

Teaching

RIGHTEOUSNESS AT HOME

It is a responsibility and blessing parents have to teach and train their children to live righteously.



**By Elder
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(1896–1978)**

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Parents have an opportunity to teach and mold the characters of their little children before Satan has the power to tempt them and before they reach the age of eight, becoming then responsible before God. . . . The Lord has granted parents these precious years, the first years of a child's life, when the children are not accountable for the things they say and do. It is a responsibility and blessing parents have to teach and train their children to live righteously.

The most effective way to teach righteousness and religion in a home is by example.

Hopefully, parents will have kept their own lives sweet and clean and can therefore profitably use the example of their lives in the teaching and training of their own children. [President David O. McKay (1873–1970) taught:] “If you would teach faith in God, show faith in Him yourself; if you would teach prayer, pray yourself; . . . would you have them temperate, then you yourself refrain from intemperance; if you would have your child live a life of virtue, of self-control, of good report, then set him a worthy example in all these things.”¹ To do so will make these teachings more impressive to your children; and they, receiving such guidance from parents, can fortify themselves against the temptations of Satan, whose goal is to destroy their lives when they do reach the age of accountability. Parents have the duty to be what they would have their children become in regard to courtesy, sincerity, temperance, and courage to do right at all times. Example is far more potent than precept.

Daily home life should conform to our Church principles and standards. Our business dealings should agree with our religion. Children are quick to detect insincerity. John Milton said that hypocrisy is the only sin that walks undetected save by God alone. Children, however, are sensitive to things that are wrong, and they resent insincerity and false pretensions. We know that children are influenced far more by the sermons we live than by the sermons we preach. Parents should always be honest with their children, keeping promises made to them and ever



speaking the truth. It is the consistent parent who gains the trust of his child. When a child feels that you honor his trust and reciprocate it, he will not violate it, nor will he bring your name into dishonor. . . .

Parents should never quarrel in the presence of their children. Sometimes quarrels arise out of an attempt to correct or discipline a child. One parent criticizes; the other objects. And the unified influence of the home, so far as the child is concerned, is nullified. Parents need to be united in knowing which way they want a child to go; otherwise, he may walk in wrong paths out of confusion. Richard L. Evans said: "Division between parents is unfair and confusing and weakens the foundations of the family. Those to whom a child should look for guidance must be united in the guidance they give."² We know that children are sensitive to family moods and feelings; they can feel tensions and differences that they can't always understand or define. . . .

A child has the right to feel that in his home he has a place of refuge, a place of protection from the dangers and evils of the outside

world. Family unity and integrity are necessary to supply this need. There is no place other than the home where true and lasting happiness can be found in this life. It is possible to make home a bit of heaven; indeed, I picture heaven to be a continuation of the ideal home life here on earth.³ . . .

The gospel as we teach it is true. Christ lives, God lives, and glorious mansions are being prepared above for all His faithful and devoted children. Plan now the kind of home and family you desire and how you will meet the needs of your children to keep them on a righteous path that will lead the family to eternal life in a celestial home. God bless all of you, my brothers and sisters. I think you can understand that much of what has been said pertains to you. And to organize and carry forward your home in a sacred manner is very important to the young people who come to bless your life. ■

Capitalization and punctuation standardized.

NOTES

1. David O. McKay, *Secrets of a Happy Life*, comp. Llewelyn R. McKay (1967), 11.
2. *Richard Evans' Quote Book* (1975), 23.
3. See David O. McKay, *Gospel Ideals* (1953), 490.

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