



EPHESIANS 5:1

SHOW A CHILD

Many have stressed the importance of faith being *caught* as well as *taught*. Paul emphasized this in Ephesians 5:1 when he wrote, “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.” What do we need to *show* our children?

Demonstrate wise use of time and resources (Ephesians 5:15-17).

What kinds of activities do our children see us engaged in? Paul asked the Ephesians to model people who lived their lives *awake* (Ephesians 5:14). In other words, they were to be thoughtful about how they spent their time and to live as if moments mattered. This does not mean one does not engage in leisure activities, but it does mean that even these have a purpose. One does not play ball or go fishing just to win games or to catch fish. Our children should see us engaged in activities that have a purpose (or redeem the time wisely).

Put the needs of others first (Ephesians 5:21), love and respect your spouse (Ephesians 5:22-33).

Our children learn how to treat neighbors, friends, and future spouse by what they see us do. It is one thing to tell them to submit to the wishes of others, but it is far easier for them to do after observing their parents submit to others on multiple occasions. Similarly, we can tell our children to *submit* (Ephesians 5:22) and *love* (Ephesians 5:25), but those teachings are often maligned in popular culture today. Unless children have been shown the value of these lessons, they might quickly discard these teachings when they are criticized.

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A father shows his children these truths by loving his wife as he loves himself (Ephesians 5:29), not perfectly, but day in and day out. A wife shows her children these truths by treating her husband with respect (Ephesians 5:33). It is likely our children will interact with their spouses as they have observed us interact, even when they do not completely understand the truth behind the behavior.

Develop an environment of honor and respect for parents (Ephesians 6:1-4), teachers, pastors, and employers (Ephesians 6:5-8).

If parents do not live in a respectful manner with one another, the attitude will soon emerge in the way children treat their mother and father. We model and require our children to respect their parents, even in situations where a family is broken from separation or divorce. We do not require that they accept wrongdoing on the part of a spouse, but we do require them to honor that parent.

Similarly, we model respect for law enforcement, employers, and those responsible for teaching our children. We teach them to honor these officials even when we may disagree with their actions. Consider David's respect for the office Saul held (1 Samuel 24:6; 1 Samuel 26:9; 2 Samuel 1:14), even when Saul wanted to take David's life. It may be difficult, but we have opportunities to model this kind of respect when receiving a speeding ticket or an inconvenient directive from a government official.

As we live our lives, let us be careful to show our children how to live.

JEREMIAH 29
INITIATIVE

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