

Playing For Keeps
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Key Scripture:

1 Peter 5:8 (NLT)

8 Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.

Deuteronomy 6:5–7 (NLT)

5 And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. 6 And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. 7 Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.

Joshua 24:1-13 (NLT)

Joshua 24:14-15 (NLT)

14 “So fear the Lord and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord alone. 15 But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.”

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- When you were growing up did you have a grandparent, teacher, coach or some person in your life who inspired you with their great stories?

Start **sharing**. These questions are to help get your group thinking and to create openness.

- Why are stories so important in shaping a child or teenager’s life?
- When you hear “think orange” at Generations Church what does that mean?
- **Read 1 Peter 5:8.** How did the devil try to devour your life when you were younger? What can we do as a church to partner with families? What can you do?
- **Read Deuteronomy 6:5-7.** Discuss the phrase you can’t give away what you don’t have. How does this command start with us? How do we live out verse 7?
- **Read Joshua 24:1-13.** Most of the Israelites were very familiar with their own history, why did Joshua recount it?
- What did Joshua make for himself and his family? Is that a decision you’ve made for yourself and your family? (Ref **Joshua 24:14-15**)
- What do you say to the parent who says, “I don’t want to force my faith on my teenage child?”
- What one thing can you do this week to improve your relationship with your kids, grandkids or the kids at GC?

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Share an impactful or meaningful story of faith with your family or loved ones.

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- Pray that the Lord will grant you the wisdom and the courage to be storytellers of faith, sharing our experiences, the joys and the challenges, with our families and the other children in our lives, so that they may come to know and love God more deeply.

Question: "Does the Bible promise that godly parenting will always result in godly children (Proverbs 22:6)?"

Answer: Proverbs 22:6 notes, "Train up a child in the way he should go; / even when he is old he will not depart from it" (ESV). Does this verse promise that raising children in a godly manner will always result in children who follow God as adults? What about all the godly parents whose children rebel?

Proverbs, as a literary form, are not direct promises; rather, they are general observations of life that are typically true. This helps to explain why some parents faithfully raise their child to follow God, yet the child rebels against God as an adult.

Proverbs 22:6 teaches that it is generally true that a child raised to love God will continue to do so as a grown-up. This was the observation of life from 3,000 years ago, and it continues to prove itself today. Most Christian parents who raise their kids in a godly manner will leave a legacy of children who love God as adults. Bringing up a child in "the training and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4) dramatically increases the likelihood that the child will hold to Christ in later life.

A great biblical example can be found in the life of Timothy. In 2 Timothy 1:5 Paul says, "I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also." Timothy's mother and grandmother both loved God and raised Timothy to do so as well. Timothy joined Paul as a missionary associate as a young man and became one of his most trusted companions. The New Testament mentions Timothy by name twenty-five times as a missionary, aide to the apostles, and pastor.

Godly parenting is essential today, just as it has been throughout history. Fathers and mothers are the key to raising godly young men and women who love God and live for Him. Despite the blessing that pastors, youth leaders, and other godly influences are, no one can replace the role of godly parents who live out their Christian faith and pass it on to their children. This is why the author of Proverb 22:6 could rightly claim, "Start children off on the way they should go, / and even when they are old they will not turn from it."

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