



Crossing the Indian Ocean one evening, we were treated to a magnificent sight. Floating on water as smooth as glass were thousands of jellyfish, each perhaps eight inches in diameter. These fish were of various colors—white, blue, green, red, pink, and yellow. The sight was most gorgeous.

Among the passengers I had become acquainted with on this trip was a very well-read agnostic. We became special friends and often talked about serious matters. On this evening we stood side by side at the rail admiring the beautiful sight.

“Isn’t this wonderful?” my friend remarked.

“Yes,” I replied, “and to think these things all just came about by themselves!”

Angrily the man turned and stalked to his cabin. I felt bad, for I had been very tactless. When he returned a few hours later, I was relieved to discover our friendship was still intact.

One day he said to me, “I wish I could believe like you do. I know you are happier than I am.”

Let us lead our children to faith in God; then they, too, will be happy.



Chapter 1

Faith in God

The waning of faith in God among any people and the deterioration of character run hand in hand.

It is natural for a very young child to believe in God. A child may not realize he believes; he is just conscious that God *is*. In fact, it is doubtful that anyone, regardless of age, can honestly say he does not believe in God. However, we want the child to have more than an intellectual belief in God. He must learn to depend on God, and he must be conscious of his relation to God. This must be taught, and is easily caught, from God-fearing parents.

The child's very first god is his father. Everyone is born with the instinct to look up to one higher than himself. This helps each person find his proper relation to others in his life. The child in a Christian home has an early advantage.

Family worship should be a regular practice in every Christian home. The child who sees and hears his father and mother kneel and talk to God every day

from the time he is an infant will not need proof that God exists. As he grows older, the transition from his father to God comes naturally. This combination of persons, events, physical and mental development, and God's Spirit working together to make a child God-conscious is one of the marvels of God's provision for us. The child who learns to respect and obey his father will hold the same attitude toward God. The responsibility and the opportunity of being a father, in this respect, is tremendous.

The Bible, God's Word, must be given first place in the home. If the parents regard the Bible highly, the child will likely do the same. The Bible is to be read—not just kept in a prominent place as an ornament or a symbol. One family I knew had an expensive Bible tied about with a satin ribbon and a large beautiful bow, lying nicely on top of a television set. Using a Bible this way seems to be something like using the Lord's name in vain.

Children should be taught to thank God for food and ask Him to bless it to their good. This attitude and practice of the family should be so regular and natural that children will never question it. The importance of a child's hearing his parents pray cannot be overstressed. Children should be trained early to pray audibly in the family. Memorized children's prayers may have a place for a time in a child's life, but the child should begin early to pray extemporaneously—from the heart.

Too often, when a child's praying sounds cute or amusing to older people, they remark about it or laugh afterward. This is always wrong. Regardless how

childish a child's prayer may sound to older ones, they should never mention it or smile over it.

When a course of action is discussed we should not ask, "What will people think of this?" but, "What does God think of it?" This teaches children that we fear and honor God above all else. An action is right or wrong on the basis of God's Word, not what man thinks or says about it.

Strictly observing the first day of the week as the Lord's Day helps stabilize a child's faith in God. We should live every day for God, of course, but being conscientious in keeping the Lord's Day holy and free from unnecessary work or business says something to a growing child that will keep him conscious of God.

Increasing crime, godlessness, and desecration of the Lord's Day are closely related. One can hardly say that one of these alone is the cause of the other evil conditions, but they are certainly involved together.

Don't go to the store or stop for ice cream on Sunday. Don't stop at a restaurant for a meal on Sunday unless it is really necessary. Sunday discussions of sale bargains are unnecessary—and are detrimental to the child's faith. One must, however, avoid fanatical extremes that create a legalistic attitude.

No one in the family should ever need to ask on Sunday morning, "Are we going to church today?" unless there are conditions that prohibit going. Going to church should be one of the good, unquestioned habits of a family.

Parents should be concerned for the conversion of the child when he comes to the age of accountability. No evangelist or pastor can as naturally and as artfully

Practical Pointers for Training Your Child

lead a young person to yield to Christ as Lord and to receive the new birth experience as a wise, deeply spiritual father or mother. Evangelists may be needed for children of Christian parents who are incapable because of lack of knowledge or spiritual depth to lead their children to Christ. The father who provided the necessities of life for the child and the mother who nursed him as an infant and told him Bible stories as a child are the logical ones to lead him to Christ. When home relationships are as they should be, children, youth, and even adults will naturally come to parents for counsel, especially in spiritual matters.