



Family Matters



A CHRIST-CENTERED RESOURCE FOR FAMILIES AND TEACHERS

Workbench Parenting: Envisioning How Common Household Tools Can Remind Us to Be Stronger Parents

THE TAPE MEASURE

“Am I tall enough to go on this ride”

It’s a big question that little children often ask.

Perhaps you’ve heard your child ask this question at a theme park, or maybe you even remember it from your own childhood. The answer is usually found by going over to a sign or pole where there is a line — a line that one must “measure up to” in order to go on the ride. It is exciting for a child if he or she meets the required standard of height. If not, the child is encouraged to be patient and wait until next time.

We like to measure things in our everyday world. We measure the distance to and from various places. We measure the size of our home in terms of square feet; we measure furniture so that it will fit into a room; we measure the size of our TV screens. To do this, we find that a tape measure is a helpful tool.

A tape measure is a flexible ruler, consisting of a ribbon of metal or plastic with measurement markings, often rolled in a spring-loaded case that easily coils and recoils. Tape measures come in different sizes: short lengths that can hang on a keychain, common sizes of 12 or 25 feet for use in the home, and those of professional length that exceed 100 feet or more.

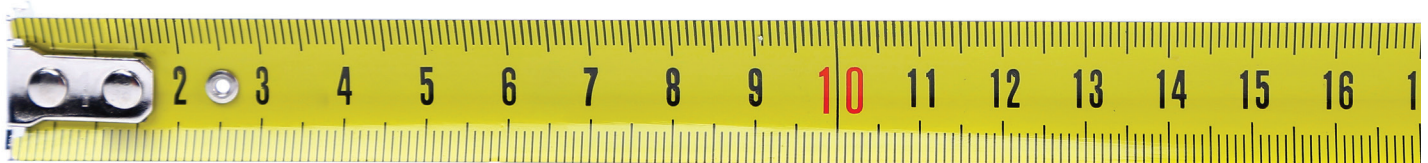
In addition to measuring things, we like to see if we “measure up.” We like to see how we compare with others in this world. Height is a measure we pay attention to early

on as a child. But as we grow, we tend to move away from physical measurements to social measurements. We will evaluate ourselves in terms of grade performance and test scores in school, athletic accomplishments, popularity and a host of other areas. The problem is that these social measures have no real standards to go by other than personal perception and emotion. This results in personal judgments that have no consistency and of which we usually see the negative side.

In contrast to how we try to measure up socially, God’s Law is clear in how we are to measure up spiritually. He has given us the Ten Commandments and other standards, and these show that we always come up short. Because of our natural sinful condition, we will never measure up to the perfection that God requires — no matter how many good and gracious things we may do for God, the church and others.

Thanks be to God for sending us His only Son, Jesus, to come to earth to live the measure of a perfect life in our place. We also give thanks that Christ took on the punishment of our sins and died in our place. Because of the loving sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, we can now stand confident that we measure up in a new way — the measure of an empty cross and tomb.

5 WE WILL NEVER MEASURE UP TO THE PERFECTION THAT GOD REQUIRES



FAMILY LINKS: Activities for families to reinforce Bible story truths in the home.

Gather the family together for a time of Bible study and discussion following the outline below.

OPENING PRAYER: Given by the person who everyone thinks is the tallest in the family.

FAMILY FUN TIME WITH TOOLS

Have an older sibling or parent collect various measuring tools from around the house. Get as many as you can find — rulers, yardsticks and various tape measures.

Have an adult demonstrate how to use one of these measuring devices. Then as a family, walk around your home measuring various things:

Discussion Questions

- The height of the kitchen table
- The length of a couch
- The width of the front door
- The width of a bathroom door
- The height of the refrigerator
- The size of the TV
- The height of everyone in the family

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What surprised you most about measuring these things?
2. What did you learn about measuring?
3. How is a tape measure helpful to us as a family?

BIBLE BREAK!

Have someone look up and read the following Bible verse, and then discuss the questions:

Lev. 19:35

- What does this verse say about measuring? (Not to be dishonest or use false standards.)
- How should we apply this to our everyday lives? (To always be truthful.)

GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS FAMILY ACTIVITY GAME

Introduction for parents — There are two main themes in the Holy Bible: the Law and the Gospel. The Law shows us our sin and points out our shortcomings and how we don't measure up to God's expectations. The Gospel shows us our Savior, shares the good news that Jesus has paid the price of sin for us on the cross, and explains that because of faith in Jesus, we are saved from sin.

Read through the list below and determine if the statement is bad news (Law) or good news (Gospel):

1. You have to clean up your room now! (Law)
2. We're going out for ice cream! (Gospel)
3. You better eat all your vegetables or you won't get dessert. (Law)
4. I went to the store and bought your favorite snack. (Gospel)

BIBLE BREAK!

Have someone look up and read the following Bible verse, and then discuss the questions:

Rom. 6:23

What is the bad news (Law) that we hear in this verse? (The wages of sin is death.)

What is the good news (Gospel) that we hear in this verse? (We have the gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus, our Lord.)

CLOSING ECHO PRAYER: Have someone read the prayer below out loud, phrase by phrase, and ask the rest of the family members to repeat it aloud.

Dear Father in heaven, thank You for sending us Jesus, who paid the price for our sins. Thank You for raising Him from the dead, so that we could receive the gift of eternal life. Help us to do our best every day, and when we don't, we thank You for Your forgiveness. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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