

WHAT I TEACH MY CHILDREN 1: GOD IS LOVING AND KIND, RIGHTEOUS AND JUST

Jeremiah 9:24 (NASB) says God said, "...let him who boasts boast of this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the Lord who exercises lovingkindness, justice and righteousness on earth; for I delight in these things," declares the Lord."

The Bible says that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever; therefore, these truths will never change. He extends His grace to us because He is loving and kind, but He will also remain righteous and just. These are the main things we teach our children.

First, we teach them that God is loving and kind. But how do we do this? I learned that when you teach children a principle, the first thing they do is to look for an example to follow. Since they cannot see God, they will look to us to provide that example. They will use what we do and say as the basis for understanding the principle. This was the reason why I had to drastically change my ways because many of the things I used to do contradicted the ways of the Lord.

When Denise was very young, she got angry with me because she did not understand why I had to spank her for having violated a house rule. Our house rules were no lying, no disobedience, and no disrespect. So that night, when I brought her to bed and told her I love her, she looked at me with a sharp stare and turned her back. I felt offended and disrespected, but I did not react because I did not want to add to the strain in our relationship. While I was hurting, I kept asking God how I should react. As this went on for days, I changed my question to, "How would You react, Lord, if You were in my shoes?" Then I remembered the father of the prodigal son. I had always wondered why he did not scold his son when he prematurely asked for his inheritance and left. But from that story, God taught me that you cannot force anyone to love you, they must make that decision themselves. I believe this was why the father gave in and just waited for his son to return.

So I decided to wait for Denise to love me in return. I would go to her room often and tell her I love her even when she would just stare at me or sometimes just say thank you. After about three months, one night when I kissed her and told her I love her, she answered back and said, "Papa, I love you too!" I could not help but cry. And that night, I felt I understood God's love a little better. God would persistently be loving and kind, even if we do not reciprocate because that is His nature. He would never force Himself on anyone, but patiently wait for us to decide to love Him in return and when we finally do, it would give Him so much joy! That night, I taught my daughter that God will always be loving and kind to her, by showing her an example.