

QUALITIES I WANT MY CHILDREN TO HAVE

1. PERSONAL QUALITIES

(By Ben Wong)

"Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me - put it into practice. And the God of peace will be in you." (Philippians 4:9)

"Your character and the bond of love and trust you build with your children in everyday life will have far greater impact than the words you say on any given day."

Children do not accidentally inherit a spiritual value system; it must be deliberately ingrained in them. If you want your children to know and live out God's truths then you must tell them those principles and demonstrate them in your life.

As a parent you are on the job day and night, shaping your children's perspectives according to your own. If your actions line up with those things you have told them, they will accept what you tell them as reasonable. They will be secure in your consistency and will be all the more likely to accept your system of values fully as their own. But if they hear you say one set of things and see you act contrary to your statements in a moment of stress, they will notice the inconsistency and their own lives will eventually reflect it.

According to Mike Phillips, there are four essential steps in the process of effectively implanting spiritual truths in your children's heart:

- (1) *Information* - telling them a principle.
- (2) *Mental Application* - telling them how it applies to their lives.
- (3) *Practical Application* - showing them how to apply it and helping them to do so.
- (4) *Example* - letting them see the principle applied in your life.

PERSONAL QUALITIES

1. To have a deep desire to learn.

Children are curious about everything. **Curiosity** breeds discovery. They should be allowed to explore. This curiosity will develop into **creativity**. I want my children to continue to have an inquisitive mind - always wanting to find out how things are.

It is also important to develop their **imagination**. This is the basis of their creativity.

- a. **Curiosity** leads to **exploration** which results in **accomplishments**.
- b. **Imagination** leads to **creativity** which results in **accomplishments**.

Both processes should be nurtured and directed. We should provide an environment

in our home in which they can learn, explore and create.

2. To have the ability to reflect and evaluate their own lives

They have a good understanding of their motives for doing things.

3. To have a healthy and positive self-esteem

They see themselves as God sees them. This becomes the basic foundation of their self-esteem. We as parents must reflect this to them over and over again. This is done through both what we say and how we treat them.

This means that they are able to accurately see themselves. Not too high or that will be proud. People with healthy self-esteem can be humble without being threatened or feel useless. They will also be able to regard others highly as well.

A person's self-esteem has two halves: feeling good about *who I am* and feeling good about *what I can do*. Therefore it is also important to help them to be able to excel in what they do. Each small ability a child masters give him enormous confidence and prepares him for greater tasks and responsibilities.

4. To have a spirit of excellence in all that they do

A spirit of excellence does not mean that they need to be the best, but that they have done their best. If they have done their best, then they should not worry if they are not as good as others. However, even if they are the best, but they have not done their best, then they are not aiming for excellence.

To have a spirit of excellence also means that they cannot be always a "Jack of all trades". It also implies that they need to be single-minded at some things. There needs to be an effort put into a few things in order to have really tried their best. If a person is dabbling at 40 things, that person can hardly be able to excel.

At the same time, they need to be able to concentrate in what they are doing. Without concentration, a person cannot do their best. This is an age of superficiality and distraction, it is even more important that they can concentrate on what they are doing and be able to be a person with depth in life.

5. To have a fighting spirit that will stand up in times of adversity

They never quit, never give in easily. They will keep going until they have finished the work that God wants them to do. This spirit is built on the strength of God that is in them which can accomplish greater than they could ask or imagine.

Moreover, they are able to endure when the going is tough. To do this, they will need to be able to stand pain and hardship. Nothing in this world that is worth achieving will come easily and not take great effort and endurance, sometimes for many years before we see the results. Therefore, it is crucial that the children learn to take the heat and come out strong in times of testing.

Furthermore, they are able to cope with failures in their lives and bounce back. They are able to turn setbacks into stepping stones. They are not afraid to fail but will only

cause them to try even harder knowing that they are wiser as a result of their failure. This is resilience.

"You never fail until you quit!"

"But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize..." (Philippians 3:13,14)

6. To have the ability to make decisions

They are decisive people. They are not afraid to make decisions. They are willing to take responsibility for the decisions they make. Because they are not afraid of responsibilities, they are not afraid to make decisions. They are not afraid to be wrong. They have learned to take responsibility for their own decisions.

They have learned to make decisions through practice with parental guidance. They are confident in making decisions. They know how to analyse the situation at hand. They know how to wait on God and listen to Him. They are able to step out by faith even when the odds are stacked against them, but the God tells them to move ahead. They listen to God more than they listen to man.

They make decisions on the basis of their values, convictions and principles.

They are making their decisions not only from the perspective of the present, but with the future in mind. They do not only have sight, but foresight. They keep eternity in mind as they make present decisions.

7. To be able to control their emotions - to be a disciplined person

They are aware of and understand their emotions. They know why they feel the way they do. They need to feel their emotions rather than to deny them or suppress them. They should be able to express and discuss their emotions openly without causing damage to self or others. However, they need to know that their emotions cannot be trusted all the times.

Moreover, they are able to control themselves. They are disciplined in not only their outward lives, but also their inner attitudes, desires, emotions and thoughts.

They can say "no!" when they need to do so. They can work out their priorities and discipline their lives to live out those priorities, e.g. work before you play, etc...
"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." (Proverbs 4:23)

8. To know how to live life to the full

They know how to have fun and to enjoy their abundant life. They love fun and has a good sense of humour. No matter where they are, they can easily fit in and enjoy. They are not afraid of what others think but just love to enjoy life.

They know how to be excited and exuberant. There is an enthusiasm in everything they do and every situation they are in.

They realise that they do not need to be controlled by their environment, but that life

is lived from the inside out. They can decide how they will respond to their environment.

9. To have a perspective in life that see things from God's point of reference

How they see things is extremely important in life because they act according to the way they see things. If they are constantly seeing the negative things in life, then they will become negative people. Therefore, it is key that they learn to see things from God's perspective so that they will respond to life as God would respond.

They should be rejoicing always and giving thanks in all circumstances. This is God's way of life. By doing this, they will have an optimistic and positive outlook on life.

10. To have a life of integrity - being honest to self and to others

They are living a real life. This means that there is nothing they feel that they have to hide from others. In other words, they are transparent and open.

To do this they would need to know what is the true condition of their heart. They are not just living to please people on the outside. They must not be phoney. Their inner life and outer life should be compatible.

This means that they are willing to admit mistakes and sins without unnecessary guilt and feeling of lost of self-esteem. They are willing to say sorry and ask for forgiveness when they are wrong.

A further related quality is that they are strong enough in themselves that they can withstand the pressure from the outside to conform to the lower standard of the world. Those who are living in darkness will dislike those who are walking in the light and are children of light. There is bound to be reactions from the world when we are living a life of integrity.

"If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, purifies us from all sin." (1 John 1:7)

11. To know their own strengths and weaknesses and use their strengths to the maximum

We are all good at something and not so good at other things. Nobody can be good at everything. They should know their own strengths and weaknesses and are able to be themselves. They are not comparing with others and are not trying to be like others. They like and accept themselves as they are and are at the same time growing.

They are strengthening their weaknesses and building on their strengths. They need to use their strengths to the maximum. Of course they can work on some weaknesses and overcome them, but never forget to work on their strengths and heighten their quality. By doing so, they can allow others to be better than them but at the same time to be able to excel and make their own significant contributions.

"Do one thing well, not many things in an average way." (D.L. Moody)