

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Spiritual Parenting:
An Awakening for Today's Families
By: Dr. Michelle Anthony

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Avoiding the 6 Dysfunctional Parenting Styles
Dr. Michelle Anthony

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A Father's Role in Guiding His Son to Authentic Manhood
By: Robert Lewis

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Our Last Chance to Save Their Future
By: Tim Elmore

Parenting
14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family
By: Paul David Tripp



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e a s t s i d e CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

PARENTING TOOL BOX

PRACTICAL TOOLS AND APPLICATIONS FOR PARENTS

VOLUME 2



I always have one single piece of advice for the parents of teens: Don't let your relationship with them fade away. Often the sweetness and closeness of the parent-child relationship is nearly gone during these years, and an awkwardness and distance sets in. Don't let your teenager cast the mold of your relationship. Here's why. Parenting is entirely relational. You cannot effectively be used by God as an instrument of rescue and transformation in the life of someone with whom you have little functional relationship. Heart and life change always takes place in the context of relationship.

Think of the gospel model—the way God works in your life. He first draws you in with an unbreakable bond of love (justification), then transforms you into what he wants you to be (sanctification). Only those who have been justified by his grace will ever be sanctified by that same grace.

So, do everything you can to create and maintain a loving, tender, patient, and gracious relationship with your teenager. Pursue him/her each day. Verbalize your love each day. Hug and kiss her each day. Confess your irritation, impatience, and harsh words over and over again. Love him as much when he is undeserving as when he is deserving. Regularly invite her out for an evening, just the two of you, for dinner and some activity. Go to their extracurricular activities. Be glad to provide transportation.

Do anything you can to be together and communicate your affection. When you must have a hard talk, don't do it on the fly. Make an appointment so you are emotionally calm, have time to communicate with affection, and are able to talk about hard things with grace. And don't forget to pray daily that God would bless you with his grace so you can be a tool of grace in the life of your teenager.

All materials based on an article published through The Gospel Coalition February 28, 2017 with excerpts from Paul David Tripp's book (*Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Youth Family*)



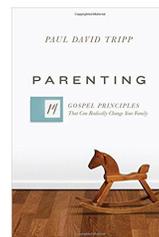
THE GOSPEL COALITION

How to Raise Changing Children in a Changing Culture

A Conversation with Paul Tripp By Melissa Kruger



Melissa Kruger serves as women's ministry coordinator at Uptown Church (PCA) in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is the author of *The Envy of Eve: Finding Contentment in a Covetous World* (Christian Focus, 2012) and *Walking with God in the Season of Motherhood* (Waterbrook/Multnomah, 2015). Her husband, Mike, is the president of Reformed Theological Seminary, and they have three children. She writes at Wits End, hosted by The Gospel Coalition.



Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Youth Family
By Paul David Tripp

In this life-giving book, Paul Tripp offers parents much more than a to-do list. Instead, he presents us with a big-picture view of God's plan for us as parents. Outlining fourteen foundational principles centered on the gospel, he shows that we need more than the latest parenting strategy or list of techniques.

Available on amazon.com

Other ECF StudentMinistries resources available: **Parenting Toolbox Vol. 1** and various books and materials at our offices. Please email our staff with any questions or needs in your pursuit and growth of being an intentional parent.

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PEACE IN THE JOURNEY

Many loving, well-intentioned Christian parents get up each morning and load the spiritual, emotional, and physical wellbeing of their children on their shoulders. Although they claim to believe God is with them, they act as if they've been left alone in their parenting task. They think it's their job to change their children. If you parent this way, you'll progressively crank up the size of your threats, the heat of your emotions, and the sting of your words, asking these things to do what they have no power to do. As a result you'll end up doing and saying things you shouldn't in a frustrated attempt to force change in your children.

No wonder so many parents are frustrated, discouraged, and exhausted! How liberating to know the wise heavenly Father is with you at every moment, and he is parenting everyone in the room. How freeing to know God carries the burden of your children's welfare, and he'll never ask you to do what only he can do. How good to know you haven't been asked to be the change-agent, but rather a willing tool in the hands of the One who has the power to rescue, redeem, and transform your kids. How important to know he doesn't condemn you in your weakness and failure, but meets you with forgiveness and empowering grace.

You can go to bed knowing he loves your children, and because he does, he's put them in a family of faith—your family. He'll reveal their needs to you so you can be a tool of his work in their lives. You don't carry the weight of their ultimate welfare; he does. All he calls you to do is faithfully represent him, to play the role of ambassador. He will do the rest.

P U R P O S E

There are only two models of parenting.

The first is an ownership model. Here the driving motivation is that these children belong to me and I have the right to form them into what I want them to be. Usually this model is informed and directed by cultural models of what a successful person looks like. So I set the rules I think are best, use whatever power I have to enforce them, and mete out whatever punishments I think are best when the child goes outside the boundaries of my rules. The ownership model emphasizes the parent's ability to restrain and control the child's behavior until he or she exits the home.

The ambassador model is profoundly different in every way: Parents understand their children do not belong to them, but to God. They know their work is ambassadorial—their job is to represent the purposes, character, and methods of God. So they constantly ask: What does God desire in the lives of my children, and how can I be part of it? Their labor is driven by biblical values rather than cultural norms.

There's one other crucial element to the ambassador model. Parents embrace their complete inability to change the hearts and lives of their kids. They recognize their role as instruments in the hands of the One who alone has the power to create lasting change. So they look for every opportunity to be tools of God's convicting, forgiving, rescuing, transforming, and delivering grace in their children's lives. Their goal is to exercise parental authority as a beautiful reflection of the authority of him who called them to their parental task—so they constantly cry out for grace to represent the heavenly Father well.

B U S Y N E S S

Every Christian parent must ask a critical question again and again, or they will lose their way in the chaos of information, pressures, and influences of the culture in which they raise their kids: What set of values determines the goals, activities, and schedule of our family?

You simply can't squeeze a biblical model of parenting into a frenetic schedule shaped by the world's view of what a successful child looks like. Many well-meaning parents have little or no relational or instructional time with their children because they're running from activity to activity, fearful their kids will somehow miss out. It's so vital to keep focused on what God wants to form in the heart and life of your children, and what you need to do to be a tool of his agenda.

Ask yourself:

Are you giving yourself the time necessary to build and maintain a relationship of love? Are you setting aside time for family worship? Is there time to share relaxed moments and discuss what's truly important in life? Is your schedule driven by an agenda of heart and life transformation, or by activities and achievements? Do biblical values shape whether you say "yes" or "no" to adding another activity? In the busyness of life, are you working to build into your kids a constant awareness of God and their need for his grace?

Asking these questions again and again protects you from the pressures that can cause you to lose your way.

A C C O U N T A B I L I T Y

Too many parents unwittingly fall into the trap of expecting the law to do what only grace can accomplish. They think if they set up a neat system of rules, enforcements, and punishments, their children will be okay. But if all our kids needed was moral information and moral control, Jesus would have never had to come. Yes, our children need God's law because it exposes their sin and shows them how to live. But the law has no power to rescue, restore, and transform their hearts. Lasting change in a child's behavior always flows from the heart, and only grace can change a child in this way.

It's vital to understand grace. Grace isn't about being permissive, because grace never calls wrong right. If wrong was right, there'd be no need for grace. Grace is quick to acknowledge wrong as wrong, but instead of moving away from a person in criticism, judgment, and condemnation, grace moves toward them with forgiveness, tender instruction, loving correction, and the patient exercise of authority. It's not enough for parents to be the child's law-giver, policeman, prosecutor, judge, and jailor. We must look for every opportunity to share grace—it alone has the ability to open the eyes and unsettle the hearts of our children so they run to the Redeemer where real help can be found.