

4 Ways Your Children Can Avoid Worldly Conformity

Private Desmond T. Doss was an unlikely hero. He was a man compelled to serve his country during World War II, while also objecting to taking human life.

As a Seventh-day Adventist, Doss believed that it was sinful to kill, even in war. Doss faced repeated harassment at basic training, including a court martial hearing, for refusing to even hold a weapon. Most mistook his religious conviction for cowardice and his refusal to work on the Sabbath for laziness. Serving as a medic, his battalion was part of the invasion of Okinawa and was ordered to take a heavily fortified, 400-foot jagged ridge.

After initially taking the ridge, the Americans were pushed off, leaving behind many wounded. Forsaking his own safety, Doss stayed on the ridge and worked prayerfully, tending the wounded. All night he dragged men to the edge of the cliff and lowered them to safety. By day's end, he had saved 75 wounded comrades.

The story of Desmond Doss' heroism is told in a new movie called *Hacksaw Ridge*. I was inspired by how he was able to stay faithful to his beliefs under heavy criticism. Doss' conviction led to him being faithful to his fellow soldiers in the fire of war.

How do we raise our kids to have the same strength of moral foundation? Cultural interpretations of right and wrong shift with the sand. With more and more pressure being brought to bear for people to bend convictions and beliefs to fit into the current cultural norm, it is vital to develop a moral foundation.

Here are four ways to develop your child's moral backbone in a

world pressuring them to conform:

1. Develop their core identity. One of the biggest contributing factors to a well-founded moral center is to have a strong sense of identity. Knowing who they are will give their stature a sense of gravity. I have found that the strongest identity we can give kids is that they are loved regardless of performance, attractiveness or accomplishments. If they don't know they are loved they will search endlessly for it like a feather floating aimlessly in the breeze. My kids are taught that their identity is the love of the God that made them. That love makes their lives eternally significant and valuable. Where are your kids finding their identity?

2. Root them firmly in God's truth. If someone is to have a firm moral backbone, they need to have a life marked by truth. In a Harvard commencement address, Nobel Laureate Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn said, "Many of you have already found out, and others will find out in the course of their lives, that truth eludes us if we do not concentrate our attention totally on its pursuit." We must teach them to pursue God's truth and His Word daily. Otherwise, they will never attain Christlike character.

3. Let them fight their own battles. Nothing teaches a person how to stand their ground more than personal experience. We all want to protect our kids, but fighting their battles for them sends the message that they are weak. The famous story of David slaying Goliath didn't just magically happen. David grew the moral courage, determination and resolve during his days as a shepherd defending his flock against lions and bears. When the day came to take on Goliath he was ready. Give advice, but let your kids fight their battles.

4. Determining right and wrong. Too many people determine what is right and wrong by how they feel. Feelings change constantly over time and they are usually based on limited

information. Kids need to learn to think critically and develop a measuring stick for what is right beyond their own limited narrative. Right and wrong must be determined from a source greater than our own perspective and that of the crowd or culture. As Ravi Zacharias says, "In order to have a moral law, you have to have a moral law giver."

Desmond Doss' moral lawgiver was God, and that gave him the conviction to stand apart. What is your kids' source or measuring stick for right and wrong?

Hacksaw Ridge opened in theaters last Friday and is an incredibly inspiring movie. I highly recommend it with one note, it shows the reality of war in vivid detail. It's not suitable for children and may even be difficult to watch for some adults. Watch the trailer above. {eo}

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