

## GOSPEL-CENTERED PARENTING IN A POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD

### Parenting in a Lifestyle of Worship



**cdm**  
DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES

## How would you minister in this situation?

- Sunday morning worship service.
- Single mom in 30's with 2 girls – 5 & 3 – arrive late
- Girls squirmy, wanting mom's attention
- Mom hears sermon on Romans 12:1 ("present yourself as a living sacrifice") in pieces
- *What does "worship" look like in this mom's situation?*
- *What would you say to people who complain about the behavior of the girls?*
- *What would you have done/said after the service?*

## Worship involves everyone

Then Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, "At the end of every seven years, at the set time in the year of release, at the Feast of Booths, when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose, you shall read this law before all Israel in their hearing. **Assemble the people, men, women, and little ones**, and the sojourner within your towns, that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, and be careful to do all the words of this law, and that their children, who have not known it, may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as you live in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess."

Deuteronomy 31:9-13 (ESV)

## What is worship?

### • Worship – general

Whatever we do, we do it unto God (1 Cor 10:31, Col 3:17)

### Romans 12:1-2 <sup>ESV</sup>

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. **2** Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

## What is worship?

- Worship – specific
  - Individual devotion
  - Corporate worship (nuclear family, church family)
- Worship is to be God-centered.
  - Ordained by the Father, made acceptable by the Son, empowered by the Spirit.
  - Worship is not about you (what did I get out of worship?)
  - Worship is not about your child (what did my child get out of worship?)

## When a child has difficulty in worship:

**In what ways is the problem spiritual?**

**In what ways is the problem practical?**

### Principles to communicate:

- God is at work in the lives of His covenant people, and he uses the church in their spiritual development.
- We do not know what the Spirit is doing in the person (parent or child) who is present in worship.
- Helping a child worship ≠ keeping a child quiet and still
- A parent's example and patient explanation is the best instruction.
  - Watch me worship.
  - Worship with me.
  - Let me see you worship
  - Worship

### Principles to communicate

- Be patient with a child's development. Don't expect them to be adults.
- Children learn to worship incrementally, as they do other things (walking, toilet training, etc.).
- Teaching children to worship is hard work, but it is the most important thing a parent does because of the eternal nature of worship.
- Parents must understand this is a season of parenting; they must resist the urge to "take a break" from parenting on Sunday morning.

### Worship begins on Saturday night

- Parents should structure Saturday to communicate the priority of Sunday worship (Sunday is not "me day").
- Make clothing decisions on Saturday night – let the children participate.
- Give them an opportunity to participate in giving.
- Review hymns and texts before bed.
- Parents must watch their tongue regarding worship. Pray for the service and the pastor.
- Find ways for children to serve (greeters, ushers, etc.)

### The "Be's" of Parenting and Worship

#### Teach parents to ...

- Be with their children
  - Resist requests to sit with friends apart from the family.
  - It is the parents' privilege to train the child in worship.
- Be in the Sanctuary
  - Most children grow into a full participation.
  - Use the narthex or monitors to remove a disruptive child BUT keep them connected to the service (Going home should not be an option).
  - Celebrate when children stay in the service. Encourage a child when you see him/her do well.

### The "Be's" of Parenting and Worship

#### Teach parents to ...

- Be attentive
  - Focus the child on what is happening because he/she is part of the service.
  - Avoid bathroom breaks.
  - The sermon is God talking to us; encourage children not to interrupt.
- Be firm and consistent
  - Firm = resolute. The parent sets the agenda.
  - Avoid empty threats and endless warnings.

### What to do in a long sermon

- Listen for illustrations and draw pictures.
- Listen for key words.
- If there is an outline, note progress (maybe even include time checks).
- Read the text the night before.
- Resist the urge to "shush" children. Redirect them and "bring them in."
- Create the expectation that "there will be a test."