

THE FAMILY STRONG BLUEPRINT

7 tools to BUILD a
STRONG FAMILY

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Hey there!

Family is unlike anything else on the planet. There are no two families alike. Although each family has a different story, each one is similar because, no matter the story, most families want to be strong.

I often hear parents ask:

"I know I need to talk with my kids about the important big topics like dating, sex and porn, but I'm not sure what to say."

"I know we need to spend more time together as a family praying and reading the Bible, but I'm not sure how to start."

"We try and have dinner together as much as we can, but everyone is so busy. It's hard to find the time."

"I want to spend more time with my kids, but now that they are older, they don't need me as much, right?"

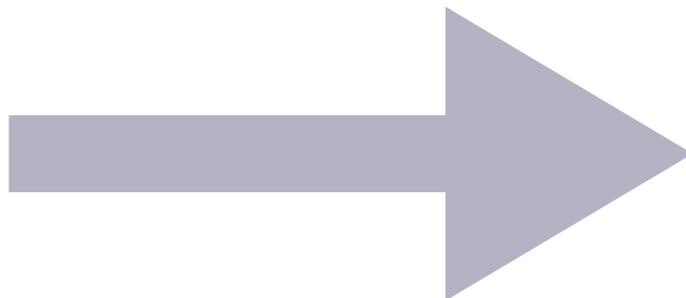
If you can relate, you're not alone. Many parents struggle with questions like these, and so many more. But they aren't sure where to turn for answer.

**THE QUESTION:
WHAT IS MY ROLE TO HELP
BUILD A STRONG (OR STRONGER) FAMILY?**

7 tools to **BUILD** a **STRONG FAMILY**

Fortunately, you have come to the right place! For 26 years, I've been talking with parents across America about the challenges they face when it comes to building a strong family. More importantly, for all these years, I have been talking to their kids too...over 4 million of them!

**THE GUIDE:
THE FAMILY STRONG BLUEPRINT WILL GIVE YOU
THE TOOLS NEEDED TO BE FAMILY STRONG!**



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**THE ANSWER:
You**

After reading the next three realities about our culture, you *most likely* will not be doing your happy dance! I know...it's difficult to take in what I'm about to reveal on the state of our world. But, before you read these realities, know this:

Mom and dad still make the best champion for a child's future. Students of all ages across America have told me that the greatest influence in their lives is mom and dad. This means that the **words you say and the life you live** have a profound impact on how your kids live and who they become.

YOU CAN DO THIS...

YOU WERE MADE FOR THIS...

YOU ARE THE PARENT YOUR CHILD NEEDS AT THIS EXACT MOMENT!

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Before I outline your blueprint on how to build a strong family, here's the three realities about our culture you need to know...

1. YOUR FAMILY IS AT WAR

Satan hates you. Satan hates your kids. Satan hates your marriage. Satan hates your family. Jesus warned of this in John 10:10 when He said, “The thief has come to steal, kill & destroy.” This may look different from family to family but know this:

Satan is your #1 enemy, and he works tirelessly to ruin your family.

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2. “NO RULES” IS THE RULE

For many people today, even many church-attending, Jesus-loving people, right isn't right, wrong isn't wrong, and sadly what feels good is often what wins. This is absolutely the defining statement of today's student culture.

Many Generation Z students believe moral truth depends on circumstances. **Simply: if it works for them, they will probably give it try, even if they know the choice they are making is wrong.**

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3. RELIGION



RELATION- SHIP

Our culture is extremely religious. Sadly, to many, religion is “whatever you want it to be.” I have spoken with people of all ages who say this about religion: **“I choose mine, you choose yours, and we are all good.”**

2 Timothy 4:3 says, “For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear.”

This verse summarizes our culture today. Rather than a committed relationship with Jesus, many people are surrounding themselves with religious people who merely tell them what they want to hear - no matter the TRUTH.

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NUMBER 1

THE FOUNDATION OF A STRONG FAMILY IS THE WORD OF GOD

A family that is in God's Word together is a family that grows together. If you are not in God's Word with your family, there is a high probability that your family isn't in the Word either.

If you haven't consistently spent time in the Word with your family, here's a few suggestions:

TOOLBOX

- A great place to start is around the dinner table. Take 5 minutes at the end of dinner to read, discuss, and pray together.
- Choose a devotional book or a book of the Bible and mix it up from week to week.
- Keep it simple, especially when starting out. Think quality over quantity.
- Set aside time each week for a deeper study together and get it on everyone's calendar.

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NUMBER 2

MAINTAIN AN OPEN DOOR OF COMMUNICATION BY REMAINING APPROACHABLE AND UN-SHOCKABLE

When your kids see you as approachable and un-shockable, they see you as trustworthy. Create an open-door environment in your home that sends the message to your kids: You can talk with me about anything.

TOOLBOX

- Show interest in the "little things." Your kids are more likely to approach you with the "big things" when they see your interest in the everyday issues of their life.
- When your kid asks you a question about a sensitive or tricky topic, don't blow it off or say things like, "You're too young for us to talk about that," or, "That's something we don't discuss!" Live by this motto: If it's on their mind, then give it time.
- You have to be willing to enter into discussions that make you feel uncomfortable. You need to be the constant voice of reason and truth, willing to talk about anything and determined to compromise nothing.
- If they believe they can't talk with you about it, they will go elsewhere for the attention and information they seek.

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NUMBER 3

DINNER TIME IS CONNECTION TIME WITH YOUR FAMILY

Dinner won't happen on its own. You have to be intentional and flexible as you plan dinnertime around everyone's schedule. When you have dinner together, implement a few "dinnertime no-no's":

TOOLBOX

- No devices at the table.
- No TV.
- No answering the home phone.
- No leaving the table until you talk about your day. This one has been a dinnertime HOMERUN for our family. Our girls are now teens, and they still love telling us about their day!
- Pray before eating.

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“So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”
- 1 Corinthians 10:31

NUMBER 4

KEEP UP WITH WHAT'S UP IN CULTURE

No generation in history has faced anything like the incredible onslaught of destructive influences attacking our kids today. On every side – social media, the Internet, music, video games, Hollywood, from their own peers – today's world seems bent on destroying our kids.

It is critical that you keep a pulse on today's culture so that you can better be prepared to help your family navigate the influence of pop culture in their lives.

TOOLBOX

- Your mission isn't to hide the world from your kids. Instead, teach them to filter the world's messages through God-focused lenses.
- Get social on their socials. Follow them and regularly view their pages, tweets, pins and streaks.
- Use the apps they use.
- Keep tabs on their playlists. Google the bands they follow. Look at the social media postings of these artists. Teach your kids to learn to discern which bands are & are not listen-worthy.
- Institute Netflix nights with your family and discuss the importance of watching God-honoring content.

ONE OF THE WORST MISTAKES A PARENT CAN MAKE WHEN IT COMES TO KEEPING TABS ON THEIR KIDS ONLINE, SOCIAL, AND APP USE: GETTING COMFORTABLE!
YOU CAN'T LET YOUR GUARD DOWN – YOU JUST CAN'T!

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NUMBER 5

CONTROL THE MEDIA OR IT WILL CONTROL YOUR FAMILY

If you think your kids are exempt from checking out porn, sending a sext message or becoming addicted to video games or social media, you are fooling yourself and setting them up for failure.

Every kid is only one click from a consequence and only one turn from a tragedy.

You have to establish parameters for your families online and social media use.

TOOLBOX

- Keep tabs on their online friends.
- Have access to all of their accounts.
- Keep the home computer in a high-traffic area.
- Consistently talk about device expectations and remind your kids that having a device is a privilege.
- Don't wait for your kids to talk with you about the big issues of sexting and porn. If you don't talk with them about these issues, who will?
- Establish parameters for social media & devices.

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NUMBER 6

WORK TO KEEP THE DOOR OPEN INTO YOUR KID'S LIVES

Staying involved in your kid's lives must remain a priority. Many messages in culture will work to tell you otherwise, but don't buy the lies! Your kids need time with you. Spending time with them doing the things that are important to them will build confidence about your love for them and can also help you keep a pulse on their most pressing issues, challenges, and concerns.

TOOLBOX

- Get a family night on the calendar & play board games, go to a movie, or go bowling. Take turns letting family members plan the activity.
- Plan a date night with your son or daughter as often as you can and spend the evening doing whatever they want.
- Regularly write notes to your kids telling them how proud you are of them and encouraging them to live life to the full!
- Work to create an environment in the home where your kids will want to hang with their friends.
- Ask your kids, "How can you and I better connect?" Or, "What is something you'd like for us as a family to do that we've never done."
- Never stop thinking creatively about ways you can connect as a family.

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NUMBER 7

COVER YOUR FAMILY IN PRAYER

A family that prays together stays together. Pray for your family. Pray with your family. Create an environment of prayer in your home.

TOOLBOX

- Encourage your kids to pray. The more they pray, the more comfortable they will get at talking (and listening) to God.
- Talk about your prayer life with your family. Let them hear how important prayer is to you.
- Pray in every room of your home with your family. Take turns praying from room to room.
- Pray as you walk around your house & through your neighborhood. Pray for your neighbors, family, your community and country.
- Keep a family prayer journal. Write in it during your family devotional moments.

"Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you."

Jeremiah 29:12

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VERSES TO READ, PRAY & BELIEVE

TOOLBOX

- "This is the moment for which you were created." Esther 4:14
- "Let's not merely say that we love each other; let us show the truth by our actions." 1 John 3:18
- "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6
- "Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care..." 1 Peter 5:2
- "Children are a heritage from the Lord." Psalm 127:3
- "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you get up." Deuteronomy 6:6-7
- "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:7
- "The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace." Psalm 29:11
- "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength." Philippians 4:13