

Time at Our Father's Knee

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The importance of time at our father's knee for both girls and boys cannot be stressed enough. This may require much time on our own knees, in prayer to our Father in heaven. It is a seemingly easy task for children to spend time with their fathers, especially for those who do not have challenges, but for our kids, it can be difficult.

Mom, you have an agenda and you will do whatever is needed to accomplish it during the day. That is your job and you have it down to a science. You know what to expect before it comes hurling around the next corner and you have those behavior boundaries drawn. Dad, on the other hand, well...during the week he is used to working with people who for the most part do not have resistant behaviors. What does this all mean? It means that when the weekend comes and Mom asks Dad, "Honey, do you think you could do something with junior this weekend?" Dad most likely cringes at the thought. He is thinking, "I have lots work around the house I have to do and I don't have time to teach junior now. I especially don't want to deal with his or her behavior breakdowns." Dad responds to Mom, "Well, maybe junior can help me later," (later comes and goes) or "Can we do this next weekend, I'm really behind?" (Next weekend comes and goes as well.) You see Dad knows that junior is going to space-out, act-out, or engage in some other resistant type behavior the minute he starts to teach. Why, because junior is not used to working with Dad and junior knows that if the "envelope is pushed" just enough, he or she will be able to get out of helping and learning something from Dad.

What is a parent to do? Know that there will be resistant behavior and plan for it. Have a plan to correct your child in place that you can be consistent with if your child has a break down. It helps if this plan is the same one as Mom uses during the week (assuming her plan works). Tell your child before you begin what you are going to do with them and what is expected of them. Before you begin doing any task with your child, tell them what the consequences are if they engage in unacceptable behavior. If your child begins to act out, make sure that you are consistent and follow through with your plan of correction.

Remember to take the time to break a task down into its most simple parts if needed. Take the time, how ever long, to work with your child. If your child is having difficulty, try to repeat the part of the task that the child is having problems with until the child is able to do the task independently. This may or may not be possible, depending on your child's abilities. Do this with a smile, with laughing, and make it fun. Congratulate and encourage with every repetition. The second harshness enters your tone of voice that is the second you will have lost your child and working with Dad is no longer fun. This also goes with working with Mom or anyone else for that matter.

In time, with consistent work, your children will learn some very valuable lessons from their parents, lessons they can learn from no other. Remember, at those most frustrating moments, our children are here to change us. We are not here to change them. They change as we change.

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