

Teaching Without Words!

Tim's mother lights a cigarette as she hurries out the door.

Pat's mum and dad come home late from a party, clearly under the influence of alcohol.

Tom's dad "fixes" his Income Tax demands.

Mary's parent's help repair a widow's leaking roof.

Dave's dad works with the teenagers in the church.

Bill's dad and mum read The Bible to the family after the evening meal.

Barry's mum eats a large piece of cake even though she is obviously overweight.

A lot of teaching has gone on in the above incidents even though not many, if any, words were spoken.

Young children learn, not just from what their parents and other adults say, but from what they do.

Our daily actions tell a lot about us.

They show our priorities.

How we spend our time reveals our value system.

At times we need to evaluate our activities to see if our value systems stack up to God's standard as revealed in His Word, the Christian Bible.

Our value systems are influenced by the society in which we live.

When what parents or any other leaders in society say and what they do are miles apart, this is communicating double messages.

What parents want for their children they must be themselves.

What leaders want for those they lead they must constantly be exhibiting in their lifestyle and their own value systems.

How can we make sure that what we are teaching our children and those we lead in society, by personal example, is what is best for them in the end?

2 Timothy 3:16-17 [NIV] "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

There is one source of wisdom and knowledge we can trust, God's Word, the Christian Bible.

Many people find it difficult to be disciplined in the study of this precious source of life-giving wisdom.

Any teacher knows that to excel in their work involves a disciplined time of preparation.

How can we teach our children the importance of knowing what is in the Christian Bible if we do not know it ourselves?

We all need to set aside every day time in which we study, not just read, but meditate on what we read in God's Word, the Christian Bible.

We need to have a set time each day and also a special place for this study, with no distractions.

We also need to pray.

This is not an option.

Our relationship with God **cannot** grow and develop if we neglect this aspect of our life.

I'm sure that over the years, Christian ministers have encouraged you to pray, and to assist this have suggested a prayer list.

Such a list can be an effective tool, but prayer needs to be a way of life.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 [NIV] *“Be joyful always; **pray continually**; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”*

Prayer should be a joyful experience that you have all your waking hours with your Spiritual Father, Saviour and the Holy Spirit.

Note the attitude of thankfulness that is to pervade our prayers.

Set times for prayer, on awaking in the morning, before we study God's Word, asking The Father through Jesus Christ to send the Holy Spirit to open our minds to His Word, the Christian Bible, our Handbook for guiding our life.

Such set times are very beneficial, but prayer needs to be continually on our minds and a continual communication with our Creator as we face decisions each day.

Give thankful prayers at all times for the beauty of God's physical creation, and the spiritual creation as we see lives changed by the Good News that Christ brought to us from the Father.

Another big area where our example is a teaching vehicle for others is the care of our physical bodies.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 [NIV] *“Do you not know that **your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit**, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. **Therefore honour God with your body.**”*

The Christian Bible tells us that our physical bodies are the “*temple*” or dwelling place of the Holy Spirit.

Also remember that we are only stewards of this physical body for a period of time, and will have to give account to Jesus Christ as to how well we cared for it.

1 Timothy 4:8 [NIV] *“**For physical training is of some value**, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.”*

Disciplined physical exercise is of value, because it encourages us to spiritual discipline and physically gives us an alert and clear mind.

Spiritual exercise is what we have mentioned above, study and prayer, but both need a healthy physical body to be effective.

Teaching by example is essential to lead our children and other people to maturity as created children of God.

I would like to end this article with a short poem that I read, for it illustrates what I have written in this article, also one verse from Proverbs.

The Little Chap

A careful man I ought to be –
A little fellow follows me.
I do not dare to go astray,
For fear he'll go the selfsame way.

I cannot once escape his eyes.
What'er he sees me do, he tries.
Like me, he says he's going to be
The little chap who follows me.

He thinks that I am good and fine,
Believes in every word of mine.
Wrong steps by me he must not see –
The little fellow who follows me.

I must remember as I go,
Through summer's sun and winter's snow,
I'm building for the years to be,
The little chap who follows me.

Anonymous

Proverbs 22:6 [NIV] *“Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.”*