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All that we teach our children is centered on modeling. We may think that the creative instructional methods we use, the fabulous books we buy and the little “talks” we have with them are the keys to successful teaching. Those things help, but children learn best what we model.

Nowhere is that more evident than when we teach our children about prayer. I come from a long line of people who leaned heavily on the verse about praying in private: “But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” Matthew 6:6. Private prayer is essential. However, children need to see their parents and grandparents praying.

If I had known what I know now, I would have done a better job of teaching my children about prayer. I would have modeled praying throughout the day instead of at designated times. I would have said, “Lord, help us get through this rain storm safely,” out loud rather than silently. I would have let them see me with my Bible in my lap when they woke in the morning or from a nap rather than saving my quiet time until after they went to bed.

I would have prayed some of my own prayers in their presence rather than alone so that I could show them a conversation with God. It might have gone like this: “Lord, you are so awesome. You have given me these two wonderful children. They are such blessings to me. But, you know what? I messed up today. When they came running into the kitchen excited about the bird egg they had found, I was busy. Lord, I could have turned off that stove for a few minutes. Now, I regret that I didn’t stop to share their joy at that very moment. It just wasn’t the same when I went out later. The moment had passed. Forgive me for getting what’s important all mixed up. I just pray that you will give me another chance tomorrow. I pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.”

Do you want your children to make prayer a vital moment-by-moment part of their lives? If you do, you must begin today to show them how it is done.