

**# 316 11/14/05 How to use the Bible to parent**

Last week, I wrote about using the Scriptures for guidance in child rearing. I can imagine that a reader might say of last week's column, "That's a great idea, but it won't work. I can't find anything in the Bible that tells me what to do when my child hates school. Even on issues that it addresses such as telling the truth, it doesn't tell me how to teach my child."

I do not believe that God intended for the Bible to be treated like an encyclopedia. He wants us to read all of it to get the big picture. And, I am sure that I cannot fully know God by reading his Word only once. Each time I reread a passage, I discover something new. That is because the Word of God is a living, breathing love letter from our Maker. Each time we read it, he has something new to say to us.

So, how does one use the Bible to rear children who will be godly adults?

First, we read it to lay down a foundation of beliefs for our own lives. Those beliefs will be the principles that we teach our children. If we parent without our own foundation in place, we will teach our children whatever whim comes along. Or, worse yet, we will let the culture teach them.

Second, we can use Bible stories that illustrate a lesson we want to teach. Each story in the Bible can be used to teach several different lessons. Children love the story of Daniel in the lion's den. From that story, we can teach them about trusting God, about peer pressure and about obedience to God. I am sure there are countless other lessons in that one story.

Third, we can teach our children by some of the guidelines that are taught in the Bible. For example, the story of the prodigal son teaches us that sometimes a child or adult child has to learn lessons the hard way. As parents, we must be patient and leave our child in God's hands while they are learning. We can then rejoice when they return rather than saying, "I told you so."

There is one thing that I regret about my own parenting. I did not study the Bible as much as I should have. If I had had a stronger foundation in Biblical truths, I could have skipped some of the hard lessons I had to learn about parenting.