

RAISING
KINGDOM KIDS
DEVOTIONAL



DAILY INSPIRATION
FOR GIVING YOUR CHILD
A LIVING FAITH



TONY EVANS
RAISING
KINGDOM
KIDS

— DEVOTIONAL —



FOCUS[™]
THE FAMILY

TONY EVANS
RAISING
KINGDOM
KIDS

— DEVOTIONAL —



GIVING YOUR CHILD
A LIVING FAITH

FOCUS[®]
ON
THE FAMILY



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INTRODUCTION

It is difficult for a parent to pass on a faith that he or she does not possess. The best way for you to inspire your kids to have their own faith is for them to witness your faith—not only in your words, but also in your actions.

—Tony Evans, *Raising Kingdom Kids*

Parents, you have been called to train up your children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6). This involves instilling in them a kingdom mind-set. Based on the truths found in Tony Evans's inspirational book *Raising Kingdom Kids*, this devotional will give you the strength and encouragement you need to provide your children with a living faith.

Join Tony Evans as he guides you through a daily journey of discovering biblical parenthood. The instructions provided in each of these ninety devotions will inspire you to prepare your child to live for God's kingdom.

KINGDOM PARENTS GLORIFY GOD

*You will never glory in God till first of all
God has killed your glorying in yourself.*

—Charles H. Spurgeon

A kingdom has to have a king. Understanding that is imperative as we take the journey of raising kingdom kids. In God's kingdom, He is the absolute Ruler of all creation and His authority is final. God has just one agenda: to glorify Himself through the advancement of His kingdom.

Glory is an often misunderstood word. In Scripture, the phrase “the glory of the LORD” (Exodus 24:16–17) often refers to God's holy presence. Other mentions of *glory* can refer to the praise and honor that God deserves (Luke 2:14). God is all about getting glory. God is not wrong or narcissistic for doing this. He is fully within His rights as the Creator of all—infinite, all-powerful, and holy. He rules over everything and sacrificed His own Son, Jesus Christ, to save humanity from sin. He is worthy of all glory.

Parents, God created you and your children for His glory. Raising kingdom kids is all about orienting your children to God's kingdom purposes—His principles and what He wants to accomplish on the earth. At the heart of the kingdom agenda is the reality that no separation exists between the sacred and the secular. All of life is spiritual, because all of life comes under God's rule. As 1 Corinthians 10:31 says, "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." Seek to glorify God every day, and teach your children to do the same. It is what you were created to do.

APPLICATION

1. Be honest: Whose glory are you living for at home? at work? at church?
2. What hinders you from bringing God the praise He deserves?
3. What's one practical way you can teach your children to glorify God today?

PRAYER

Lord, I know You created me to glorify You. Help me orient my life toward this goal and give me the wisdom to lead my family this way too. Amen.

KINGDOM PARENTS DON'T LOSE HEART

*The world is indeed full of peril, and
in it there are many dark places.*

—Haldir the elf, J. R. R. Tolkien's

The Fellowship of the Ring

The Magic Kingdom is quite a sight to behold.

From the moment visitors set foot inside Disney World, they are inundated with a smorgasbord of visual delights, cheery music, smiling characters, and chipper employees. Fantasy, fun, and nostalgia are everywhere. It's almost as if Disney is daring you to be glum.

But it's all a fairy tale.

Outside Disney's gates, the real world can be a dark place. Because of sin's corruption, God's earthly kingdom—created in perfection in Genesis 1—has gone from Cinderella's Castle to the Haunted Mansion (see Genesis 3). There is nothing magical about the worldly kingdom, even though society would have you believe otherwise. While the world lies about its pleasures, all sorts of godless rebellion such as murder, deceit,

pride, idolatry, and lust, attack God's creation.

But don't lose heart. God has provided hope and victory through Jesus. As Colossians 1:13–14 says, "For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

As you raise kingdom kids, be shrewd about the world in which you live. But don't be afraid, because our Savior has overcome the world! (John 16:33). We do not belong to this earthly kingdom. We are part of God's kingdom where He gives the agenda and we are to advance it . . . in our own lives and in the lives of our children.

APPLICATION

1. In what ways can you focus more on Jesus' victory than the world's evil?
2. What lies about the world's true nature have you found yourself believing?
3. How can you encourage your children to avoid deceitful or worldly pleasures?

PRAYER

Father, thank You for overcoming the world through Jesus. Please help my family and me to be in the world but not of the world. Amen.

KINGDOM PARENTS REFLECT CHRIST

*We are the culmination of God's infinitely
wise and skillful work of creation.*

—Theology professor Wayne Grudem

At the height of his career, Andre Agassi had everything. The Hall of Fame tennis star owned a blistering forehand, numerous endorsement deals, and amazing hair.

In the early 1990s, a thirty-second TV ad featured Agassi sporting his signature headband and mullet. A Canon EOS Rebel camera snapped images of his bad-boy coolness as he posed in various locations. At the end, Agassi adjusted his glasses, flashed a smile, and said, “Image is everything.”¹

In a manner of speaking, image *is* everything in life. But not exactly like that commercial had in mind. Genesis 1:26 tells us that on the sixth day of creation, God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.” Humans were created to be image bearers of their Creator. As a camera records an image seen through its

lens, we are to reflect God's nature, character, values, and principles through our words and actions.

This concept is also vitally important in the realm of child rearing. As parents, we must teach our children the significance of submitting to God's all-encompassing authority in their lives. Through that submission comes their greatest influence and impact for God. Only when we submit to our Creator will we find true purpose, peace, and joy in life.

Indeed, bearing God's image *is* everything . . . and best of all, we don't have to have a mullet haircut.

APPLICATION

1. What do you think it means to be made in God's image?
2. What part of God's image are you representing well right now? In what areas do you need improvement?
3. How can you reflect God to your kids today in the way you act and speak?

PRAYER

God, thank You for creating me in Your likeness. Please help me to be a faithful image bearer of You to those around me, especially my children. Amen.

KINGDOM PARENTS HAVE A THRIVING FAITH

*Our children will learn righteousness
best by seeing it lived out in every
possible way in our lives.*

—Writer and speaker Sally Clarkson

As a frequent flyer, I've heard flight attendants give the preflight safety reminders hundreds of times. One of those tips has always stood out in my mind: if the cabin loses air pressure and oxygen masks drop from the overhead compartment, adults should put on their own masks before helping any children.

The same principle applies to parenting. Before training their children, kingdom parents must continue to mature in the Lord. It is difficult for parents to pass on a faith they do not possess.

The best way for you to inspire your kids to have their own faith is for them to witness your faith—not only in and through your words but also in and through your actions.

Children will have a difficult time learning to trust God, tell the truth, or show patience if they don't see their parents exemplifying these virtues. Before Deuteronomy 6:7 exhorts parents to train their children in God's laws—"You shall teach them diligently to your children" (ESV)—it first says in verse 6, "And these words that I command you today shall be on *your* heart" (ESV). Parents, the seeds of God's truth must be flourishing in you before any significant growth can be expected in the young hearts you're tending.

APPLICATION

1. In what ways can you keep God's Word consistently on your heart?
2. How are you seeking to continuously grow in your faith?
3. In what ways can you model godly faith to your children today?

PRAYER

God, help me teach my children about You by first living out my faith in an authentic way. Amen.

KINGDOM PARENTS ARE RESOURCEFUL

*Maybe it's about time I expanded the
realm of possibilities around here.*

—TV secret agent MacGyver

It seemed MacGyver could do anything. He disarmed missiles with paper clips and created explosives out of salt, sugar, and weed killer.¹ From 1985 to 1992, *MacGyver* was one of the most popular shows on TV. MacGyver was more than a secret agent; he was a human Swiss Army Knife.

Raising kingdom kids in a fallen world often requires some MacGyver resourcefulness. But if you're running low on paper clips and fresh out of weed killer, don't worry. God knows exactly what you need to accomplish your parenting mission. In Genesis 1:28, God told history's first parents, Adam and Eve, to "be fruitful and multiply." But the verse also says that before God gave His commandment, "God blessed them." In other words, God empowered these parents to fulfill His command *before* He issued it.

God has already provided you with all the

tools you'll need for parenting success. His holy Word speaks truth into all life situations. His Spirit empowers families to fulfill godly goals. And prayer can move mountains.

Sure, you may need a little duct tape to patch up a car fender or broken relationship. But you're never trapped in a no-win situation. Use all the resources at your disposal and know that God has blessed you with everything you need for the tasks ahead.

APPLICATION

1. Do you truly believe God has given you everything you need to parent your children?
2. Are there areas in your life in which you are trying to fix or jerry-rig tricky situations on your own? If so, how can you trust God more in those areas?
3. In which areas of your parenting life can you take advantage of the spiritual tools God has provided?

PRAYER

God, thank You for equipping me with everything I need to raise kingdom kids. Help me trust You and take full advantage of Your blessings. Amen.

KINGDOM PARENTS AREN'T PERFECT

*I am careful not to confuse excellence
with perfection. Excellence I can reach
for, perfection is God's business.*

—Actor Michael J. Fox

A recent column by writer Heather Lende caught my eye. She confessed to spending her whole life trying to be perfect. While raising four children under the age of five, she served on the school board, directed community theater, made pancakes every morning, and tended a garden until ten at night. Oh, and in her spare time she ran marathons.

Then she was hit by a truck—literally. Lying flat on her back with a broken pelvis, Heather was struck even harder by the comments of her friends and family. One friend said it was nice having Heather's undivided attention for once. Her kids said it was fun having Mom available all day. That's when Heather prayed a prayer, promising she'd spend more time with her children when she was healed.¹

Please don't wait to get hit by a truck to learn this lesson: kingdom kids don't need perfect parents. We can't do everything right, but we serve a God who can. Kingdom kids just need authentic parents who seek to understand and apply God's principles in their homes. Don't be afraid if you don't have all the answers. When you mess up, pray to God for wisdom and ask Him to help you in the future. You may even have to ask your child for forgiveness.

By living a life of authentic dedication to God and your children, you may one day be rewarded with the greatest joy of seeing your children and grandchildren walking in His truth and making a kingdom impact.

APPLICATION

1. Have you fallen into the trap of thinking you have to be a perfect parent? How can you break out of that mind-set?
2. In what ways can you live more authentically?
3. How does increasing your availability to your children improve your ability as a parent?

PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for being perfect so I don't have to be. Help me to be authentic in serving You and raising my children. Amen.

KINGDOM PARENTS CONTINUALLY GIVE LOVE AND TIME

Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.

—Galatians 6:9

In 2003 fifty stepchildren—ages six to fifty-six—were asked how a stepparent should get a stepchild to like him or her. Their overwhelming response was summarized, “When the stepchild felt loved by the stepparent, they usually loved the stepparent in return.”¹

One adult respondent said, “[My stepmom] was such a good wife for my dad. And even though she was not very affectionate, she always took an interest in my life, knew what I was doing, and encouraged me to do my best.”²

Whether they are from blended families, single-parent families, or traditional families, all children need the same things: love and time. Having two biological parents may be ideal, but the underlying traits found in healthy homes aren’t tied to genetics. Rather, they are tied to the kingdom

principles of parenting—commitment, connectedness, gentleness, resiliency, strength, character, and kindness.

If you're facing the challenges that come with a blended family, stand firm in your commitment and love. Aspects of commitment include dependence on each other, loyalty, honesty, trust, and development of goals and dreams together. A strong sense of commitment is the foundation for a fully functional home. So love your spouse and your children. And don't give up, because the rewards for your family—blended or not—will be great.

APPLICATION

1. If you're a stepparent, in what ways have you persevered to love your stepchildren?
2. How have you struggled to love your children? Why?
3. What steps can you take to ensure you do not grow weary in your commitment to your family?

PRAYER

God, I want to have a loving, committed family. I know that takes work. Give me the perseverance, patience, and strength to love them the way You love them. Amen.