

FEAR NOT

Passing the Torch

[Family Fears: It's no easy thing raising godly kids in a culture where godliness is in short supply. Many couples, single parents, and even grandparents fear for the future that the next generation will face. But God has a game plan that fits any culture and one priority that He asks us to focus on above all others.]

FEAR NOT - THEME VERSE

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isaiah 41:10)

TWO SIDES OF THE SAME COIN

- 1 _____ are responsible for how their children come out (Proverbs 22:6/ Ephesians 6:4/ Colossians 3:21)
- 2 _____ are responsible for what they choose to do (Ezekiel 18:1-20)

A DEVASTATING MYTH & A FRUSTRATING TRUTH

(Proverbs 22:6 / Genesis 3 / Ezekiel 18:20 / Proverbs 21:30-31)

- ▶ The Myth: A _____ somehow guarantees _____.
- ▶ The Truth: We have no ultimate _____. But we have lots of _____.

PREPARED FOR BATTLE – INCREASING YOUR ODDS OF SUCCESS AND LEARNING TO LEVERAGE SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE

- 1 Fight for a strong _____
Ephesians 5:22-6:4 / Malachi 2:13-16
- 2 Model respect for _____
Romans 13:1-7 / Proverbs 24:21-22
- 3 Put _____ over _____
1 Samuel 16:7 / Luke 9:25 / Matthew 6:33
- 4 Take a genuine _____ in their _____
Philippians 2:3-5 / John 1:14
- 5 Pick your _____ carefully
Ephesians 6:4 / Colossians 3:21 / Ecclesiastes 7:16-18 / Romans 14:1-15



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Passing the Torch LifeGroup Discussion Questions

Note: This week's sermon and homework focus on parenting. But if you're not a parent or don't have kids in your home, simply apply the questions to other relationships where you wish to have significant spiritual influence.

Prayer

Take a few moments to pray for one another. What has been weighing heavy on your heart this week?

My Story

What comes to mind when you hear the expression "Christian family?" Describe what you think a Christian family should look like today.

Digging Deep

- 1) **Quick Review:** Take a minute to look back over your sermon notes. Is there a particular truth, application or part of the message that challenged you or caught your attention?
- 2) If you could go back in time and give your parents a piece of advice from this week's sermon what would it be?
- 3) How would you define the word 'influence?' What kind of influence do you have on the people around you?
- 4) Depending on the kind of environment you were raised in, you likely have had a variety of positive and negative influences in your life. How do the positive influences stay with you? How do you attempt to overcome some of the negative influences?

Digging Even Deeper

- 5) **Read Proverbs 22:6.** (Remember this is a proverb and not a promise!) In light of the fact that we have no absolute guarantees that our children will choose to walk by faith with God, what do you think this verse actually means? (Hint: Proverbs 22:15 might offer a clue!)

- 6) **Read Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21.** What do terms like 'exasperate,' 'embitter' or 'provoke to anger' mean? What is the difference between bending a child's will or breaking their spirit? How could a parent intentionally or unintentionally push their child too far?
- 7) Think of any training or discipline regimen required to get better at something you want to do. What does it look like for parents and those who have influence over children to bring someone up in the 'training and instruction of the Lord?' Discuss as a group practical ways you can influence the next generation for Jesus.
- 8) **Read Ezekiel 18:20.** How does this verse speak to generational cycles of brokenness within families? Where does ultimate responsibility lie concerning the way kids grow up and live their lives? Where is the hope when generational cycles are unhealthy or dysfunctional?

Taking it Home

- 9) Write down 5-10 names of people in your life with whom you have influence. Now consider Creekside's definition of a disciple as 'someone who learns to live and love like Jesus and leads others to do the same.' Now evaluate your current character and life disciplines. Do they model the kind of life you hope others would adopt or imitate? If not, what do you think needs to be addressed first in your life to remedy this challenge?
- 10) **Quickly review the 5 ideas offered for increasing your odds of success with children as you leverage influence on them.** Instead of giving way to the fear of failure, which of these ideas speaks loudest to you regarding the way you need to exert influence on the next generation for the sake of the kingdom of God? (NOTE: Passing the Torch is an important part of a parent's job description. To do this well we need to remember that many things are better "caught" than "taught.")

HELPFUL SCRIPTURE FOR FURTHER STUDY: Psalm 119:15-16; Matthew 5:13-16; Philippians 2:3-4; Colossians 3:13

Praying Together

Pray with your group that each person sees and appreciates the good gift of family and friends. Pray for one another that God will truly assist you in bravely and obediently "Passing the Torch" of faith and godliness to the next generation.