

PARENT INSPIRATION

Teaching Christian Values

Values Begin with God

Without God, values die. We see this all around us in our local communities and the evening news. We live in a postmodern society without a central core of values. Every day we are pressured to accept anything, anyone, any actions, any deviancy, as OK. *Me* values are everywhere and in everything. We can easily be seduced. *My needs* are most important - what *I* can do, what *I* own, how *I* look, how important *I* am. Values begin with *me*.

God's values are drastically different from the secular values that surround us. In Scripture God gives us several condensed versions of values to guide our lives. Galatians 5 includes love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (verses 22 and 23). Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone lived by these values? Consider other lists of God's values (in the *Learn More* section). Any one of these will provide an excellent guide for teaching God's values to your children.

God's values are qualities of the soul He plants inside us - not outward actions alone. We can't generate them ourselves. God doesn't want you to just act compassionate, He wants you to be compassionate inside your soul. Then kindness and compassion are your automatic responses when you hear that your neighbor has been in a terrible auto accident. Your family immediately does something to help.

God's values are a result of our close friendship with Him. This is the most important thing to communicate to your children: Values come from God. He puts them inside us because we are His friends. The more we talk about Him, study His Word, and listen to His Spirit speaking to our minds, the more like Him we will become. Our values and character will reflect our friendship with God.

Sometimes the process of planting God's values in our character is difficult. The road to learning God's values isn't a straight, smooth, six-lane interstate highway. It's more like a narrow, rutty, curvy mountain road. Many people give up. They forget that the view is at the top of the mountain and that *God is the driver*. All they really have to do is trust His driving. He will take them safely to the mountaintop.

Carefully choose the values you want to teach your children. Carve out a special time with your partner in parenting to decide on the most important values you want your children to have in their characters. Post the list in a prominent place in your home. These are the values your family will stand for.

Begin today to plant God's values in the soil of your child's heart. God will be with you every moment.

REFLECT

Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. 1 Sam.16:7 NIV

The things that are important to God, are worth nothing to people. Luke 16:15 ICB

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

- **Values in My Heart.** Paste a picture of Jesus on a large red cardboard heart. Talk about a value your family wants Jesus to put into your hearts. Write or draw pictures of the value on the heart. Do one value once a week for family worship. Continue to focus on that value during the week.
- **Values Search.** With older children read one of the Bible passages in the Reflect section. As a family analyze the day's news using the values from the Bible passage. How many did you find? How many opposites did you find?

LEARN MORE

- See 2 Peter 1:5-7, 1 Corinthians 13, Exodus 20:1-17, Matthew 5:3-11, and Romans 12 for other descriptions of the values God would like to plant in your child's mind.
- *10 Christian Values Every Kid Should Know: A How-to Guide for Families* by Donna Habenicht. See chapter 2 for more family activities.
- **God's Ten Promises** by Kimberley Tagert-Paul