

TALKING POINTS

Talking Point #1

The most important decision your child will ever make will be their decision to follow God. That is the ultimate goal. Everything else is secondary. You are the spiritual leader in your home and your child's greatest guide in understanding what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Some assume that it is the church's responsibility to make it happen. However, it is the parent's responsibility to introduce their children to Jesus. What happens at home is more important than what happens at church because they only spend a short amount of time at church compared to the amount of time spent in the home. This doesn't discount the impact of the church but the church does not have the lead role. The church partners with you as a parent to encourage, equip and to give you confidence as you take this lead role. Church takes on significance because the child sees the parent living out daily what they hear on Sunday.

The most important factor in determining your child's spiritual growth is your spiritual growth. As you grow so goes the child. They learn more by who you are than by what you say. This Parent/Child Dedication is as much about your spiritual growth as anything else. We challenge you to intentionally take steps to grow spiritually: Worship, Bible Study Groups, and Serving.

Assignment: Write a letter to your child sharing your heart, hopes and dreams for him/her. This is a letter only you can write.

Talking Point #2

One of the greatest influences on your child's life is your marriage. That is a daunting thought when you realize the challenge many parents face in keeping their marriage in focus. How do you protect your marriage and keep it as the priority relationship in the home? It helps to remember that you were a family before your child was born and yes, they are welcomed additions, but they do not void the marriage relationship. Remember, a strong marriage will give your child a sense of security. Single parents must be careful to have a balanced life where children are influenced in a positive way.

In Practice:

- Don't put your child at the center of the family or the marriage.
- Make sure that your spouse feels like the priority.
- Breakaway as a couple. Be together, just the two of you. Go out on dates (no children allowed).
- Ask your wife what you can do to make her life easier.
- Ask your husband what you can do to support him

Assignment: Talk about and write down some ways you will make your marriage the priority. Single parents should write down how you will maintain a balanced life.

Talking Point #3

You often hear parents say to younger parents, "You had better take it all in because they will be grown before you know it." With that in mind, commit to parent intentionally. When your children walk out your door to face their futures as adults, what are the values you will have instilled in them? Who your child becomes and what they value will not be an accident. It is our hope and prayer that when you pack your child's belongings to send them off to college or you sit at their wedding, you know that you intentionally taught your child what matters most in life.

- Discuss with your spouse what you really value in life. With that in mind understand that your child learns more by your actions than your words. Ask yourself, do my actions validate what I say I value?
- What are your top 3 values you want your child to have? You must parent intentionally based on these values/goals.
- How will you instill these values? What habits will you develop to teach your children daily what you value?

Assignment: Write down your top 3 values and the 2 habits you want to develop to instill those values in your child.