

RAISING UNCOMMON K!DS

12 BIBLICAL TRAITS
YOU NEED TO
RAISE SELFLESS KIDS

SAMI CONE



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Grand Rapids, Michigan

Sami Cone, *Raising Uncommon Kids*
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Published by Baker Books
a division of Baker Publishing Group
P.O. Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287
www.bakerbooks.com

Printed in the United States of America

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Cone, Sami, 1975–

Raising uncommon kids : 12 biblical traits you need to raise selfless kids /
Sami Cone.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-0-8010-1878-7 (pbk.)

1. Parenting—Religious aspects—Christianity. 2. Child rearing—Religious
aspects—Christianity. 3. Parent and child—Religious aspects—Christianity.

I. Title.

BV4529.C598 2016

248.8'45—dc23

2015034037

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Published in association with the literary agency D.C. Jacobson & Associates, an Author Management Company, www.dcjacobson.com.

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16 17 18 19 20 21 22 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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To my husband and parenting partner, Ricky,
who made it possible for me to be a mother in the
first place. I love you forever and for always.

And to our own uncommon kids,
Kariss Nevaeh and Britton Jerick. Thank you for al-
lowing me to see the world through your eyes. You
two are the best mirror a mom could ask for!

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INTRODUCTION

Hello, Pot, Meet Kettle— Your Mirror Image

I educate over a million people each day through television, radio, and my blog, yet a few years ago, I couldn't seem to figure out how to teach my own kids one of the most important qualities they could have: compassion.

The genesis of this book was in a heart's cry to God one night after my daughter had been, in my opinion, exceedingly selfish. Before sending her off to bed, I prayed desperately, "God, help me show Kariss what it truly means to put the needs of others ahead of her own wants."

Then, as my daughter lay in bed, I found myself telling a tale to her that only God could have planted in my head. It was the perfect little story that not only related to her own world, but somehow made the plight of children around the world more tangible to her.

Of course, it starred her as the main character, so it captured her attention right away. But more important, I saw a twinkle in her eye and a light go on in her head that I had never seen before.

I knew God had shared something special with me and from that moment forward, I felt a strong pull to share it so others could spark the same flame in their own children.

Still, I was surprised when almost two years later, a book agent captured the same vision I so desperately wanted to share with others.

But then he suggested, “Instead of making this a children’s fable, why not direct it toward parents going through the same struggles with their children you are?”

Honestly, it caught me off guard.

After all, this wasn’t about me and my character, but instead about my daughter’s selfishness and her need to change.

And then it hit me. Where had she learned this behavior? Where had she learned it was okay to want every McDonald’s Happy Meal toy in a series? Where had she learned it was fine to have a room full of stuff, yet want more? Where had she learned to expect presents for every holiday (including half-birthdays)?

She learned it from me.

If I wanted my daughter to change, I realized, the change had to start with me.

It dawned on me that I didn’t need to write a parenting book so much as I needed to write a book to people who happen to have kids who will watch, study, and emulate them—which pretty much describes every parent.

In *Boundaries with Kids* by Henry Cloud and John Townsend, I read that we parents have three main avenues of influence over our children: teaching, modeling, and internalizing. Teaching involves helping your children identify experiences and apply your instruction to new situations. Modeling goes a step further to where your children learn directly from watching how you operate and treat others, regardless of whether or not you intend to teach them something. Helping your children to internalize equips them to take their positive experiences and traits and make them a part of their everyday reality.¹

You may be looking for a quick fix for your kids; I'm here to coach you in paying a little less attention to their behavior and spending a little more time evaluating your own.

It's been said that we rarely see an accurate picture of what the mirror reflects back to us, and I think that statement is even more accurate with how we see our kids. While others may see them as wonderful and kind, we may only be aware of what annoys us if we are mainly seeing ourselves in them. Likewise, some of what we think is cute about our own children could drive others nuts.

*I'm here to coach you
in paying a little less
attention to your kids'
behavior and spending
a little more time
evaluating your own.*

So where better to look for the traits we need to embrace than the Bible?

Ever since my first time reading Colossians 3:12–17, I've felt drawn to the passage.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

What particularly strikes me is that verse 14 says “binds them all together in perfect unity” (or “harmony,” as it states in the NLT).

It drives home a message that, while each of the characteristics outlined in these verses is important, they are best when combined.

It reminds me of another favorite Scripture passage of mine, 2 Peter 1:5–8.

For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Not only does it embody the same principle of embracing pivotal characteristics of our faith incrementally, but did you catch verse 8? “If you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

It’s like it was written just for parents!

When I read this for the first time, I thought, “Jesus totally gets me!” I wasn’t as worried about being effective and productive for Christ as I was about trying to make sure I wasn’t being ineffective or unproductive! He wasn’t setting the bar low; he was meeting me where I was in my own parenting journey.

After all, how many days is your only goal to survive until dinner (especially when you’re parenting toddlers)?

I remember younger moms asking me when my kids said their first words, took their first steps, or ate their first solid food. Do you want to know what my brilliant answer was as the mom of two kids just nineteen months apart? “I’m sure I wrote it down somewhere, but for now my goal is just to keep them breathing.”

Just as I was in the midst of figuring out how to keep my children alive and well, God laid out a clear road map in these verses to guide us as we guide our children.

So with Colossians 3:12–17 as my guide, I’ve taken twelve parenting dilemmas I have personally faced and framed them into twelve characteristics God calls us to emulate. I didn’t always tackle them the way I wish I had, but I have learned from each scenario, and that’s what I’d like to share with you in the coming pages.

This book has three sections. In each section, you’ll find four unique characteristics and focuses that not only build on each other but are built from within your four walls and eventually out into the world. You will learn how to love from the One who loved us first and then take that love to anyone and everyone you encounter in your life.

The breakdown looks like this:

Section One: Your Heart at Home

1. *Love* (focus: God)
2. *Harmony* (focus: Character of the Home)
3. *Gentleness* (focus: Parent to Child)
4. *Bearing With* (focus: Child to Child/Siblings)

Section Two: Your Attitude toward Others

5. *Forgiveness* (focus: Extended Family)
6. *Wisdom* (focus: School)
7. *Patience* (focus: Church/Community Group)
8. *Kindness* (focus: Neighbor/Neighborhood)

Section Three: Your Influence in the World

9. *Gratitude* (focus: City)
10. *Peace* (focus: State)
11. *Humility* (focus: Country)
12. *Compassion* (focus: World)

At the end of every chapter, I’ve listed some practical applications for you to take these ideas from the pages to the street.

You can focus on one character trait a month, or you can devour them all in one sitting. Ultimately, it's up to you.

Just promise me one thing: act on what you read. Because what good is it if knowledge goes in but action doesn't come out as a result?

So don't just strive to have kids "like everyone else." In fact, your goal should be to have kids unlike others. Go against the grain. Raise uncommon kids.

The graphic consists of four overlapping circles. The second circle from the left contains the text "SECTION ONE" in a bold, sans-serif font. The circles are a light gray color.

SECTION ONE

YOUR HEART AT HOME

I love a good deal.

In fact, I am rather well known for my deal-finding strategies and savvy saving advice. So it should come as no surprise to learn that from a young age, my kids were known to utter phrases like, “Do we have a coupon for that, Mommy?”

To this day, before my kids ask me to buy something, I will often hear them telling each other, “You have to wait until it goes on sale!”

But I think the ultimate kicker was when I heard my (at the time) two-year-old daughter tell my mother-in-law, “Nani, you can get that much cheaper at Walmart.”

Frankly, I wasn’t sure whether to laugh or cry.

Did I sit down daily and educate my two toddlers on how to save money by stacking coupons with store sales?

Of course not.

But at the time, we had just hit rock bottom financially due to the economic crash. We went from two modest incomes to one and had to sell a car just to make ends meet. This meant that

I accomplished all of our shopping and daily activities with a double stroller.

Can you just picture it? Me walking to the bank, grocery store, bookstore, and yes, even Walmart with my two kids under two in a double stroller. Not only did we have to be picky about our prices, but we had to plan each trip extremely carefully because we could only buy what would fit in the basket beneath our double stroller.

In the midst of those circumstances, I often threw myself a mini pity party. Yet as I reflect back on that eighteen-month stint, I can honestly say it was one of the sweetest periods of our lives. We learned to focus on what was truly important and were reminded that relationships remained our most prized possessions.

During those months when I felt I wasn't providing adequately for my kids, I was actually doing the best thing we can do as parents: put what we say into practice.

Which is why I'm writing this book: to tell you something you probably already know yet most of us overlook in the throes of day-to-day parenting.

The key to raising uncommon kids may surprise you: it starts with you. Your influence will impact your kids far more than your instruction.

In these first four chapters, we'll start building the foundation necessary for raising selfless kids in a self-centered world from within the four walls of your home—by examining the characteristics of love, harmony, gentleness, and bearing with one another.



LOVE

Above All Else

We want more.

We want more stuff. We want more “likes” on Facebook. We want more friends. We want more vacation time. And yes, we want more for our kids.

But how can we realistically raise compassionate kids content with less when they’re constantly being told more is better?

It starts with us.

Before we can raise uncommon kids, we have to be uncommon ourselves. That means everything you’ve heard about living in the world but not being of it—and then some.

It’s not wrong to want more for your kids, depending on what you want more of.

Every day, I pray for more wisdom, more kindness, more generosity, more joy, more contentment, and yes, more compassion within my children.

Does this mean we ought to strip ourselves and our kids of every creature comfort? Of course not. But it does mean we need to take a harder, more evaluative look at who we are, what we do, what we have, and why we have it.

While a child's behavior is not always a direct representation of their parent's influence, a parent's influence should have a direct impact on the behavior of their child.

*Before we can
raise uncommon
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uncommon ourselves.*

Don't lose heart! Though this may seem daunting initially, you should instead see it as an immediate and effective way to start influencing the legacy you will leave with your children.

The Bible contains 393 verses that talk about love, including Colossians 3:14, which reminds us, "Above all, clothe yourselves with love" (NLT). While that verse may make it seem as though love ought to be the final characteristic we study, I'd argue it should be the first. Without love, the rest of what we will discuss will be meaningless.

Think of the characteristics in the chapters of this book as blocks in a pyramid, each one building upon the other. All are necessary to complete the pyramid, but it's first important to start with a firm and solid foundation.

And where do we learn about love? From the very first father who ever was: our heavenly Father. After all, 1 John 4:8 says, "God is love." If we truly want to show our kids love, we must first understand the most pure and perfect love there is. Before we can understand that, we need to first be willing recipients of such love. For that, we can go only to God.

My Unique Religious Road

Some of you may be thinking, *I already know God and his love. Can we just skip to the part where we fix my selfish kids?*

If there's one thing I've learned in my forty years of life, it's that no one experiences God quite the same way. I've come to understand that even those of you who grew up going to church, or at least believing in God, have a journey unlike anyone else's.

I grew up in what you could call a "religiously confused" home.

My father is Jewish, and my mother grew up Church of England (Anglican). Though my parents divorced when I was seven, the years we did spend under the same roof were interesting from a religious standpoint.

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While my parents were not what I'd call very religious, neither did they seem to want to give in to the other. For example, during the winter season, we'd pick up a short Christmas tree and call it a "Hanukkah bush." We also lit the menorah each night during Hanukkah, but I didn't get presents like Jewish children traditionally would.

Friends at school thought I was so lucky because I got to celebrate double holidays, but what they didn't know was that it didn't mean double presents.

While we never went to church or synagogue while my parents were married, things changed after their divorce.

During my middle school years, my mom became an evangelical Christian. But having grown up in middle-class, suburban Chicago up until that point, I'd witnessed a lot of religious hypocrisy firsthand among my friends' families. As a result, I wasn't too keen on joining in, regardless of what the religion was called.

I distinctly remember telling my mom I was considering becoming Jewish when she asked me to go to church. Likewise, I'd tell my father I was considering becoming Christian anytime the topic of a bat mitzvah came up.

The Religious Tides Change

It was during the middle school years, however, that two of my best friends invited me to a summer church camp. I'd never been to a sleep-away camp to know what I was getting into, but I'm sure it was pretty much like what you're imagining in your head right now: older cabins, high school counselors, plenty of outdoor activities, and a plethora of sleeping bags.

In fact, so many sleeping bag packs had been dumped into a pile upon arrival (à la the young Lindsay Lohan version of *The Parent Trap*), that at first I could not find mine. Then as I quietly watched other campers reclaim their possessions and the pile got smaller, my pack was nowhere in sight.

This might not seem like a huge deal upon first glance, but what I didn't mention was that inside my sleeping bag, I'd rolled up my prized "cutie blankie" and my favorite Pound Puppies stuffed animal. I'd had "cutie" since I was a baby, and I'd rather have eaten any bug they could throw my way than imagine life without my blanket.

I'm pretty sure that's when the sobbing started.

The rest of my memory from that night is a bit hazy, but I believe it involved a trip to the camp director's office to call my mom and beg to go home. They must have convinced my mom that all would be okay, because I didn't get back on the bus to go home. Instead I spent the night on top of a cold, hard bunk in a borrowed sleeping bag.

Suffice it to say, I didn't exactly sleep well that night. As I lay stiffly and stared at the ceiling of the old cabin, I made a promise to God. Amid tears I couldn't manage to stop from streaming down my face, I bartered with this higher power I didn't yet fully believe in: I promised if he found my blanket and puppy (honestly, the sleeping bag was the least of my concerns at that point), I'd believe in Jesus.

I thought it was a pretty good deal.

I recognize this isn't the typical path people take in following Christ, but in my middle school-aged heart and mind, it was 100 percent genuine.

Much to my surprise, I eventually did fall asleep that night, and when I awoke it was to my counselor, who was taking me back to the camp director's office. Can you imagine what I discovered once there?

My sleeping bag pack! After I confirmed that my prized possessions were indeed inside, the director explained that a Russian foreign exchange student misunderstood the bag retrieval process after getting off the bus and grabbed my sleeping pack by mistake.

It didn't matter how it had happened. My blanket and puppy had been found. In my mind, God kept his end of the bargain, so I needed to keep mine. And thus, I prayed to accept Jesus. After all, I'm a woman of my word.

One thing that's important to note about my personality back then is that I was an extreme people-pleaser. I also generated much of my self-worth from my accomplishments and believed the only way to receive love was to perform well at whatever I was doing: academics, sports, you name it.

So from that point forward, at least while at camp, I purposed to become the best Christian I could be—and that included memorizing as many Bible verses as possible to win the top award at camp. And that's about as far as my faith went for the remainder of my school years.

Fast-forward to my midtwenties. I'd continued living life as the "good girl," which meant I played with a lot of fire while straddling the line between love and acceptance.

After working at a spring training stadium for a Major League Baseball team for almost a year, I found myself in a predicament that completely rocked my world: not only had I ended up in a relationship with one of the players (something I said I'd never do) but then I discovered he was married.

I could not believe how I'd landed in this place.

I made a phone call to a pastor I'd sold season tickets to and asked if I could come speak with him. Long story short, I was told to "fast and pray" during my lunch hour that week (two words that were very foreign to me at the time) and listen for God to speak to me. When I returned that instruction with a blank stare, he told me to close my office door during my lunch hour, skip eating, and instead sit quietly in reflection.

At the end of that week (April 20, 2000, to be exact), I distinctly heard God say to me, "Whether people like you or dislike you, they will respect you when you live a consistent life for me."

In that instant, the weight of people-pleasing I'd been carrying most of my life instantly lifted off my shoulders. From that moment forward, I dug into not only learning about the Bible, but more important, learning about Jesus and cultivating a relationship with him.

My Husband's Journey

My husband grew up deeply rooted in a church culture. He went to a private Christian school, and even grew up in a neighborhood that was literally planted around the church. Two other sets of relatives lived on that same street, with his nana living just one street over.

To say our worlds differed would be an understatement. One similarity is that he too "stretched his wings" during his college and young-adult years. Though he continued to go to church, he was not walking with God.

Through a series of events, he felt called to move back to Florida from Nashville. He did so begrudgingly, and we met two days later. Five months later we were engaged, and five months after that we were married. Our first child would be due on our one-year wedding anniversary.

So there we had it: two kids from divorced families who met, married, and procreated in just over a year. Now, all of a sudden, we were faced with dealing with our own conceptions of religion, having to decide what we would pass on to our children—and how.

A House Full of Love

What we lacked in knowledge, we made up for in love. While my husband and I came from different spiritual backgrounds, we purposed to root our children in a shared faith that we prayed would one day become real to them.

The irony we realized was that we are called to teach and train our children in the ways of the Lord. But the only way ours would truly come to know what it meant to love the Lord would be to see us model those very teachings, both within and outside our homes.

So we prayed and collaborated on what our spiritual map of faith would look like inside the Cone home. We started by setting certain nonnegotiables:

- We would start each day with devotions.
- We would begin each meal with prayer. In fact, we created a simple prayer covering the essentials that our kids could learn quickly to say before every meal: “Thank you for our family, thank you for our food, bless it to our bodies, Amen.”
- We would read either a character-filled or Bible-based story to our children each night.
- We would pray a special prayer over our children right before leaving their bedroom each night, beginning from the time they were born. Because of this, each of our kids had it memorized and could say it aloud with us by the time they

were two, and we still end our prayers with it each night. The prayer is taken directly from Proverbs 6:20–23: “My son, keep your father’s command and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. Bind them always on your heart, fasten them around your neck. When you walk, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you, when you wake, they will speak to you. For this command is a lamp, this teaching is a light, and correction and instruction are the way to life.”

I can already hear some of you pushing back: “This seems more robotic than genuine love.” But let me remind you of one of the most common misconceptions about love: it’s not simply a feeling, it’s a choice.

If we all waited to love others until we “felt like it,” I’d venture to say we would see few acts of love in the world. Much like if we waited until we felt like it to eat healthfully and exercise, we

MENTOR MOMENT

AM I ALWAYS LOVELY?

When we lived in South Florida and attended Christ Fellowship, our pastor (a former football coach) constantly reminded his church family to “suck it up and get tough.”

Now, don’t mistake that tough exterior for anything other than what it is. He and his wife, Ms. Donna, are some of the kindest, most genuine and compassionate people you would ever want to meet.

In fact, it was starting to get to me at one point when I realized they said they loved me and my family, but they also seemed to equally love another family that had hurt us, and I just couldn’t see that family as being very lovable.

I earnestly approached Ms. Donna after church one Saturday night to ask her a serious question. In retrospect, she must have thought I was going to drop a deep, philosophical bomb on her.

wouldn't see many people losing weight. Instead, fitness experts recommend setting a realistic goal and sticking with it every day until (a) it becomes a habit or (b) an internal change takes place that then drives external behavior.

Spiritual Discipline

The same principle about choosing action instead of waiting for a feeling can be applied to spiritual discipline.

There are no requirements for how and/or when we approach God; the important thing is to do it, and do it regularly.

As a morning person, I enjoy starting my day with devotions and journaling. For some of you, that's not possible, so you make time for Bible study before bed. Still others may use a lunch hour to do what I did back in my baseball days: use your allotted work breaks to reconnect with God and recalibrate your thinking.

But instead I just cried out, "How can you possibly love everyone you meet?"

She tilted her head, smiled a gentle smile, and said, "Oh Sami, I didn't always used to be this way. Tom has taught me such a valuable lesson over all these years. There is always at least one good thing you can find about someone; you just focus on that one good thing and love them through the rest."

I have never forgotten those words or that moment. After all, am I always lovely? As much as I'd like to think so, we all know the answer to that question.¹

Donna Mullins is the wife of Tom Mullins, the founding pastor of Christ Fellowship and the President of EQUIP. She is also the co-founder of Place of Hope, a faith-based, state-licensed child welfare organization in South Florida. She and Tom have a son, Todd, who is married to Julie; a daughter, Noelle; and a grandson, Jefferson.

This is all well and good in theory, but for those of you who are visual learners, I thought it might be helpful to share how my different spiritual disciplines emerge throughout my day.

Here's a sample of my typical routine:

- 5:30 Wake up and go for a walk while I listen to a podcast from a Christian teacher/pastor I respect and can learn something from and be challenged by.
- 6:15 Dive in to my devotions and journaling. At a minimum, my morning must-read is *My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers. I've been reading from the same copy for so long that it has a layer of Press'n Seal holding the cover together. Depending on the time, I may also read from the *One Year Bible* and then journal.
- 7:15 Pray with my kids before breakfast, referring to our prayer poster and prayer shield (see more about these later).
- 8:20 Drive the kids to school and pray over them and their day before I drop them off, asking them for any special requests or concerns about what's coming up that day in class, with friends, or with teachers.
- 10:30 Try to take a midday break to stand, take a couple of deep breaths, and express gratitude in a quick prayer.
- 12:30 Before eating lunch, reflect on my day thus far and check in with God to see if I'm truly spending my time where I should on things that are of value.
- 3:30 While waiting in the school car line, ask God to help me redirect my focus from whatever I've been doing that day to preparing my mind to receive whatever our children are ready to share with me from their day at school.
- 5:00 When possible, involve our kids in cooking/preparing for dinner, being mindful to listen more than I talk so I model how our heavenly Father wants us to sit at his feet and share what's on our minds.

7:30 Start the bedtime routine—have the kids help choose a book and then read together. (My husband is the best at this. His voices and inflections are far superior to mine!)

8:00 Tuck the kids in bed, pray our special prayer (Prov. 6:20–23), and give lots of hugs and kisses before walking out their door.

10:30 Pray with my husband before going to sleep, reflecting on our day and praying for tomorrow. If we’re not too tired at this point, we’ll read a section from a book we’re working through together or from our *7 Minute Marriage Solution Bible*.

Other spiritual disciplines we engage in regularly, besides going to church on Sunday, include going to community group once a week, working through Bible studies periodically throughout the year, serving as a family on mission trips, and volunteering in our community.

I never recommend people do exactly what I do, but I hope sharing my routine will challenge you to think about why you do what you do.



Parenting Mirror: Do You See What I See?

Just as you don’t want to hide chips and cookies in your pantry and tell your kids they are “only for Mommy,” you don’t want to confuse your kids by encouraging them in their own spiritual disciplines if you never engage in spiritual disciplines yourself.

While your kids won’t always be honest with you, they never seem to fail at spilling the beans when they are with others. This mere fact can terrify most parents, but I experienced a delightful example when Kariss was about six years old.

Every once in a while our children’s teachers at church will ask them a series of questions about themselves or us as their parents, typically in the form of a questionnaire that they’d hand to us at the end of service on Mother’s Day or Father’s Day. Kariss was asked to describe me, and you know what she said? “My mommy loves God.”

I guarantee my daughter didn't know that because I told her I loved God; she could say that because she saw I loved God as demonstrated through my daily actions.

But even more important is that my daughter's answer proved she felt loved by me as well, because if she didn't know what it meant to be loved she could never accurately describe love in others.

Now that we've laid a foundation of love, your family should begin to understand not just the source of all love, but why we would in turn want to share that love with others, especially within our own home. Moving toward the uncommon may start with a characteristic, but only by studying and seeking it out in an entirely new way.

! Make It Practical

I've now given you a glimpse into my own spiritual disciplines as well as my family's. While every individual and family loves God differently, the overarching point is this: God loves each of us equally and we cannot love others until we grasp that basic, yet life-changing concept.

Once we as parents truly embrace the love of our heavenly Father, we must exhibit that love daily and put it into practice. Only then will our children understand what it means to love with an everlasting love and be able to walk away from the common path and instead run toward the uncommon.

To do this, foundational practices ought to be discussed, adapted, and then put into practice as a family. If you're looking for a baseline from which to start, consider some of the activities listed below that not only work to bring your family together but bring you closer to the love of our Lord.

- *Establish consistent devotions as an individual and as a family.* It doesn't matter so much when you have your personal

and family devotions, as long as you make time for this important period of reflection each day.

- *Tithe.* Set aside a set percentage of any money that comes into your home to give away, either to your home church or a nonprofit you and your family feels passionate about.
- *Offer your time.* Give generously of your time and talents on a regular basis.
- *Model worship.* Your kids will never understand what it means to worship until they experience it firsthand. Model worship in your home regularly through speech and song.
- *Create a gratitude journal.* Encourage each member of your family to create and keep a gratitude journal. For little ones, this may be as simple as having them draw a picture every day of something they're grateful for. For tweens and teens, you may want them to use an app on their smartphone to make a daily list of one thing they're grateful for every morning before they start their day and every evening after they return home. In our family, we take time during breakfast and dinner to have everyone share one thing their grateful for and one thing they're praying about, and I keep track of those lists in a shared family notebook.
- *Follow a nighttime prayer routine.* You can read more about ours at <http://samicone.com/kids-bedtime-routine-prayer/>.

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For more practical tips and guidelines, visit
SamiCone.com/UncommonKids.