

Parents should pay attention, trust God-given instincts

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In his 2013 book *Things That Matter*, political columnist and commentator Charles Krauthammer included an essay called “Life By Manual.”

“Every human activity is now the subject of the how-to industry. A visit to the local bookstore shows how far things have gone. Not just parenting and loving, but everything— eating and drinking, running and sunning, living itself— is a skill to be learned and mastered. There are books, videos . . . The business succeeds because Americans have come to believe that only an expert can teach them the correct way to walk, or bend their knees or think well of themselves.”

Krauthammer is not belittling the importance of learning from others. He does seem, however, to be poking gentle fun at the idea that we are helpless, and that our own instincts and common sense cannot be trusted. Nowhere is this more evident than when it comes to parenting. Advice comes to us from everywhere— books, TV, radio, school, conversations with friends . . . a wide variety of “experts,” many with lots of initials after their names.

Realizing that I, too, run the risk of being one of those voices, I would like to suggest the following:

Pay attention to the spiritual development of your child.

In the midst of all the advice coming at you about how to help your kids succeed in school, in sports, in arts, in just about every area and aspect of life, don't neglect their spiritual development. Want them to be as strong and accomplished *spiritually* as you do academically, athletically, socially . . . and understand that at the end of the day their spiritual growth and maturity is more up to *you* as their parent than to their church.

3 John 4 says, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in truth.” Make this your prayer and your goal for your kids— that they walk in truth— more important than winning an Olympic medal or an academic scholarship.

Trust yourself and the instincts God has given you.

God never gives us a job to do or calls us to a responsibility without giving us what we need to fulfill it. That includes the job and responsibility God has given us to parent. Listen, read, talk, engage ideas all you want . . . but sift and sort as you do. Above all, make sure the approach you take is consistent with what the Bible teaches.