

Modeling Integrity to Your Child

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A life of integrity is a life you can trust.

The psalmist speaks of the power of purity and of a life of integrity: **“I will give heed to the blameless way. When wilt Thou come to me? I will walk within my house in the integrity of my heart. I will set no worthless thing before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not fasten its grasp on me. A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will know no evil. He who walks in a blameless way is the one who will minister to me” (Psalm 101:2-4, 6).**

The message of Scripture is simply this: **How we live in private does matter, because God sees all. A life of integrity is the powerful basis from which to build character into another person’s life.**

The bad news is that all of us have deceitful hearts. The good news is that God is at work, hammering us into shape—to resemble Jesus, **“who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds” (Titus 2:14).**

Look at your life to see if there is any persistent deceit. If so, you will not make much headway in challenging deceit in your child. Watch for the subtle deceptions we adults are so prone to—giving phony reasons for not taking phone calls, failing to keep promises to our children, offering excuses to get out of commitments and to change plans, and so on. You need to face up to these areas where you’re failing and ask God to work in your heart so that you model a life of integrity for your child.

Deceit can be one of the more difficult sins to attack in our hearts because we can be deceived by our own deceit! Work together with your spouse to help each other in identifying deceitful patterns in your lives. (If you are a single parent, discuss this with a trusted friend, someone of the same sex, with whom you can help each other identify deceitful patterns in your lives and with whom you can hold each other accountable to model a life of integrity for your children.)

I have a friend, Pastor Joe who truly enjoys the sport of hunting and this is what he had to say to me one day: *“I have enjoyed hunting with all our children. In the process we’ve hunted with other fathers who have ignored and broken game laws while their children were watching. I’ve often wondered what must be going on in those young people’s lives as they watch their father habitually break the law. Are they concluding that cheating must be okay if Dad does it?”*

Remember, your life is like a door. You can shut it to deceit, lies, and misrepresentations of the truth. Or you can open it to truth, the pathway through which integrity gains entrance into your family and your child’s life.