BUILDING A LEGACY OF FAITH
Have you thought about the legacy you want to leave to your children and generations to come? That is a question every Christian parent should consider. The implications of it are breathtaking. If the objective of living is to pass on a heritage of faith to those you love and to be with them throughout eternity, I suggest that you be intentional about preparing for it now. For parents who believe passionately in Jesus Christ and anticipate His promised gift of eternal life, there is no higher priority in life than providing effective spiritual training at home.

THE RELAY RACE OF FAITH

If you have ever watched track and field competitions, you know that relay races are usually won or lost in the transfer of the baton. A runner rarely drops the prize on the backside of the track. The critical moment occurs when he burns around the final turn and prepares to hand the baton to the next runner. If either of them has fumble-fingers and fails to complete a secure pass, their team usually loses.

So it is with the Christian life. When members of one generation are committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and are determined to finish strong, they rarely fumble the baton. But getting the handoff securely in the hands of children can be difficult and risky. That is when Christian commitments between generations can be dropped. It isn’t always the fault of the parents. Some young runners refuse to reach out and grasp the baton. Either way, there is nothing more tragic than failing to transfer the baton to those who come after.
THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION

When I read the Bible today, I am aware that scribes and monks in the Dark Ages labored in monasteries or dreary caves and invested their lives in the tedious task of copying and preserving those priceless texts. What a gift they handed down to us. Now that treasure is in our hands. One of the most important questions Christians should ask is, how committed are we to the safeguarding of the faith for our progeny and for others they will influence. Those truths could be lost in a single generation. Will we hand down the “pearl of great price” to future generations?

That thought is addressed musically in the lyrics to the song “Find Us Faithful,” written by Jon Mohr and sung by Steve Green.

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful
May the fire of our devotion light their way
May the footprints that we leave
Lead them to believe
And the lives we live inspire them to obey

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful

After all our hopes and dreams have come and gone
And our children sift through all we’ve left behind
May the clues that they discover and the memories they uncover
Become the light that leads them to the road we each must find Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful

What inspirational words are expressed in these lyrics! Let me say it again for emphasis: Staying faithful to our beliefs should be our ultimate priority. It has meaning not only for you and me but also for those who are yet to be born. That was the essence of my great-grandfather’s daily prayer as he pleaded with God for the spiritual welfare of his family. Are you also praying for those in your bloodline?
O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from old—what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. They would put their trust in God and not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. (Ps. 78:1–7)

One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. (Ps. 145:4)

Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. (Ps. 34:11)

The living, the living—they praise you, as I am doing today; fathers tell their children about your faithfulness. (Isa. 38:19)

Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation. (Joel 1:3)

God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you. This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.’” (Exod. 3:15)

These Scriptures are “marching orders” for people of faith. Again, they are addressed specifically to parents, and all of us can understand them. No other commandments in the entire scope of Scripture speak so emphatically to the responsibility of raising children. That assignment can be summarized by one verse written by the Apostle Paul in the book of Ephesians. It says simply, “Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4 KJV).
NOW IS THE TIME

Now I will share something with you that will explain my passion for the issue we have been discussing. It espouses a theological perspective that some of you might not accept. It has been my lifelong conviction that if a Scripture addresses a specific issue in straightforward language, it should be accepted as written. We need look for no other interpretation. The biblical writers said what they meant and meant what they said. So it is with regard to the certainty of life after death.

When the Creator blew the breath of life into Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, He made them in the image of God. Respected commentaries interpret that to mean all human beings were given eternal souls and they will live somewhere forever. Those who have been “washed” in the blood of Christ and whose names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be in Paradise eternally. Those who reject the gift of forgiveness and salvation will be lost forever, separated from God and His saints. The word “hell” is one of the most frightening and disturbing words appearing in Scripture, but Jesus Himself spoke of it as a literal place. We can’t ignore those emphatic words, because they bear the authority of Christ.

This is what is at stake as we set out to introduce our children to the Savior. We can’t make their decisions for them, but through prayer and careful guidance, we can influence their choices. The way we handle that responsibility has awesome implications for the future. If our children reach maturity and die without accepting the good news of the gospel, their parents will never see them again in the life to come. That understanding didn’t come from me. It is straight from the Word of God. This is the source of the urgency of which I have written.

Now is the time to introduce your children to Jesus Christ. That training should begin early and continue for as long as you have moral authority over them. May the Lord bless you as you fulfill this divine responsibility.
Here is some additional encouragement for parents from Dr. James Dobson’s Family Talk:


For over three decades, Dr. James Dobson has been America’s leading authority and advocate for the family. This material is excerpted from Dr. Dobson’s book Your Legacy: The Greatest Gift (Copyright © 2014 by Siggie, LLC Published FaithWords and is used with permission.