

# Family Matters

Answers to your questions . . .

**What are some ways I can grow closer to my spouse?**

**Answer:** Many couples don't take enough time to talk, bond and firmly connect with each other. You can apply the 24-5 Principle, which is based in part on Deuteronomy 24:5. Here are five steps to doing just that.

1. *Keep your promise.* Many couples, at their weddings, light a "unity candle" and blow out their individual candles. That symbolizes husband and wife dying to themselves in order to give birth to something new and much more intimate, beautiful and mysterious—"two becoming one." One of the best ways to become one is to spend time together, and that can happen when

you and your spouse talk, set goals, go shopping, pay bills or study a devotional book together.

2. *Be intentional and selective.* Everyone has the same amount of time—24 hours a day. Avoid being sloppy with yours. You can make excellent use of what time you have by allocating time to talk and do things together. When that time comes, make sure you're rested and not rushed or preoccupied.

3. *Be creative and perseverant.* Talk about a variety of subjects—solving problems, overcoming challenges, establishing goals and priorities, your spiritual life, preferences and just having fun.

4. *Enjoy and encourage uniqueness.* You and your spouse aren't alike.

Think of how awful and boring it would be to be married to yourself! Those conversations wouldn't be very interesting, would they?

5. *Be loving, respectful and patient.* The gift God has given you and your spouse is each other. In the end He'll probably be less interested in your professional success or how much money you made than in how you nurtured the gift He gave you in marriage.

Taking time to talk is part of that. Choose wisely how you spend those minutes, hours and days.

*This answer was taken from the Complete Guide to the First Five Years of Marriage, designed to help spouses build a strong foundation for a lifetime partnership.*

## TOUGH QUESTIONS FROM KIDS

**Answer:**

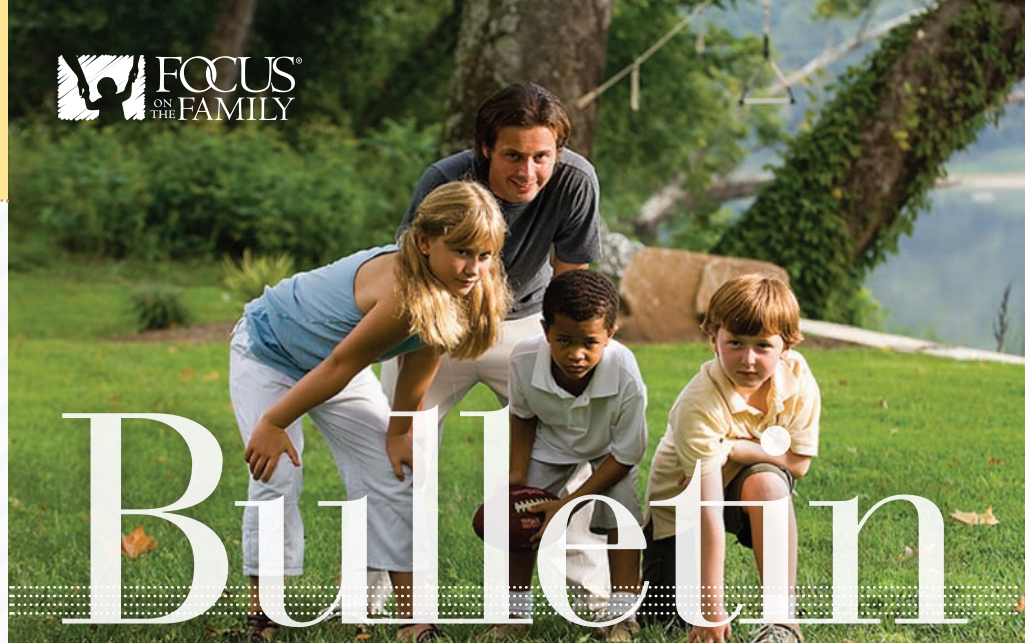
Some people do better in math. Others do better in reading and writing. Still others do better because they work harder than most students. They listen in class, ask questions and do their homework. Some people may learn a certain subject right away because God gave them the ability to do so. People are good at different things. Isn't that great?

For more information on any of the topics in this bulletin, go to [focusonthefamily.com](http://focusonthefamily.com) or call 800-A-FAMILY (232-6459). To reach Customer Service regarding your subscription, please call 800-692-9912.

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SCHOOL'S IN SESSION!

## Where Does Your Child Shine?

BY JULIANNA LAWSON

ARE YOU UNSURE OF YOUR CHILD'S STRENGTHS? CONSIDER these ideas to discover his areas of expertise:

**Observe your child during his free time.** What kinds of activities grab his attention? Does he pick up a pencil to sketch? Perhaps she finds a favorite book and curls up on the couch. Does she enjoy recording the day's events in a diary? Does he volunteer to bake a batch of cookies for the family?

**Observe how your child interacts with siblings and peers.** Perhaps he is a leader who enjoys organizing a group of kids to get a game going. Maybe he encourages a child who is feeling left out. Is she the one to suggest putting on a show at a family gathering?

**Visit with your child's teacher to find out which subjects hold his interest.** When is he most likely to raise his hand in class or volunteer for a project? Which assignments have been thoroughly completed with special attention to detail?

Use these clues to match your child's interests with activities happening at school or church, in your neighborhood or in your family. It may take a few tries to make a successful connection, but when it happens, you will know because your child will become more confident in his identity.



## TOUGH QUESTIONS FROM KIDS

Why do some people find a subject hard, and others find it easy?

Answer on back



# Guiding Their Gifts

My son, Foster, is outgoing and compassionate, so I tap in to those traits and encourage him to share Jesus with others. I suggest ways he can use his sociable side to show God's love.

For example, on the way to school, I might say, "Foster, you make friends easily. Is there anyone in your class who is shy?" I challenge him to look for people who seem timid or lonely and be their friend because I know that's easy for him.

He's also musical and often sings praise songs at the top of his voice. I make gentle suggestions about when and with whom he might share a new song. "Don't you think Joey would like that song? Why don't you teach it to him at recess?"

I follow up after school by asking him about these opportunities. By using his God-given strengths, Foster is learning to confidently and boldly share Christ's love with others.

—Renae Brumbaugh



# Bystander, Bullied or Bully?

The back-to-school season is full of new beginnings for tweens, especially if they're making the transition from elementary to middle school. Have you talked with your tween about his new class schedule, the basics of having a locker and . . . how to handle bullying?

Parents often express concern about kids suffering at the hands of a bully, but they seldom consider the possibility that their child could *be* that bully. Talk openly with your tween. Make it clear that bullying is never acceptable; discuss the options available to your tween if he feels bullied; and challenge him to be responsible if he sees someone being bullied.

To help you begin this discussion with your tween, you can download the complimentary episode "Mike Makes Right" at [WhitsEndBlog.org/thriving](http://WhitsEndBlog.org/thriving). Listen as Mike Caldwell confronts the school bully, and without realizing it, ends up becoming a bully himself.

To get the most out of this complimentary download, use the summary and discussion questions link on the same page.

# Cheating: It Matters Now and Later

Although some kids have always cheated in school, today's tech gadgets have made cheating easier than ever before. While low-tech methods, such as notes concealed on the tongue of a sneaker or on the tail of a shirt, are still used, high-tech methods are becoming increasingly popular. A few of those methods include:

- taking photographs of the test and emailing the photo to other students.
- instant messaging, with a predetermined code, during tests.
- programming math formulas or history dates into a graphing calculator.

In many high schools, cheating is no longer the exception but the norm. Even intelligent kids may cheat to maintain their position at the top of the class. In the upper grade levels, there are typically two types of cheaters: poor performers desperate to pass and high achievers driven to get a 4.0 grade point average.

Some teens justify their actions by arguing that "everyone is doing

it." These students often do not even know that what they're doing is wrong, believing that "the end justifies the means." They may further rationalize their cheating by claiming that it's harmless because it doesn't affect anyone else.

The cheating doesn't stop after a teen's high school graduation, either. The same habits are practiced throughout the college years, and recent media reports about bankers, investors and politicians are evidence that dishonesty continues throughout the adult years.

Kids need to understand that ambition is fine, but integrity is more important.

Knowing that technology helps kids refine their ability to cheat, parents need to clearly articulate that shortcuts are not acceptable.

We need to help our kids understand that cheating is a form of lying and stealing and it does affect others—both now

and later. Cheating hurts honest students who must compete with their dishonest classmates for scholarships and other opportunities. And no one wants to go under the knife someday and discover that the surgeon cheated his way through medical school.

Teens need parents to emphasize honesty and integrity. They need to be taught that cheating hurts relationships with peers, with adults and with God. They need to understand that the end does not justify the means. Cheating is always wrong in God's eyes (Deuteronomy 25:16; Luke 16:10)—and that's reason enough to avoid the temptation.

—Tammy Darling

