

## **Building Healthy Morals and Values**

*By Jim Burns, Ph.D.*

Far too many parents have abdicated their God-given responsibility of teaching morals and values to their kids by allowing schools, TV or even their church to be their children's primary teacher. Take the area of sexuality, for example. Only 10 to 15 percent of adolescents tell us that they received any good, positive, healthy, value-centered sex education or drug education from home. It's time for us as parents to take back the ground we've given up, and become proactive about providing healthy moral guidance and values for our families.

Dave and Pam Hicks have been excellent examples to Cathy and me of what it means to proactively parent in this area of building healthy morals and values. They've reared four absolutely incredible daughters. One of their daughters, Carrie, worked as my assistant for seven years, so I have firsthand knowledge that they did a magnificent job! Years ago Dave and Pam told Cathy and me one of their secrets. Every six months while their children were growing up, Dave and Pam would leave home for the day or overnight when possible. They would talk about each child one at a time and discuss what they hoped to work on in that child's life for the next six months. They would write down their decisions and then review them during the next six-month period.

Cathy and I chose to follow their example and take time away to focus on our kids. We've made important decisions during these times: to take our youngest daughter away for the mom-and-daughter sex talk an entire year earlier than the other two girls and to have more family fun days. Cathy and I both feel that our focused time away is a must for healthy parenting. When we become too busy to take time away, we're allowing circumstances and chance to the place of proactive parenting.

Parents, it's time to bring morals and values education back home; it belongs first and foremost there. We must become students of the culture and take responsibility for equipping our children to develop sound biblical values and morals that will keep them from the dangerous influences of our culture. We don't have an easy-job—we're bound to face some bumps, bruises and missed opportunities along the way—but let's take time to learn from the experts on the subject of morals and values. You can begin to teach family values to your children when they're young and continue as your children move toward independence in the later teen and young adult years.

Most likely every parent reading this has made the decision to teach his or her children positive, healthy morals and values and to foster those values. Most parents are frightened by the amount of negative distractions and temptations facing today's children. However, if our children are given proper education, a good example, positive faith and

proactive parenting, they can make it through the maze of negative influences and develop positive morals and values that they will pass on to their children.

*Excerpted and adapted from [The 10 Building Blocks For A Happy Family](#) by Jim Burns, Ph.D.*

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