

FAMILY MATTERS

Answers to your questions . . .

Can you offer some advice that I can pass on to my kids when they are faced with temptation?

ANSWER:

Your children need to know that they have an enemy: the evil one, or Satan. It isn't necessary to talk about Satan and his demons a lot, but your children need to know the basic facts. The key fact is that when Jesus died and rose again, He defeated Satan. Still, when people do things Satan's way by disobeying God, they give the Devil a foothold in their lives and let him accomplish some of his goals through them.

When your children resist Satan by doing things God's way—making the right decisions, asking for forgiveness when they sin—it's a victory

for the winning side.

Here are a few hints to help:

- Tell your children when they face temptation it's a good idea to turn to the Bible. Your children can do what Jesus did—counter the Devil's lies with verses they know (or can find) in the Bible, and choose God's way. Encourage them to pray when they're tempted, too—even if they're in the middle of making a mistake. When they ask for help, God will answer.
- Reassure your children that even when they've blown it and given Satan a foothold, they can go to God for strength and forgiveness. You can model God's unconditional love by maintaining an open

door policy for your children when they've done wrong. Let them know that you're available for help and forgiveness.

- Avoid giving your children the impression that the Devil is scary. He's a master deceiver, a master liar. Seeking the truth and following God makes him powerless in our lives. Rather than railing against him, however, let God judge him. Satan's fate is sealed. He's just trying to cause as much damage as he can before he's thrown into the lake of fire forever.

(Adapted from *Parents' Guide to the Spiritual Growth of Children*, general editors John Trent, Rick Osborne and Kurt Bruner.)

TOUGH QUESTIONS FROM KIDS

ANSWER:

You can't get closer to God by doing "Christian" things. You will get closer to Him by deepening your relationship with Him. Do that by spending time in His Word. Worship Him. When you pray, tell Him you want to get to know Him better. Ask Him to draw you closer to Himself.



Bulletin

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Happy New Year!

A MARRIAGE PLAN FOR THE NEW YEAR

BY RACHEL DODD

IN JANUARY, WE SOMETIMES GET CAUGHT UP IN MAKING BIG RESOLUTIONS to improve our relationships, particularly our marriages. If we're not careful, setting marriage goals becomes a self-improvement project that aims so high we quickly give up. But when we give God control, He is able to make lasting changes in our lives. We can trust that He's shaping us into the husband or wife He's created us to be.

As a couple, discuss 2 Corinthians 5. Read the chapter together or individually, then focus your conversation on the following verse and discussion questions.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." —2 Corinthians 5:17

- What do you like or dislike about making New Year's resolutions?
- What's the best resolution you ever kept?
- What do we need to surrender to God for Him to breathe new life into our marriage?

Instead of resolving to *do* more, what about asking God to help you *be* more? What does your marriage relationship need you to be in order to grow together spiritually? More loving? More attentive? More available?

Now, that's a marriage plan for the new year that could make a big difference.

Tough Questions from Kids

What can I do to get closer to God?



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KIDS AND PRAYER

As a mother of three, I've learned that praying with my children can be a struggle. It's often hard to keep their attention during prayer. Here is what I wish I'd known a lot sooner:

Be brief. Children have short attention spans, so marathon prayers make it hard for them to follow along.

Make it personal. When we ask our children what *they* want to pray about, their prayers are more meaningful.

Don't give advice. Prayer is a shared conversation with God. Avoid inserting preachy comments to kids in your prayers. Prayer is not a lecture.

Include praise. Prayer is more than merely listing what we want. It is beneficial for children to learn to praise God in their own words. Praising God deepens a child's understanding of Him.

—May Patterson

ARE YOU PAYING ATTENTION?

Sometimes good parents—caring, loving parents—can overlook a child's needs because their attention is pulled in too many directions. Being actively involved in work, church and the community are all good things, but we need to be aware of the impact that busyness can have on family connections.

Relationships with our kids don't happen automatically. Life is busy, and we sometimes default to reactionary parenting—only becoming keenly aware of our kids' needs when some problem surfaces. The first and perhaps most important step toward becoming better, more intentional parents is to simply pay more attention to our kids, to start becoming aware of the unique ways they are created.

When you pay attention, you naturally start making parenting decisions that better accommodate your children's strengths and weaknesses. Every child has a unique, vibrant personality that gives parents important clues on how to best raise him or her.

Let's be parents who take the time to see and hear who our children are so we can bond with each of them in uniquely special ways—showing them through our actions that we care about each of them as individuals. Out of that deeply relational understanding comes the ability to mentor, correct and teach each child the life lessons he or she needs to thrive.

—Daniel Huerta



THE SANCTITY OF LIFE AND THE GOODNESS OF GOD

Early in our marriage, John and I had talked about adoption. We were open to it, but we never seriously pursued it. We'd agreed that we'd adopt any baby who would otherwise be aborted, and once we learned about kids languishing in foster care awaiting adoption, it occurred to us: *Why would these kids be any different? Why wouldn't we also be willing to adopt them?* Our pro-life passion and Christian commitment compelled us to take action.

Six-month-old Daniel came home with us in August 2000. Over the next six years, we opened our home to three more little ones. Our children came to us already battle-worn. As a family we have faced the effects of fetal alcohol syndrome, mental illness, generational addiction and learning disabilities.

There are risks when we declare our pro-life intentions. Caring for a parent with dementia or a child with special needs requires divine perseverance. Foster care



and adoption are fraught with unknowns. Opening your home to a refugee family requires sacrifice and courage. Advocating for children dying around the world from preventable diseases takes precious time and energy. Choosing to not abort a disabled child requires courage and dedication, and often comes at great personal cost.

Yet we're reminded that Jesus risked everything. He touched the unclean, the leper and the sinner. He traveled to places where the lost, the outcast and the needy congregated. Ultimately, He laid down *His* life for every human life.

John and I made the choice to adopt, to hope, to risk, to love. Many would question the tough choices we've made. But we have love and purpose in the midst of hardship, and we experience dimensions of God's goodness that we wouldn't have known otherwise. This is the life God has called us to, and He and His plans are good. We live in perilous times, with lives that are precious short. We have to trust God that defending life in all of its expressions is worth it.

Love is a risk worth taking.

—Kelly Rosati

You can access the simulcast of the 2018 Evangelicals for Life Conference Jan. 18–20 by visiting Evangelicals.Life.