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The Father Connection
Qualities of the Heart That
Empower Your Children to
Make Right Choices

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Fathers have the unique responsibility to empower their children to make right choices. While it's not always easy, it is possible for fathers to instill key qualities in the hearts of their children and help them grow in faith and life. Here are several ways you can make the heart connection for your children.

Create a Climate of Unconditional Love and Acceptance

There is nothing more important than for a father to learn that unconditional love and acceptance is the foundation for empowering their children to make the best choices in life. One of the most basic ways to meet your child's need for unconditional love is to demonstrate affection. Children need to hear the words "I love you," and experience your love through thoughtful interaction and meaningful conversation.

Affirm a Child's Personal Worth

Fathers can communicate a child's personal worth in many ways. One of the most important ways is to spend time with them. Go on dates. Involve them in your work. Have leisurely conversations around the

table. Take an interest in their hobbies. Affirm their worth by investing ample time in their everyday lives.

Foster a Sense of Belonging

If our children don't feel like they belong at home, they will look elsewhere for a place to belong. Help your children find value in your family home by asking their opinion, involving them in projects, and creating a safe, welcoming environment. Let them know they always belong in your family and are a valuable member of the household.

Acknowledge Value More Than Performance

While it's easy to focus on everything your child does right, be sure to acknowledge that even when they aren't at the top of their game, you still love them the same. It doesn't matter if they win or lose; it only matters that they did their best and learned something along the way. Leave them thinking "Wow! It doesn't matter if we win or not – you love us anyway!"

Share the Benefits of Honesty

Seize every opportunity to impress on your children the ways in which honesty and integrity protect us and provide for us. Try to show them how God's standards of honesty, will not hold them back in the world, but will , actually produce substantial benefits.

Remind them that the young man or woman who heeds God's standard of honesty will be protected from the burden of guilt; when they're honest, they don't always have to be looking over their shoulder.

Try to impress upon them the fact that young Christians who "speak the truth" will reap the reward of "clean hands and a pure heart" towards God. Help them see how a habit of honesty can protect a person from embarrassment and shame that results when their deception is discovered. Try to help your children recognize that the reward for

cheating is empty and short-lived, while the sense of accomplishment that comes with honest achievement is satisfying and lasting. Also try to help your kids see how God's standard of honesty provides a reputation for integrity. "A good name is more desirable than great riches," the Bible says, "to be esteemed is better than silver or gold" (Prov.22: 1).

Try to help your children understand how God's standard of honesty protects and enriches their relationships. The very foundation of relationships is built upon trust, and trust simply can't survive in the atmosphere of deceit. The element of trust is indispensable in building any successful, lifelong relationship. It undergirds marriage vows and business agreements with a reassuring, fortifying element. Help your kids recognize that a strong foundation of trust will improve and enrich the quality of their relationships, providing something that money can't buy, and dishonesty can't achieve.

Admit When You are Wrong and Ask for Forgiveness

The ability to admit mistakes and ask forgiveness is apparently rare among Christian parents. No wonder our kids have trouble admitting their mistakes and identifying with their parents! Instead of seeming "perfect" to your child, admit when you are wrong and ask for their forgiveness. This will go a long way in empowering them to make the right choices in life.