

Text: Ps 119.9-11

I'm working on what I'm calling an "extended book review" of Tedd & Margy Tripp's book, *Instructing a Child's Heart*.

Last time we talked about the first of five goals for Formative Instruction:

- Remember Scripture is our personal history
- Develop godly habits
- Apply Scripture to life
- Model spiritual vitality
- Grow into a mature relationship with your children

We really could describe the first goal this way: "Develop a Scripture saturated environment for your thinking." Or, maybe, "Develop a Biblical worldview."

Today I'd like to discuss briefly the following four goals. I want to start, though, by going to the famous text in the Psalms:

Ps 119.9-11 How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping *it* according to Your word. ¹⁰ With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments. ¹¹ Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.

My title is:

Applying the Scripture to Life

Remember, this book is written with the idea of instructing children, but my contention is that the ideas in this book are for everyone.

1. You can't instruct anyone without mastering the subject yourself.
2. Everyone should live to be a positive Biblical influence on someone.

I. Develop godly habits

A. Habits create life-patterns

Pr 22.6 Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.

1. Note: a proverb is not a guarantee, it is a general principle
2. You make choices today that affect your tomorrow
3. You can make habits today that will affect the pattern of your life

Habits can be good or bad. They are formed the same way:

- Making delimiting choices
- Repeating them over and over

B. What do I mean by “delimiting” choices

1. A choice that imposes limits on behaviour
2. A choice that counteracts random or impulsive behaviour

Occasionally I get a little ribbing about my constant use of MyFitnessPal

- I made a choice to limit my eating based on calorie counting
- The choice counteracted my previous random habits
- I’ve somewhat succeeded (though maintaining is harder than losing)

3. Spiritual choices, spiritual habits, involve a similar process

- a. You counteract the desire of the heart to satisfy lusts and serve self
- b. You impose consistent behaviour to follow the spiritual pattern and overcome the fleshly pattern

² Tim 1.5 For I am mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that *it is* in you as well.

² Tim 3.14-15 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*,¹⁵ and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

4. This is how Scripture functions, training, and disciplining

² Tim 3.16-17 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;¹⁷ so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

Ps 119.9-11 How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping *it* according to Your word.¹⁰ With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from Your commandments.¹¹ Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You.

The more you develop spiritual habits, the more you will enjoy the freedom that we find in walking by the Spirit.

II. Apply Scripture to life

For this one, we will use an illustration, from the life of David

¹ Sa 17.34-37 But David said to Saul, “Your servant was tending his father’s sheep. When a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock,³⁵ I went out after him and attacked him, and rescued *it* from his mouth; and when he rose up against me, I seized *him* by his beard and struck him and killed him.³⁶ “Your servant has killed both the lion and the bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God.”³⁷ And David said, “The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.” And Saul said to David, “Go, and may the LORD be with you.”

¹ Sa 17.45-47 Then David said to the Philistine, “You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted.⁴⁶ “This day the LORD will deliver you up into my hands, and I will strike you down and remove your head from you. And I will give the dead bodies of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the sky and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel,⁴⁷ and that all this assembly may know that the LORD does not deliver by sword or by

spear; for the battle is the LORD'S and He will give you into our hands.”

- A. David isn't using Scripture directly, but consider where his thoughts come from
- B. Read David's Psalms. His thoughts are deep meditations on the Law, he understands the promises of God.
- C. We see this kind of meditation reflected here
 1. The Philistine opposed God's people and blasphemed God – the Lord called his people to oppose him
 2. David's confidence is in God, not his own strength
- D. David's words apply Scriptural principles to his life situation

III. Model spiritual vitality

- A. There is a kind of lip-service to God that doesn't really live by God's word

² Tim ^{3.5} holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power...

- B. The way to teach others to trust God in prayer, for example, is to model trusting God in prayer

You need to live what you believe; have not only the outward look of Christianity, but the inward life.

IV. Grow into a mature relationship with your children

Again, remember the context of the book, instructing children. What if you don't have children? Be involved with other people.

- A. The pattern of Scripture

1. Joshua made a choice for his household

Josh 24.15 “If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

2. The Psalmist planned for an ongoing relationship of instruction

Ps 48.12-14 Walk about Zion and go around her; Count her towers;¹³ Consider her ramparts; Go through her palaces, That you may tell *it* to the next generation.¹⁴ For such is God, Our God forever and ever; He will guide us until death.

3. Another Psalmist looks back at the instruction he received

Ps 78.3-7 Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us.⁴ We will not conceal them from their children, But tell to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done.⁵ For He established a testimony in Jacob And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers That they should teach them to their children,⁶ That the generation to come might know, *even* the children yet to be born, *That* they may arise and tell *them* to their children,⁷ That they should put their confidence in God And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments,

B. Scripture living develops in company with others

1. We need to make an effort to orient our lives around the Bible
2. Preachers used to talk about “Family Worship” or “Family Altar”
 - a. Take time to read the Bible on a regular basis with someone else
 - b. Take time to pray with one another

You might miss some days because of circumstances, but the more you make this a habit, the deeper your walk and their walk will grow.

3. You may be alone – find a prayer partner, meet once a week to read a chapter and pray
4. Grow in your communion with the Lord with your friends (this is the beauty of the “body life” of the church)

Conclusion:

The instructions in this message aren’t profound. I’ve heard preachers talk about things like this all my life.

I've managed to practice some of it!

How much better our lives would be the more we could put these things in practice!