

**# 170 01/27/03 Vulnerability helps in spiritual training**

Have you ever realized that when someone wants to develop a relationship with another person, she tries to look good to impress the other person? She may try to impress by how she dresses, what she can do, what she has done or how self-assured she is. In fact, that is exactly what she should not do! We enjoy being around people who let us see their vulnerabilities.

The same is true of parent and child relationships. If your child discovers that you make mistakes—and are humble in your admission of those mistakes—that will improve the relationship. Why am I writing about vulnerability in a series of articles about spiritual training? It is very, very important to let your children see that you are not perfect in your own spiritual walk. That gives them permission to try, knowing that it is okay to fail.

If you are unsure about how to approach your children with spiritual truths or maybe not even sure if you understand those truths, tell them. You can say something like this: “Son, I have been negligent in sharing my faith with you in the way that I want to share. Part of that is because I grew up in a home with Christian parents who did not talk much about their faith. I have come to realize that I need to talk to you more than my parents talked to me.

“I am going to try to bring my faith into discussions that we have as a family. I want you to be comfortable asking me questions. I may not always have the answers. That is okay, because I have asked God to help me. Together, with God’s help, we will find the answers in the Bible and by praying together.

“I will probably make mistakes, but it is important for you to know that my heart is right. I want you to grow into a man who relies on God’s Word to run your life. That means that the decisions you make about your life will be in line with God’s Word. In advance, I want to thank you for your patience when I struggle to help you find the answers that God wants you to have.”

That kind of vulnerability does not make a parent less, but more. It says to your child, “I am going to show you how God is with me in the valleys as well on the mountaintops.” It will allow your child to seek your counsel when he is in a valley.