

Larry Tomczak: 25 Essentials Parents Owe Their Children

When I lived in Atlanta, I often drove by the Scottish Rite Children's Hospital. In front is a sign that is thought-provoking:

"100 years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in or the kind of car I drove ... but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child."

I grew up in a home where my parents had very little but they gave a lot. My father was an immigrant who came from Poland, never finished high school and worked as a custodian. My mother was disabled, scrubbed floors three times weekly and pinched pennies with dad to make a living in Cleveland, Ohio. We never had a car, went on vacations or enjoyed air conditioning, yet, thank God, I turned out a success because of their sacrificial investment in me.

Incredible Legacies

Sarah Edwards was the wife of the 18th century icon minister, Jonathan Edwards, and mother of 11 children. Author Elizabeth Dodds chronicled the achievements and contributions of those children and their offspring underscoring the potential of what parents can produce for their legacy. Out of 1,400 Edwards descendants, the family produced:

- 13 college presidents
- 65 professors
- 100 lawyers and a dean of a law school
- 30 judges
- 66 physicians and a dean of a medical school
- 80 public office holders, including three mayors, three governors, three U.S. senators, a controller of the

United States treasury and a vice president of the United States.

Were Jonathan and Sarah Edwards able to foresee all this as they daily raised their children in the everyday routine of life?

Did Abraham Lincoln's mother, who died when he was only 10, foresee the destiny of her child as she read him the Bible and trained him up "in the way he should go" (Prov. 22:6)? I doubt it, but she acted in faith remaining diligent in her duties and trusting God for the results. Later in life after she was long gone "Honest Abe" declared, "All that I am and all that I shall be I owe to my mother."

During these turbulent times in which our children face Satanic assault unprecedented in history, let's remind ourselves of what we owe our children as parents entrusted by Almighty God with their development and destiny.

25 Essentials

Obviously people say, "We owe our children love!" That is correct, but how specifically and practically is parental love expressed?

As responsible parents knowing one day we'll give an account to God, here's what I hope you'll find to be a helpful list of the basics—what a parent owes a child:

1. Discovering a life-giving relationship with God in the person of Jesus Christ, learning to love, obey, pray and enjoy a grace-filled, abundant life.
2. Moral guidance, learning the fear of God and loving His commandments for our good and His glory.
3. Love and respect for God's revelatory gift to humanity—the Bible, the authoritative Word of God.
4. Protection from harm through parental safeguards and

training in alertness.

5. Communication—opportunity to regularly engage in conversation and exchange of thoughts and ideas.

6. Affection—nurturing, encouragement and care communicated intentionally and consistently.

7. Correction—disciplinary measures carried out diligently and wisely for training in righteousness.

8. Education—the value and necessity of ongoing learning as a key to success.

9. Serving others as a core value versus self-centered living.

10. Honesty—learning the importance of integrity in all areas of life.

11. Discernment—cultivating critical thinking and learning to discern between good and evil amidst seductive, secular influences.

12. Sanctity of life from womb to tomb.

13. Sanctity of marriage honored as a lifetime covenantal commitment between one man and one woman.

14. Moral purity intended by God to respect the opposite sex and celebrate sexual intimacy only in the bond of marriage.

15. Financial stewardship—earning and saving money; generosity, tithing and giving to those less fortunate; investing and learning to spend wisely.

16. Faithfulness—commitments are upheld even when inconvenient; tasks are completed.

17. Honoring those in positions of authority (parents, grandparents, teachers, police...) as well as the elderly and those with special needs.

18. Value of work in its various forms providing opportunity for achievement and advancement with our accountability ultimately to God.

19. Humility as opposed to pride as one remains teachable by attentive listening and learning in order to mature and be blessed.

20. Thankfulness as one cultivates an attitude of gratitude versus envy, entitlement, resentment and discontent.

21. Healthy habits to avoid harmful substances and maintain healthy living and longevity of life.

22. Endurance—the power of perseverance for character development and continued progress in life amidst inevitable adversity and unexpected setbacks.

23. Etiquette and grooming displaying self-respect and maturity in social settings.

24. Friendship—selecting companions of character and recognizing JUST friends (social), RUST friends (past), TRUST friends (counselors) and MUST friends (God-given gifts).

25. A disciplined life as opposed to being slothful, disorganized, procrastinating and ultimately unproductive in life.

Here's the Deal

Children learn from the way parents live. If we go the right way, then they learn the right way to go. Christianity is not a meeting to attend but a life to be lived; not compartmentalized, but a lifestyle that leads to peace, prosperity and a powerful legacy.

“And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them

when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deut. 6:5-7). {eo}

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