

Family Life Today Article: March 1, 2013

A Parent's Top Five

A righteous man who walks in his integrity--how blessed are his sons after him.
Proverbs 20:7

Barbara and I have not been perfect parents. But when you have as many children as we do, God gives you a few hundred lessons along the way. And from our years of experience, we've come up with a list of five non-negotiables that all parents need in order to raise a family God's way:

1. *Understand the times.* In past societies, the culture helped reinforce the values that parents were trying to instill in their children. Not today. That's why you need to be surrounded with a few like-minded parents who can support, encourage and counsel one another through the choppy waters of modern life. A great church is where you'll find them.
2. *Have a sacred commitment to each other.* Your kids need to see your vows lived out in every circumstance, in times of both peace and conflict. Make it a priority to resolve disagreements with your spouse, to forgive each other, to remain faithful. These qualities of love build a powerful, profound sense of security in children.
3. *Know what you believe.* You are the textbook your children read. Your deeply held values about life will influence your interactions with your children. As parents, you need to know what your unshakable convictions are.
4. *Remember God's perspective on children.* Never forget that children are a gift from God. Raising your children is a privilege and responsibility He has given to no one else, and they should be raised to know Him and walk with Him.
5. *Strive for the right goal.* More than anything else, your children need to grow to love and fear the Lord. That's more important than ensuring they have a good education, develop different skills or learn how to succeed in today's culture. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Discuss

Which of these purposes strike the deepest chord in you? Which ones need the most work?

Pray

Pray that your priorities will be shaped by God's Word and will influence your choices for you and your family.