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# How to Build a Healthy Family

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Free media and discipleship resources for pastors, leaders, and growing disciples.

# How to Build a Healthy Family

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Children are a precious gift from God, and yet too often they find themselves in an environment of neglect, or even abuse within their own homes. As they learn and grow, they are constantly bombarded with worldly influences that conflict with God's Word. The strongest influence on our children can be our own character. Modeling godly behavior and a love for the Lord are vital while providing direction, boundaries, correction, love and encouragement to our children.

## How to Build a Healthy Family

### Parents with Power

Ever wish you could make someone do the right thing? Parents often watch their children make bad decisions and feel powerless to do anything about it. Unfortunately, many just give in and put a "band-aid" on a situation by giving money instead of time, ignoring a situation instead of disciplining, or trying to be their child's friend instead of their parent. The best way to love your child is to care enough to correct them when they need it. ([read more](#))

### Modeling Behavior for Children

How seriously do you take the Bible? If you read something about parent-child relations in the Bible that contradicts something you read in another book, which teaching do you accept as truth? ([read more](#))

### Honoring Parents

Do you and your partner agree on how to raise your children? If not, you may think you are experiencing a marriage problem because you can't get together on this important issue. This can feel like a pretty hopeless situation. Often times your children have learned how to pit you against one another. By the time they get into their teens, those kids will be able to do what they please, because they will have learned how to manage you instead of you managing them. ([read more](#))

## **I'm Not Having Fun Yet!**

Someone once said to me, "Don't make parenting so difficult. Just relax and have fun! You don't have to know everything in order to be a good parent." Being a parent starts out as a dream. Doting, expectant fathers and their pregnant wives dream about the sweet infant all cozy in pink or blue blankets with cute outfits and fun toys. With smiles in their eyes, they turn to each other and vow, "We're going to be the best parents ever!"

Then the baby arrives. Suddenly the parents discover "the dream" yells. And smells. And spits. All at 3 a.m. ([read more](#))

## **Discipline with Love and Conviction**

God's Word instructs us to love one another (1 Peter 1:22). Nearly every parent wants to give his or her children tender, loving, and sacrificial care that flows out of a heart of love; but even the most dedicated mother or father cannot do this unless God is the source of that love. This is because God is love, and as we walk in His love, it will flow to our children through us.

God does not leave us without guidance. In fact, the biblical standard for love is described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. It has fifteen components: suffers long, is kind, does not envy, does not parade itself, is not puffed up, does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil, does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth, always bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ([read more](#))

## **Setting Limits**

In all athletic team competitions, the home and visiting teams and their corresponding fans all go by the same rules and boundaries. The rules are published in a book and knowledge of the rules is essential to understanding and playing the game. Making sure the players stay within the limits established by the rule book is the job of the officials. If a player breaks a rule, the referee penalizes the entire team. The player and his team must accept the consequences. The referee's interpretation of the game is final.

The phrase football game tells us many things. The very name of the game determines the shape of the ball, the dimensions of the playing field, the rules of the game, and the type of clothes the players and officials wear.

The word family also tells us many things. Determined limits make a family unique. ([read more](#))

## **The Truth about Consequences**

We do our children a great favor if we help them understand there are consequences for their actions ... good and bad.

Distraught parents often come to me because their children are suffering the consequences of not being adequately supervised. Of course, teenagers do not want to be supervised, but oftentimes dire consequences will be the result of parents adhering to their children's complaints and demands for more personal freedom in areas where they are unable to cope with temptation. Setting consequences for a child's choices and then making them happen is a crucial part of teaching children. They must learn the principles expressed in Galatians 6:7: "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." ([read more](#))

## **Helping Kids Live Within Limits**

I want to remind you that raising children is a 20-year process. Twenty years. So those of you with preschool children need to remember that you have a ways to go! So relax, take it easy; there isn't any one day that makes a whole lot of difference, not in the perspective of 20 years.

In Isaiah 53:6 we read, "*All we like sheep have gone astray.*" One could think of this verse as the theme for family life. If parents go "astray," the children will usually follow. It's important to recognize the responsibility you have in raising your children. ([read more](#))

## **Expect Respect from Your Children**

The foundation upon which you're going to build an effective family life is this: You expect your children to honor you. Now how does that happen? That happens when you and your partner sit down and develop guidelines, limits, and rules that both of you are prepared to carry out, and in your considered judgment, are in the best interests of your children. ([read more](#))

## **Enforcing Boundaries with Children**

How seriously do you take your responsibilities as a parent? Do you believe in setting limits and boundaries? Many people these days are saying, “Don’t pressure your child. If they don’t want to do it, don’t force them.” ([read more](#))

## **Setting Reasonable Limits for Kids**

“But Mommy, I don’t want to.” Or maybe, it’s “No, Daddy, I won’t.” Sound familiar? These responses are the “cries of resistance” to major principles parents need to set down concerning their families. These principles are called limits.

When you think about living and working together as a family, setting limits is vital. Children need limits – limits that are fair, reasonable, and as few as possible. The limits of your family need to be clearly communicated and enforced. ([read more](#))

## **Cooperative Parenthood**

If your marriage partner is more intimately involved in your life than anyone else, your children run a close second. You will either reveal or conceal your spirit around your children. ([read more](#))

## **Four Building Blocks for Raising Children**

What do you think is involved in being an effective parent?

The Bible tells us in Proverbs 22:6 to *“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it”* (KJV).

Now that’s a tall order, and a great responsibility, and there are some positive ingredients that make that possible. ([read more](#))

## **Examples From Case Histories**

Dr. Henry Brandt shares insights from various counseling sessions with parents. The names and certain details in these true case histories have been changed to protect each person’s identity and privacy.

## **Everyone Wanting Their Own Way**

Jon was 14, a handsome, tough young man. A likable guy, he noticed the pictures on the wall of my office and asked what it took to graduate from the college I’d attended. Someday he wanted to be a professional man, he said. I found out that he

liked sports, reading, and church, and had lots of friends.

But when it came to talking about his folks, his eyes became slits, his lips pressed into a line, and his voice raised a couple of levels as he shrilled, “I hate them!”  
([read more](#))

### **Damaging Comparisons**

Sisters Kendra and Connie Evans were much alike, except that Kendra was an “ugly duckling” in comparison with her blonde, blue-eyed, younger sister. The difference had been repeatedly noted even in childhood.

“What a perfectly beautiful child!” strangers had exclaimed over Connie. And through the years, Mrs. Evans never tired of hearing this praise for her younger daughter.

“Connie is a pretty child,” she would reply. “It’s just too bad that her sister couldn’t have shared her good fortune.” ([read more](#))

### **A Mother-Daughter Battle**

“I love Betty very much and she knows it. But why is she so rebellious?” Mrs. Grant asked me.

This mother was a sincere Christian, and her teenage daughter had been a continual object of her prayers. She could not get Betty to study, do a chore right, get along with her brother, or even eat properly. It was a mother-daughter battle, and it terribly distressed Mrs. Grant. ([read more](#))

### **Act Like a Parent!**

Isabel Carr complained that her problems began the day she decided to become an obedient wife. “I figured that a Christian woman ought to be subject to her husband,” she said.

And what had ten years of obedience produced? Her husband, Glenn, bowled four nights every week. He paid little attention to the children, even missing their son Dan’s high school graduation because Glenn stayed too long on the golf course. Three months ago, admitting he was growing fond of his secretary, Glenn moved out. He had not contributed a dime to the family since. ([read more](#))

[The articles above are by Dr. Henry Brandt from [BiblicalCounselingInsights.com](http://BiblicalCounselingInsights.com)]