Parenting God’s Way

Day 9:

**Areas for Successful Parenting: Relationships**

Relationships are an area of life where many aspects of character development are played out, and the Bible has much to teach us about choosing companions. Choosing the right friends in the first place is vital to a healthy and godly life. Proverbs 13:20 says, “He who walks with wise men will be wise, but the companion of fools will suffer harm.” As your children go out into the world and begin to build friendships, talk to them about the importance of choosing friends wisely. Children young and old will benefit from following God’s Word when deciding with whom to spend their time (Prov. 22:24-25; Prov. 23:20-21).

Scripture is a reliable source of guidance in this area. Urge your children to make sincere efforts to follow its advice, and monitor their friendships as best you can while they’re young. Doing so will help them to avoid the pitfalls and heartaches as well as preserve them for God’s blessings both now and down the road.

Teach your children to build relationships carefully, not only with peers, but also with teachers, parents of friends, and other adults. Respect, loyalty, and helpfulness are important to all relationships. Encourage your children, through example and correction, always to speak kindly of others and not to join in gossip. Try not to let your children hear you speaking cruelly or critically of anyone, but explain to them that God is the judge of all people and that their speech should always be gracious (Col. 4:6). Talk to them about making investments of love in the lives of others through acts of kindness, encouragement, humility, and acceptance. Even small children will enjoy showing love to others when they sense in their spirit the joy that such acts engender, both in themselves and in the recipients of their kindness. Support their efforts in this area, and their motivation for expressing love to others will grow along with the number of positive relationships in their lives.

Digging Deeper

1. As I monitor my children’s choice of friends, how can I identify influences for good or bad at an early stage? How can I help my children take an active part in seeking out positive, healthy friendships?
2. Does my speech reflect to my children a loving and compassionate, non-judgmental character toward others, or have they heard me being unnecessarily critical at times? How can my family and I work on this aspect of relationships together?
3. What are some things I can encourage my children to do today that will support strong, loyal relationships and build habits of selflessness for the long-term?

Proverbs 13:20 Walk with the wise and become wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.

Proverbs 22:25-25 Don’t befriend angry people or associate with hot-tempered people, 25or you will learn to be like them and endanger your soul.

Proverbs 23-:20-21 Do not carouse with drunkards or feast with gluttons, 21for they are on their way to poverty, and too much sleep clothes them in rags.

Colossians 4:6 Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.