

EVERYONE NEEDS THIS FOURTH TOOL

TURN WORDS INTO PICTURES

"The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." (Deuteronomy 29:29).

Are you weary of all this skill development? It *is* work. And sometimes *hard* work! But, it is a cop out to not engage the mind in work and worship. Thinking, self-discipline, exercise are not always easy. Disciplining ourselves to read and think on the great truths of the Bible is work. Convincing our kids of this is an even bigger job! But, it is rewarding in this life and in the life to come. Be happy over little successes in them and yourself.

TAP IN ON THEIR VISUAL SKILLS

Yours is a visual generation because of movies, television, and computers. They all broaden our "experiences" which we can then use to personalize images. You may learn better if you can see it. Your kids are even more that way. This can be a big help to them in studying the Bible. They can think in pictures better than previous generations, but they may not have read enough to do this as they read. I honed my reading skills sitting on a tree limb (I was labeled a "tom boy"), but my visual skills were weak; we had no t.v. and never went to the movies! William Jay, a pastor and writer in England until 1853, learned to visualize by observing the beauty of the English countryside and recalling it later. After he learned to read and then to preach, it helped him teach the Bible in a plain and simple way. Your teen has seen so many more images than Jay or I did. He is very used to the visual. Your job now is to tie that ability to visualize to his understanding what he reads. That will help her remember what she reads as well as understand it.

This skill of picturing something in your mind is called visualization. The Bible is full of pictures in words that communicate truth to us. The lives of individuals, the activities of nations in both the Old and New Testaments, poetry such as in the Psalms, wise sayings such as in Proverbs, prophecy, and even in the letters of the Paul and others are pictures ready to become an image on your teens brain. Jesus taught by using stories that illustrated a spiritual principle. These images are useful for discovering the meaning of a passage or understanding the biblical principle. You should train your teen to sharpen this skill so he will remember these principles.

VISUAL EXERCISES

Here are a few visual exercises to do *with* your teen: Do not assign this and walk away. Exercise together.

1. Read Joshua 10 and Deuteronomy 7:1-2. Picture details of the battles, Joshua, the camp at Gilgal, the execution.
2. Read Psalm 61. What images are used here for God? What characteristics do these bring to mind?
3. Read Proverbs 24:30-34. Picture a neglected vineyard; don't forget details like grapes hanging down, weeds, a delapidated shed. What is the wise lesson that image brings to mind (v. 32-34)? A prowler sneaks around and comes upon you quietly. Poverty is like that. What represents need? How does he (it) come upon you?
4. Read Proverbs 8. Picture a woman standing on a high hill or at the main intersection of a town. Don't forget the details: her dress, hair, the day, the people around. Who does she represent? What three things is she shouting?
5. Isaiah 10:5-15. Assyria is like a _____. What was the attitude of the Assyrian King? (v. 12-14) In verse 15, picture the ax talking to the person holding it. Picture the saw, rod, and staff. Who is like these in God's hand? What does this teach about God's sovereignty?

FROM IMAGE TO PRINCIPLE

Make a 3x5 card with the following steps to using visualizations in Bible study:

1. Picture the image, including details.
2. Does the image help you determine the meaning of the passage?
3. What spiritual principle is being taught?
4. Does the image help you remember the spiritual principle?
5. How can you apply this principle to your life now?

A principle is a fundamental truth from which others are derived. It is basic. Paul says in Hebrews 6:1, "Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection." He means to leave the basics and get on into more complex, mature truths which he proceeds to do. So we are coaching these teens beyond the image process into thinking through to the spiritual principle represented. This part is harder! (Please look now at the next chapter if you need some help on identifying principles.)

As you can see, this is another thinking skill. Encourage your teen to use the above steps with the following passages:

1. Review Isaiah 10:5-15 again. Do these five steps with them. Be clear about the foundational truth of the arrogance seen in the King.
2. Read Jeremiah 2:11-13. Both Jeremiah and Isaiah are filled with images; you really can't profit from these "sermons" unless you can make these words into pictures and principles. What are the two evils so great that even the heavens should be afraid?

3. Read John 6:26-33. Who is the bread?
4. John 10:11-14.
5. See the images in the quote below by Ernie Reisinger. What is the principle (hint: it relates to God's sovereignty in salvation and sanctification.)

"Only God can make a crooked stick straight." Ernest Reisinger

This, like the other thinking skills, is something you have to keep coming back to over and over. How can you do that before your teen leaves home?

**THINK
IN PICTURES**

AND IN

PRINCIPLES