

# Disciples<sup>1</sup> Making Disciples (Followers)



## SABBATH—JANUARY 28

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY:** Exodus 29:38-42; Proverbs 1:8; Proverbs 22:6; Matthew 28:18, 19; John 8:31; John 13:35; Romans 8:28; Ephesians 6:1-4.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “ ‘I [God] will teach all of your children. And they will enjoy great peace’ ” (Isaiah 54:13, NIV).

**MOSES WAS THE SAME AS AN OLYMPIC RUNNER PASSING A TORCH.** He tried to put faith in the hands of the people who followed him. Moses knew very well that nothing can take the place of the home as a place where parents and children learn to have faith in God, live their faith, and hold on to their faith. The greatness of any nation depends upon faithfulness to God's Word (the Bible) at home. The pages of the Bible are full of advice on how to help children receive the faith of their parents and grandparents. Advice from Deuteronomy is repeated in Proverbs and Ephesians. All of these Bible books offer guidance and hope to parents who would make disciples of their children.

**A LOOK AT THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** God asks parents to lead their children to accept His values and to introduce them to Him.

Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, February 4.

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<sup>1</sup>disciples—people who follow Jesus.

**SUNDAY—JANUARY 29****PARENT DISCIPLES  
(Matthew 28:18, 19).**

**Jesus commanded His followers to go everywhere and make disciples. Earlier, Jesus had explained what He believed a disciple to be. Study the explanations Jesus gave. How do Jesus' teachings about making disciples and being disciples help explain the work of the Christian home? Matthew 28:18, 19; John 8:31; John 13:35; Deuteronomy 6:6-9.**

A disciple is a person who follows his or her master's teaching (John 8:31). People become disciples when they share the truths of Christ so another person can accept these truths. Jesus explained disciples as persons who know how to love others (John 13:35). So making disciples means helping people become the kind of persons who love both God and people.

*Parents as disciple makers:* The family is a natural place to carry out Jesus' command to make disciples. Parents should work to lead children to Jesus. Family is the best place for children to accept God's truths and values. It is also in families that children get their first messages about love and loving. A loving relationship (connection) with parents helps children to grow up loving Jesus and

other people. Then children have a better chance to be more successful with their own children. They also will have a better chance to make friendships that lead to successful witnessing.<sup>2</sup>

**What should parents have before trying to guide their children to Jesus? Deuteronomy 6:5, 6, 18.**

**Why is it more important to bring up children to know a perfect Savior than to bring up perfect children? Think about your personal experience with the good news of salvation. What about your experience would you like your children to know?**

**MONDAY—JANUARY 30****SPIRITUAL EDUCATION AT HOME  
(Proverbs 2:1-9).**

**How does Moses show the need for parents to pay attention to sharing God's truth with their children? Deuteronomy 6:7. What special challenges face parents today as they stand near the border of the heavenly Promised Land?**

"Teach diligently [faithfully]" or "impress" (NIV) is the same word as "whet [encourage]" (Deuteronomy 32:41, KJV) or "sharpen" (NIV). Mothers and fathers share their spiri-

<sup>2</sup>witnessing—teaching people about Christ and living a Christian life.

tual experience with their sons and daughters. In doing this, they sharpen these young arrows (children) and help prepare them for the spiritual challenges they will face. The pairs of words “sit/walk” and “lie down/get up” suggest that sharing never stops and should take place in all of life’s activities. Sharing faith takes time.

**What does Solomon say is the purpose of his parental<sup>3</sup> advice? Proverbs 2:1-9; Proverbs 3:5-8.**

Passing faith to children is not a perfect science. Even godly, attentive parents understand they can do only half the work. As young people grow up, they make choices. Finally, they will put together their own set of values. Christian parents do want their children to have freedom of choice. But they sometimes fear that their children might not make wise choices. Proverbs encourages young people to learn from their parents, to lay aside their youthful independence, and to let God control their lives. But Proverbs also upholds freedom of choice and often tries to influence the minds and hearts of young people to choose God’s way.

**Sometimes, parents spend only seconds a day with their children. Research shows that the more time parents spend with their children, the better their children**

**become. But many children spend too much time with television, video games, and computers. What can parents do to spend more time with their children?**



Families should spend time together.

**TUESDAY—JANUARY 31**

**FAMILY WORSHIP  
(Exodus 29:38-42).**

**What experience of morning and evening worship did God’s people have in Old Testament times? Exodus 29:38-42. What spiritual lessons can we learn from these verses?**

The offering of a yearling lamb<sup>4</sup> morning and evening at the sanctuary were regular times each day. During these times, the Israelites worshiped God. They remembered the history of their promise to Him. They renewed their faith in Christ as their Savior. Every sacrifice was a symbol of the death of Christ, the

<sup>3</sup>parental—having to do with being a parent.

<sup>4</sup>yearling lamb—a one-year-old lamb being offered for sacrifice during one of the sanctuary services.

Lamb killed from the beginning of the world (Revelation 13:8). “In this custom Christians have an example for morning and evening prayer. God is not pleased with just ceremonies without the spirit of worship. But God looks with great pleasure upon those who love Him. They bow every morning and evening to ask forgiveness and to pray for needed blessings.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 354.

Prayer is so important to family life. The praying members of families are united by a common faith. They receive strength from each other in fighting battles of life. They experience a peace that non-Christian families do not know. Surveys of young people show that regular worship at home with their family improves their spiritual development. Regular family worship helps them accept their par-

ents’ values and continue their family’s heritage (history) of faith.

Ellen White offers the hope that family worship can be the best time of the day when it is regular, “short and spirited,” “intensely (very) interesting,” and “full of life.”—*Child Guidance*, pp. 521, 522. Family worship can include a few Bible verses and brief comments, time for the young to ask questions, singing, prayer, and the parents sharing their stories of faith. Children should have a part in choosing Bible verses, stories, songs, and other activities.

**What have you remembered to be the best thing about family worship? What can parents do to create more of these experiences? How do children’s questions give opportunities for sharing faith?**

### WEDNESDAY—FEBRUARY 1

#### WITNESSING TO YOUR CHILD (Proverbs 22:6).

**What principle<sup>5</sup> is shown in Proverbs 22:6?**

The words “train up” are closely related to a word for initiate (start). It describes the way a midwife<sup>6</sup> helped a newborn baby unwilling to drink from the mother’s breast. The midwife rubbed the baby’s gums with something that tasted very good such as date juice. This would get the baby to suck. “The way” means “the way he



**Families should pray together.**

<sup>5</sup>principle—basic rule.

<sup>6</sup>midwife—a woman who helps another woman to give birth to a child.

ought to (should) go.” This way is “the way of wisdom” and “right paths” (Proverbs 4:11; Proverbs 2:20). So Proverbs 22:6 suggests that parents should lead their children into choosing godly values. Such leading is the same as the midwife encouraging the baby to take its mother’s milk. The parents’ job is to make spiritual things beautiful and attractive.

Some parents have children who refuse to accept their beliefs. These parents feel guilty when they read Proverbs 22:6. They believe their son or daughter has lost spiritual interest because they have been poor parents. But Proverbs 22:6 is not meant to suggest that the future choices of children will always be in line with how they are brought up. Proverbs 22:6 does not make parents responsible for their child’s future. The child’s future will be the child’s responsibility when he or she becomes an adult. Instead, Proverbs 22:6 suggests that the parents’ positive attitudes (feelings) toward spiritual things will help children to have these same attitudes when they become adults.

**What advice and encouragement would you give to parents whose older children have wandered from God? How would the following verses and the principles behind them help: Luke 15:11-24; Romans**

**8:28; 2 Peter 3:9; Revelation 16:7?**

## THURSDAY—FEBRUARY 2

### A SERVICE OF LOVE (Ephesians 6:1-4).

**What is the advice in Ephesians to children? What are the unique parts of instructions to parents that follow? How is the advice to children and the advice to parents related? Ephesians 6:1-4.**

The commandment to “‘honor your father and mother’” (NIV) continues to be important to Christians. Ephesians 6:1 talks about both parents. This means children are to honor both parents. Ephesians 6:1 suggests both parents are to help bring up the children. Mothers are not to carry the responsibility alone. Ephesians 6:1 also says that children are not expected to obey their parents if their parents do not follow the Lord. (Compare<sup>7</sup> Acts 5:29.)

The instruction to parents is for both fathers and mothers. But it is especially for fathers. This may be because fathers are responsible for the management and discipline of the household. The fathers’ parenting<sup>8</sup> styles and use of power could exasperate (frustrate) and make their children bitter.

<sup>7</sup>compare—show how two things are the same.

<sup>8</sup>parenting—bringing up children.



Both mothers and fathers are to raise children.

“Exasperate” (Ephesians 6:4, NIV) means “to make a person angry.” Parents must be sensitive to the emotional needs of their adolescent (teenage) children. Parents must have rules for their children. Parents also must have a good relationship with their children. “Nurture and admonition [warning],” or “training and instruction” (NIV), show that children need to be brought up in a way that includes discipline and godly values.

Here again are the words of the Lord. The parenting described in these verses is Christian parenting. Christian parenting is helping children to have a relationship with God and a positive understanding of eternal things. Jesus’ teachings should influence Christian parenting. Christian parenting is a service of love that Christian mothers and fathers give their children.

**What is your relationship to your parents? What changes might you need to make in order to be sure**

**you are honoring them?**

### FRIDAY—FEBRUARY 3

**ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Ellen G. White, “Responsibility for Eternal Interests,” “Every Home a Church,” “Leading Little Children to Christ,” “Preparing for Church Membership,” *Child Guidance*, pp. 471–502; “Blessing the Children,” *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 511–517.

*A sacred trust from father to son:* “In Joseph’s childhood, Jacob taught him that love and fear of God. Often in Jacob’s tent, under the Syrian stars, he told Joseph the story of the night vision at Bethel, of the ladder from heaven to earth, and of the angels going up and down the ladder. He told Joseph of Christ, who had come down from His throne to show Himself to Jacob. He also told Joseph the story of the struggle beside the Jabbok River.<sup>9</sup> When he had promised to do away with cherished sin, Jacob stood victorious, and received the title of a prince with God. . . .

“By learning about God through nature and studying the great truths his father taught him, Joseph became strong and firm in following Jacob’s principles.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 52.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. If some people in class are willing, have them talk about their rela-

<sup>9</sup>Jabbok River—the place where Jacob wrestled all night with Christ and became victorious because he refused to give up (Genesis 32:22-33).



tionship (connection) with their parents and/or children. Have them explain what things they

have learned from their experiences that could help others in the class better relate to either their parents or children.

2. What special problems in teaching values to children do parents in troubled marriages face? What special problems do single parents or those who are married to non-Christians or members of other faiths face? How could your class help people in such situations?

**SUMMARY:** The passing of faith to children is an important subject in the Bible. When parents have faith in God and the Bible, it shows in every part of their life with their children.