



# Encouraging Words

with Darlene Sala

September 18, 2017

## BEDTIME STORIES

Do bedtime stories really matter? I mean, does it make any difference in the life of your kids whether or not at the end of the day you take the time to read them a story? ISIS thinks so. Islamic State has recently published a guidebook instructing mothers to tell their children bedtime stories about--get this, martyrdom and heroic jihadists.<sup>i</sup> When I read that, it made me shudder.

It's great to teach your children about true heroes, and there are a lot of them in the Bible. And it's true that there are many stories in the Bible that include violence. You'll find a number of them in the book of Judges, which, incidentally, was at one stage of their lives, our kids' favorite section of the Bible. But there's a lot of difference between stories that elevate a person who stands up for what is right and those that glorify violence used to wipe out those who disagree with you. Almost every day you see in the news stories of ISIS using young children to carry out their violent acts.

But I'd like to get back to the issue of bedtime stories. Do they matter? Absolutely! They are an opportunity to build character in your children and strengthen your relationship with them.

What should you read to them? Bible stories written at their age level are wonderful, of course. Psalm 78 instructs God's people to "Tell [the deeds of the Lord] to their children, so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments." But secular stories with a good moral value definitely have their place as well. Biographies are great for older kids. I hope you don't mind reading the same story over and over for the younger ones.

Just remember: you're building memories as well as teaching values--one story at a time.

---

<sup>i</sup> Ammar Al Shamary and Gilgamesh Nabeel, USA Today, "Islamic State's New Killers," March 12, 2015, p. 1.