

Raising Godly Children Our Parental Duty

By Linda Kracht

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Raising godly children has always been a challenge, and until we come face-to-face with our Maker, it likely always will be. In fact, the Bible is filled with stories about children who wandered away from their parents' ways; some repented and returned while others didn't. Some were severely punished for their disobedience while others repented before punishment struck. The Bible also contains stories of parents being punished for not forming their children properly. So, the challenge of raising godly children is age-old and fraught with consequences — for parents and children alike.

Is there a tried and true process by which parents can be guaranteed their children will become godly adults? While I wish I could say there was – and that Dave and I have mastered it – it just isn't possible. Each person is unique and endowed with a free will, therefore, we can only help each other and keep trying our best.

For fun, I have developed a “top ten” list of things our family has done in an effort to instill godly values in our children. Please understand, we are not claiming that we have the secret to raising godly children or that we are perfect parents. But we do take parenting seriously; and, we have a sense of humor. I hope you find a tip or two among the list that can help your family.

Linda and Dave's 'Top Ten' Ways to Raise Godly Children

1. Breastfeed them. Breastfeeding is the best way to begin the parental nurturing process. This nurturing does not evaporate once babies are weaned. Children who were breastfed as babies will remain close to parents because of the early bond that developed during breastfeeding. Furthermore, children who witness siblings being breastfed will observe a terrific model of sacrificial giving. Breastfeeding helped teach our children what love is and who loves them.

2. Feed them well and eat with them. While this may seem rather obvious, it isn't to some families. There are many families who do not cook daily, nutritious family meals or sit down to eat with each other! A study has just been published, which shows teenage girls are less likely to experience eating disorders when they eat at least five meals a week with their family. I understand that families today are busier than ever. No matter! Rearrange mealtime if you must so that you and your children can share at least one nutritious home-cooked meal per day.

3. Clothe them. I have a problem with giving children an allowance. At our house, we provide our children what they need rather than allowing them to save an allowance to buy things of their choosing. Parents surrender their power to veto purchases once they've handed money over to their

children. What often happens is purchases become the source of conflict between children and parents. Part of the parenting challenge in teaching children to be consumers, of course, is teaching the difference between a need and a want.

4. Pray for them. It seems obvious, but it isn't for some. Furthermore, teach them to pray for you so you are strengthened in your endeavors. Parenting is hard work and you need Godly inspiration and support. Growing up in today's world is challenging so prayer is a must.

5. Model godliness. Teens and young children model what they see. If you find yourself complaining about your children, perhaps what's needed is a deep look within for signs of personal ungodliness. Rooting out our own bad habits can go a long way toward molding "godliness" in our children. Godliness hosts a peace that is apparent to the observer; children will be drawn to us when we model godliness and peace that comes from trying to act as God acts.

6. Help them. Help your children even when they don't ask for help. This doesn't mean doing things for them that would serve to make them grow and mature. Helping or assisting children unexpectedly may make their day. It can also help you connect in unanticipated ways. We all love it when someone else helps us unexpectedly or acts generously. Make yourselves available for your children in the same way and the payback will be enormous. It is giving that we receive... .

7. Nurture them. Ponder this comment: "Hurt people hurt people. Loved people love people."

8. Work them. Like adults, children and teenagers need to feel productive and to be creatively engaged with challenging projects. They also shouldn't always be on the receiving end in your household. When you are busy with household chores, they should be too, in proportion to their age and ability. Keeping children busy has many benefits: they learn new tasks; you may complete a project faster, and the task just might be more fun when worked on together.

9. Rein over your household. Rein as a benevolent king and queen rules over their subjects — with love and concern for their well being. It is easier to understand rules, and abide by them, when you know you are loved.

10. Love them unconditionally. God asks that we follow in His footsteps. God loves us unconditionally; we are called to love as He does. While some days this can be challenging, it is our duty.