

## About the Author

Tim Swanson knows first-hand that the Bible is true and that Jesus Christ is the real deal. God gave Tim an alive heart and faith in Jesus Christ two days after his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. Ever since then, Tim's life has been purposeful, changed and forgiven.

When God called Tim from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, He gave him a mission to help young people and adults learn about Jesus and learn how to live truth-filled lives. This mission is one that Tim works on together with his wife and two children.

Tim's desire is that you examine every piece of parenting philosophy that you believe and root out the untruth, replacing it with God's parenting truth. He wants you to raise your child to obey and glorify God in the midst of a generation that hates to obey and only glorifies itself. Your parenting philosophy and activities today will ripple through time, affecting many generations to come.

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## Chapter 1: What Will Your Legacy Be?

I'm writing to you because my heart is to help you to be a godly parent. You'll be challenged in your thinking about parenting. But, you will also be encouraged. If you are a Christian, you will have the encouragement of the Holy Spirit to build a God-honoring home.

As a parent, you are in a very powerful position. You can either destroy the lives of your children and grandchildren or you can bless their lives. What you do in the next week, month, 18 years will either create a legacy of godliness and diligence or it will fester a future of laziness and immorality.

**“The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and the fourth generation.” Exodus 34:6-7.**

God is presenting you with a choice. You can either obey God by raising your child the way He wants you to. Or, you can sin against Him by not raising your child God’s way. If you choose sinful parenting, you will grow a culture of rebellion into your offspring. If you choose godly parenting, you will build a Biblical legacy for your grandchildren.

**“His mercy *is* on those who fear Him from generation to generation.” Luke 1:50**

Do you fear God? Do you teach your children to fear God? God’s mercy actively resonates through the lives of those who

fear Him and continues to do so as they raise their children to fear Him. Fear towards God is not terror or fright. The product of godly fear is obedience and worship. The fear of God is like a three-strand rope. One strand is realization that God can crush you. The second strand is respect for God because He is infinitely amazing, all powerful, and perfect. The third strand in this rope of godly fear is a loving trust that God cares for you and has adopted you as his child. Look inside of yourself. Do you fear God? Are you living a lifestyle of obedience and worship?

**“Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law.” Romans 13:8**

The Ten Commandments summarize God’s moral requirements for humans, specifically how we are to behave. The first four are about how we are to love God. The last six are about how we are to love others. A God-honoring family culture is one that focuses on loving God and loving others.

You will have a family culture no matter what you do. Biblical parenting is proactive, planning ahead for the type of family culture that is God-honoring. Do you want a family characterized by loving God and loving others?

What kind of family culture do you want? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Your Family Vision Statement:** Take a few minutes to brainstorm what is important to you. \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

Why does your family exist? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In what ways has God gifted you and your spouse to reach out and do ministry? \_\_\_\_\_  
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Write out a family vision or mission statement. In twelve to fifteen words, explain the purpose God has for your family. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6**

Explain what God means when He says, "Train up a child in the way he should go." \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What thinking patterns and life habits are instilled into a child that is trained up in the way he should go? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



Vision



Parent Plan

## Chapter 2: The Beginning, Middle and End

What I'm going to tell you in the next sentence is so profound that it permeates the beginning, middle and end of your parenting. *You must read the Bible together as a family every day.*

The Bible gives the responsibility for being the spiritual leader of the family to the dad. If you are the dad, you can't punt on this one. You have to get out the Bible and start reading it to your family every day. Under your leadership, your wife will begin to read the Bible to your child throughout the day. But, the Bible squarely places you, Dad, as the guy who is in charge of knowing the Bible well enough to teach both your child and your wife. Wow! That is some responsibility. Why, yes it is! Put down the cold beverage and reach for your Bible. Hit record on Sunday football and head to church every Sunday. Clear your work schedule and be the first one out of the car in the church parking lot. God has said in His book of ultimate truth that you are responsible for being the Bible teacher for your family. And, it all starts with you reading the Bible out loud every day to your family.

**Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.**  
**Ephesians 5:25-26**

Mom! If you don't have a godly man in the house, you are going to be the one reading the Bible out loud to your child every day. If your man is a Christian but won't lead, you start praying for him to lead. In the meantime, read the Bible with your child every day, several times a day.

If your husband is leading, support him by telling him how much you appreciate it and by being ready to listen when he's reading. You multitask most of your day. Take a break from that during family Bible time. Help your husband by listening and encouraging. When your husband doesn't feel like doing Bible time, get out the Bible and help him out.

The Bible is so important that you should begin your day with Bible reading, lunch break with the Bible open, and end your child's day with the Bible reading.

So, where do I start? Make your child's earliest memories be of you reading the Bible to him. Read Bible stories to your child from age-appropriate picture books. That's essential! But, make sure to read the Bible to your child. Sing Bible songs with your child.

Here is an idea for Bible time:

1. Sing a Bible song or watch a Christian song on video and sing with it.
2. Read a small section of the Bible. Try for at least 8-10 verses.
3. Pick one or two key points from those verses and tell your family. Try to give an example that applies to your daily life.
4. Read a few verses from Proverbs and talk about one of the key points.
5. Pray for your child to love Jesus, have a new heart, and believe that Jesus died for his sins.

As your kids get older, you can start reading longer passages. Mix it up a bit. For a few months, read a chapter from the Old Testament and a chapter from the New Testament every day during Bible time. If you are reading from a study Bible, read the commentary out loud for each chapter. When you get tired

of this routine, read through the gospels again, or spend a month in the Proverbs.

Family worship or Bible time can last from 5 minutes to 30 minutes. If you are going kind of long, have everyone stand up and sing a Bible song. If your child is old enough to start thinking and talking, ask some questions. Don't stress about the length. The point is that you begin to build a framework of truth in your child's mind that will be the GPS he uses to chart his course through life.

Think about your day... How much time do you spend talking about how to apply God's Word to your child's life? Your child was born with a brain that defaults to worldly thinking. **The Bible says that we have to use the Bible to reprogram our minds to think truthfully. If your child is able to think truthfully, he will have a better opportunity to act truthfully.** Bible time needs to be daily, and also should take place informally throughout your day. The point is to spend time in the Bible together daily and to pray together for God's help in understanding and applying His truth.

The Bible is a spiritual book, so if you don't understand the Bible, you need to start praying for God's Holy Spirit to teach you and give you insights that you can pass on to your family. As you read the Bible together, you will start to gain momentum for teaching your child how to apply God's word.

What is the biggest obstacle that you see to doing a daily Bible time with your kids? \_\_\_\_\_

Why is it important to read the Bible with your child multiple times a day? \_\_\_\_\_



## Chapter 3: Your Parenting Philosophy

As a parent, you naturally have ideas about raising kids. The problem is that your ideas have a mixture of truth and lies swirled together. Your ideas are a product of advice, ideas, habits and things you've seen. There is some truth to what you believe. And, there is some wrong thinking woven in. This is why, if you raise your children your own way, they will grow up and pass that wrong thinking onto your grandchildren and great grandchildren. God knows exactly how you should raise your children. He's told you in the Bible.

The problem that most of us have is that our parenting is based on the hodgepodge of ideas we've grown into. Our list of parenting do's and don'ts are based on good or bad experiences we've had and on random books and TV shows. You need to lay a new foundation of Biblical parenting truth, which is why I wrote this book. So, let's get started.

The Bible says that we are born spiritually dead and that our spiritual heart is constantly deceiving us into thinking that we are right. This is a problem because kids and adults think that they are right most of the time. For example, our culture says that children are basically good. The Bible teaches that children have sinful hearts and need to be trained to live a godly life.

The Bible is absolutely true and it tells you how your children should live. So, you need to make Bible training a significant part of your child training. The Bible is meant to be used throughout your day. You train your child how to live a godly, righteous life.

**All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. 2 Timothy 3:16-17**

The key word here is ***instruction***. ***Instruction*** in what? ***Instruction in how to be righteous***. That means from your child's earliest hours you are teaching him how to live life God's way. This is called living a morally pure life. Start by reading to your baby simple Bible stories throughout the day. Take your baby to church every Sunday and hold him during church service. Sing Bible songs to your baby and play baby praise songs on your music device. As your child gets older, talk about all of the things that God is doing in his life. When he is naughty, tell him he is disobeying God when he acts like that. From your child's earliest moments, you should be singing to him, praying with him, and reading the Bible to him.

As your child gets older, you must help him connect the dots of who God is and how to live a godly life. This requires you to read through the Bible with your child and explain it to him. You can't be passive in this. Embrace your mission to read the Bible with your child daily and build a foundation of godly understanding. Someone will give your child a lens through which he will view the world. Will it be you? Either, you will disciple your child to have a Biblical worldview or he will default to a worldly lens for life. His childhood will be made up of many small decisions that build him into what he will be in the future. Those decisions need to be based on truth. It is your job to walk through daily life with your child, helping him to learn the truth and apply it.



## Chapter 4: Christian Worldview

**And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. Ephesians 2:1-3**

By nature, your child's mind is humanistic and self-centered. True, he can be very caring, but he is wired to be self-serving. This is a lifestyle that makes perfect sense to him. All children, except for Jesus Christ, have been born self-centered, having inherited this sinful nature from Adam. Everyone is born with a way of viewing the world around him that is humanistic and selfish. From birth, experiences, media, parents, religion, teachers, books, words and other influences shape a child's worldview. This becomes the lens through which the world is viewed, decisions are made, emotions are vindicated, and reflexes are born.

How do you decide whether your emotions, thoughts, and actions are God-centered or humanistic? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service*. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove**

**what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.  
Romans 12:1-2**

Notice in Romans 12:1-2 that the command for a Christian to live a holy lifestyle is accompanied by a “how-to” statement: Renew your mind. That means fill your mind with God’s truth and start viewing the world truthfully, Biblically. If you have a Biblical lens for viewing the world, you will be able to figure out how God wants you to live your life. This sounds simple, but it takes hard work to learn God’s truth and use it to evaluate all of your thoughts, emotions, and incoming messages. It is much easier if you have been raised with a Biblical worldview, which is why Biblical parenting involves teaching you child to have a Biblical worldview.

Why do you think God tells you to renew your thinking? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- Here are some key truths that you must teach your child:
1. God is infinitely perfect, wise, good, just, and is worthy of our worship and obedience.
  2. The Bible is God’s truth and should be trusted as a guide for life.
  3. Humanity’s purpose is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.
  4. God is our creator and we are created for a purpose.
  5. Jesus Christ is our only hope for life, forgiveness, and the ability to obey God.

Which of these truths were you raised with? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Which of these truths have affected how you parent? \_\_\_\_\_

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Life as a Christian is a constant battle between God and evil. If you are Christian, you hate sin and love God's ways. You are constantly rejecting sin and replacing it with obedience to God. To do this, our weapons are not physical weapons. No, our weapons are spiritual. We engage with the Bible, church and prayer intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. This results in a lifestyle of obedience to God. We have to be constantly on our guard because we have a myriad of ideas hitting us from all directions that influence us. We have to evaluate and dismantle the ideas, sorting out the truth and lies. Based on our experiences, backgrounds, readings, etc., we have ideas about how to live. The apostle Paul knew this when he wrote the following:

**For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. 2 Corinthians 10:4-6**

We have to take all of our thinking about parenting, life, God, and us and give it to Jesus Christ. We have to screen everything through a Biblical worldview. Parenting adds a new dimension to this because our worldview has huge effects on our kids. Parenting is a journey that you take with your child, where you lead him to learn about God, learn what God wants

for him, and put those truths into practice in daily life. You lead your child to discover his talents and build vision for how to serve God his whole life. You lead your child to ferret out character flaws and build godly habits that replace those flaws. The process of doing this is called Biblical parenting. It's a fight that is worth fighting. Spend your life teaching your child to take every thought captive and obey Jesus.

Think about the media that you expose your child to. Where are you allowing lies to filter into your child's thinking? \_\_\_\_\_

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Think about this question before answering it. What messages do you want your child to absorb? \_\_\_\_\_

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List input that you need to cut: \_\_\_\_\_

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How are you going to increase the truthful input? \_\_\_\_\_

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There is an open battle to control your child's worldview. Many parents are naïve to this, or assume that it is a good opportunity to teach a life lesson. Producers, educators, neighbors, relatives, musicians, and baby-sitters all have their own worldviews and they want your child to share those views. Listen to the lyrics of the today's popular music. How will you build a Biblical foundation for your child, while shielding him from ungodly influences?



Truth Hooks

## Chapter 5: God Chose You!

**These words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6:6-9**

After giving His commandments about how His people should live, God gave this command to parents. We are to know God's commandments by heart and teach them carefully and diligently to our children. God's commandments are basically how to live a God-honoring life. We are to plaster God's Word all over our houses, memorize the verses with our family, and apply the Bible to our child's life.

*God's plan for your life is for you to spend your days teaching and mentoring your child in how to know and obey God's commandments. You are not to just give your child knowledge, but you are to train him to do that knowledge. This is called wisdom. Wisdom is to do the truth.*

Both dads and moms are given this charge from God. Dad is responsible for making sure that this happens, but both parents are involved in teaching and applying God's commandments as a lifestyle. This is one of the reasons why you should not send your child to day care or grandma's, while both parents go to work. God has given you the responsibility to instruct your child in godliness. You can't afford to give up this time that your child desperately needs with you to learn how to live life God's way. *You are the ones*

*that God has commanded to raise your child in a lifestyle of loving and obeying God. Don't delegate this responsibility because God has given **you** the command.*

Time with your child is a big factor here. Are you willing to invest your life to raise your children? It is easy to delegate this to others. You have to keep the goal in mind: You want to raise your child so he is mature in his relationship with God and is ready to be used by God to minister to others, using his strengths and gifts to bless others.

This is the main reason why my wife and I educate our children at home. We want our kids to grow up with a rock solid understanding of God and His plan for their lives. We want them to understand the world around them in a truth-filled way. We know our children's talents and struggles. We have our children's hearts and they listen to us. God has given us the job to grow our children in the knowledge and application of His truth in every area of their lives. For us, schooling is not only about academics. *Education is about teaching the fear of God and the application of His commandments in their lives in the context of reading, writing, science, social studies, PE, art and music.*

As your child grows, you must make decisions for him based on your family vision statement. You will make difficult decisions to do some very hard things because of your vision for your child's future. The truth is that a parent can do many terrifyingly difficult things over long periods of time because he/she believes that it will produce attainable results. As you make decisions for your child's education, you must decide what the best way is to give your child a Biblical worldview and a healthy context for learning. There are several options for educating your child. The challenge for you is to decide

which one will help you best to obey the command to raise your child to know and obey God.

The topic of this whole chapter is that God chose you to parent your child. Are you willing to live in a smaller house and cut your entertainment budget? Are you willing to put your time, money and resources into raising godly children who have a healthy relationship with you and God? You have to decide. We live debt-free and semi-thrifty lives so that we can provide a healthy home on one income. Our children are growing up seeing that we don't need two incomes and that we don't need the government to give us money and food. Instead, they see God provide more than enough money and resources for us on one income, while we model for our children godly household economics.

Speaking of economics, does this concept only apply to people who have money? What about people who live a slum or in extreme poverty? Can they trust God to provide? Or, should dad and or mom leave their children and go work? What about families who live in cultures where it is normal for fathers to move to other cities and other countries to work? How about fathers who leave for long periods of time to work on ships or the international space station?

These are good questions and the Bible has the answers, if you are willing to listen to the Bible. Remember, the Bible is God's word and is the only source of truth for you to live your life by. The Holy Spirit is given to believers to lead you into all truth. The Holy Spirit will never contradict the Bible because He is the author of the Bible. The Bible is your textbook and the Holy Spirit is your teacher.

Let's look at some truths from the Bible that apply to all humans, no matter what their economic status or cultural context.

Should a Husband and Wife Live Together?

Yes!

1. God made marriage and commanded married people to leave their father and mother and become one entity. The Hebrew word in Genesis 1:24 is "dabaq," which means to cling to each other, to stay close to each other, and to stick together. This means that that you and your spouse need to be close to each other and be one.
2. Paul assumes that husbands and wives live together when he says in 1 Corinthians 7:5 that husbands and wives should have sexual intercourse as a regular part of their relationship.

Should a Child Live With Relatives or at a School?

No!

1. God gives parents the responsibility to live with and raise their child in Deuteronomy 6.
2. God has created the family as the spiritual covering for the children. Children are born into the kingdom of Satan and are under the covering of the believing parent(s). Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7:14 that the children are made holy by the believing parent. It is the parents' job to be spiritual protectors of the children until they grow up and leave the family.
3. The family is a very important part of God's salvation plan for the nations. In Acts, 2:37-28, Peter says that salvation is a promise to you and your children, to as many as God will call to life in Jesus. The point is that the family has a purpose for salvation of the children. The Holy Spirit

chooses to use your life-on-life parenting as a means for producing generations of believers.

Can a Poor Person Trust God to Provide Financially?

Yes, if he builds his life on God's truth spiritually, physically and financially.

1. **Jesus said, "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: <sup>25</sup> and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. Matthew 7:24-25.**
2. **Jesus said, <sup>25</sup> "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? <sup>26</sup> Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?<sup>27</sup> Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?<sup>28</sup> "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; <sup>29</sup> and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. <sup>30</sup> Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?<sup>31</sup> "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' <sup>32</sup> For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.<sup>33</sup> But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. <sup>34</sup> Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for**

**tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.** When Jesus spoke these verses, He was living in poverty and was homeless. He knew the provision of His Father.

3. So, you say, “I’ve known people who had to leave their families in order to provide. Why didn’t God help them? There are a few major reasons. First, some refuse to stay out of debt. Others, refuse to leave their parents’ family and live in debt to supporting relatives. Many people don’t know how to manage their money. In reality, they are not willing to trust God’s way of living. Or, they are not willing to do the job that God is calling them to locally. Or, they are not willing to move their family to a place where God is calling them to. So, they choose to disobey the Creator’s command to “stick together.”
4. David said, **“I have been young, and *now* am old; Yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread. Psalm 37:25.**

I believe that I’ve made the point clear that God’s command to have an intact family unit of mom and dad in the same house applies to people in all cultures or economic statuses. Are there some extreme cases for splitting up the family? Yes, but they aren’t for economic reasons.

As I conclude this chapter on you being God’s choice to raise your children, I must mention sexual abuse. It is your job to protect your child from sexual abuse. If sexual abuse happens, it is your job to confront it and bring healing to your child. The more fragmented you get as parents, the less you are able to protect your child from sexual abuse. God chose you to protect your child, as well as teach and disciple him.

Your mission as parents is to live out God's truths spiritually, physically, financially, and in your relationships. As you do this, you are to teach your child the truths of the Bible and how to apply them in every area of his life. You might be tempted to do ministry or jobs as a couple or separately. It might seem right to you to hire a nanny or use a daycare service, so that both of you can do ministry. This is a mistake. Your first priority is to minister to your child and to raise him in the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His Bible. This doesn't mean that you can't do ministry. You can't do ministry if it negatively affects your ministry and training to your child.

Biblical parenting is simple: Live out God's Biblical truths in all areas of your life. Model it for your child daily. Daily and naturally teach him how to grow inside and outside to be a godly young person who relates to others in god-honoring manner. The point I want to resonate in your soul as you finish this chapter is that *your entire life is a life-lesson that you are living out in front of your child. You are his teacher. You are his mentor.* Your life habits, values and beliefs will become his. You only have a small window in which to accomplish this. The time is now.

What lifestyle choices are you making that give you more time with your child? \_\_\_\_\_

What lifestyle choices are you making that take away your child's time with you? \_\_\_\_\_

Stop right now and pray about these choices.  
Ask God to give you power and clear direction.



My Parents

## Chapter 6: Training Your Child

Training your child starts from your earliest moments and extends until he leaves your home. How you react to your child and how you train your child to behave will either garden a beautiful flower or grow a thistle. Train your child to obey you the first time. Do this by consistently, lovingly training your child to obey you every time, the first time.

You are preparing your child to obey God with his life. So, when he is young, you tell your child what to do. This is so important that I'll repeat it: **You tell your child what to do.** Grow in your child a submissive heart towards you. As he gets older, he'll start to obey God on his own and you can begin to gradually release your control. For the first 5 or 6 years, you are making almost all of the decisions for your child. You'll start to ease off slightly as he starts to use wisdom in his choices. By the time your child is an adolescent, you'll be easing off your dictating and becoming a guide. If your child can't make wise decisions, you have to tighten up the control.

There are three major pitfalls to watch out for in parenting. **Pitfall #1:** Have you ever watched other people parent using questions and choices? They say, "Would you like to...? Or, "Why don't you..." Modern parents might think that this helps the child become more cognitive about making wise choices at an early age. This isn't spiritually healthy for your child. Your young child needs to obey you. Instead of giving choices or questions, give direct orders. This will create less conflict and parenting chaos. It will help your child feel more secure. And, it will help your child develop an obedient heart towards you and God. As your child grows in his ability to apply the truths of God's word to his life, you should begin to give him options. Gradually release your child to make more and more

quality choices as he grows into his tween and teens. However, keep an eye on his heart, and carefully cultivate willingness to obey.

Do you tell your child what to do? Or, do you give him options and ask him questions? \_\_\_\_\_

Think of some situations in your child's day. Switch from giving choices to giving commands. Plan out how you will tell him what to do in these situations. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
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**Pitfall #2:** Giving orders you don't intend to follow through on is a parenting pitfall. For example, in the grocery store parking lot, a parent might say, "Don't walk in that puddle." The child walks in the puddle. The parent does nothing or asks how it feels to be wet. **This is a parenting failure because it hardens the child's heart towards authority and teaches the child that he doesn't have to obey.** When this child becomes an adult, he will have to deal with God. God will tell him to do something, and he will have to go through some serious trials to learn to obey God the first time, every time.

**Pitfall #3:** One other thing to remember is that your embarrassment and irritation are never reasons to discipline and train. You discipline and train your child because you love him and want him to grow up in obedience to God.

### **Tips for Training**

Following is some general guidance for the age groups. Every child is different, so you might find that you have a child who

is operating in a lower or higher age group. Take five minutes and read through this section.

**Infant:** Your child needs to know you love him. There are three ways that you can show your infant that you love him. Give lots of love, give structure and spend copious amounts of time together. There is one thing to remember here and that is not to reward temper and angry crying.

**Baby:** Continue to give your baby tons of love and a predictable schedule. Don't reward angry crying. As your baby becomes more mobile, you need to be in control of his movements. You should tell your baby no and start to bend his will to obey you.

**Toddler:** Your child hitting you, telling you no, ignoring you is sin because he is not treating you respectfully. If you allow these sinful habits to get a grip on your child, you are feeding his sinful nature. Your baby disobeying you isn't cute, just like your disobeying God isn't cute. Keep your child on a schedule and tackle the disobedience. Don't tolerate disobedience, such as him telling you no or throwing food on the floor on purpose. Shower your little person with love and require obedience. When he disobeys you, spank his bare bottom with a wooden spoon or a 5-gallon paint-mixing stick. There are five basic rules for spanking:

1. Spank your child on the bottom only and only for disobedience.
2. Be as consistent and as immediate as you can be.
3. Don't spank when you are angry or frustrated.
4. Explain that God tells him to obey you and that, when he doesn't obey you, he'll get a spanking. Insist that he submit to your spanking and put his bottom out.

5. Always have your child ask for you to forgive him and then pray and ask for God to forgive him.

Teach your child to obey the first time.<sup>i</sup> The default is that your child learns to obey the fourth time when you've lost your temper. Or, the third time when you are feeling frustrated. If you teach your child to obey the first time, you will prepare him to obey God. Don't give up on this one. ***Always insist on immediate obedience with a happy heart.*** Be consistent and timely in your discipline.

**Twos-Threes:** You need to be extra vigilant during this period because your child will develop some bad habits. He'll get picky about what he wants to eat. Some throw temper tantrums. Be calm but be firm. With the food, give him small portions that he can eat and insist that he eats it. Don't allow him to decide what he's going to eat. As when he was a toddler, don't allow him to tell you no. Don't let him back-talk or talk sassy to you. It isn't cute. It will produce a hardened heart towards you and eventually towards God. If your three year-old throws temper tantrums, don't dial into the emotion. Remain calm and spank. Then, take a 20 minute break. Re-enter the tantrum again and spank. As you do this, you'll see an eventual decrease in the ferocity and length of the temper tantrums. If your child starts to hold his breath or starts to become overly agitated in the tantrum, lovingly use cold water to bring down the level of the tantrum. It is not healthy for your child to allow himself to lose control. Self-control is a godly habit that you must always be working towards. You'll see the tantrums lessen in their intensity and length.

If your child has to only obey on his terms, this isn't obedience. Fight this battle and win. This kind of rebellion will rear its ugly head at different times. It is subtle but you can

feel and see the rebellion. Deal with it. If your child will only eat a certain kind of food, wait it out and insist that he eats the small age-appropriate portion you give him. If you love your child, you will not allow him to manipulate you into accepting partial obedience. Partial obedience is actually full disobedience.

You see this next one all of the time. A parent reaches for a child and the child pulls away. That is sin. Nip that in the bud. If you tell your child to do something verbally or nonverbally, you must follow through and train him to obey you immediately with a happy heart. Insist on it. Practice it often.

**Fours-adolescent:** This is the time when your relationship with your children should be really blooming. You're spending tons of time together living life together. You are working on your child having a soft, kind heart towards you. You continue to tell your child what to do, but you begin to loosen up as he becomes more able to make godly decisions. All of your structure and scheduling will be paying off now. Your child will be in the habit of obeying you and respecting you. You will still see rebellion rear its ugly head. Deal with the heart cause for that rebellion. Read the Bible to your child multiple times during the day and pray against the sin towards which he is inclined.

Do you find yourself yelling at your child? Or, do you ever feel like you love your child but don't really like him at that moment? Take a step back and contemplate the root that is causing this conflict. You might find that there is a character issue that needs to be dealt with. A stubborn streak or a flaw that is causing the behaviors you find frustrating. Your child might not pay attention to detail and might take short-cuts to avoid work. First, isolate the root cause. Second, focus your attention onto this issue for a day. Don't let it slide. Lovingly

talk about the issue. Remind your child of Bible verses that address this issue. Third, keep anger and frustration at bay. Discipline and coach your child through the day. You may need to spend several years targeting the same issue. Don't give up.

For some training issues, you're looking at a week of consistent targeting and training. For other issues, you may be in for a slow and steady approach that will last for ten years. Be consistent and stick to it. You're in for the long haul. If your child doesn't understand your expectations, model the correct behavior. Do an activity together. Then, assign another activity and monitor how it is completed. Use a lot of praise when you see glimmers of the desired behavior. As you make this character issue a top priority, you'll probably see some change of heart in your child. Focus in on this issue until you see acceptable progress, remembering to be loving and patient.

Pornography and sexual abuse are traps that can catch your child. Be vigilant and keep open communication with your child about boundaries and what he's doing when you're not around. If you feel a gut check or sense a red flag, follow through and get to the bottom of it.

**Teenagers:** This is a period when you have to really focus on keeping your child's heart. Don't give your child over to be parented by his peers or by neighbors. It's easy to let him fill his life with friends and sports. Be intentional about staying involved in all aspects of his life. Your job is to transfer the control from yourself to him in the next 5 years. Walk with him and tackle the issues together. Don't allow your child to become rebellious or snappy with you. Instead, garden a kind, soft heart. Don't allow a silent, surly teen who is self-

absorbed. Instead, insist on a polite, kind teen who is considerate of others. Being kind and respectful is a lifestyle, so insist on and grow this lifestyle in your teen.

You must provide a context for your teenager to use his talents and gifts. If you don't, his default might be counterproductive activities. You can open the door to addictions, attitudes and bad influences. Be deliberate about providing a social, work and ministry context for your child in his teen years. *The two biggest factors during this period will be time together and Biblical training within meaningful life contexts.*

**Siblings:** Create a culture of kindness towards each other and tolerance for differences. It is easy for siblings to go from laughing to teasing to anger in just a few minutes. Stay on this. Don't allow this type of behavior to spawn in your home or in your car. Stay on top of bickering or sassy behavior. This will happen. Train your child to treat others well. He will have to be kind to his spouse, boss, family, neighbors, and children. During the adolescent and teen years, he must practice godly behavior.

**You and Your Spouse:** Your children will grow up to be like you. How do you treat your spouse? With love and respect? Do you lovingly resolve conflict and forgive? Or, do you use conflict to equalize power and create a pseudo peace? Sarcasm and manipulation are enemies of a godly family culture.

### **Wrap-up On Training**

No matter where you are in your parenting, remember this: Your child has a wicked heart and needs Jesus Christ to forgive all of his sins and give him a new heart, a heart that

wants to obey God. Your child needs the Holy Spirit to start to change him from the inside out. Following Christ is a lifestyle that begins at the cross and extends into eternity.

Your job is to build godly habits and a submissive heart into your child. God's job is to save your child and give him strength to obey you. You tell your child what to do and don't allow his rebellion to rule. Garden a kind and submissive heart into your child.

How would you describe the overall culture in your family? \_\_

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How are you facilitating godly interests and activities in your family? \_\_\_\_\_

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Are there any areas in your parenting that you need to tighten up? \_\_\_\_\_

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Is there a personality issue in your child that is driving you over the edge? Jot down two or three things that you will do to avoid losing your temper. \_\_\_\_\_

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If you were to give me advice on how to handle this issue that is driving me nuts, what would you tell me? \_\_\_\_\_

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What are a couple of things that you are doing consistently to promote a positive, godly family culture? \_\_\_\_\_

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Stress Free



Safety First

## Chapter 7: Do You Have Your Child's Heart?

Your child will grow up a product of the influences to which you give him access. There is a battle in this world against you. It is a battle for your child's heart and mind. Whoever gets your child's heart eventually gets his mind. You are the one to whom God has given the responsibility to influence your child's heart.

There are a few things to consider:

**Time parenting:** Are you your child's best friend and constant companion? Do you pawn your child off on relatives and friends multiple times a week? I'm not talking about a date night with your spouse every once in a while. Do you shuttle your child from home to sitter(s)? If so, why? When you shift your child into the arms of others, you are giving up valuable bonding and relationship time. Instead of your child feeling secure in your sphere of safety, he learns to expect the instability of multiple caregivers. Also, you are giving up time that you'll never recover, time that you should use to garner your child's heart.

**Family environment:** Look at your house with a critical eye. Something as simple as Disney, or KidzBop can develop a sassy attitude in your child. Your complaining can give your child a moody, cynical attitude. If you allow your children to call each other stupid and argue, you'll see the sin of pride and self-centeredness blossom into violence. The curriculum at your child's school can give him a disdain for the Bible simply because it presents God as unnecessary for life.

**Hobbies and interests:** Look in your garage and examine your lifestyle. What is the message that you are giving your child? Do you love sports and free time better than you love

God? Do you love God more than you love camping and shopping? Do you and your child have everything you ever could want? Something as simple as giving your child too many toys can create a selfish heart. Would you rather spend time on your computer or phone than spend time with your child?

Your child will respond to the evil influences quickly because your child has a sinful nature that loves sin. Your job is to limit the evil influences and promote the godly influences. You are growing a child who is designed to love God and obey Him. You have a limited window of time in which to train a Biblical worldview into your child. You must teach him God's truth and train him how to apply the truth. This discipleship is daily and deliberate.

*Christianity and Biblical parenting is a lifestyle that spans from birth to twenty.* What you spend your money on and your time and resources will be what your child gives his heart to. If you spend your money, time and resources on God and being a Biblical family, your child will grow up with those values cemented into him.

You will have your child's heart if you:

1. Spend immense amounts of time with your child.
2. Lovingly discipline and train your child in every aspect of his life.
3. Teach your child the Bible and help him understand how the Bible applies to daily life, science, history and career.
4. Guard your child's heart from the anti-God input from the world.

Make a quick list of what inputs you are inviting into your child's heart.

Which need to go? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Reflect on how much time your child is out of your immediate care. What message are you communicating to your child? \_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Just looking at your priorities and lifestyle, how committed are you to earning your child's heart and raising him in the knowledge and fear of God? On a scale of 1 to 10, what number would you give yourself right now? \_\_\_\_\_



Kind Heart



Relational

## Chapter 8: Moral Innocence

**I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. John 17:14-19**

Jesus prays that God the Father would protect His children in the world and keep them pure. Jesus wants you to use the truth of the Bible to protect your child from the hardening corruption of the world in which he lives.

To protect your child from hardening, you'll need to limit the input of evil and teach him to process his reactions to evil using the truth. First, let's look at why we should limit the input.

Being born with a sinful nature makes us susceptible to moral corruption. To compound the issue, we are born spiritually dead toward God. When God gives a person an alive spirit towards Him, He puts His Holy Spirit into that person, giving him power to fight the sinful nature. Until your child is born again, you will have to work extra hard to limit the worldly input.

Watch your child! His moral innocence slowly erodes, as he becomes more aware of sin from TV, TikTok, his peers, etc. This erosion of his moral innocence impacts his thinking, speech, and actions. And, as mentioned in the last chapter, it also hardens his heart towards you.

Your child's life has a trajectory. You will set and guide that trajectory by limiting his moral corruption and filling him up with a godly lifestyle. You must shield your child from the trends with dark monsters, sexual innuendos, grotesque/violent games and movies. Does your child need to read books about dolls that terrorize people or watch movies about zombies who eat human tissue? Most secular movies and songs focus your child on external beauty, relational drama, and brokenness, with a smattering of violence. Carefully weigh the content against the effect it has on your child's innocence.

How should you teach your child about the evil in the world? You don't need to go into detail, but you do need to acknowledge the evil. Is your neighbor openly committing adultery? Is your friend's daughter living with her boyfriend? How about abortion? All of these need to be talked about. When your child is young, a good response is to say, "That is not God's way. It is wrong. Let's pray for them to obey God."

Moral innocence does not mean being naive or ignorant. It means that you and your child process the evil and sin around you by looking at it Biblically. It's the process of learning how to be in the world and not being of the world.

One of the traps of living in our broken world is to become morally insensitive and accepting of sin. The other pit to fall into is to negatively judge others. As your child gets older, work with him to be honest about sin and evil without developing an "I'm-better-than-you" attitude.

The truth of the Bible teaches us how to live amidst evil and how to treat sinners. It is a challenge to hate sin and evil, fight

against evil, and still love those who are evil. Love and justice must come together. You must teach your child how to fight for justice without becoming bitter towards those who do evil. It is godly to push for justice, protect the innocent, and free the captives. It is also godly to bring the good news to evil people and allow God to take revenge on them. For example, a child trafficker should be caught, prosecuted and punished. Christians should be actively involved in making that happen. A Christian also has to give up the right to feel personally bitter towards the child trafficker. He has to give God that right to vengeance. A Christian should try to bring a trafficker to justice and also bring the gospel to him. Justice and love.

Modeling and helping your child process these truths is especially important as he travels through the adolescent and teen years.

What are the moral causes that your family fights for? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How do you model both love and justice as a family? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Two questions for thought: What is an area where your heart has become hardened towards immorality? Is there a people group or type of sinner that you need to forgive?

**“Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” Jesus (Matthew 5:44)**



## Chapter 9: Raising Up Stewards

God has given humanity the task of stewarding His creation. We are to use all of His resources in ways that will honor God. The problem is that rebellion against our Creator has brought friction and obstacles into this work. We have to learn how to handle the stress, reduce the waste and maximize the benefits. This process is called *taking dominion* over the resources God has given us. We spend our whole lives taking dominion over our skills, talents, resources, time, and the environment we live and work in. We plant, grow, harvest and market using the resources God has given us.

From your child's earliest moments, you are preparing him to contribute to this lifelong process of taking dominion through stewardship.

**Body:** Your child's body must be stewarded. You must structure his day so that he gets plenty of exercise and a regular night's sleep. Make exercise a normal part of your family's day and have an 8:30 bedtime. You need to insist on him eating a balanced diet and eating age-appropriate portions. This is an issue of training. It is unhealthy for your family to be eating prepackaged foods. You must show your child that diet is important to you by taking time to meal plan, shop, prepare and cook healthy, balanced meals. Limit the candy, chips and sugar drinks to one portion a day or even a week. Have your child brush and floss his teeth at least twice a day. By about age 7, your child should be showering and changing clothes regularly.

**Food:** As your child grows older, food will be a key indicator of his understanding of resource stewardship. His eating habits and wastefulness need to be tightly managed by you

until he can demonstrate that he values resources and understands portion control.

**Time:** Stewardship of time boils down to you taking control of your child's schedule. Teach your child how to prioritize activities. Before he goes to bed at night have him write a task list for the next day. Walk with him through these tasks the next day. These lessons in time management have to be modeled by you. You have been given a limited amount of time here on this earth to accomplish all of the good works that God has planned out in advance for you to do. There really is very little time for video games, television, DVDs and social media. Remember, your child will take on your habits, both good and bad.

**Talents:** Your child has natural talents that you must identify and develop. For example, your child might be really talented in encouraging others. You must facilitate activities where he can develop this talent. As a family, write cards for a friend or relative who is sick and deliver them. If your child is skilled in bossing people around, you must teach him servant leadership. Put him in charge of a family activity and help him organize the activity. Make a list of your child's top talents. Make a plan to grow those talents.

**Will:** Your child's will is one of his most powerful resources. From the womb, your child has one thing that he wants to serve with that will, himself. Your job is to help him take dominion of his will and bend his will to serve God. All of your training and discipline must point your child towards willingly obeying God. He obeys you the first time with a happy heart because, in doing so, he is obeying God. Dig deep to find the will and take the time to bend it to obey you and God. For some, this is quick. For others, persevere for the long term.

**Finances:** Financial stewardship is both modeled and mentored. Start mentoring finances by growing productivity in your child. Goals and to-do lists are the building blocks for productivity. As your child hits his elementary years, teach him how to be productive and diligent. Give him a goal to work towards such as putting his toys in the appropriate bins and keeping a clean room. Type up this goal and post it on his wall. Every day, help him carve out time to keep on top of this goal. Every evening, help your child write a short to-do list for the next day. As he gets older, help him to prioritize his lists.

Financial stewardship involves saving and spending. Regarding saving, set some goals for your child and help him start saving. It could be that he saves \$1 out of every \$10, for example. If he breaks something in the house, have him save to replace it. If he wants something special, help him save to purchase it. With regards to spending, you want to help your child lay up his treasure in heaven. Teach him how to tithe a tenth of his allowance and birthday gifts. This lifelong habit will help your child be less self-centered and more dependent on God. Finally, as a family, invest in missions. Sponsor children, orphanages, missionaries, and mission projects. Hang up pictures, watch videos, write letters and draw pictures to send to your missionaries and sponsored children. Save money as a family and invest in the two or three ministries that your family is passionate about. Wherever your child invests his money, his heart will follow.

Help your child understand about avoiding debt, setting goals, investing in God's kingdom, and saving for the future. Read through Proverbs with your child about once a year, highlighting the verses on diligence and financial stewardship. Most importantly, openly discuss and model your financial decisions with your child. Help him understand why you don't

have a car payment. Help him make the connection between wasting resources (like food or water) and wasting finances and vice versa.

**Stewardship:** Parenting is a full time job because you must have your child stewarding his talents, time, resources, and environment on his own by his late teens. Two factors are critical: 1. Having a relationship with your child. 2. Having a hold on his heart. You must create life activities wherein he can practice stewardship. You must integrate all of your training into his life and help him apply it.

Look at your spending from last month. Outline a rough estimate for each of the following.

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Housing: \_\_\_\_\_

Food: \_\_\_\_\_

Utilities: \_\_\_\_\_

Gas: \_\_\_\_\_

Debt: \_\_\_\_\_

Entertainment: \_\_\_\_\_

Savings: \_\_\_\_\_

God: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the message that you're sending your child based on your spending? \_\_\_\_\_

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Look at your vision statement that you wrote in the beginning of this book. How does your spending match up with your vision statement? \_\_\_\_\_

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Church

## Chapter 10: Working on Character

**Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6**

Training involves mind, body, emotions, and spirit. All of these intertwine together into a word we call character. Some adults have debilitating character flaws. As parents, we work on our children to build character, rooting out the weaknesses and growing the strengths.

Building godly character involves a lifestyle of Biblical parenting. Individualizing your training to meet the needs of your child requires systematic, prayerful parenting.

### **Godly Habits:**

The fruits of the Holy Spirit describe the life habits of a Christian. These life habits guard the emotions and direct the actions. Growing these fruits in your child's daily life is fun and rewarding. Openly talk about which fruit you are practicing throughout your day. **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23**

### **Task Completion:**

Although this may be natural for some kids, it is an area that requires a lot of training. Your child's future boss and spouse will thank you for fighting this battle! Watch your child for a day. How many tasks does he not complete? How many times are you frustrated because you have to ask him two or three times to finish a task? Take it one task at a time and walk him through completing each activity. This is a hill to die on, so to speak. Walk with your child through his week, helping him to

complete each task. As he starts to respond, you can gradually back off. Don't give up! You'll see results.

**Stamina:**

Mental and physical stamina are difficult to instill because both require the parent to learn the same lessons. You have to walk through the stamina-building activities with your child. Kids don't naturally grow stamina on their own. Building stamina usually takes place after the fun has worn off. Stamina is built over the years as you work together to accomplish difficult tasks. From an early age, we've taken our kids snowshoeing and hiking. We've built up their mental, emotional, and physical stamina over the years.

What activities do you regularly do to build stamina? \_\_\_\_\_

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**Talents and Gifts:**

Your child has very unique gifts that will suit him for specific ministry and careers. Discover those gifts and provide opportunity to develop them. For example, it takes years of patient parenting to push a hyperactive boy through music lessons. You will get grey hair, but in the future your son will thank you. Does your child have a gift for organization? Put him in charge of the family budget.

What are your child's unique talents and gifts? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is your strategy for growing these? \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Mission-Focused:**

Where you spend your time and money, will be where your family's attention goes. Spend your time and money on bringing the love of Jesus into your community. As a family, sponsor a child and write letters to him. Read books out loud together about Christians who have served God in various cultural contexts. YWAM Publishing has a wonderful series called Christian Heroes. Adopt a missionary that you keep up with and write letters. Take your family on short-term missions trips. Jesus gave us the job to take His good news to the whole world. Make home and international missions a natural part of your child's lifestyle.

One way to do home missions is to invite people over to your house. Hospitality is a natural way to reach out to your community. Teach your family to watch for opportunities to invite others in. As you do this, process with your child how to respond to rudeness or naughty behavior. You be watchful to set healthy boundaries. There is a balance to this, and the key is kindness. For example, if you hear taunting or naughty talk, kindly say, "At our house, we use kind words when we play." Take the time to debrief with your child afterwards. When it is too much, limit the amount of hospitality. Pray as a family about the people you are reaching out to.

How are you intentionally mission-focused as a family? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are some ways that you can be hospitable? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Outdoors



Persevere

## Chapter 11: Biblical Discipline

Discipline sounds punitive and it can be. Have you ever heard of the word disciple? When you become a disciple of Jesus Christ, you begin the journey of becoming more like Him every day. With Biblical parenting, discipline is within the process of helping your child grow up into a godly young person. Discipline can be physical or it can be a discomfort.

There are a couple of key Biblical concepts to keep in mind when you discipline:

1. Discipline when you are calm, not when you are angry.
2. Discipline doesn't have to be one-for-one. But, you do need to address the issue of rebellion.
3. Discipline should be timely and private.
4. Discipline should not exasperate your child.

There are two types of consequences that can be meted out: punishment and natural consequences.

### **Punishment:**

When your child is willfully disobeying you, punishment is in order. Remember that the purpose of punishment is to bend your child's will to willingly obey you. Punishment is not for accidents or for revenge. If an action is motivated by rebellion or a refusal to obey, punishment is appropriate. Gauge the severity of your punishment to fit the action. Keep in mind that punishment is a loving action. You are looking for a softening of your child's heart towards you through the process.

### **Biblical Spanking**

Spanking is what the Bible prescribes for your child when he willingly disobeys you. In the chapter, Training Your Child, I outline some guidelines for spanking. Please reread those. In

our culture, people are openly against spanking. But, Biblical spanking is the right way to handle rebellion.

**He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly. Proverbs 13:24**

If you find that your child is motivated by losing privileges, add a minor consequence in addition to the spanking. However, be careful with this. Once you've spanked your child and forgiven him, life should move on. The purpose of spanking is to address the problem of rebellion and restore the relationship between you. Keep a close watch on your child's heart in submitting to your discipline. Don't let him harden towards you. Take time to talk and pray together. Don't allow him to tantrum or hit you. Give him time to calm down before spanking him, if he is angry and worked up. Spanking is a time for loving, calm reflection and forgiveness. Importantly, if you are escalated and angry, your child will not receive your discipline. If you spank your child because you are angry and frustrated, that is not Biblical discipline, and he will know that. If you discipline your child in anger, you need to ask him to forgive you. You are representing your Heavenly Dad when you discipline your child. Do your best to represent God accurately in your demeanor and motivations. God disciplines his children because He loves them and wants them to obey Him. He isn't harsh or angry when He disciplines His kids.

**Grace (undeserved mercy)**

Biblical discipline isn't one-for-one. You are addressing a problem or a pattern. Deal with it. Move on. Deal with it again later. Move on. Sometimes, you will give grace and not discipline. This can happen at times. Obviously, it can't happen all of the time or that wouldn't be discipline.

## Natural Consequences

Both rebellion and accidents often result in natural consequences. As a parent, you need to use wisdom on how you allow natural consequences to discipline your child. Your model for this is your Father in Heaven. He has allowed you to escape many natural consequences for your sin. And, He has allowed you to experience natural consequences for your mistakes. Natural consequences are effective for helping your child learn to behave better. Keep in mind that all consequences are softened within the relationship you have with your child. You are walking with your child through all discipline, whether dealing with rebellion or accidents.

What was your experience with spanking growing up? Was it loving Biblical spanking? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How do you usually respond to your child when he disobeys you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

There is a balance to discipline, from too lenient to too strict. How are you finding balance in your discipline? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Where do you need to tighten up? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Loosen up? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Chapter 12: Managing Your House

When you read the Bible, you'll find that God likes order and schedules. In the Old Testament, God had a lot to say about organization and cleanliness in His instructions for the nation of Israel. He told them how and where to live, and gave them many rules about being clean and orderly. God's church was set up in a very orderly manner. Think about how you imagine Heaven. Do you imagine piles of junk all over God's kitchen counter? Do you imagine dirty dishes hardening in Gabriel's sink? If you opened up Jesus' refrigerator, would you find grime and stale vegetables? Sanitation and organization are important to God, and as such, they are important for our physical and emotional health.

In the Garden of Eden, God gave Adam and Eve the job of taking dominion in the earth and making the environment productive for humanity. Six thousand years later, we have the same job, only our subduing is of the pile of dirty laundry or the rapidly multiplying dust bunnies.

To dads, your job is to work with your wife to set the vision for how the house will look and feel. This is delicate so go easy. You are most likely the provider, so you will be gone most of the time. But, your conversations with your wife are the beginning. To give her momentum, you need to use servant leadership. You need to quietly support her taking dominion over the house by doing the dishes, cleaning bathrooms, and folding laundry. As you use servant leadership, you'll see your wife begin to blossom in her ability to clean and keep an organized house. Also, teach your child to clean, and give him age-appropriate tasks.

To moms, your husband and you need to talk about what you think a clean house looks like. Start to get a handle on the clutter by targeting one area at a time. As your house becomes more organized, you will find emotional energy and you will gain momentum as a mom.

Our purpose in life is to mirror God's amazing qualities and enjoy our relationship with Him. You'll find that this same concept is lived out in your children. Your child will be a mirror of you. He will mirror your good and bad qualities. As you mirror God in your home, your kids will mirror those qualities too.

Which parts of your house need to be subdued, organized, and kept clean. Do you feel overwhelmed by them? \_\_\_\_\_

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What isn't working and why?

Isn't working:	Why?

Talk to your spouse and make a short list of where to start. As your house becomes a reflection of God, you'll both find more emotional peace.

## Clarification on Gender Roles

A man's identity is generally found in his productivity and leadership, especially as the provider for the household. A woman's identity is generally found in her productivity, nurturing, and organized home environment. Since we are sinners, there will always be a tension in these relationships. Men may find it hard to be diligent or may find it hard to be the servant leader in the home. Women may find it hard to be content with the identity of mother and wife. The tendency is to want the other person's job or just to settle for being discontent.

What if the husband is a stay-at-home dad and mom works? What if both spouses work? God has given each spouse a responsibility. The husband is like the team captain and the wife is a star teammate. This doesn't mean that each spouse has to fall into a traditional job description. God has also uniquely gifted each spouse for tasks within the household. Together, you create a synergy. As a couple, you work together to find out what works best for your marriage and parenting. God has created the two of you with unique gifts, personalities, and skills. Submit to each other and collaborate to work out which roles and tasks fit which spouse. God gives the husband the responsibility to lead. He gives both spouses the opportunity to work together to create a God-honoring household.

What about your roles is working well? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is there something that you'd like to look at changing? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **Chapter 13: Clean and Scheduled**

God wants His people to be set apart from the dirt and filth of the world. This starts in our physical living situation. God wants us to have a clean house that shows how clean He is. God also wants us to live scheduled, orderly lives. Your clean house and consistent schedule will create less stress and more productivity.

As your child grows, teach him to do the chores with you. This will become an area where you can train him to have a happy, obedient heart and to complete tasks. Welcome this opportunity by creating a predictable life with chores that he gets to participate in.

### **Schedule**

Scheduling is really important because your schedule becomes the framework for your family. Think about Jesus. He got up early and had activities that he accomplished during the day. He kept regular meal times. He attended church on the weekends. On Earth, Jesus was a scheduled person. Some part of your life will drive your schedule. It could be your job or your sleep habits. The challenge is to take control of that schedule. If you control your schedule, you will see your productivity increase. You will also see your child develop better life habits. This will help your children become successful parents. And, your child will probably do better in his future career because of your schedule today.

### **Make a Prioritized List**

Make a list of what you want to accomplish for the next day. Prioritize this list, so that the important, time-sensitive tasks are sure to be done the next day.

## Create a Predictable Schedule

Set a reasonable time to wake up and create a predictable daily schedule. One way to build your family's schedule is around mealtimes. Within reason, insist on the family sitting down together to share meals. Turn off the TV and put away the technology. This is a great time to read a missionary story or from the Bible. Over the years, your family will find the dinner table to be a place to connect. After setting reasonable mealtimes, create a schedule between those times. Plug in your activities from your prioritized list.

Growing up with a schedule will be a gift that you give your future generations. You can't imagine how many amazing accomplishments your child will have because you gave him a daily schedule.

What kind of life habits do you want your child to grow up with? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Secret

## Chapter 14: Lifestyle Decisions

But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed. Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine *showing* integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you. Titus 2:1-8

This passage is about daily life choices. Remember, your child will grow up to be similar to you. All of your choices that you make now will affect his future. With deliberate thought, your life choices will empower a pattern of good works in your child.

Your vision statement for your family is your guiding light for making lifestyle decisions. *Your job is to raise children who are Christ-centered, who understand the Bible and how to apply God's laws in their lives – a pattern of good works.*

**Church:** God told His people in the Old Testament to work six days and spend one with Him. For modern Christians, church is very important. Regular attendance and participation in a Bible-practicing church is paramount for your family. Being part of a church is a lifestyle decision that you need to make. If your relationship with Jesus Christ is important enough for you to make the sacrifices to be in His church regularly, your

child will recognize that. Raise your child in a healthy church and make attendance mandatory and a significant part of your lifestyle. Healthy church involvement, coupled with your discipleship at home, will help to produce a pattern of good works in your child.

**Submitting to Authority:** Simply put, if you willingly submit to the authorities in your life, your child will have an easier time doing so himself as he grows up. Submission is a heart issue.

**Working:** Men have a tendency to either overwork or under provide. This leaves the wife having to either lead the family spiritually or go to work to provide for the family. A man's failure to have balance in work will impact the upbringing that his children receive. Women can have the need to feel financial security, which can be a motivator to leave the children and go to work.

**Housing and vehicles:** The modern lifestyle requires too much, so most moms and dads both work, forcing the children to grow up with a smaller amount of parenting and discipleship. You have to ask yourself and God, "What kind of house do I really need?" It is important to be content with a smaller house and to force your family to be debt free and on a budget.

**Daycare:** Ask yourself this: Why do I put my child in daycare or send him to a relative's? Your answer to this question will reveal either a Biblical or an unbiblical belief that is driving your parenting decisions. Always come back to this one truth: *You are the one that God has chosen to garden your child and raise him.* You are the one that God has chosen to parent an accurate picture of Father God into his life. Delegating this daily to another creates instability and a spiritual void that will

be filled by another. Daycare displaces relationship-building time. This adds up over time to be a considerable amount of squandered time.

**Education:** What method of educating your child will give you the best chance to disciple and raise your child in the Christian faith? How will you integrate God’s truth into your child’s education?

Think about your child’s current daily schedule. What is your child doing all day?

Time	Activity	Place

Add up how much time he spends with you daily. \_\_\_\_\_

Reflect on this. What are you happy with or dissatisfied with? How does this use of time line up with your vision statement?

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Look back at the Bible truth from Titus at the beginning of this chapter. List the activities or attitudes that God wants you to practice. \_\_\_\_\_

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How are your lifestyle, housing, employment choices impacting your Biblical parenting? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Chapter 15: You Can't Be the Perfect Parent

Your child belongs to God, and you are stewards of this beautiful gift. You cannot create the outcome, but you can be diligent in the process. One of the most important pieces of being a parent is to have a firm commitment to Biblical parenting and at the same time know that you can't be the perfect parent.

You will become overwhelmed by repetitive negative behaviors that seem to derail your parenting. At these times, look back over the past six months and take note of the positive ways that your child's character has grown. Parenting is about long-term momentum, which comes from simply being consistent with your schedule, discipline, and family time. When you are overwhelmed by a tantrum, a rebellious heart, or sibling fighting, take a step back. Pray your heart out to God. Call on Him to fulfill his promises to use Biblical parenting. Only God can give your child an obedient heart. Look back over the years and thank God for all of the parenting growth He has given you. Parenting is a marathon, not a sprint. If your child has pushed you over the edge, send him to his room and give yourself time to reflect on God's grace and goodness to you.

**The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Romans 13:12**

Put on the armor of light! This simply means be like Jesus, who is the way, the truth, and the light... the Light of the world. How would Jesus parent your child? In order to be like Jesus, you have to be a born-again Christian. To be like Jesus, you have to use your weapons of light.



Armor Up!

## Chapter 16: Hey! I'm a Single Parent

If you are a single parent, you're probably frustrated at how idealistic this all sounds. You're right! Many parents don't know how hard it is to single parent.

Through all of the journaling and reflecting, what are the top five action items that you want for your parenting?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

What is there about Biblical parenting that feels most unattainable? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The truth is that you can't do this alone: Work full time, parent full time, disciple your kids full time. You will have to build a community of godly people who can support you in this mission.

For a single mom with a son, you can't be a strong male role model for your son. You must enroll mature Christian men from your church. The church won't automatically know how to step up to help you. You must prayerfully facilitate this.

If you are working full time, you will have to have a job that allows you flexibility to parent. Or, you'll have to have godly support. The first person to talk to is your pastor. Feel free to contact me at [www.SwansonMission.com](http://www.SwansonMission.com) to brainstorm ideas.

## Chapter 17: Protecting Your Child

Protecting your child is one of your most important responsibilities. Here are a few ways that many children get hurt.

### **Sexual Abuse**

Children can be sexually abused by other children in the neighborhood, by older children, by relatives or neighbors. How will you protect your child from being sexually abused? Here are some ways:

1. Talk to your child about how his private areas are not places not to be touched by others.
2. Some people touch boys' private areas as a joke. It is not a joke. Tell your child to report to you if this happens. Immediately, go confront the sexual abuser and tell them that it is not a joke. It is sexual abuse.
3. Do not allow anyone to touch your child on his bottom or private areas. If that happens, immediately deal with the issue. Talk to your child and say that you are sorry that happened and that it was not right. Take the steps to make it stop. Don't be afraid to tell the other person that it is not okay to touch your child. If it is another child, talk his parent to make it stop. Don't allow your child to be with that person unsupervised.
4. Always know where your child is. If he is out playing for a while, ask him where he went and who he was with.
5. Don't let your child spend the night with people who you do not 100% trust.
6. Be careful about letting your child go into other people's houses.
7. Many children see pornography at a friend's house. Talk openly with your child about avoiding pornography.

## **Protecting Your Child from Demons**

There are ways that you can invite demons to attach to your child. Be careful to avoid those situations.

1. Horror movies and movies about witches, demons, or spells. You need to stop your child from seeing these images. If you are at a restaurant, cover your child's eyes and ears, and ask the manager to turn off the TV.
2. Pornography: Be very careful about what your child looks at on the internet, Youtube, TikTok, or on a friend's phone. Talk with him and ask him if he has seen anything. Be open with him about not looking at naughty pictures.
3. Meditation and Natural Healers: Do not take your child to a healer or allow your child to do spiritual meditation. You are inviting spirits to come to your child when you take your child to a natural healer. The healer might say that he is talking to Jesus Christ or to the Lord. This is a different Jesus Christ and a different Lord.
4. Name switching: In the Philippines, it is common to sell your crying baby to a neighbor and change his name. This is believed to stop the crying and it does for many. This is a demonic practice. Do not do it. If you have, repent and renounce that action.
5. Sexual Abuse: Make it your number one priority to know where your child is and what he is doing. Openly communicate with your child, so you know if something has been done to him.
6. Your Rebellious Sins: Your child can become like a mirror of you. Do you want a child who is targeted by a spirit of anger, depression, lust, or suicide? Of course not! Get help for yourself. Don't pass on your sin to your child.
7. Religious Amulets and Good Luck Charms: Don't use charms, dream catchers, or amulets. Trust only in God.

## **Sexual Identity**

You can break your child's sexual identity. Protecting your child's sexual identity can be complicated, but here are some points to consider.

1. Teach your child his identity as a child of God. A person's sexual identity is tied to his understanding of his purpose and identity as a child of God.
2. Be present in your child's life. This means that you need to spend time with him on a daily basis. Don't leave him to go work in another city. Don't have him go live with his aunt or grandma, while you live somewhere else. Both parents need to be living with your child, and spending time with him daily.
3. Speak life into your child, especially affirm his sexuality. Don't call him names that mock him. If you have a girl, don't call her a tomboy. If you have a boy, don't call him a sissy. Affirm his qualities as a boy or affirm her qualities as a girl.
4. Do your job as a parent! Be there for your child and give him love. Both mom and dad need to give time, attention, and love to your child daily.
5. Protect him from sexual abuse and pornography.
6. Sometimes, families will pick on a child who is not strong in his sexual identity. They will bully that child, physically abuse him, and mock him. Your job is to make sure that this never happens to your child.
7. Bullying: Your child can be bullied physically and emotionally. Communicate with your child to know if this happens. Stop it from happening. Talk to the adults involved. If it continues, take your child out of the place where it is happening.

You have the ability to shape your child's sexual identity into a god-honoring person who lives out God's plan for him. Make this a significant priority for your parenting.

## **Protecting by Blessing**

Speak words of affirmation, blessing and life over your child often. Tell him how proud you are of his spiritual and physical growth. Teach him about his identity in Christ and his value in God's eyes. Don't be shy about this. Often, encourage your child by telling him the talents and gifts that you see God developing in him. As a parent, you have plenty of words of correction. You are often instructing him on his behavior and giving him corrective feedback. Be intentional about giving your child positive feedback. Pray blessings over him. Speak blessings over him. Tell him specific ways that you see God working in his life.

## **Death and life *are* in the power of the tongue. Proverbs**

**18:21a.** You have the power to curse or bless your child with your words. When you criticize your child or tell him he is stupid or worthless, you wound him and those wounds can infect him until the day he dies. Be very careful with your words because you can either speak life or death into your child's soul. Of course, you will make mistakes. Confess your sin to your child and ask him for forgiveness. Then, focus on being truthful and speak life. **There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword, but the tongue of the wise *promotes* health. Proverbs 12:18**

## **Spiritual Warfare**

1. Pray over your child often and pray for God's protection. Teach your child to pray. Worship together.
2. Read your Bible at least 30 minutes a day and pray for your family. Reading a devotional is not enough preparation for battle. You need to read and study the word. Teach your child how to read the Bible.
3. Don't allow evil spirits to come into your house or target your family. Submit to God and send them away. If the problem persists, please contact a pastor or the author.

## Chapter 18: Dealing With Evil Spirits

There may be times in your parenting when you suspect that there is something strange going on. You begin dealing with a sin in your child that seems to be **supercharged**. In this case, ask God if you are dealing with an evil spirit. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and help you know what type of spirit it is: For example, spirit of anger, spirit of rejection, spirit of lust, spirit of defiance, spirit of fear. I'll use the spirit of anger as an example.

When you and your child are calm, talk to your child and tell him that you think there might be an evil spirit attacking. As a believer, you tell it to leave in the authority of Christ.

1. Pray out loud, "I cover myself, my family, and my pets with the blood of Jesus. Holy Spirit, please protect us and clean out this attacker. Please show us what is causing this attack."
2. This next is not a prayer. You are calmly commanding in the name of Jesus Christ. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, I command the spirit of (anger) to leave (child's name) now."
3. Pray, "Holy Spirit please show us when this attached." If the Holy Spirit shows your child when it started, have him say, "I renounce that sin I did when I was (fill in situation). I renounce all agreements with the spirit of (anger). Sometimes, the Holy Spirit does not show the entry point. If your child is not old enough, skip this step."
4. Read scripture together that deal with this subject.
5. Submit to God and resist the Devil: Tell your child that he needs to use self-control from the Holy Spirit when he starts getting (angry.) Read Bible verses together.
6. If your child has an episode with the sin (temper tantrum), the spirit may try to attach again. Command it to leave in Jesus' mighty name.

The behavior patterns are separate from the spiritual attacker. Once your child is free of the spirit that is supercharging his behavior, he must be retrained to replace those behaviors with godly behaviors. For anger, he must be taught how to take a break to cool off.

**Other Possibilities:**

A spirit can attach to your child because of a traumatic event in his past. This requires you to speak truth over the event and help him forgive and heal. "I'm sorry that (event) happened to you. That was evil and I renounce that it happened to you in Jesus' name. God was there with you. Can you forgive (person's name)? Say with me, 'I choose to forgive (person's name) and I give him to Jesus. I trust Jesus to do what is right to that person.'" Pray a prayer for healing over your child and the traumatic event. "In Jesus name, I pray healing for you because of (event). Holy Spirit, please close that door and clean out the hurt that is there." Look at your child and say, "The little boy inside who was hurt can grow up and be a godly man! You are accepted and God loves you."

Also, it can be there from a generational family problem. If you aren't successful in freeing your child from the problem, pray a generational prayer over him to cut off the generational spirit. (Contact author for the prayer.)

## **Chapter 19: Special Parenting Challenges**

Biblical parenting is the right answer for all children. However, your child is unique, and for some issues, you'll need to find medical and therapeutic assistance. God can miraculously heal your child, or He may choose to walk with you through the process of prayer, medicine, and therapy. Remember, some challenges are due to the physical wiring of your child.

### **Reactive Attachment Disorder**

The failure to attach and the refusal to connect in close relationships wreaks hurt and devastation in a family. Depending on emotional and physical development in your child's brain, your child might have reactive attachment disorder. (It's easy to diagnose yourself and your child using Google, so read a few books on the subject before you start using a label.) When parenting with reactive attachment disorder, my advice is to get counseling from a Christian counselor who specializes in therapy for children who struggle connecting relationally.

### **Asperger's Syndrome**

For a child with Asperger's, you'll need to be consistent, logical, and black and white in your discipline and training. Your child will need a predictable schedule and organized environment. Also, your child might not be able to "see" your facial expressions or read your body language. With Asperger's, you'll need to teach your child to consider others and be flexible. You'll need to train your child to cope with and work within a disorganized world that can be overwhelming for him. Your child might appear selfish and unable to think outside of the box. Research Asperger's and develop a plan for training your child to live in relationships with others and to function successfully in a world where he's a minority.

## Chapter 20: The Grand Adventure

Think about parenting as a long road trip. Your journey is together as a family. Your destination is arriving at a family reunion in Heaven where you'll meet all of your grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

You have the vision for your destination. You have your roadmap. And, there will be plenty of time together. *Your job is to raise your child in the fear of God and in a lifestyle of applying God's truth to his life.* At first, you'll be making all of the choices for your child. During this time, you'll be insisting on an obedient heart towards you. You will be telling your child what to think and what to do. As you grow your child's Biblical foundation for living a godly life, you will begin to give him more decisions. You will eventually be more of his guide. But that cannot happen without you being his decision-maker for many beautiful, loving, teachable years.

Biblical parenting is a deliberate partnership with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit grows you and your child spiritually using several avenues: the Bible, prayer, and your church community. You may have noticed an emphasis on these as you read the previous pages. God's gift of becoming a Christian and growing as a Christian is given as we drench ourselves and our family in these pipelines of grace: Bible, prayer, and church.

Paramount for parenting sanity is to know that this whole adventure is a process. Stay calm, stay the course. Slow and steady grows your child. Many times, you'll feel like there is no hope. At times like these, look to Jesus Christ. Then, look back at how He has faithfully helped your child overcome

obstacles in the past. If you parent Biblically, you will see your child slowly mature in his character.

Communication as a family about this road you're traveling together will create a natural environment for tackling the miles that you need to cover to reach your destination. Openly talk with your child about God's word, pray together, and live out life-on-life discipleship.

To sum up, give your child the gift of a God-honoring, structured house that worships and obeys Jesus Christ together. Teach your child the good news of Jesus daily. Model for your child how the Bible is lived out, one hour at a time.

**These words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Deuteronomy 6:6-9**



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<sup>i</sup> Tripp, Tedd. *Shepherding a Child's Heart*. Second edition, Shepherd Pr, 2021.