

How to Create a Distinctly Christian Family

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According to the word of God, you and I don't have enough human ingenuity to build a successful home. Psalm 127, written centuries ago, is still true. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." Here are five things the Lord can use to build a great family for you.

1. Two Married Parents

True marriage hasn't crashed and crumbled in the last few years in America. The culture relative to marriage has disintegrated. True marriage will always be honored in Scripture as an institution that remains pure and strong. In God's church there are many devoted *single* parents who pray that their children will grow and marry so that their grandchildren will be reared in a wholesome environment—with all the emotional and spiritual benefits of having both a mother and a father present and involved. A boy needs a father to train him how to be a strong, sanctified man who is honest, who owns his mistakes and corrects them, who respects the values of the Scripture. A girl needs a father to affirm her and hold the honor line in her character; a man who understands that outward beauty will always be worth far less than inward beauty (1 Pet. 3:1-4). There's no getting around the fact that a devoted single Christian parent can successfully form her/his child into a Christian. It's just much harder.

2. Two Married Parents who Seriously Want a Christian Home

Many parents say they want a solid, Christian home, but fewer are willing to make the commitments necessary to succeed. It means being faithful to Bible class and worship. It means controlling entertainment choices to exclude anything of which Christ would disapprove. It means maintaining family scruples of morality and honesty and prayer and commitment to our Lord, which utterly define the identity of the family. It means involving the entire family in spiritual family projects to care for widows, orphans, the sick, and the helpless. It means creating an atmosphere in which the things of Jesus are discussed without hesitation throughout the day in the home. It means holding each other accountable (Eph. 5:21).

3. Two Married Parents who Consider Child Discipline a Joint Effort

Ignoring bad behavior in our children is a recipe for creating adults who refuse to control themselves, and who will live unhappy, unproductive lives...lives, which will one day, be detrimental in influence on our grandchildren. Some parents prefer to postpone the correction of bad behavior (temper tantrums, refusal to obey parents, disrespect to adults, lying, bad attitudes, etc.) until their children are teenagers and the core issues are bigger—to sort of put their more serious child-rearing "on credit" until later. They will regret this. The prime time for training children is when they are young and pliable in their hearts (Prov. 19:26; Prov. 29:15).

4. Two Married Parents who Are Rock-solid in their Determination to Keep Satan out of their House

The road Satan travels into the living rooms and bedrooms of our homes is the road of mass media. Be perfectly honest and ask yourself how much of television and movies today is counterproductive to parents rearing their children to love and serve the Lord. Parents must simply stop being cavalier toward family entertainment, imitating their worldly counterparts. Online devices can be beneficial in your children's education but, with a couple of keystrokes, they can unleash a tidal wave of mind-corrupting filth. Top 40 music lyrics are cloaked in genres which parents have a hard time understanding, so they end up turning a deaf ear to soul-poisoning values which steal their children's hearts away. Want to build a Christian home and instill healthy values of righteousness in your children? Put on your spiritual glasses and take another look at your family's entire entertainment practices. Then radically remove any garbage you find.

5. Two Married Parents who Have a Plan for Educating their Children in the Word of God

Begin tonight having sit-down family Bible time with your kids. Announce that it will be every night. Vary what you do each night: verse studies, games to learn the Bible, singing, rehearsing Bible stories, encouragement-note writing, writing missionary notes, ethical problem-solving, etc. Be creative, and make this nightly event a habit. Dad should be the leader but, if Dad cannot or will not, Mom should do it (c.f. 2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). Your children will one day do the same with your grandchildren and, believe me, you'll be glad you did it (Prov. 22:6).