

4 Ways to Raise Up Godly Girls

It was the end of a long day and I was relieved to be home. Running through the door, I dropped my purse and keys in the chair, kissed my husband warmly, kicked off my shoes, threw off my cardigan and headed for my overstuffed chocolate-colored couch which I affectionately call, "The Dove Bar."

Then up from the lower level of our home like two little Labradors came bounding my daughters, Naomi and Camile. "Mommy's home!" they cried and jumped on top of me, making one hilarious and *heavy* hog pile! "Come on, Mom, get up! Come watch us play the Wii! I'm hungry mom, when will dinner be ready? Mom, I need you to do my hair, my braid came out. Can we go outside and wash the car?" Rest time was clearly over!

I love my daughter's enthusiasm and zest for life—*on most days!* It reminds me of the best of childhood—spending warm summer days catching butterflies and ladybugs, playing kickball, digging in dirt and savoring delicious icy popsicles on the front steps.

I also know that these years of innocence can often fade and become years of pain, isolation and rejection without proper parental intervention. I want my daughters to maintain their sense of joy and wonder through the ups and downs of life, particularly during their high school and college years when their identities are forming and are most fragile. I want them to have a healthy sense of self-esteem that is not dictated by magazines or models, and I desire that they have a healthy standard of beauty, which is best presented in the pages of Scripture not at the cosmetic counter.

As a working mom and as a campus minister, that means keeping my faith and my family the priorities in my life. It also

means learning from my own past mistakes and listening to the advice of other sisters in the Lord who have raised their daughters successfully.

Here are a few things that I have learned make a big difference in raising healthy, godly girls for Christ:

1. Listen well. Sometimes as parents we can do more talking and dictating than listening and learning. Learn to talk less and listen more, particularly when your daughter seems distressed or her moods are changing. These could be indicators that something is wrong on the inside and she is having a hard time naming what it is. Listen without judgment and be slow and thoughtful in your response to what she has to say. It will open a door to her heart and keep it open for years to come.

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2. Pray with intention. In her book *Power of a Praying Parent*, Stormie Omartian talks about praying with intention. This includes being still before the Lord and asking Him how to pray for your children, inserting their names in Scripture as the Lord leads and using quiet times as a time of journaling and writing a list of prayer requests for each child. Pick up a journal today and get writing.

3. Remain available. We all know that time is a commodity these days, particularly for the busy family. Nevertheless, our kids need to know that they matter more to us than our deadlines at work or redecorating the den before Christmas. Find ways to remind your kids that you are here for them no matter how busy life seems. Slip a note in her backpack or under her pillow, text "I love you" to her before a tough test or tryout. Pray with her through a frustrating situation and encourage her to keep her own journal with how God has answered her prayers.

4. Model grace and humility. When you do fail, be humble enough to admit your mistake and repent.

Your daughter gets her first cues on how to talk, think and act from you. Beyond being her first standard of beauty, be her greatest model of godly grace and humility. When someone hurts or disappoints you, do you talk harshly about that person with your girlfriend on the phone or do you pray for that person instead? When the house is messy and company is coming do you fret and complain or do you put on your iPod and dance around while you dust and vacuum? Teach your daughters how to press into God not crack under pressure. And when you do fail, be humble enough to admit your mistake and repent.

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