



**Making the Most of
Every Opportunity,
Because the Days Are
Evil/Good/Confusing/
Wonderful/Frustrating.**

- **Open Learning
@MLC Conference
June 14, 2023**

How do we get here?



Things Got Real.

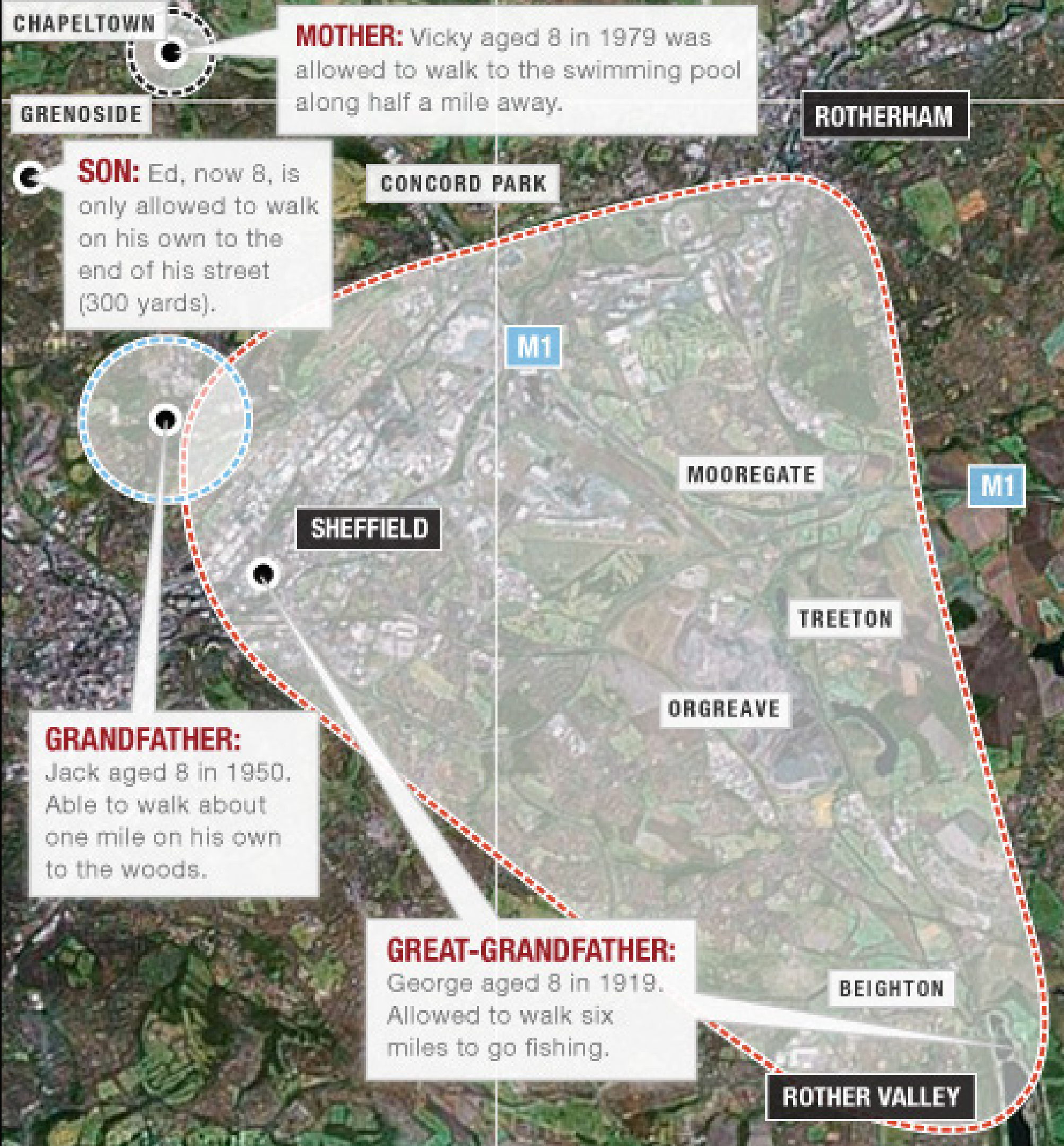


The Situation: *Safety*



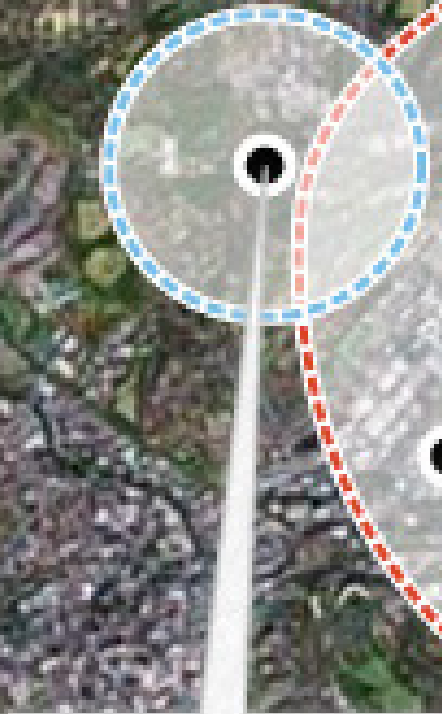
A 2022 survey found that just 10% of American parents with kids aged 7 to 9 ever let them stay home by themselves, and almost one in five said they wouldn't even let their teens do that. In fact, the survey of 2,500 American parents commissioned by SafeHome.org revealed that parents don't feel comfortable letting their kids walk to school, ride their bike to a friend's place, or play in a park unsupervised until they are at least 12 years old.*

*Source: [safehome.org](https://www.safehome.org)



MOTHER: Vicky aged 8 in 1979 was allowed to walk to the swimming pool along half a mile away.

SON: Ed, now 8, is only allowed to walk on his own to the end of his street (300 yards).



GRANDFATHER: Jack aged 8 in 1950. Able to walk about one mile on his own to the woods.

GREAT-GRANDFATHER: George aged 8 in 1919. Allowed to walk six miles to go fishing.

*Source: npr.com/krulwich

The Situation: *Mental Health*

Forty percent of US parents are “extremely” or “very” worried that their children will struggle with anxiety or depression at some point*. The Pew Research Center report said mental health was the greatest concern among parents, followed by bullying, which worries 35% of parents.



*Source: [cnn.com/health](https://www.cnn.com/health)

The Situation: *Mental Health*

Suicide became the second leading cause of death among children 10 to 14 during the Covid-19 pandemic, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Mental health-related emergency room visits among adolescents 5 to 11 and 12 to 17 also jumped 24% and 31%, respectively.*



*Source: [cnn.com/health](https://www.cnn.com/health)



A Growing Problem

“I would say over the last 10 years, since I’ve been practicing as a general pediatrician, I have seen a shift both in the amount of patients and of all ages dealing with anxiety and depression.

And their parents being concerned about this is a key issue. Even before the pandemic, we were seeing skyrocketing numbers of kids and adolescents dealing with mental health issues,

and that has increased exponentially since the pandemic.”- Dr. Katherine Williamson,

pediatrician and spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics

*Source: [cnn.com/health](https://www.cnn.com/health)



The Situation: *Identity*

- 59% of families said they endure emotional strain as a result of participation in youth sports.*
- About 60 percent of all Tommy John (elbow) surgeries in the United States are for patients ages 15 to 19.*
- Only 1.3% of athletes receive a full or partial athletic scholarship.
- Fewer than 2% of college athletes go pro in their sport.

*Source: cnbc.com; thelariatonline.com

A Biblical Mindset

Psalm 78:1-4 - My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. 2 I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old— 3 things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. 4 We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done. (NIV 2011)



A Biblical *Mindset*

Ephesians 6:4 - Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (NIV 2011)

2 Timothy 3:15 - from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. (NIV 2011)



A Biblical *Mindset*

Means of Grace Focused

True Partnership

Identity: Baptism

Identity: Safe and Meaningful
Place in THEIR Church

Safety: Inoculation Vs. Isolation



Next morning Jerry whistled as he walked to school. He was happy now. God had put joy into his heart. "I wonder why it feels so good to be forgiven," he thought. "Thank you, God," he said, "for always being willing to forgive us."

Let's talk about this: Why didn't Jerry want to see his mother? What wrong had Jerry done? Was it easy for Jerry to say, "I'm sorry"? Why did Jerry feel so good the next day? The Bible says, "Be glad in the Lord . . . and shout for joy," because God forgives us our sins every day for Jesus' sake. *Older children and grownups may now read: Psalm 111.*

Let us pray together: Dear Lord, we're glad that we can go to You at any time and can always receive forgiveness. Help us from doing wrong, make us sorry for our sins, and help us to believe in Jesus, our Savior. Then we shall always be children of God. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

were made
John 1:3

What Jesus Made

"My new wagon is scratched. I'll wait a few days. It will get better." Will that wagon get fixed?

"My hand is scratched. I'll put on a bandage; it will get better." Will that hand get better by itself?

What difference? A man made the wagon. Jesus made the things which Jesus made are much more different than anything a man can make.

What things can Jesus make? The Bible says that all things

in the beginning of the world were made by Him. Jesus made the sun and the moon and the stars. He made the lions and the cows. He made grass and trees begin to grow. He made the first people. "Without Him was not anything made that was made," says the Bible. What do you think of that?

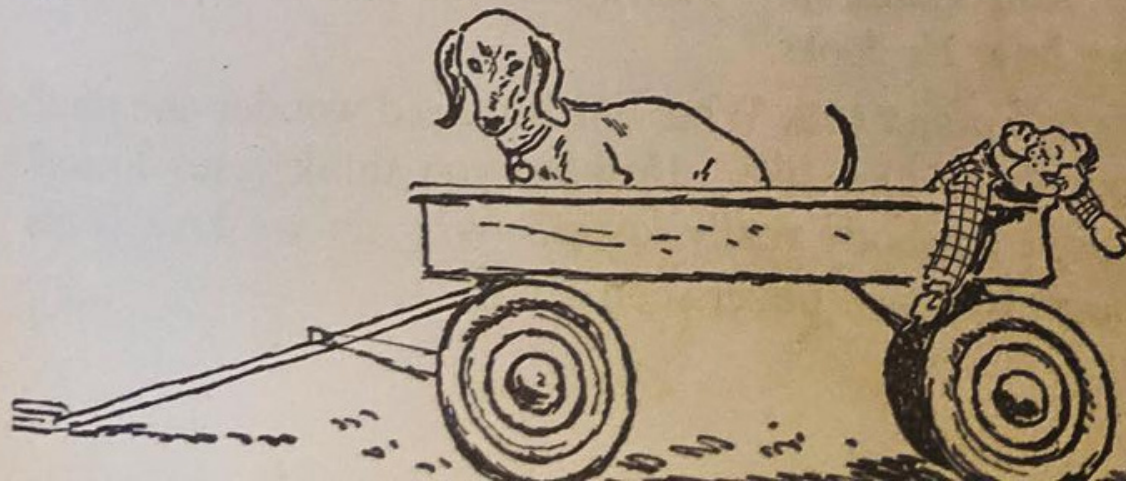
When the world was made, God said to the first people, "You take care of the world and rule it." Jesus had put many wonderful things into the world for people to use in making things. He also gave people minds so they could figure out how to make things from what He had made.

But in the beginning all things were made by Jesus. And the things which Jesus made still can't be made by people. You see, Jesus is God, and God is much wiser and greater than the people He made.

Let's talk about this: Why can a hand fix itself while a wagon cannot? What are some of the things Jesus made? For whom did He make them? What did He give to people so that they could make things from what He had made? What must Jesus be if He made all things in the world?

Bible reading for older children and grownups: John 1:1-5.

Let us pray to Jesus: What a wonderful world You have made for us, Lord Jesus. All that You have made shows Your great power and love. We are glad that You made us and that You also saved us when we became spoiled by sin. Help us and keep us all as God's children by giving us the Holy Spirit. Amen.





A Practical Approach

- 2-Year-Old Home Visits
 - Short study
 - Teaching home devotion, including our own produced family devotions
 - Emphasizing Sunday morning
 - Family Feedback
 - Podcasts



Bible Study

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

1. What does God seem to want most of all for your children?

2. What attitudes does God encourage us to have here? How can we practically live out those attitudes?

"Impress them on your children...Talk about them when you sit at home..."

Psalms 78:1-8

My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. 2 I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from of old—3 things we have heard and known, things our ancestors have told us. 4 We will not hide them from their descendants; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done. 5 He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach their children, 6 so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. 7 Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. 8 They would not be like their ancestors— a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him.

1. What important lessons from the Bible does God want us to pass on to the next generation?

2. What does rebellion as God's people look like? What does loyalty look like?

Beautiful Savior Youth Discipleship Plan

Home Devotions

Addressing Obstacles

1. List the top 2-3 obstacles that most often get in the way of a family doing home devotions.

2. Brainstorm ways we might overcome those obstacles in our own families.

What Should I Do?

Share - Learning to share highs & lows

1. What was your high point this week? What was your low point? How did God bless you through these two experiences?

2. List the potential benefits for a family as they share their highs and lows.

Read - Learning to read the Bible & reflect
Luther's Four Strands

- What is God saying here?
- What sins does this lead me to confess?
- For what does this lead me to give thanks?
- For what does this lead me to pray?

Psalm 91:1-6

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

Field Test: Take these verses above and answer Luther's four questions.

Pray - Learning to pray for each other's high & lows

A
C
T
S

Goals & Plans List

Setting Goals

Starting a family devotion plan can be very intimidating. It helps to set short and long term goals for your family.

- In one month it would be great if we could...
- In six months it would be great if we could...
- A year from now it would be great if we could...

As we grow in faith, it can we will begin to look for ways to serve others. If you desire, you can use the space below to plan ways that you could serve your church, your community, or your literal neighbors next door.

- In spring, we would like to...
- In summer, we would like to...
- In fall, we would like to...
- In winter, we would like to...

Plan Ideas

Here are some ideas of things you might try as a family for your home devotional life:

5-15 Minutes a Day

- Read through the discussion questions in the Family Devotions provided in your church mailbox
- Subscribe to the WELS Devotion of the Day
- Watch a YouTube video from Your Time of Grace and discuss it as a family.
- Read one of the daily Meditations provided by church
- Read one of the devotion books from NPH or CPH contained in the church's Home Devotion Kit
- If you child has Memory Work, run through it with them and walk through what the passage(s) mean.

15-30 Minutes a Day

- Read through a chapter of the Bible and use Luther's 4 Strands to study it. If you would like a 3 Year Reading Plan, one of the pastors could provide it for you.
- Listen to a podcast of one of the BSLC sermons and identify the key points in it. You can find these on the church website.



A Practical Approach

- Training Parents
 - Parenting Classes
 - Dads Retreat
 - Marriage Workshop



A Practical Approach

- Training Youth
 - Apologetics in Confirmation
 - Teen Group
 - Mentor Program
 - Intergenerational Lunch
 - College 101
 - Summer Sunday School



A Culture of *Worship*

- Parent Meetings
- Baptism Celebration
- Core Values
- Harvest Strategy
 - Donuts with Daddy, etc.
 - Chapel Cafe

Hear from *the Cains*..



Biggest obstacle? Garrett:

"Consistency in the Word, prayer, and family devotion is probably the biggest challenge. While it's great to find every opportunity, no matter how small or quick, to get into the Word, pray together, or talk about our choices and what our heart/motivations should be led by, it can often be too easy to get distracted by the daily habits and behaviors and lose focus."

Hear from *the Cains*...

Biggest obstacle? Natalie:



"Consistency. We recognize that disciplining our children at home is absolutely essential, but getting into a consistent, daily routine can be challenging, particularly during the school year when time is already so tight. It really takes a change of heart and mind to restructure a family's priorities. And honestly, you have to allow yourself grace when you inevitably fall off the wagon, or don't see the impact you'd hoped to when a kid makes a less-than-God-pleasing decision. It's an exercise of endurance, patience, and love.

Hear from *the Cains*..

Instilling a mindset? Garrett:



"We try to consistently incorporate the Word/Baptism/Who we are in Christ into conversations, decisions, reviewing our behavior/choices and when we are planning ahead for something. It's sometimes more common that we reflect with the kids on what they could have done differently and why, but we want them to know they are always God's children, He loves them and never leaves them, they're forgiven and that He wants to regularly hear from them in prayer."

Hear from *the Cains*...

Instilling a mindset? Natalie:



"I hope that we are showing our kids that God's Word is the framework for everything around us; how we perceive the world, and how we interact with it. We do a lot of critical thinking exercises, making observations, thinking about what Scripture tells us, and exploring our responsibility as Christians to be different than others (and mostly to show love). I pray that my kids will always see that our faith is something that is living, cerebral, and vital for spiritual health. It's something they'll need to have fed and informed by God regularly in order to exercise it throughout their lives. We plan to spend our kids' childhood rooting the habits of studying God's Word, praying, and attending worship/Bible class so that when they are old enough to leave our home, these things will be the norm - as routine and necessary as breathing."

Hear from *the Cains*..

Any tips? Garrett:



"Sounds simple, but make time to talk to your kids...find every opportunity to share your faith with them. We may take for granted that our kids know we're believers, but when they see it, hear about it, and talk about it with you every day it can help strengthen and encourage them (perhaps more than we know). I think it's also good to work at modeling the Christian behavior we expect of them - take time to explain why you're sorry or why you've made a mistake, what God says about it, and why (through Christ) He forgives us."

Hear from *the Cains*..

Tips? Natalie:



"The biggest thing is just to SLOW DOWN.

Recognizing there is nothing more imperative to a family's overall well-being than time together in God's Word is crucial. Choosing to let go of the distractions is necessary. We all have time for discipleship work, we just need to overcome the mental illusion that we don't."

My Prayers for Us

