

## **Developing a Strong Family**

What do you believe are the most important things that children need? Some might suggest the necessities of life (food, clothing, shelter, etc.). Others might suggest proper nutrition, medical care, exercise, or plenty of sleep. It is true that all of these things are important to the physical life of a child. But, aren't there needs that exceed these in importance? Indeed! The most important thing that children need, in my opinion, is plenty of positive examples of godly living, as well as continual, solid teaching from God's word! I believe that children need to be diligently taught (no matter what their age). Granted, a two-year-old will not be able to learn what a six-year-old can, but there is still teaching that can be done at any age. Opportunities need to be sought out by parents in this regard. They must take the initiative to teach their children about Jesus, His church, what it means to be a Christian, etc. But Donald, I take my children to Bible class at church every week. Sure this sufficient, isn't it? Won't they learn about god this way? Well, they certainly will learn in Sunday school. But, will they learn all the things they really need to in a Bible class? No. Moses put it this way, when he addressed the parents of his day—"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you lie down, and when you rise up. 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" (Deut. 6:6-9). God expected the Israelites to take their responsibility as parents seriously. He knew that being a good parent is more than just providing for the child's physical needs. Those who are good parents work hard and tirelessly teach their children the way of the Lord! This should be a continual activity—not just something that is done in Bible classes! Parents who want to develop a strong family need to sit with their children at home—perhaps around the dinner table—listening to their children and instructing them. Wise parents impart spiritual knowledge while walking with their children from one place to another (or, a modern day equivalent—driving in the car. Diligent parents contemplate the Scriptures with their children before they lie down at night to sleep. They discuss God's truth with their family when they rise up in the morning from the night's rest. In a nutshell, the kind of parents that God desires are those who are constantly teaching and training their children (as well as themselves). We, like the Israelites in Moses' day, need to absorb the word of the Lord into our daily life and routine. Every minute and every activity is a potential moment for sharing the words of life, thereby helping our children to mature and consequently causing our families to grow stronger.

Donald