

# P78 PARENTS



## Showing Our Love to Our Children

By: Jim Burns, Ph.D.

Leesa sat as far away from me as possible in Sunday school class. With her arms folded and a scowl on her face, this 10th grader was definitely making a statement about the fact that her parents made her come to church. She was there every week, but she seldom talked. One day after class I decided to give Leesa a hug and tell her I was glad that she was in the class. I walked up to her, reached out my arms and hugged her. She didn't move. She didn't look up or respond. It felt as though I were hugging a cold, metal, immovable pole. I fumbled through my pre-planned speech and walked away, feeling like a fool. The next week I tried it again. Same result.

Two years went by, and though Leesa seemed a little more open, she was still hesitant. Finally, at a camp sharing time, when Leesa stood to speak, the youth group became especially quiet. No one had ever heard her give more than a two-sentence response. With tears in her eyes, she said, "Two years ago Jim gave me a hug. To my knowledge, no one had hugged me since I was a baby. To be honest, most of the time I'm not very huggable. But the day that Jim hugged me I started to melt on the inside. It has taken me two years to understand about God's love, but tonight I made a commitment to Christ, and I want to thank Jim for that first hug." That night Leesa received more hugs than she ever had.

In 1987 researchers found a Harvard University child-rearing study from 1951 based on interviews with mothers of kindergarten students. The researchers decided to follow up that study to see how the children were faring as adults. After locating and interviewing members of the original group, it was discovered that the happiest respondents—those who enjoyed their jobs and their families and possessed a zest for living—shared one important characteristic: their parents had been warm and affectionate, generous with hugs, kisses and playtime.

The study indicated that the most important predictor of future happiness is not a good education or an up-scale home, but physical closeness with parents. Other factors such as money, major injuries or even frequent moves had less bearing on the respondents' future happiness than did genuine affection.

### The Power of Affection

Every family is different about showing affection. Many parents withhold affection because "we didn't do that when I was growing up." If we grew up without a positive model to follow, we may not know how to demonstrate affection. Even in some of the most caring homes, parents may stop touching their children once they reach grade-school age. When this happens, an important part of showing God's love also stops.

A father and a mother, concerned about signs of sexual promiscuity in their 17-year-old daughter, consulted me. The father mentioned that he felt uncomfortable showing affection to his daughter. He loved her dearly, but he seldom told her so; he couldn't remember the last time he had hugged her. At the risk of sounding trite, I said, "If you don't hug your daughter, someone else with another agenda will gladly do it for you."

Children and teenagers—and adults too—need meaningful, loving affection. Sometimes the absence of touch can affect children so much that they may spend a lifetime reaching out for arms that will never embrace them. More and more research of sexually promiscuous people is pointing back to deep yearnings just to be touched and held.

The Harvard University study and other studies suggest that children need the love and the affection of their fathers as well as their mothers. D. Ross Campbell, author of "How to Really Love Your Child," emphasizes this: "In all my reading and experience I have never known of one sexually disoriented person who had a warm, loving and affectionate father."

Unfortunately, in a world filled with violence, sexual abuse and perversion, parents may shy away from giving their children the blessing of tenderness and touch. Yet a study at the University of California-Los Angeles found that just to maintain emotional and physical health, people need eight to ten meaningful touches each day.

## Top 7 Cries Of Today's Teens

By: Jim Burns

1. **The need to be trusted.** Teens believe that their elders distrust them and regard them as irresponsible and unpredictable. Teens today want to be taken seriously – and we, as their parents, would be wise to create an environment at home that allows them to earn that trust.
2. **The need to be understood and loved.** Please note that the teens who responded to the survey did not asked to be “fixed and made whole.” I believe they know their lives are in heavy transition at this point. But the data from the research is clear that teens tend to believe that their elders do not understand them. Teens crave to be listened to and loved . . . preferably by parents or guardians. (And if they don't get this need met by you, Mom and Dad, they'll go somewhere else!)
3. **The need to feel safe and secure.** Say what? Wild, reckless, self-confident teenagers who know no fear need to feel safe? That's right. They need to know their home is secure and their school is safe. Sadly these days such is not always the case.
4. **The need to believe that life is meaningful and has a purpose.** Studies show that this is a growing need in the populace as a whole . . . more than likely because the “Gen X” philosophy that postmodernism rules is on the wane. Society in general is realizing that there are moral absolutes – and I'm convinced that Millennials can be the transitional generation for bringing spiritual revival to the world!
5. **The need to be listened to – to be heard.** Though this might sound like #2, there's a huge difference between feeling “understood” and “listened to.” The latter takes time, and the breathless pace we lead our lives doesn't make that possible.
6. **The need to be appreciated and valued.** A poor self-image is a key factor in anti-social behavior . . . just ask the residents of Columbine and Paducah. Roughly one-third of all respondents to the Gallup survey indicated they felt worthless and unappreciated.
7. **The need to be supported in their efforts.** This means anything from helping with homework to showing up at Little League or soccer games. It's one thing to get your kids involved in a lot of activities; the real benefit to your children, however, is when Mom and Dad also participate.

### UP-COMING EVENTS

<b>November</b>	15 - Sat. Gladiators Game	<b>January</b>	7 - First FUEL of the Year
	25-Tue.-TUPOS-5-9pm- Operation Christmas Child		10 - Mystery Trip
			11-Student Art Class Begins
			14 - CRUNCH NIGHT
<b>December</b>	17-Fri-Youth Christmas Party		

- Be looking for other events yet to be scheduled!

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### Jesus Demonstrated Affection

Jesus certainly understood the importance of meaningful touch. Even with constant demands for his attention, he took time out to show affection and love to children: *"People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.'* And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them."

Jesus was a master of communicating love and personal acceptance. He did so when he blessed and held the children. And he demonstrated his knowledge of the genuine need children have for affection.

### Models of God's Love

As parents, we are often the arms, legs and mouthpieces of Jesus to our children. During our prayer time together a few months ago, our five-year-old daughter, Rebecca, began her prayer, "Dear Daddy." Then she looked up and smiled at my wife, Cathy, and me and said, "I mean, Dear God." After our time of prayer Cathy leaned over to me and said, "The 'Dear Dath2C I mean Dear God' phrase surely has hidden theological meaning, doesn't it?"

For Rebecca Joy Burns-and for many children-the concept of God is very close to the concept of an earthly father. My interest, my compassion, my discipline and my affection will help my children to understand a healthy concept of God. As parents and significant adults in the lives of children, we are constantly modeling the love of God to them.

Cathy and I have come up with a "Daily To-Do List" with our children. We don't follow it legalistically; rather, it is a set of guidelines we use to keep our children's spirits open with a sense of security and love.

1. Say I Love You." Every day our children need to be reminded of our love. The positive reinforcement and verbal reminder of unconditional love will give children the ability to go on even during tough times, and it will help them to say "no" to temptations.
2. Show physical affection. Meaningful touches, hugs, kisses and even "high fives" bolster a young person's self-image. A real sense of security, self-worth and meaningfulness comes from touching.
3. Listen. When children know that we are really listening, they will sense how significant to us they really are.
4. Use eye contact. As parents, our lives sometimes become so busy that we can forget how body language and eye contact can let our children know that we care.
5. Pray daily. A daily time of prayer with our children helps them grasp how important God is in our lives. We want prayertime to be a warm, wonderful, loving part of our children's lives.

God can use our affection to show our children and others how valuable they are, and how much they are loved by earthly families and by the heavenly Father.

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NEXT P78 MEETING:  
TBA

WE ARE ON THE WEB!  
[www.h1studentz.com](http://www.h1studentz.com)



The Hampton First Baptist Church Student Ministry exists to Encourage Students to: **Reach** their friends for Christ, **Encounter** Christ through God's Word, **Associate** with other believers in their spiritual journey, and to **Live** a life of worship.

REAL FAITH FOR THE REAL WORLD

A FEW RESOURCES FOR YOU!!!

[www.homeword.com](http://www.homeword.com)

[www.cpyu.org](http://www.cpyu.org)

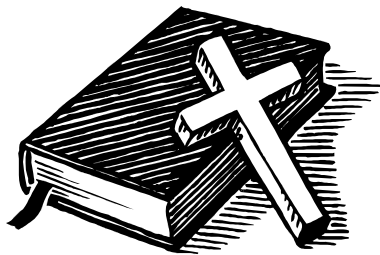
[www.family.org](http://www.family.org)

[www.pluggedinonline.com](http://www.pluggedinonline.com)

<http://barna.org>

[www.sacredgateway.org](http://www.sacredgateway.org)

<http://search-institute.org>



PSALM 78:1-8

1. O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth.
2. I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, from of old—
3. what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us.
4. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power, and the wonders he has done.
5. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children,
6. so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children.
7. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.
8. They would not be like their forefathers—a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him.