

Sponges

Recently, Connor (who is four) and I were eating lunch together. Connor noticed one of the Christmas decorations on the table. There on the table we have the word "JOY" in red letters surrounded by white and red poinsettia looking flowers. Joy is of course something many people think about during the holiday season. There is joy when family gets together, at parties, or by going caroling. There is lots of joy this time of year.

Connor didn't pick up on this aspect of the decoration. Being four, he is still learning his letters. He noticed the "J." He then exclaimed, "That is a J. Does it say jelly beans?"

"No," I chuckled in response, "It says Joy."

His response made me take a step back.

"Where is patience and peace?"

Clearly, he had been listening. A few weeks ago, he had a lesson in Bible class about the fruit of the Spirit. Bret also finished a long series of lessons on the same on Sunday evenings. Believe it or not, Connor, even at his young age, absorbed what he heard.

Children (and adults too) have an uncanny ability to soak things up like a sponge. It can frequently be funny the things that kids can repeat. Art Linkletter even made a popular show from this idea (Kids Say the Darndest Things). Children don't miss much when it comes to what they observe in the world.

Not only do children hear what we say, but how we say it. They learn from us. If we are quick to anger and have fits of rage, they will naturally do the same. If we are slow to anger and patient with them, they will want to do the same with others.

It is not enough to just bring our children to church with us. We must be willing to be an example of faith in and allegiance to Jesus. Remember the Bible School song we used to sing, "O be careful little eyes what you see. For the Father up above is looking down in love." Other verses would include: O be careful little hands what you do, o be careful little ears what you hear, and be careful little tongue what you say. I wonder if we could change the lyrics,

O, be careful little feet where you walk

O, be careful little feet where you walk

For our little ones below are watching where we go

O, be careful little feet where you walk

--Alex Swango