How to Build Character in your Children

Day 4:

**Generosity**By Sabrina McDonald

Anna grew up with very little. Luxuries that others enjoyed, like vacations and new clothes, were impossible. But Anna always felt that those experiences helped her appreciate what she did have. So when Anna’s husband was handsomely promoted, she worried her children’s character would suffer. Would they grow up with a sense of entitlement? Anna said, “I needed them to know that wealth has purpose.”

Most Americans wouldn’t consider themselves “wealthy.” But even the poorest person in the U.S. is wealthier than 99 percent of the world. When God sees “the poor” in America, He sees rich people, and He has given us responsibilities.

First Timothy 6:17-19 says, “As for the rich in this present age … they are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.”

Here are some things parents can do to foster generosity.

*Be a model of generosity.* Give to the homeless. Contribute to natural disaster funds. Put extra in the offering plate. Your example is the best tool you have.

*Encourage your children to be generous with each other.*Teach them, for example, to share their toys—that’s a lesson you’ll need to emphasize over and over.

*Encourage kids to give away their own toys and clothing.*Each year, go through their toys and say, “Let’s give away five toys that you don’t use anymore and are not broken.” (And maybe it’s more than five.) Remove all clothing that is too small. Then brainstorm organizations that need your items.

*Encourage* *Sunday school offering.* Have them tithe their allowance, or provide money. It makes a big impression that you would offer your hard-earned money to give away.

*Praise generosity when you see or experience it.*Write thank you notes for money given by grandparents and gifts from friends. Point out times when friends gave clothes and other household items to you. And be sure to praise your kids when they are generous.

Make sure children understand that generosity is not a rule. Second Corinthians 9:7 says, “Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” Because of gratitude for God’s generous love and mercy, we extend the same generosity to others.

As you live out these principles with your kids, remember to pray that God would work in their hearts to be a cheerful giver. See the prayers and scriptures provided on this page.

**Scripture:**

Luke 6:38 Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back.

2 Corinthians 9:7 You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.”

1 Timothy 6:17-19 Each those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. 18Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. 19By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.