

Four Lessons of Faith

Treva Osborn

My wife is due to give birth to our first child in February. While it has largely been a time of great excitement, there are also moments of terror as I realize the great responsibility that comes with being a parent. I have been thinking a lot about the lessons I want to teach my son and how I will do so. At the top of my list is instilling the importance of having faith and allowing that to guide all of his decisions.

As a Seventh-day Adventist Christian, I believe that faith impacts every aspect of my life. God is not confined to only particular areas, but instead my relationship with God impacts everything, including how I treat the environment. I want to pass on to my son a holistic faith that will provide guidance and meaning to every step he takes.

There are four lessons of faith that I want my son to embrace that have strong applications to environmental concern and care.

First, life is a gift from God. Life is nothing short of a miracle and is dependent upon God's creative and sustaining power. We do not own ourselves, but everything we have comes from God. This means that our job is to be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us. This planet is one of God's gifts to us, and we need to take good care of it.

Second, God is love, and faith leads us to love God and our neighbor. Love is not just a warm and fuzzy feeling towards someone, but reveals itself in concrete acts which promote another's highest good. One of the ways we can show love is by caring for the planet so that future generations can have a healthy environment to live in.

Third, I want my son to experience a weekly day of rest from work by observing the Sabbath. In the Bible, the Sabbath is experienced as part of the creation story, showing the importance of personal rest, but also allowing the earth to rest by not working it. In the 10 Commandments, God gives instruction about Sabbath observance and says that the Sabbath is not just for humans, but also meant for the animals and all of creation to rest and be restored and renewed.

Finally, I want my son to learn the importance of healthy living because the Bible tells us that our bodies are a dwelling place for God. The Seventh-day Adventist Church has always stressed the importance of health and has used the acronym NEWSTART to easily remember eight key health principles. Three of those principles, air, water, and sunlight, require that we take good care of the planet if we are to experience their healing benefits.

I know it will be a challenge, but these are the lessons I want my son to embrace. If he does, I believe God will be pleased with a young man that is a good steward of his creation.

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