How to Build Character in your Children

Day 1:

**Integrity**  
By Scott Williams

I remember as a boy accidentally breaking a small mirror. *No problem*, I thought*. I’ll just glue the pieces back together and nobody will know the difference*.

To my surprise, the finished product was not at all like the original. Instead, I was looking at six separate smaller, jagged versions of myself.

That image has stuck with me as I’ve raised my seven children to adulthood. As I’ve tried to model character to them, I’ve been cautious of any words or actions that might break my reflection into jagged pieces of myself—one at church and one at home; one when I think I’m being watched, another when I don’t. When they see me, I want them to see the whole reflection of Christ, in all His fullness.

The true meaning of the word integrity combines the characteristics of wholeness, simplicity, and purity—completeness. Biblical integrity means we must live in such a way as to model Christ, who is the same, yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8).

As parents, we must encourage our children to let their words be their bond, to treat others equally, no matter their actions, social standing, or outward appearance. They need to know what we’ve learned by trial and error—that it’s much easier in the long run to be unified in our words and actions up front than to try to piece back together a half-dozen different deceitful versions of ourselves.

Of course, our children (and we) will fail. Every one of us is broken. We’ll say one thing and do another. We’ll fudge on the truth. We’ll make promises and fail to keep them. Thankfully, returning to integrity is easier than trying to restoring the pieces of a broken mirror. The Apostle John reminds us, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:9).

Those of us who are in Christ have the promise of the indwelling Holy Spirit, who convicts us of sin and leads us into all truth. The more we (and our children) respond to His leading, the more we find that our lives are integrated with the plans and purposes of God and reflect His glorious image.

**SCRIPTURE:**

Proverbs 20:7 The godly walk with integrity; blessed are their children who follow them.

Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

1 John 1:9 But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.