

Quality Time

✖ As a new school year descends upon us, with all the obligatory “back-to-school” sales and hype, we have to ask ourselves, “What are my kids going to learn this year besides reading, writing and arithmetic?”

Many of us have seen our kids pick up things at school we don’t particularly care for. Maybe it’s an attitude of disrespect toward you or foul language from the lyrics of a new CD or behavior they learned from pornographic pop-ups that appear on the computer monitor while doing homework. Get ready, because these things will happen.

As parents we have to create a godly culture in our homes that our kids are drawn to—one that goes “back to school” with them—rather than allowing them to bring unwanted attitudes and behaviors back home.

It’s a tough fact to accept, but kids today are falling into a trap of deception. It offers all the shine but shows none of the dirt that comes from being deceived. Deception doesn’t happen quickly, and this culture has a lot of time to repeat its message over and over again. As a result, our kids transfer ownership of their hearts from us to something else.

One pop culture mogul said, “We don’t advertise to this generation; we own this generation.” In many ways that’s true. What they say goes. What they put on network TV sells.

We can tell our kids, “As long as you’re a part of my house, you’re not going to watch this or wear that.” But such a response does very little to turn their hearts toward home.

Somewhere in the process of growing up, our kids get turned off to anything we have to say. They don’t want to talk about things or listen to us. And when they do listen, they do it grudgingly. It seems they don’t want our influence, and no

longer embrace godly values.

Though it may come as a surprise to some of us, our kids have gradually transferred ownership of their hearts from us, their parents, to their friends or the culture. Kids care more about pleasing their peers than pleasing Mom and Dad. This type of thinking begins gradually, but every little step is a sign that their hearts are being lured away.

It seems hopeless, but there is something we can do! We, as parents, need to intervene. We've got to turn their hearts back toward us. This will not happen by commanding our kids to do this or do that, but by wooing them.

Parents, it is our job to continue to woo our kids so they will want to listen to us—not to the media, their peers or ungodly influences. If we allow the culture or their friends to overpower them, we will have an incredibly difficult time re-establishing the respect they once had for God and us.

The saying "Quality time is better than quantity" is not true. Parenting means sacrifice and time.

We need to do things with our kids and win them over by building bonds and making memories together through shared experiences. This will begin to draw their hearts toward home.

After you have spent quantity time with your kids, they will start to see that you care and want to listen to them. Your kids will eventually open up and share their thoughts and feelings with you.

Depending on how hardened your kids are and how controlled and manipulated they are by the culture and their friends, it might take a significant amount of time in the beginning to woo them. But it's not impossible. Start a pattern of spending "quantity" time with your kids while they're young and impressionable.

It's time to recreate a culture in the home that demonstrates to our kids unconditional love and promotes open communication. It is our job as parents to woo the hearts of our children and influence their minds. Be encouraged. You can do it!

Ron Luce along with his wife, Katie, founded Teen Mania Ministries in 1986 with a mission to "provoke a young generation to passionately pursue Jesus Christ and to take His life-giving message to the ends of the earth."