

# Developing Good Role-Modeling Skills



As parents it is vital to learn a couple of very important skills. First, we must ever be seeking to cultivate a relationship with our children. It is of vital importance that we keep the lines of communication open. If communication breaks down, trouble will surely follow. Communication does not have to consist of long discourses and lengthy lectures but can be as simple as taking the time daily to LISTEN to your children--what is going on in their lives, with their friends, as well as their own struggles!

Mothers in particular have a powerful influence in the lives of their children. Mom's actions, words, and the ways in which she handles life's stresses, difficulties and challenges will leave a deep impression on her children, which most likely will shape the way they act in similar situations. I suppose the most valuable lesson for mothers to learn is the need to daily draw their strength from the power of prayer, the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God. As busy mom it is very easy to neglect quiet time resulting in failure to live each day in the grace and power of Jesus. When all is said and done, the most important blessing that a mother can pass on to her children is the meek, quiet spirit she receives from Jesus and demonstrates each day amidst life's many challenges and responsibilities.

Moms are good nurturers, but it is in the heart of every true father to see maturity in his children. The calling of fathers to train up children with the intent that they may come to maturity. This is more than just reading a Bible story to children once in a while, or hanging out with them when a father has time (although that is important, too). Fathers in particular, and mothers as well, should be the heavenly interpreters in the lives of their children - Making sense out of the "nuts and bolts" of life from an eternal viewpoint. This input is imperative to their spiritual development, determining (when they reach adulthood) whether the children will have a worldly, carnal attitude or one of spiritual understanding.

(Christian) fathers\* must set the spiritual climate in the home. Fathers have the power of reproducing "after their kind" (in a spiritual way) in their sons, daughters, and wives. Now is a good time, fathers, to ask yourself what you are reproducing in your family. Are you setting the holy example of Christ for your family to see, or are you just "living" - eating, sleeping, and pursuing your dreams? These are heart-searching questions that must be answered. Fathers, what message are you teaching your sons and daughters? Not the message they hear from your lips, but the one they see through your lifestyle, by the things you prioritize, the things you spend time doing.

Are we speaking into the lives of our sons, fathers, showing them the face of God

as seen in Jesus, the radiance of His countenance shining through our lives? Are they hearing the words of God from our lips - not just the cute Bible stories and videos - but the Word that cuts as a sharp sword, exposing the very depths of sin in their lives? Are they seeing one who will pray through with them until peace with God is secured? Remember, Dads, we cannot give what we do not have! To be a father who is making an eternal difference, the most important thing is that we would personally be close to the Lord.

Parenthood is essentially the gift of being able to impart a spiritual seed into our children, a seed that will have inherent a kind of life that will bring forth after its own kind. Then they, in turn, can impart the seed to their children, etc., and so it is passed on from generation to generation. It is good to help our kids see the unique gifts they have been given by God, and to encourage them to develop them, but if that is all we do, we do them a great disservice. We must give them something of Jesus, something genuine and life changing if we hope for them to grow up as men and women who are wholly committed to the Lord!

This present culture puts great pressure on young adults to excel, to be successful, and to make a lot of money. Unless our sons and daughters have been taught by godly parents that to submit to this pressure is for the most part, a sure way to spiritual ruin, they will fall prey to this spirit and end up sacrificing the eternal inheritance for the pleasure of temporal success. Rather, as fathers we must teach our children how important it is to possess such qualities as humility, meekness, contentment, and an attitude of preferring another's interests above one's own.

Pride is a most dreadful sin, and unless its venom is deeply dealt with in our children, we can be sure that it will be their destruction. Additionally, we must teach our children about the deceitfulness of greed, and admonish them to flee from any form of covetousness. Such sins will destroy their spiritual life, making the eyes of their hearts blinded to the true riches found in Christ. Yet how can fathers be effective in dealing with these sins in their children when they have never been dealt with in their own lives?

We may help by instruction in the Word, but the real substance of what we are and become as Christians springs out of the growth of the new life of Christ. Our greatest help, then, to our family is to pray for an atmosphere which is conducive for the full growth of the life of Christ...(both in our own hearts and those of our children).

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17, KJV).

(\* God will undertake in homes where one Christian spouse has come to believe and seeks the Lord for his/her family if the other spouse is yet unbelieving. The family is not left without witness: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband..."1 Corinthians 7:14 KJV).

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