

How to Raise Kids of Character



by Marilyn Boyer

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Character has been said to be doing right
no matter what the cost or consequences,
whether anyone is looking or not.

Most people say that is it is the intellect
which makes a great scientist. They are
wrong: it is character.

Albert Einstein

The true test of character is not how much
we know how to do, but how we behave
when we don't know what to do.

John W. Holt, Jr.

Character is like a tree and reputation
like a shadow. The shadow is what we
think of it; the tree is the real thing.

Abraham Lincoln

In our world today, becoming a person of character is often a forgotten concept. Instead, people strive to entertain themselves with TV, Xbox, or sports, often at the expense of those around them.

Rick is a drywall contractor and he, as well as many of our friends who are also businessmen, report that people who want a job, often just show up, and expect a paycheck. They feel no responsibility to earn it or perform a certain quality of work or to expend a concerted effort. It's just the way the average person grows up.

One of our friends is owner of several fast food restaurants in town. He faces this dilemma as minimum wage workers have lots of expectations from their employers, but no loyalty to the company. It used to be that you could fire them, but now, there aren't enough people to go around for the jobs available, so if they don't show up just because they felt like taking the day off, the employer is in a catch-22 situation. Fire them and no one will show up tomorrow.

If you learn to raise kids whose lives reflect the character of God, they will shine as lights in the dark society in which we live. God will make opportunities for them that others don't have, because He honors his principles in the lives of his children and He even honors his principles when those who aren't Christians live by His truth.

God's way is contrary to our natural desires. If we lose our lives in serving others and teach our children to do so also, God will reward us immensely. We taught our kids a little song we once heard called *Do Right*:

Do right, do right, because it's right to do.
Do right, do right, for the world is watching you.
**It's never right to do wrong to do right,
so do what's right to do.**

Do right, do right, The Lord will see you through.

To grow kids of character, you:

Must know what character is and communicate it to your kids.

Character is the very essence of all the attributes God possesses. Our job is to glorify God, to learn to be more like Jesus. We must learn what He is like and then teach it to our kids in a way they can understand and make a living part of their lives. It doesn't come naturally—so you can't just expect your kids to develop character qualities in their lives without cultivating them.

As a very young mom, I attended a Sunday School class that I will forever be thankful for, taught by a man named Larry Coy who taught us that the Bible has practical life answers. As I sat there, quite like a sponge absorbing his wisdom, I began an adventure of pursuing God to learn more about Him. As I would learn a principle, I then sought to find a way to teach it to my kids.

I recently finished writing a book about the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence, *For You They Signed*. My purpose in writing it was to teach my kids and others the sacrifices these men made on our behalf based on what they believed about Jesus Christ. Some gave doctrinal statements in their last wills so their children and posterity would know what they believed. I felt like I was on a treasure hunt; it was fascinating! In compiling and reading my research, I was struck by the overwhelming evidence of character in their lives so richly documented and exemplified in their lives, that I couldn't ignore it. God led me to change the book into a year's worth of character lessons from the lives of the signers. Ultimately, my goal was to inspire children to attempt great things for God and in so doing impact their culture and become a tool in God's hand to help America return to her godly roots. It contains a year's worth of study

that families could use in devotion time to learn character and Scripture together as well as history.

These men who founded our country strove to become men of character and placed an extremely high value on teaching it to their children and those under their charge:

Thomas Jefferson, a signer from Virginia, established the Bible as the primary book for use in Washington City schools when he was president. Even those founders not Christian, like Jefferson had a high respect for God's ways and principles, had been raised by them, and thought it preposterous that anyone would not want his children raised by the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Benjamin Rush, a signer from Pennsylvania and a man of God, wrote a pamphlet called *Defense of the Use of the Bible as a School Book* in which is his five propositions are:

- 1) That Christianity is the only true and perfect religion; and that as mankind adopts its principles and obey its precepts, they will be wise and happy in proportion.
- 2) That a better knowledge of this religion is to be acquired by reading the Bible than in any other way.
- 3) That the Bible contains more knowledge necessary to man in his present state than any other book in the world.
- 4) That knowledge is most durable and religious instruction most useful when imparted in early life.

- 5) That the Bible, when not read in schools, is seldom read in any subsequent period of life.

He also declared,

In contemplating the political institutions of the US, I lament that we waste so much time and money in punishing crimes and take so little pains to prevent them. We profess to be republicans and yet we neglect the only means of establishing and perpetuating our republican forms of government; that is, the universal education of our youth in the principles of Christianity by means of the Bible; for this Divine Book above all others, favors that equality among mankind, that respect for just laws, and all those sober and frugal virtues which constitute the soul of republicanism.

He states the need to:

- 1) teach the principles of the Bible before other academics
- 2) focus on Bible teaching in the first seven years of a child's life, as children are more capable of receiving God's truth while young
- 3) impressed children with God's standards of right and wrong
- 4) teach good habits early to cemented them in a child's life.
- 5) Use multiple senses of the child to communicate God's truths to him—sound, sight, touch, etc.

- 6) The interesting events of the Old and New Testaments captivate young children and through them godly principles are internalized in their lives.
- 7) The spirit of a child responds to the truth contained in God's Word.
- 8) The mind has a wonderful capacity which enables it to recover knowledge acquired in early life, as a person grows older. The Bible is the only book which is capable of affording this support to old age; and it is for this reason that we find it resorted to with so much diligence and pleasure by such old people as have read it in early life.
- 9) God places his blessing on nations that follow his principles set forth in His word. We are commanded in Deuteronomy 6 to teach them diligently to our children.

This is only a small part of his thoughts on the early training of children, shared by many of our founders. So many of the great schools of higher learning were established to train ministers of the gospel such as Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, and Princeton.

This was the mindset in our country at the time of its birth. People were trained to look to the Bible as having answers for every need in life. I believe it still does and we are responsible to communicate that to our children and guide them in digging out those practical answers.

I will mention just one other of the founders, Benjamin Franklin. A rather well known founder, though not a professing Christian he did believe in a Creator God who governed the affairs of men. His problem was with Jesus Christ, who he valued only as a great teacher to be emulated.

Wanting to develop character in his own life, Franklin chose 13 virtues he felt would help him form good habits. He worked on one each week, and then reviewed them to see if he was making progress.

This is his list of character qualities:

TEMEPERANCE:	Eat not to dullness, drink not to elevation
SILENCE:	Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself, avoid trifling conversation
ORDER:	Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time
RESOLUTION:	Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve
FRUGALITY:	Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself, i.e. waste nothing
INDUSTRY:	Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions
SINCERITY:	Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly; and if you speak, speak accordingly
JUSTICE	Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty
MODERATION	Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve
CLEANLINESS	Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation
TRAQUILITY	Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable
HUMILITY	Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

These were standards, he set for himself; such was the prevailing attitude of the founding era. People felt a sense of duty to their posterity, fellow man and God. What we don't often realize is that the situation in our country declined rather recently and that we can do something about it.

We can teach our own children who may be sent out as arrows to accomplish so much more than we can and to have far reaching effects on our society; it's not too late.

We as home educators have the awesome opportunity and duty to change the tide and raise up a generation of godly leaders, willing to let God reign in their hearts and lives and be used of God to accomplish His mighty purposes in our land. Let us heed the warning Noah Webster gave:

The education of youth should be watched with the most scrupulous attention... It is much easier to introduce and establish an effectual system, than to correct by penal statutes the ill effects of a bad system. The education of youth lays the foundation on which both law and gospel rest for success.

The report on a recent international survey found American elementary students to be **above average**, junior high students **AT average**, and high school students **WELL BELOW average**. The longer students remain in American schools the less they seem to know. America now ranks 65 of 200 countries in literacy, behind some third world nations. Just a few decades ago, America had one of the highest literacy rates—in MY lifetime! The year I entered first grade was the year the Bible was removed from public schools. Studies **clearly show a dramatic decline from that time forward**. Recently, **700,000** American high school graduating seniors couldn't read their own diplomas. (*Four Centuries of American Education*, Barton)

Pick up a blue-backed speller or *New England Primer* sometime and see what school kids were taught for decades in our country. They learned the Ten Commandments, prayer and praises to God, rhymes about the Bible to learn letters, an acrostic of Bible verses to learn the alphabet, and a catechism about Jesus Christ, sin, the doctrine of salvation, etc.

Okay, so what can we do? I will share with you some of the things we've found helpful in teaching our 14 kids how to internalize the character of our Savior.

TEACH them the character qualities set forth in the Bible. I Corinthians 10:11 tells us that God wrote about the lives of people in the Bible so that we might learn from their examples, positive AND negative. Point out admirable qualities in the men and women of the Bible and show how God blessed them because of it, or corrected them, as the case may be. We found *Character Sketches* (<http://www.iblp.org>) to be a very valuable tool, although you can do it just from the Bible or ever Bible story books.

- Boys can be taught the character of godly Bible men and girls of godly Bible women. You may want to incorporate this into their room décor or make a special book or wall hanging.
- Each of our children had a quilt I helped them make to teach them character qualities. We went over a different quality at naptime each day and they became VERY familiar with them. (Instructions available in *Fun Projects for Hands-on Character Building*.)
- We used a project called “Bible Men Chart” to teach our kids about the lives of men in the Bible



who demonstrated character qualities for the purpose of learning the qualities ourselves. (Instructions available in *Fun Projects for Hands-on Character Building*.)

- We found Bible characters who demonstrated different character qualities in their lives and transferred the pictures to the curtains. We used these as a teaching tool, a fun way to learn character and saturate our home with Scripture. (Instructions available in *Fun Projects for Hands-on Character Building*.)
- Job 12:7.8 and Proverbs 30 tell us that God has given us animals which display these same qualities in their lives, as a part of Gods' wonderful design. *Character Sketches* was a valuable tool for teaching this. Children seem to have an attraction to animals at an early age, so this is a great way to introduce character qualities. Again, all sorts of visual aids can be worked in to make the lesson more interesting. Prov. 16:21 says, "A wise teacher makes learning a joy."
- Point out character qualities in people your child comes in contact with. Ex. "Wasn't Mrs. _____ kind to give you a glass of lemonade? "
- A character quality chart may be useful. We had a list of character qualities we were learning and a space to paste stars or stickers as we reviewed their day to see which qualities they had exhibited. This is a great time to talk over the events of the day and help the child be aware that God is working in his life.

- Character qualities can be mentioned throughout the day as well, for example, “_____ is learning to be responsible by putting his clothes in the hamper.” Or “that was a very orderly thing to do.”
- We often had a character quality of the month. We would learn the definition, since children cannot learn to demonstrate if they don’t understand it , and a corresponding Scripture verse. We developed projects to help solidify it in their lives...to put it into practice. An example would be the quality or orderliness, with room checks, drawer checks, and providing containers with pictures for toys. Or while teaching kindness, especially toward a brother or sister they may be having frequent conflicts with, plan a special surprise, such as baking cupcakes or making a small gift. Where your treasure is there your heart will also be.
- When our children are very small, 2 or 3 years old, we begin teaching them Scripture with simple flashcards we developed. We have three sets for little people: Proverbs, Character Quality, and an If/When set, which teaches equity in making right decisions.
- Proverbs for Preschoolers is a resource we developed to teach our little ones Scripture while learning the simple skills involved in forming letters by tracing the dotted lines. It also provides a picture to color illustrating the verse.
- As they grew a little older we looked for a Bible study for our kids which would help them to practically apply God’s Word to their lives in order to be more like Jesus. I found lots that taught information, but it all lacked practical application. So I used a concordance and wrote my own lessons for my kids to study the different character types found in the book of

Proverbs. It helps give insight into how to deal with people they will meet in life. For example, did you know there are five types of fools in the book of Proverbs? One type they are to have nothing to do with, the Nabal fool. The simple fool, on the other hand is to be taught and he will learn. It also gives insight into character needs in their own lives such as the blessing of the diligent and the end of the slothful. We have two books, *Proverbs People Book 1* and *Proverbs People Book 2* that we use with our kids who are between 7 and 12 years of age.

- We also developed what we call Daily Wisdom flashcards for our kids to use that teach practical verses from Proverbs, such as how to deal with anger and the verse to go with it, or beware of flattery (Proverbs 20:19). We go over a verse a day and review previously learned verses. It's a simple but powerful way to learn Scripture to use in different situations.
- *Power in Proverbs* is a study we developed for our high-school-age children to learn to use the concordance to look up answers to any problem they may ever encounter in life. Scripture is practical and supplies answers to everyday problems and decisions. Of key importance in this process is to gear Scripture memory to character needs in your own children's lives.



Remember, every negative character quality in your life or your child's life is just a positive character quality misused. Your job is to direct and steer child in the proper direction using Gods' Word as your guide. Teach them to memorize and hide God's Word in their heart.

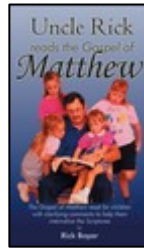
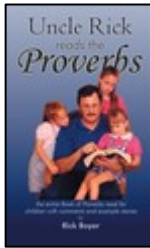
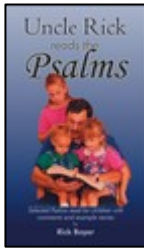
- Psalm 119:9—The Word of God keeps a young man pure.
- Psalm 119:11—God’s Word in their hearts will keep them from sinning
- Deut. 31:9-13—Learn to fear God

The **memorization** of Gods’ Word builds a godly frame of reference in their lives. We are responsible to feed their eager young minds with God’s thoughts while they are young and can easily accept God at His Word. Verses can be taught in many ways. One of the things we’ve done is to write verses on 5”x7” index cards and illustrate the verse with simple figures on the front. Apply the verses to daily situations whenever appropriate:

- Prov. 15:4—Control of griping
- Matthew 5:5— Trusting God that what Mommy and Daddy say is the very best thing for me right now
- Matthew 5:7— Instruction in forgiving brothers, sisters, friends, etc
- Ephesians 6:1— Instruction to obey parents, because it’s the right thing to do.

When your child is faced with a problem, Scripture is the answer. Memorize, explain, and develop practical projects to implement the truth of the Word into their lives.

- Psalm 139—self-image problem
- Matthew 5:10—Standing alone, being courageous
- Proverbs 16:32 & 15:28—Talking too much
- Proverbs 2:9—Faced with a difficult decision
- Ephesians 4:26—Angry at one another



Read God's Word to them well before they can read for themselves. Your children will develop an interest and desire for Scripture at an early age. It varies, but a four-year-old child can generally be read to at length; 2-3 year olds need shorter short passages.

Help them to see God's hand in daily experiences

- start from babyhood (rock and), tell her how special she was and how Jesus loves her, how you love her, etc.
- when your child has a cut, explain how God will heal it. When He does, turn their attention to that
- Help them to see God's Hand in natural occurrences such as rain. Explain God's purpose for rain, instead of allowing children griping
- On a walk, point out God's creation and his purposes for it
- When they are going through "rough things," explain how God can make what seems bad turn out for good. Use Bible men as examples, such as Paul and Silas's time in jail leading to the salvation of the jailer and his family, and the story of Joseph: "You meant it for harm, but God meant it for good, to save much people."

Treat your child with respect.

- Treat every with courtesy, as you would an adult
- Do not send a child away from your presence as punishment; it implies rejection of them as a person
- Respect your child’s interests as just as important your own.
- Don’t tell ‘cute kid’ stories that embarrass him or her.
- Don’t grab things from him
- Tell your child you love him—often—and tell him why. Be careful not to list his “qualifications” but to emphasize his significance to you and God.
- Tell your child what pleases you about him. Communicate thankfulness for him.
- Point out positive character qualities in his life, or notice when he is trying to do right. Emphasize that all their abilities and qualities are given to them by God for the purpose of accomplishing His goal or plan for their life.

Teach him his spiritual heritage.

1. Jeremiah 1:5-10 tells us God has a plan for a child even before he is conceived. Also Judges 13:8, 12, Luke 1:26-38, Psalm 139:13-16, Acts 7:5, Luke 2:2
2. God forms a child in his mother’s womb. Ecclesiastes 11:5, Psalm 139:13-16; Luke 1:76
3. God wants to use even a young child. His plan is already at work. II Timothy 3:15; I Samuel 2:11, 18, 21, 26; Luke 1:66

4. God can let a child know his specific purposes for him at an early age, or even to his mother before conception. I Samuel 3, especially 1, 4, 19; Genesis 16:11, Isaiah 49.
5. A child has an important testimony for the Lord. Proverbs 20:11, Luke 1:80, 2:40

Teach your child to pray.

1. Teach a child the different parts of prayer: Thankfulness, Praise, Petitions for Others, for Self.
2. Share with the family when God answers prayers. Possibly keep a family log (sharing requests and answered prayer) for children and grandchildren to look back on.
3. Train child to pray at the meal table, at bedtime, and throughout the day. Encourage him to pray at any time, wherever he is, talking to God as a friend, not with flowery words. Ephesians 6:18

Teach your child about your experiences with the Lord and what He is doing for you.

1. This teaches him the fear of the Lord. Deuteronomy 4:10
2. It helps make God more real to him and causes them to develop a worshipful attitude toward Him.
3. Joshua 4:6, Joshua 4:21, 22

4. The parent is responsible for a wise answer when a child comes of age to question and grasp the meaning of God's Word. Personal testimony is essential. Consider keeping a spiritual diary for yourself and the family. Deuteronomy 6:20-25, Psalm 102:18

Teach responsibility in the home.

We as parents are responsible to teach our children all the practical things they need to know to be a responsible adult. Our job is to pass on to them all we know.

A dad, for example, should teach his son how to work on a car, work a garden, skills in the workshop, home repairs, budgeting, finances, etc.

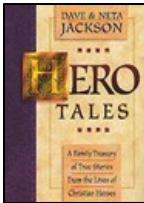
A mom should pass on to her girls how to cook, plan nutritious meals, sew, bargain hunt, clean house, decorate, do laundry, crafts, homemaking skills.

The younger parents start, the better. As soon as your child expresses an interest in helping Daddy or Mommy they ought to be allowed to begin learning. This is usually around the age of 2. For example, Dad can let his son hand him the proper tools as he's working on a project and explain what he is doing and why. Both boys and girls can help Mommy do dishes- wash, rinse, dry, sort laundry, dust, etc. It's much easier, of course, to do it yourself, but the benefits of investing that time to train them are well worth the effort.

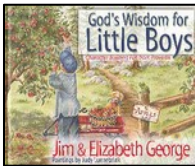
Additional Resources We've Found Useful



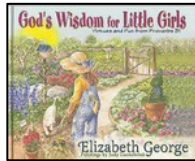
Child's Book of Character Building
(out of print, limited quantities)



Hero Tales
William Bradford,
Brother Andrew
George W. Carver
Betty Greene
Jonathan Goforth



God's Wisdom for Little Boys and God's Wisdom for Little Girl



God's little boy is giving, wise, hard-working & priceless.
God's little girl is cheerful, caring, kind, diligent

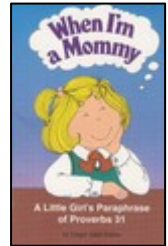
A Little Boy After God's Own Heart and A Little Girl After God's Own Heart

A boy or girl after God's own heart is filled with joy, love peace, patience, goodness, kindness

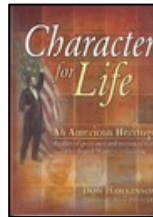


When I'm a Daddy
A little boy's guide to Biblical fatherhood

When I'm a Mommy
A little girl's



paraphrase of Proverbs 31



Character for Life
Profiles of great men and women of faith who shaped Western civilization.
Available through IBLP.org.

When kids are raised this way:

Parents can expect their kids to have a sense of mission, a vision for God to use them a mighty way. It builds others-mindedness in them. We have been blessed to hear over the years the things that our kids have done just to be a blessing to others. For example:

Some years after the incident we heard that our son Josh, while he was battling leukemia, stopped to help an elderly man in our church pump his gas. The man's wife later told us the story and said how it affected her husband that a teenager who was sick himself cared enough to stop and help.

As a teenager our son Rick surprised a newly widowed woman from our church by installing motion detector lights for her as she would now be coming home alone after dark. She was so touched and loves to tell the story to this day.

Carrie, Emmy and Christa do many things including babysitting, cleaning, helpful projects, etc. for our pastor and his wife just to try to be a blessing to them.

Kelly and Kasey wanted to start a club with some friends at church for the purpose of doing nice things for others and help spread cheerfulness. I was afraid it might become some that excluded others so I redirected their original plans to start a club anyone can join.

Our daughter Laura became involved in ministering to elderly folks. It started when she and I would visit a couple who were retired missionaries. I wanted Laura to learn to have a servant's heart and these folks were often lonely. We would visit on a regular basis and Laura listened for little hints as to ways she could be a blessing to them, like what colors Lillie liked, her favorite flowers or candy bar. Uncle Jim was diabetic, but loved the little containers of jam and jelly from restaurants. Laura would save hers to take to him when we visited. He would sit in his chair waiting for us to arrive and his face would light up when we entered. What started out as trying to be a blessing to them became a blessing to us. He often didn't remember what he'd had for lunch, but he certainly remembered what he'd done to serve the Lord and we asked to hear his stories again and again. We will ever be thankful for the testimony of a life lived in total service to the Lord and hope to follow his example of commitment in our own lives.

Our daughter Grace visits an elderly neighbor couple every week. They recently came for her graduation party and told Rick and I what a joy Grace's visits are to them. They wait each week and are disappointed if we are out of town and she has to miss a week. She calls them Mom and Dad and they love that. What little things we can do to be such an encouragement to others.

Several of our kids give special Christmas gifts to a family being raised by a single mom every Christmas and try to be friends to the children.

For several years after our son Josh went to heaven, we began giving gifts each Christmas to family of a child who has leukemia. It was fun to find the ages and likes of the family

members and each save up money to buy special gifts to brighten up their Christmas time.

We delight in giving money for Bibles for people in China. We have a dear friend who arranges to get Bibles to folks who need them and what a treasure a Bible is the people there. Even if we can't go ourselves we can have a part in bringing others to the Lord. Kate recently made a special picture album for a family who lost their son in an accident. She gathered friends' testimonies of the blessing their son's life had been to them and pictures also and presented it to the family as a special remembrance of how God had used their son's testimony in the lives of many.

I share all these instances just to help you visualize some things you and your family could maybe do for others you come in contact with. Teach your kids to keep their eyes and ears open to sense the needs in others and find creative ways to be a blessing.

Moms, you don't realize what an impact you have on your children! Thomas Edison went to public school for 2 months when he came home and asked his mother what the word "addled" meant.

"Whatever makes you ask that?" replied his mother.

When Thomas told her the teacher had told him he was addled because he asked too many questions, she boldly declared that he would not go back to school. She would teach him herself. (School teachers often still like the kids who retain what they are told and can spit it back on tests, not the kids who are thinkers and are driven to learn.)

He spent his life inventing a multitude of devices which in turn have made our lives considerably more productive. Just a few among his hundreds of inventions are: electric generators, phonograph, storage batteries, motion-picture machine and of course, the lightbulb. Edison has been named the greatest inventor America ever produced.

You may be thinking, WOW, his mother must've been so smart! But in reality, it wasn't her that invented all those things. She was wise in that she succeeded in teaching Tom character, and believing in him and encouraging him to go on, even when experiments "failed." FAILURE is just a stepping stone on the road to success!

Once, after Edison has tried over 700 different materials as filament in a light bulb to make it last longer, it failed again. His lab assistant remarked,

"You must be discouraged."

"Discouraged?" Tom answered,

"No. I'm not discouraged. I've just found 700 things that WON'T work."

That's perseverance, That's Determination, That's Endurance, That's Vision, That's CHARACTER!

Mom, Dad, you don't have to be super-brained individuals. You don't have to know everything before you can teach your kids. (I've gotten a much better education since I began home educating our family!

What you do have to do is to teach your kids to read, write, communicate, and HOW to learn. Then, anything they ever need to know, they will be able to learn on their own or

find the help they need. Your job is to encourage their God-given love to learn and instill confidence in them by believing God has a wonderful plan for their life and communicating that to them!

My oldest son, Rick has a calling on his life to be a godly statesman; not a politician, a statesman. He believes God will grant favor to one who will unashamedly stand up for truth and not compromise. He's always telling me, to accomplish anything of importance, you need to be willing to have the right enemies by just letting truth speak for itself.

At age 19, he ran for the chairman of the Republican Party in our county and won! He later ran for the Board of Supervisors (against an incumbent truant officer for the same superintendent who took us to court in 1980.) and won by an overwhelming majority, just by knocking on every door three times, meeting the people, explaining the issues and telling where he stood. He is now about to complete his first year of law school, second in his class. His vision is to protect freedom and uphold the Constitution.

I share these things to encourage you. I always HATED history in school. Looking back I see why. They took out all the important stuff. History is HIS STORY—the hand of God in the history of the world. My knowledge of history when I began teaching my own kids was very splotchy.

In his first grade year, Rick read the A Beka fourth grade history book...EIGHT times. God gave him an insatiable desire to learn about history and later on, government. God put it there; I certainly didn't foster it at first. It wasn't very long before my little son

knew volumes more about history than I ever will and taught our entire family about the importance of being actively involved in the civic arena as well as how to do it. (I never knew the average person could be a delegate to the state convention to pick candidates, make sure the pro-life platform remains intact, etc.)

Rick began his interest in politics during Reagan's race for president when he was just a pre-teen. He then became involved helping doing grass roots stuff in state and local elections. My job was to cart him to meetings, put up signs, etc, before he could even drive, buy Conservative Chronicle (It gives an account of what every congressman, senator votes on different issues, not what they say when running, but how they actually voted). Mom and Dad took on the role of cheerleader and encourager!

Just the other day, Rick called me up between law classes and said, "Mom, I just needed to hear you tell me again that I can do this; that I can keep up the pace." He has a wife, 2 children, law school, and has to work to support his family. We're told the first year is the toughest! Rick has NO free time. He didn't understand his contracts class when studying for his midterm exams. He found that Pepperdine University posts past law exams online as examples. He took 21 of them and got an A on his final) Rick is driven to do his best!

I can't help him with his studies anymore; his level is way beyond me! What I can and must do and what you must do for your kids is illustrated in a poem he wrote to me one Mothers' Day eight years ago:

“Thanks, Mom for being
my best friend,
my wisest counselor,
my greatest source of strength,
the one who constantly encourages me that I’m fulfilling my calling.
You’ve always told me
God has a plan for me,
and you make me believe I can do it.”

Mom, Dad, our job is just to be a shoulder, not a mastermind! We need to come alongside our kids; let them lean on us for rest and refreshment, and sometimes give a little nudge or push and send them off to accomplish those great and mighty things God has in store for them!

Character is basic to real education. A man or woman of character will rise to heights undreamed of for God. You are the example and the encourager. Home education is not about merely the accumulation of data or the learning of academics, that’s easy for God.

God give our kids talents, abilities, desires, drives, passions. Our job is to channel those into accomplishing God’s purposes. We are here to serve, to influence others around us for the Lord, to be available as opportunities spring up to be useful to others and hence the Lord Jesus. We are here to make a difference for eternity. God bless you as you daily pour yourselves into your children’s lives. Your kids are entrusted to you by the

Almighty God to raise them up as giants for Him and to point their lives back to Him by the way you live your life.

I pray God's richest blessings on your family!

Marilyn

OBEDIENCE

Doing what is expected
of me cheerfully,
immediately, and
thoroughly.

COLOSSIANS 3:20

ATTENTIVE

Listening with my ears,
eyes and heart.

PROVERBS 15:31

HONOR

Viewing and treating
others as a special
creation of God.

I PETER 2:17

KINDNESS

Treating others as
I would like to
be treated by them.

EPHESIANS 4:32

COURAGE

Standing alone for
righteousness and
yielding my fears to God.

JOSHUA 1:9

JOYFULNESS

Choosing to have a
good attitude even
when circumstances
are tough to bear.

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

INITIATIVE

Seeing a need and taking responsibility to meet it without being asked.

EPHESIANS 2:10,
ECCL. 9:10

ALERTNESS

Being keenly aware of what is taking place around me so I can be prepared with a right response.

I P E T E R 5 : 8

DEFERENCE

To hold others in
esteem and give
them first choice.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3

GRATEFULNESS

Realizing that God has given me all I need and being appreciative to God and others.

EPHESIANS 5:20,
PHILIPPIANS 4:6

DEPENDABILITY

Honoring my word and
responsibilities
even if it means
unexpected sacrifice.

PSALM 15:3

GENTLENESS

Responding to
others in a kind,
understanding manner.

GALATIANS 5:22,
2 TIMOTHY 2:24

DECISIVENESS

Making wise and
deliberate decisions
based on God's standards.

JAMES 1:6

DISCERNMENT

Having the ability
to identify subtle
untruths or
wrong motives.

HEBREWS 4:12

SELF- CONTROL

Subjecting my own
desires to the control
of the Holy Spirit

PROVERBS 25:28

TRUTHFULNESS

Accurately
reporting
the facts.

PROVERBS 8:6, 7

HUMILITY

Acknowledging that any good I have achieved is a gift from God and knowing my life is to be used as an instrument in His hands.

MICAH 6:8

DILIGENCE

Viewing each task given
to me as a special duty
and putting forth the
effort to do my very best.

COLOSSIANS 3:17

LOYALTY

Committing to the welfare
of those I serve, even to
the detriment of
my own comfort.

PROVERBS 20:6

ORDERLINESS

Managing my life and
my belongings in
order to reach my
maximum potential.

I CORINTHIANS

14:40

FLEXIBILITY

Cheerfully being willing to change my plans when circumstances beyond my control require it.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6,7

BOLDNESS

Facing confrontations
with the assurance that
God will bless the
outcome if I'm standing
firmly on the truth.

PROVERBS 28:1

GENEROSITY

Giving unselfishly
to the needs of others.

LUKE 6:38

MEEKNESS

Yielding my expectations
and rights to God without
getting angry with the
outcome.

PSALM 25:9

PATIENCE

Waiting for God's timing
with a happy heart.

HEBREWS 12:1

PERSUASIVENESS

Skillfully handling
truths to lead others
in a right path.

ACTS 28:23

RESOURCEFULNESS

Making creative use
of things others
might discard.

COLOSSIANS

3:23-24

SENSITIVITY

The ability to put myself
in another's shoes and
see life from his
point of view.

COLOSSIANS 3:12

FORGIVENESS

Picturing Jesus' death on
the cross for my sins so
God's love can flow
through me to others who
have wronged me.

COLOSSIANS 3:13

ENTHUSIASM

Expressing joy in
each job I am given to do.

COLOSSIANS 3:23,
PHILIPPIANS 4:4

DISCRETION

Avoiding words, actions
or attitudes that could give
the appearance of evil.

PROVERBS 1:11.12

HONESTY

Speaking the truth with
love in all situations.

COLOSSIANS 3:9

LOVE

Giving unselfishly
of myself to the
needs of others.

I JOHN 3:18

PRUDENCE

Exercising caution in all situations; foreseeing the consequences of my actions.

PROVERBS 22:3

PUNCTUALITY

Being prompt in all
commitments;
honoring the time
of others.

COLOSSIANS 4:5

RESPECTFULNESS

Treating others with
honor and esteem

NEED VERSE

THOROUGHNESS

Bringing each task I
do to completion
with excellence.

ECCLESIASTES 7:8

TOLERANCE

Giving others room
to grow at different rates
as God leads them.

I CORINTHIANS

8:12, 13

VIRTUE

Maintaining moral
excellence and setting
Godly standards.

II PETER 1:5

WISDOM

Learning to see life
from God's
point of view.

PSALM 90:12

ENDURANCE

Having the inward strength to endure tribulation with determination.

I PETER 2:20-21,
PHILIPPIANS 4:5

AVAILABILITY

Being willing to attend
to a need when I am
called to help.

ISAIAH 6:8

CONTENTMENT

Realizing that God
has given me all I need
for my present happiness.

PHILIPPIANS

4:11, 12

COMPASSION

Being willing to expend effort to help alleviate the suffering of those in need.

PROVERBS 3:27