

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

—Deuteronomy 6:6-9 ESV

For over thirty years now we have listened and have found the following to be true in our children's lives.

- 1) Our children needed to have parents that were real. They wanted to see their father be exactly who he claimed to be and do exactly as he said he would do. They expected their mother to be loyal and supportive of their father in everything he set out to do.
- 2) Our children needed the assurance that their parents were totally committed to each other and that their home was a place of love and stability.
- 3) Our children needed their home to be a haven of acceptance and understanding in the midst of an uncertain world. They wanted to be able to share their home with their friends.
- 4) Our children needed the unconditional acceptance

of who they were regardless of their physical appearance, intelligence, or personality.

- 5) Our children needed and wanted to be involved in their parents' lives. They wanted special events in our home, vacations, and other outings. They desired to be involved and accepted by our friends.
- 6) Our children wanted to see faith and love in action, and not just talk.
- 7) Our children needed to see that commitment is the bond that holds everything together including marriage, home, and relationships. They wanted to see and understand sacrifice and to see value placed upon self-denial.
- 8) Our children needed to see their parents accept responsibility for their mistakes and to ask forgiveness when we wronged each other.
- 9) Our children needed to see their parents verbally express their reliance upon God for guidance in all areas of life.
- 10) Our children needed to know that their parents would never abandon them, stop loving them, or cease praying for them as long as they lived.

—Excerpt from *Courageous Parenting* (© 2006 Crossway Books) by Jack and Deb Graham.

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