

BUILDING KIDS' HOPE BY BEING PRESENT

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When my kids are having a rough day, the easiest way I can help turn it around is by offering to sit with them. They may or may not want a hug, and they might not even want my presence right away, but it helps them to know that I am there for them. Usually, before the tears have stopped falling, they want a hug too. Researchers are constantly talking about the benefit of parents being wholly present in their kids' lives by being attentive and engrossed when listening or playing with their children.



So it shouldn't come as a big surprise that God works the same way with us. He's the one who designed us to crave connection with him and with others, and he wants to be with us too. In fact, the whole Bible is the story of how he is perpetually trying to repair the gap between us.

Last week we talked about the connection between **God's peace and hope**. In today's devotion, we talked about the second strand of hope: **God's presence**. God is—and has always been—with us. We mentioned [Psalm 139:13](#) when the psalmist talks about how God knitted us together in the womb. And we looked at [Hosea 11:3-4](#) which speaks about how God has cared for us the way we as parents care for babies.

Then we looked at the connection between God's presence and hope. As parents and guardians, our presence can help our children feel hope because they know what to expect, they know they are loved, and they know they are wanted. God's presence does the same for us. When we are present in our children's lives, we are mirroring God's presence in our own lives and the lives of our children.

Here are a few tips to help you practice being present.

1. **Tune in to Yourself.** Before we can be actively present in our kids' lives, we need to be physically present in our own. Dr. Julie Meehan suggests physically grounding ourselves in the moment by paying attention to a part of our body, like our breath or the feel of our feet on the floor.
2. **Turn off Distractions.** Maybe you need to turn off your phone, computer, or television. I have a "parking spot" for my phone to visually remind me not to touch it. Or you might need to put down your book, the dishes, or the laundry. No matter what the distraction is, intentionally set it aside sometimes and focus on your children.
3. **Turn Towards Your Child.** Let them take the lead in the activity if they want to play. Get down to their level if they want to tell you something. Take time to see what they are doing, and be specific if you offer any suggestions or praise.

Don't forget as you practice presence to take it one step further. Talk to your children about how God does the same thing. Like you, he loves them, wants the best for them, and wants to be with them. When we remember his presence, we have hope for tomorrow.

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article [Being Present with Our Kids](#)

