



# THE PARENT UPDATE

**Fairfax United Methodist Church**

## Parent Newsletter

*Jay Campbell*

I hope you find this short newsletter encouraging, informative and practical. Several articles are given here to continue helping you on the journey as parent and spiritual leaders

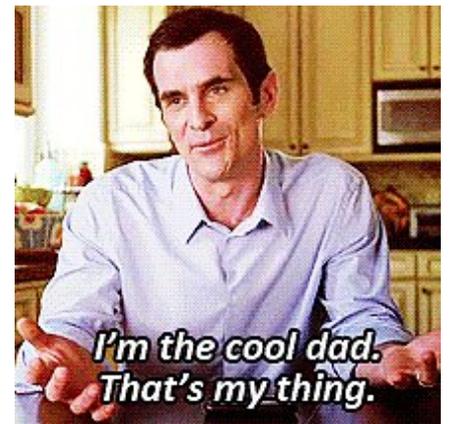
Below you find 4 Articles:

Five Ways Parents Can Re-Prioritize Their Lives

Teaching Your Kids About the Real Value of Money

Discussion Questions to Get Your Family Talking

10 Building Blocks for a Solid Family



# Five Ways Busy Parents Can Reprioritize Their Lives

*Jim Burns*

Of the 24 hours - the 1,440 minutes - available to us each day, parents actually spend very little time with their children. Remember, all we have is right now. So, how about you? What does how you spend your time say about your priorities? Do you need a little help getting your priorities straight? Here are five ways you can reprioritize your life:

1. Ruthlessly Eliminate Stress. No one can get their priorities straight if they're constantly living "under the gun." If there's so much stress in your life that you're finding it difficult to keep your priorities in order, lighten your load first - and now!
2. Make Daily Solitude a Priority. Don't let guilt make you feel like you're "avoiding your family" for taking time for yourself each day. It's a must, even if it's just 15 minutes in the morning for "quiet time" with the Lord. No one will miss you if you "take 5" for yourself every now and then.
3. Develop a "Blank Slate" Approach. Begin and end each day with no agenda. Come before the Lord with open arms, hands, and an open mind and heart each morning. Let Him set your day in motion and then give everything back to Him at the end of each day - all your worries, cares, successes, failures. Exchange them for a good night's sleep. (See Psalm 91:1.)
4. Give Your Family Your Best, Not Just Your "Emotional Leftovers." It may be noble to "give your all" at work. But what does that leave for your spouse and kids? Not much? Not good! Your family deserves the best you have to offer. They need you healthy, rested, happy, or perhaps more importantly, content. Don't just leave "table scraps" from your heart for them. Give them the main course. Then, watch how your priorities change by themselves!
5. Don't Wait. This is your life and these should be your priorities. If you're waiting for someone else to come alongside you and tell you how to live your life, you're in for a long wait. The time to make the changes is now—so get to it!

Reprioritizing your life doesn't have to be difficult. But, if you're like most of us, it does need to be done every now and then. And, with God's help, you can do it!

## Teaching Your Kids About the Real Value of Money

*Jim Burns*

As parents, the sooner we begin teaching our kids about money, the better off they'll be in the future! The late Larry Burkett, the founder of Crown Financial Ministries, once gave some advice I've found helpful on what kids need to know, that I'd like to pass along to you.

1. Kids need to know that money is not the most important thing in life. A person's attitude toward

finances is an indicator of his or her heart. Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). Jesus taught that what we do with our money and our possessions is a direct reflection of what is in our hearts. Our kids' hearts will be found wherever their treasures have been buried.

2. Kids need to know about income. As soon as a child is ready for school he or she should begin to receive an income to manage. Whether that income is earned or given as an allowance is a decision that must be made by the parents. But whatever the choice, parents need to begin to instill within their children that boundaries must be placed on how money should be spent and that spending must not exceed income.

3. Kids need to know about budgeting. As soon as children begin to receive income, they should be taught how to divide that income into categories and to budget. The categories may be as simple as saving, spending, and giving. Encourage kids to budget and not to spend their entire income on personal desires just because they have it to spend.

4. Kids need to know about saving. Children should be encouraged to regularly save a portion of their incomes and to not deplete their savings when they want to buy something that they feel they need.

5. Kids need to know about debt. Parents need to teach their children the cost of borrowing and how difficult it is to get out of debt once they are in debt. They should be encouraged to stay out of debt and to purchase with cash whenever possible.

6. Kids need to know about tithing. Parents must instill within their children the necessity of tithing to the Lord and help them understand that the first part of any and all of their incomes should be tithed to the Lord—before personal purchases, savings, or recreation.

7. Kids need to know about generosity. In addition to tithing, parents need to encourage their children to set aside a certain amount of their incomes to help people in need, such as missions or special humanitarian projects or to purchase or give items for the benefit of others.

## **Still More Discussion Questions to Get Your Family Talking**

*Jim Liebelt*

Parents often struggle to get more than one- or two-word responses from their kids, especially in families that don't talk much. It's no secret that good communication builds family relationships. But, when the rubber meets the road, how does a parent actually help to get more out of family talk-times? Here are a series of family discussion questions you might find helpful.

The Way I Am / The Way I Was...

In the following group of discussion questions, your kids will talk about the way things are right now in their lives, while parents will talk about the way things were when they were teenagers.

- Talk about what you like (liked) doing most when you are (were) hanging out with your friends.
- Talk about what the biggest fads are (were) in your school.
- Talk about what are (were) the "in" words and phrases students at your school use (used) and what they mean (meant.)
- Who are (were) your favorite music artists? Why?
- Describe your best friend. What are (were) they like? What makes (made) them tick? Why are (was) he/she your best friend?

### Family Talk...

Here are more open-ended discussion questions to keep your family talking:

- Describe an embarrassing moment in your life that your family members don't know about.
- Talk about the time you remember being the sickest. What was worst about going through that time?
- What are three of the happiest memories you have from your life? What made them happy experiences?
- Talk about one thing you know you should do differently that would make your family work better.
- What is your biggest fear? Why?
- What do think is the most important thing in your life? Why?
- (For kids) What is one issue you wish your parents would discuss with you? Why?
- (For parents) What is one issue you wish your kids would discuss with you? Why?
- (For kids) What is one area in your life you wish you had more control over? Why?
- (For parents) What is one area in your son's/daughter's life you next plan to give them more control over? Why? What will this look like?

# 10 Building Blocks for a Solid Family

*Jim Burns*

Your family will never be perfect, but these 10 essential building blocks will help you make it as healthy as possible.

1. Be there for your kids. Your children regard your presence as a sign of caring and connectedness (even when they don't seem to do so!) Presence provides kids with a greater sense of security than almost any other quality parents can offer.
2. Express affection, warmth, and encouragement. Families with a sense of A.W.E. ---as opposed to shame-based parenting---is a home where children and spouses will feel more secure.
3. Build healthy morals and values. The decisions kids make today will often affect them for the rest of their lives. Parents have significant powers of influence---through modeling and teaching---over the morals and values their kids carry into adulthood!
4. Discipline with consistency. Clearly expressed expectations and consistent follow-through produce responsible kids. Make your goal of discipline one of teaching kids responsibility not evoking obedience.

5. Ruthlessly eliminate stress. The unbalanced life will not be kind to the areas we neglect. Parents must make the difficult decisions of reducing the effect of our culture's breathless pace on their family.

6. Communication is key. Positive communication is the language of love for our children. Parents must take the initiative to set the tone for family communication---which includes the important skill of listening.

7. Play is necessary for a close-knit family. There is nothing like play to bring about family togetherness and communication. Play builds family memories, reduces family stress, and produces support and affirmation.

8. Love your spouse. A loving marriage brings hope and security to your children. At times, this means putting your spouse's needs ahead of your children's needs.

9. Let your life reflect the understanding that the best things in life are not things. Healthy stewardship and financial decisions produce positive family priorities.

10. Energize your family's spiritual growth. Your greatest calling in life is to leave a spiritual legacy for your children. Pay close attention to your own spiritual health and model a healthy spirituality for your family.

Excerpted from Jim's book *The 10 Building Blocks for a Solid Family*.