

The 5 Best Gifts You Can Give Your Children

Do you ever feel that you aren't doing a good enough job of preparing your kids to enter the world as adults?

I know I do. I get easily distracted by my smartphone or other unimportant things that don't add lasting value to my life, or theirs.

Just the other day I had to make the conscious decision to put my phone away and spend focused time and attention with my kids. I found great pleasure in joining my 1-year-old daughter in playing with a Noah's Ark toy.

I showed her how to open the little door and place an animal inside, then shut the door. I opened the door back up and took the animal out. She picked up on this fun game really fast. After that we rolled a ball around. And then I put her on our little plastic slide and pushed her down. She had so much fun that our 4-year-old just had to join in, so they took turns going down the slide again and again.

It's the simplest pleasures of life that add the most meaning.

As a father and husband I have to constantly fight off the tendency to slip into unintentionality. I have to remind myself that the things that so easily distract me are sucking the joy and meaning out of life.

Here are five areas where I am working on being more intentional about investing in my kids:

1. The gift of purpose. I don't just want my kids to be successful. I want them to be successful at the right things. What good is it if they succeed financially, but fail to live according to their God-given purpose?

Philosophers have been debating the meaning of life for thousands of years. But I know what the purpose of life is. It's found all through the Bible. The meaning of life is to have a relationship with God and with others. But sin completely destroyed our ability to have healthy relationships, especially with God.

The only way to have a relationship with God is through His Son, Jesus Christ.

As a Christian, the purpose of life is to help others find Christ. As a father, the purpose of life is helping my kids find Christ, and then to help them understand that their purpose is to help others find Christ.

2. The gift of a biblical worldview. According to the Barna Group, only 9 percent of Americans have a biblical worldview. More alarmingly, only 19 percent of born-again Christians have biblical worldview.

And this isn't just people claiming to be Christians on a survey. The study defines a born-again Christian as someone who "made a personal to commitment to Jesus Christ that is important in their life today and that they are certain that they will go to heaven after they die only because they confessed their sins and accepted Christ as their Savior."

The Barna Group also estimates that only half of protestant pastors have a biblical worldview.

This is alarming because if God really did create the universe and everything in it, and created man in God's image ... then God is the ultimate authority on how to live life.

This means that helping my children develop and live by a Biblical worldview is essential if I want what is best for them. And Sunday school certainly won't cut it.

3. The gift of affirmation. The Bible teaches that words have

incredible power. Power to tear down and power to build up. I want to use my words to instill confidence, courage and a sense of purpose in my kids. I want them to know that God has a plan and purpose for their lives. I want them to know that God has their backs.

4. The gift of affection. Kids thrive on affection. Part of my job as a father is to do my best to make sure my kids know they are loved, valued and cherished. The best way to do this is to put my phone and other distractions every day and give them focused time and attention. I can instill an incredible sense of worth in my kids by simply being with them and engaging with them, like our playtime with Noah's Ark and the slide.

Studies show that children who have a strong relationship with their fathers are more likely to succeed in all areas of life. They are also less likely to engage in sexually risky behavior.

5. The gift of an example of a great marriage. Children learn through imitation and modeling. One of the best things I can do for them is model a healthy marriage. How I treat my wife, how we handle conflict and what we do after the conflict is over ...

All of these have an impact on how my children will handle relationships with each other, their peers and, yes, the opposite sex.

And I want my marriage to be something that they can model their own marriages after. Some day. Hopefully a day that is far, far off ...

I believe that by intentionally investing in these five areas of my children's lives, I can give them a great chance to succeed once they enter the world of adults.

What have you found to be one of the best gifts you can give your children? Share on social media or in the comments below.

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