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The Power of Transparency

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It's easy for parents to think what children need most from them is moral and spiritual perfection. That belief often drives parents to hide their flaws in a corner closet, close the door, lock it, and throw away the key. Such behavior tells kids it's more important to appear perfect than be real. In healthy homes parents know God loves them unconditionally, so they don't need to pretend they're someone else. They can be real with the fact that they're in process and have a long way to go on their spiritual journey.

I'm Not Proud

I'm not proud of the fact that while in college I experimented with drugs. Nor that I have to continually keep a tight rein on my sexual appetite. Yet, I don't deny my past mistakes or minimize my present weaknesses. I openly talk about them with my sons. I'm convinced such authenticity creates an environment where children feel comfortable with themselves--both their strengths and weaknesses.

I find it fascinating that children are told to be themselves. Such advice isn't easy to follow when a child grows up in a family where "being yourself," brings trouble. It's much easier when they learn they're precious though flawed, and accepted though imperfect.

Her Secret Surfaced

Some parents fear such an attitude might encourage bad behavior. Yet, what good comes from denying or minimizing our brokenness and sin? None! Remember the woman caught in adultery? What she feared most happened. Her secret sins surfaced in the presence of the religious leaders, curious spectators, and Jesus.

The Pharisees used the episode to trap Jesus in an apparent no-win situation. If he condemned her to death by stoning, he would stand in opposition to the Romans, who alone could execute a criminal. If he released her, he would defy the Law of Moses, which decreed the death penalty in such cases.

Neither

Jesus did neither. He challenged those without sin to throw the first stone. After everyone had left and she remained alone with Jesus, the Lord accepted her and said, "‘As a witness against you, we are wiping off the dust from your town that sticks to our feet. But understand this, God’s kingdom has come near to you.’" (John 8:11).

A Priceless Legacy

To admit sin isn't to embrace it--it's a crucial step in overcoming it. Real people are comfortable with their brokenness because they know God is changing them. And in healthy homes parents help their children cultivate the kind of integrity which leaves a priceless legacy: the ability to be real . . . the same on the inside as they appear on the outside. Kids like that can be real because they're comfortable with themselves.