
- But what if my son is sharing his toy simply because it's expedient, because he's afraid of consequences, because it's easier than arguing, because he wants her to like him, because he wants mom and dad to be proud of him? Those are terrible motivations if they're his only motivation.
- I need to teach my child to do the right things in the right ways *for the right reasons*. And few people come to those conclusions naturally on their own.
- At this point, I've tightened my circle almost as small as it can go.
- So, I tell my son, "*In **I Corinthians 10:31** God commands us to do everything in life for the sole purpose of glorifying Him. Glorifying God means that when we do or say things, people have a higher opinion of God because of what we did or said. That means that when you share your toys with your sister, you need to do it because you love God and you want your sister to think highly of Him. In other words, you want to show His love to her. You need to share toys with your sister - not for your sister, and not even because your dad told you to - you need to share your toys because you love God and want to please Him with your life. And that's one little way you can know you're obeying God.*"
- That's what I mean by being "more specific."
- All of that was a mix of Truth and application where I showed my son how God's Word needs to change how he lives.
- And because he's a human child, I know that he will likely forget or choose not to live out our conversation. And because God called me to be his parent, I know I'll have the opportunity to use that conversation as a touchstone in future conversations.