



Building Strong Convictions

Adapted from "Taking Your Family to the Next Level" series by Scott Erickson

Our days are filled with noise. Many families have war over electronic voices, messages, and interruptions. Some suggest that if the children are quiet and occupied, the absence of struggles and turmoil among the children is a good tradeoff. As leaders of the home, we need to be careful regarding this type of thinking. There has never been a time like this before. As our culture continues to drift from its foundational roots, anointed dads are needed to lead our families to develop strong convictions, a solid foundation, and spiritual insight. The following report confirms we are in a struggle for our convictions:

Engaging in various forms of social media is a routine activity that research has shown to benefit children and adolescents by enhancing communication, social connection, and even technical skills. Social media sites such as Facebook and MySpace offer multiple daily opportunities for connecting with friends, classmates, and people with shared interests. During the last 5 years, the number of preadolescents and adolescents using such sites has increased dramatically. According to a recent poll, 22% of teenagers log on to their favorite social media site more than 10 times a day, and more than half of adolescents log on to a social media site more than once a day. Seventy-five percent of teenagers now own cell phones, and 25% use them for social media, 54% use them for texting, and 24% use them for instant messaging. Thus, a large part of this generation's social and emotional development is occurring while on the Internet and on cell phones.

Because of their limited capacity for self-regulation and susceptibility to peer pressure, children and adolescents are at some risk as they navigate and experiment with social media. Recent research indicates that there are frequent online expressions of offline behaviors, such as bullying, clique-forming, and sexual experimentation, that have introduced problems such as cyberbullying, privacy issues, and "sexting." Other problems that merit awareness include Internet addiction and concurrent sleep deprivation.

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Many parents today use technology incredibly well and feel comfortable and capable with the programs and online venues that their children and adolescents are using. Nevertheless, some parents may find it difficult to relate to their digitally savvy youngsters online for several reasons. Such parents may lack a basic understanding of these new forms of socialization, which are integral to their children's lives. They frequently do not have the technical abilities or time needed to keep pace with their children in the ever-changing Internet landscape. In addition, these parents often lack a basic understanding that kids' online lives are an extension of their offline lives. The end result is often a knowledge and technical skill gap between parents and youth, which creates a disconnect in how these parents and youth participate in the online world together.¹

¹ Gwenn S. O’Keeffe and K. Clarke-Pearson, “The Impact of Social Media on Children, Adolescents, and Families,” *Pediatrics* 127, Issue 4 (April 2011), <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/127/4/800> (accessed July 6, 2017).

COURAGE

C1: Describe your childhood. What did you do for entertainment? What were your traditions growing up?

C2: How many electronic gadgets do you have in your home? (TV's, video games, phones, tablets, laptops, etc.)

- For one month, do an electronic inventory. Monitor and write down how much time every family member spends being entertained by their gadgets.
- With such distractions, how can you raise a family with strong convictions, a solid foundation, spiritual insight, and spiritual power?

C3: It has been suggested that if the children are quiet and occupied, the absence of struggles and turmoil among your children is a good tradeoff. Read and answer the following.

Acts 21:8–9 (ESV)

- From these verses, what insights do you have for leading your children to higher ground?

STRENGTH

S1: As our culture continues to drift from its foundational roots, anointed dads are needed. A dad who yields to the Lordship of Christ is a must. Read and answer the following.

Acts 6:3 (ESV)

- From this verse, what should be an anointed dad's first loyalty?
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate yourself on how yielded you are to the Lordship of Christ. Write out a plan to improve.

S2: Samaria was known for its idolatry and its rebellion against God. In all of Samaria's history, they had not had one righteous king. Read and answer the following.

Acts 8:4–6 (ESV)

- From these verses, what are two things you can observe about what dads need to be in their home?

S3: Dads need to make sure that their family is exposed to the right things – less time with electronic media, more time understanding who they are and what God's plans are for them.

- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate yourself on how well you allow the Holy Spirit to preside in your home. Write out a plan to improve.

ENDURANCE

E1: A spirit-filled dad is committed to having an ear tuned into the Spirit. Read and answer the following.

Acts 8:26 (ESV)

- From this verse, what do you learn about hearing the voice of the Spirit?
- What are you doing to teach your family the value of listening to voice of the Spirit?

E2: Two extremes today are presented as follows: One danger is thinking our imagination is the voice of the Spirit, the other is thinking the Spirit will never speak. Your family is waiting for you to portray the correct message. Read and answer the following.

Acts 8:29–30 (ESV)

Acts 8:34–38 (ESV)

- From these verses, what are two things men need to do?
- What is the message you are transmitting to your family?

E3: Fathers are commissioned to have a legacy to their family. Read and answer the following.

Acts 21:8–9 (ESV)

Deuteronomy 34:9 (ESV)

- From these verses, what do you learn about being a Spirit-filled dad?
- How did Philip's four unmarried daughters learn to prophesy?
- What are you doing to create a Spiritual environment in your home?

Psalm 127:3 (ESV)

Deuteronomy 4:9–10 (ESV)

Deuteronomy 6:4–7 (ESV)

- From these verses, what are four observations you gather about the power of influence in the lives of your children?
- For one month, set aside one night a week and turn off media and engage with your family. What were the results?