

Psalm 34:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

Analysis

Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.

David shifts to didactic mode, assuming teacher's role to instruct next generation. This establishes intergenerational discipleship—experienced believers teaching younger ones how to fear God.

Come, ye children issues invitation. Children (banim) means sons, descendants, younger ones. Can refer to literal children or disciples/students. Come calls them to attention, nearness, receptive posture. Hearken unto me (shama') means listen attentively, obey, respond. Not casual hearing but active listening that leads to action. David positions himself as instructor, assuming authority to teach based on experience recounted in previous verses.

I will teach you provides educational commitment. Teach (lamad) means instruct, train, cause to learn. This is intentional pedagogy, not casual advice. The fear of the LORD identifies curriculum. Fear (yir'ah from yare) means reverent awe, worshipful obedience. David promises to teach how to fear God—implying fear is learned, not automatic; cultivated, not instinctive. Proper response to God requires instruction, modeling, training.

This establishes biblical pattern for discipleship. Older generation must intentionally teach younger how to know and worship God. Faith isn't genetically transmitted but discipleship-mediated. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 commands: These words shall be in your heart, and you shall teach them diligently to your children.

Psalm 78:4-7 declares: We will not hide from their children, telling to generation coming the praises of LORD, that they should set their hope in God.

Reformed catechetical tradition builds on this. Westminster Shorter Catechism begins: What is man's chief end? To glorify God and enjoy Him forever. Q2: What rule has God given to direct us? Scripture. Systematic instruction shapes hearts, minds, lives. Modern church's catechesis neglect explains generational faith loss. We must recover David's commitment: Come, children, I will teach you fear of LORD.

Historical Context

Teaching children God's ways was central to Israel's covenant identity. Passover included explicit pedagogical element: when children ask What does this mean?, parents explain redemption (Exodus 12:26-27, 13:8,14). Deuteronomy repeatedly commands teaching children God's laws, mighty acts, covenant requirements (Deuteronomy 4:9-10, 6:7,20-25, 11:19, 31:12-13).

Wisdom literature was often cast as father teaching son (Proverbs 1:8,10, 2:1, 3:1, 4:1, 5:1). This pedagogical framework shaped Israelite education. Faith transmission occurred in family and community contexts through intentional instruction. Jesus continued pattern, teaching disciples, who taught others, who taught faithful men able to teach others (2 Timothy 2:2). Discipleship is inherently intergenerational.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How does David's invitation Come, ye children model appropriate posture for intergenerational discipleship?

2. What is difference between casual exposure to faith and intentional teaching of fear of LORD?
3. Who are children you can teach (literal children, younger believers, new converts), and how will you teach them?
4. Why is fear of LORD something requiring teaching rather than being instinctively understood?
5. How can modern church recover robust catechetical tradition David exemplifies here?

Interlinear Text

לְכ֑וּ שְׁמ֣עַו בְּנֵיכֶם יְרַאֲתָהּ אֵלֶיךָ מִלְּדָכָם:
 H1980 ye children H1121 hearken H8085 H0 you the fear H3374 of the LORD H3068 unto me I will teach H3925

Additional Cross-References

Proverbs 1:7 (References Lord): The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Psalms 111:10 (References Lord): The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth for ever.

Psalms 32:8 (Parallel theme): I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.

Isaiah 28:9 (Parallel theme): Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

Proverbs 8:17 (Parallel theme): I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Psalms 66:16 (Parallel theme): Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul.

Proverbs 4:1 (Parallel theme): Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.

Proverbs 7:24 (Parallel theme): Hearken unto me now therefore, O ye children, and attend to the words of my mouth.

Proverbs 22:6 (Parallel theme): Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Proverbs 8:32 (Parallel theme): Now therefore hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways.

From KJV Study • kjvstudy.org