

Question: What are some things parents can do to help their children have a better chance of succeeding in face of life's harsher realities? (Part 2)

Last week we suggested that when parents bless their children with unconditional love, acceptance and assurance they provide a foundation that enables their children to go forth in life with confidence. To help parents do this, we discussed two of the five elements of blessings given by the biblical patriarchs as identified by John Trent and Gary Smalley in *The Blessing* (Genesis 28 & 47). Here are three more elements.

(3) Expressions of High Value: Each of us needs to feel that we have a value and an importance of our own. Thus, our children need to see that they are valued for who they are and what they are instead of only how they perform. If value is placed only on performance, our children will question their value when they fail to perform up to expectations. Tell your daughter that whether she hits a homer or strikes out does not change her importance to you and that she can still contribute to her team. Tell your son that whether he makes A's or F's he will always remain your beloved son. When children feel valued, hindrances in life tend to become less important because they have the confidence to persevere until they succeed.

(4) Words that Picture a Special Future: When Isaac blessed his son Jacob, he said: "May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness-- an abundance of grain and new wine. May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed" (Genesis 27:28-29). Many years passed before these things happened, but every word was fulfilled. We cannot predict the future for our children in the same way that the patriarchs did; but we can picture meaningful goals, directions, challenges and hope for their future. Remember that children tend to be literalists. If parents tell them they are too dumb and ugly to accomplish much in life, they may believe them and never try. When children are made to feel their future is hopeful and that they have something to look forward to, their attitudes can be totally transformed. Picturing a special future for a child can bring out the best in him or her.

(5) An Active Commitment: Our words of praise and encouragement need to be backed up by personal involvement in the lives of our children. We can greatly encourage our children by helping them learn to trust in God through Jesus Christ throughout life. In addition, wise parents are ready to pay almost any price to support and help their children achieve healthy goals in life. This dedication helps our children believe they can do whatever needs to be done to excel.

Many of us have been blessed by parents who have used these five elements without being conscious of them. However, by becoming more aware of these things, we can intentionally and purposefully bless not only our children but all of those with whom we come in contact with in life.

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