

# Christian Families Foster Spiritual Growth

## Introduction

As Christian parents, we will try to do everything possible to help our children grow spiritually. Yet we are imperfect parents raising imperfect children in an imperfect world. Some pitfalls that hinder spiritual growth can be avoided. Some cannot. Understanding the difference will help us raise children who are growing spiritually.

## Scripture

### **Ecclesiastes 2:4-6,8a,11**

<sup>4</sup> I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. <sup>5</sup> I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. <sup>6</sup> I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. <sup>8</sup> I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces... <sup>11</sup> Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

### **Matthew 18:6-9**

<sup>6</sup> “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. <sup>7</sup> Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come! <sup>8</sup> If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. <sup>9</sup> And if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.”

### **Romans 7:18-19,24-25a**

<sup>18</sup> For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. <sup>19</sup> For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. <sup>24</sup> What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

## Study

1. God gave Solomon the means to do nearly anything he wanted in life. In Ecclesiastes, Solomon recorded what he observed when he looked back at the “great things” he had done. How might our observation be similar as we wrestle with the demands of our jobs and the responsibilities of Christian parenting? What can we learn from Solomon’s observations?

2. Share some practical ideas for keeping the proper perspective on what really matters for our lives.

3. In Matthew chapter 18, Jesus warns against leading anyone into sin. Perhaps no more frightening words than these could be said to Christians whose lives have a direct impact on children. Why do you think Jesus was so serious about this?
4. Make a list of a few sinful things in your life that your children might see (if not now, then eventually). What steps can you take to get rid of these negative influences?
5. Paul carried on an ongoing battle with his sinful nature. Why is it important for parents to remember that both they and their children are fighting the same battle that the apostle Paul fought?
6. How can parents more effectively make use of Christ's victory over sin to nurture their children in their faith?

### **Closing Prayer**

Lord Jesus Christ, open our eyes to see our weaknesses and faults. Wash us clean where we have failed. Give us the strength to set a God-pleasing example for our children. Nurture our families through the good news of your victory over sin and death, and let us celebrate that victory in godly living, for your holy name's sake. Amen.