

Stupid Rain

What is the most powerful human influence in your child's life?

Your "quality time" with your child?

Church and Sunday School?

Friends?

Parental discipline?

These may all be good things, but there is another influence more powerful than all of them. The most powerful personal influence in your child's life is **everyday talk**.

Everyday talk is talk that happens in the unplanned moments. It happens in casual, unguarded moments. It happens when you are distracted or irritated and would rather not be talking at all. It happens when you receive unexpected news, good or bad. You are always talking or thinking about things—at home or on the way to the mall, when you are driving to work or school, when you are falling asleep (or lying awake), or when you are dragging yourself out of bed in the morning. This is everyday talk.

The power of everyday talk

Talk is a given. Everyone talks. It's a basic function of life. In

order to teach your kids you must talk to them. But there are all sorts of talk. For example, formal discussion (usually a monolog, in reality) occurs when you sit your children down and explain some matter that you think is really important. Then there is talk that gives directions, such as, "Take out the garbage," or "Be quiet," or "Come here." However, Deuteronomy 6 speaks about a specific type of talk that God wants you to have with your children—everyday talk.

Why do I say everyday talk is so powerful? Because the Bible teaches so.

Deuteronomy 6:6–7 says, "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 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."

The New Living Translation freely translates the same passage this way, "And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are away on a journey, when you are lying down and when you are getting up again" (NLT).

The kind of talk that God requires here is talk that happens in the normal routine of life, every day. God wants you to talk about His world. God wants you to talk about what He does and how people respond to Him. He wants you to do this when you are at home, when you are out and about, when you relax. He wants you to talk about Him with love and awe every day. He wants you to talk freely and naturally to your children about His commands and how to obey them day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute. This is what Deuteronomy 6:7 means. God wants your everyday talk to be about Him.

Does this idea seem strange or unnatural? Are you thinking, "What good will this do?" God's ways are not our ways.

Remember the historical setting of Deuteronomy. Moses was giving his final instructions to Israel before they were to enter into Canaan. Moses could not go with them. After leading them for forty years, he had to say goodbye and leave them to enter the Promised Land without him. He was giving Israel the tools and weapons they would need to overcome the Canaanites.

What weapon would enable them to conquer a land filled with ferocious warriors? It wasn't what you might expect. He told them to talk to their kids about God every day. In Deuteronomy 6:12, Moses told the Israelites not to forget about God when they entered the land. The way for the Israelites not to forget was *to talk to their children about God all the time*—when they got up or when they went to sleep, wherever they were. Talking about God and what He was doing for His people was to be a vital weapon against their enemies. It was the key to their success.

The weapon of everyday talk

Everyday talk is still key to successful parenting. But everyday talk is not automatically an effective weapon. At least two things have to happen. First, God says that *these commands of His are to be in your heart*, living there in a rich, full way. Think about that for a moment. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, Moses says that these commands of God are to be so valuable to you that your heart cannot contain them. His commands are to dominate your thinking and overflow from your heart into the lives of your kids as you walk along life's road.

What kinds of thoughts live long enough in your heart to take up residence there? Or, said in a slightly different way, what things are so important to you that you can't stop thinking about them? Dads, how many times do you replay that six-iron that gave you a winning birdie? What about when your team won