

Family Values

When you think of a family that possesses strong family values, what do you picture in your mind? Are you picturing a family where for the most part they all seem to get along and they seem to enjoy doing things together? Are you picturing a family that you know, maybe neighbors, someone you work with, or someone that you go to church with? Or is it your own family?

A strong family that possesses good family values supports and nourishes the members throughout the span of that family. A strong family unit creates a safe, positive and supportive place for all members to feel secure and know it is a place to thrive. It is place for family members to utilize resources and to live together in a fairly healthy manner. The parents in a strong family set the tone. They should be good role models that lead the example for their children, at home, as well as to friends, in the community, teaching their children the importance of doing the same. As Harvey has explained, the parents will train their children. This evening, I want to talk with you about some important family values and how to instill them in your children, how to train them and pass them down to future generation. **Let's look at this together, using an acrostic from the word, VALUES:**

1. V- Vision: Having a **vision** for your family is important. By that, I mean, what will be the goal or the purpose of your family? What is important to you? Take the time to think about this and even write them down.

The word value actually means: to place an estimate of worth on; to think highly of...What we think highly of we will invest time in. We should think highly of our family; we should place great value on them and invest our time in them- have a vision, a goal, a purpose. What are the values that you want your family to possess?

For our family, the most important value we wanted to instill in our children was a passion for God. We also wanted them to learn obedience to authority, responsibility, honesty, respect, (some of the very things you are encouraged to talk about this week as well). We wanted our children to learn the value of a good marriage by seeing their dad and I loving each

other. We wanted our children to learn the importance of having good character. C.H. Spurgeon said: “A good character is the best tombstone. Those who love you and were helped by you will remember you. So carve your name on hearts and not on marble.” We wanted our children to learn absolutes- right and wrong, black and white. We also wanted our family to be a place of laughter and fun. These are just a few examples of what we wanted our vision, our goal to be...

2. A- Action: What **action** will you take to achieve your vision or goal for your family? This requires doing something, which requires **TIME**, which in today’s society it seems we all lack. We have become so busy. In order to achieve the vision of our family values, we must decide what is important for us to invest our time in, and what things we simply have to give up.

Because the most important value Harvey and I wanted to instill in our children was a passion for God, we made time each week to go to church, and made time every day to read the Bible and pray. Because teaching our children responsibility was important, we taught them how to take care of their own things, clean their rooms, and required them to help around the house.

This week you will have an opportunity as well to encourage book and news paper reading and sharing around the dinner table to further encourage responsibility. Sharing around the table was one our favorite times and one thing I think is so important in a family. If your life is so busy that you do not have time to have family dinners together at least a few times a week, then I encourage you to examine your schedule and see what you maybe can give up to gain some time with your family.

Another part of our vision for family values was having fun and laughter in our family, so one of the actions we took was playing games, inside and outside with our children. We played board games, made up games, cards, puzzles... You are encouraged this week on Friday to have a game night with your family. We read a lot of books from the time my children were little until they were teens. We spent hours playing games and talking. Make yourself available to your children, especially when they become teens to talk on their time table.

3. L- Love: Every action you take to achieve your vision must be taken through the path of **love** in order to be successful. The moment I found out I was pregnant I was in love with my child. But I am going to have to be honest (and I think every other parent here will agree) there were moments, when tested by a stubborn toddler, or a teen desiring their own way, it was hard to like your child at the moment. Yet all along, my heart, as I am sure yours does, continues to love. And the values I desired to instill in my children did not waver. If they misbehaved, we did not change our mind in our values as a family of expecting obedience and respect for authority. It is because we love our children that we want what is best for them, and we want them to be successful in life, and to grow up to be all that they are destined to be. I believe that a happy healthy family benefits our whole society. “Strong families build strong communities.” It is because of love that we can continue to take the actions that are necessary to look back at the visions that we desire to achieve in our family. I believe that we are faced with choices every day and we can choose to love. We can choose to make love a priority in our family, a love for God, a love for our spouse, a love for our children, and a love for others.

4. U- Unity: When love is being expressed through your actions to achieve your vision of your family values the results will be **unity** in your home. There will be a sense of harmony and agreement. I am not saying that you will never have a disagreement or argument; I am simply saying, that you will be able to have common ground to return to if you do have a disagreement. Unity is a beautiful thing and you know it when you don't have it. The Bible says, *How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!*

5. E- Encouragement: This is such an important word and one I love the meaning of. **Encouragement** means: to give courage, hope, or confidence to; to give support to; help. What better place to do these things than in our own family? We need to teach our children to encourage their siblings and other people. They will learn this from you. Do they see you encouraging your spouse? Do they hear you encouraging them? I wonder tonight how many of you, even adults could use a little encouragement? How many of you could use a little courage, hope, confidence support and help? Imagine if in our homes we would concentrate on giving each other some encouragement each day, how it could even affect the tone and unity of our homes? It would be amazing.

6. S- Strong: If I were to ask the question tonight- what kind of home you desire- weak or **strong**, I imagine that everyone here would reply- **strong**. Weak implies such a lack of power, while strong implies so much strength and great power. I don't believe that anyone here would desire a home that is weak and without power- a place that is failing. So let's just quickly review what I have gone over: Remember, it is important to have a vision, a goal that you desire for your family and for family values, and decide on the actions you will take to fulfill those visions, making sure that one of the actions to include will be encouraging words, and decide to walk in love and unity in your homes and I am confident that you will succeed in having strong homes and families.

It has been a joy for Harvey and me to share a few tips on parenting with you tonight. Thank you for this privilege.