

The Bible Parenting Code

Revealing God's Perfect Parenting Plan

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READ THIS FIRST!

The title of this book does not refer, as one might initially think, to a parenting cryptogram your author discovered hidden in the Bible. This is not one of those dubious works. Furthermore, God would have no rational reason for concealing His design for childrearing, and God is a super-rational Being. I use the word *code* in its usual sense, to refer to a system of principles or rules that govern a certain activity or define a certain role – both, in this case.

The members of any well-run organization – military, corporate, civic, educational – operate according to a code of conduct that sets boundaries around and defines proper individual behavior in keeping with the organization’s mission.

As one might expect, the Bible sets forth more than a few such codes of conduct beginning with the commandments God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai. The Bible describes codes for marriage, worship, interpersonal relationships, and yes, the Bible also describes a code for the rearing – or “training up” (the usual biblical term) – of children.

The Bible Parenting Code consists of hundreds of verses – far more than space will allow me to cover herein – that do not, in most cases, mention parents or children explicitly, but are nonetheless pertinent to a proper understanding of children and parental responsibilities. God is the author of the Bible’s parenting code; therefore, it is impeccable. It describes the one and only proper way to raise raising a child. Because it is God-given, parents deviate from it at their, and their children’s, peril. Unfortunately, such deviation has since the 1960s become the norm, even in the Christian community. Its foremost symptom is provocative misbehavior on the part

of a child – tantrums, defiance, disrespect of authority being the most common manifestations. In every case, we are talking about typical toddler behaviors that are present well past toddlerhood. Post-toddlerhood behavior problems have increased dramatically since the 1960s, when American parents began taking direction from so-called “experts” in the mental health professions (of which your author, ironically, is one). That body of secular parenting advice has had a disastrous effect on the behavior and mental health of children. And because it is anti-biblical in every respect, professional parenting advice has caused the relatively simple process of raising a child to be highly stressful for many if not most parents.

Since the 1960s, child discipline has become a highly controversial matter. The lack of general agreement on the subject has caused marriages to fail, extended family relationships to fall apart, friendships to crash and burn, and neighbors to stop speaking to one another. It has triggered conflicts between parents and teachers and caused many promising young people to leave the teaching profession. Meanwhile, mental health professionals have profited greatly from assigning bogus diagnoses to, conducting bogus therapies with, and prescribing dangerous medications for children, the ultimate victims of these disagreements.

America desperately needs a restoration of traditional, biblical childrearing norms and practices. Such a restoration requires a roadmap. Hopefully, this book will serve that purpose. Undoubtedly, the great majority of its audience will identify as Christian, but the book is not for Christians only. I am not attempting to persuade the reader to believe in the Lordship and Second Coming of Christ Jesus. My intent is to reach out to all who share concern for the direction childrearing has taken since the 1960s and are willing to participate in bringing about a necessary course correction.

God's Perfect Parenting Plan is comprised of scripture that explicitly refer to children and parental responsibilities as well as scripture that are not so explicit but are nonetheless relevant to those topics. This book takes a close look at forty (not including the Epilogue) of them, the intention being that the reader will focus on one scripture per week over approximately nine months, but that is by no means a requirement. You can read all forty in one sitting, given sufficient mental stamina.

Each chapter is an essay. I have sequenced them in what seems to be a logical order, but you can read them in any order that suits your fancy. After reading a chapter essay:

- a. **contemplate** how the Bible verse in question applies to you, your children, and the specifics of your family situation, especially any difficulties you may be experiencing.
- b. **communicate** your thoughts to your spouse or "parenting partner," who is hopefully reading this book as well, and engage him or her in creative discussion.
- c. **determine** changes you need to make in your parenting approach.
- d. **formulate** a plan of action based on the Bible verse in question.
- e. **incorporate** your plan into your day-to-day parenting, resolving to form new, biblical parenting behavior that gradually replaces behavior that may be the worldly norm but is not working for you.

The questions and thought exercises at the end of each chapter serve as a catalyst and guide for letting God's Word transform you into a confident, relaxed, authoritative mom or dad. It is also my hope that this book will be used to stimulate study, discussion, and discovery in church-

based parent education programs (in which case, the number of chapter essays can be adjusted to fit the length of a class).

My purpose is to help you, the reader, connect with God's design for us, His most special and beloved creation, as concerns the raising of His most precious children and help you experience the fullness of joy that He wants all parents to experience.

Amen!

INTRODUCTION

You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples. – *Psalm 77:14 (ESV)*

Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. - *Matthew 7:7–8 (KJV)*

When people think of miracles, they are usually in mind of events that have no scientific explanation; events, therefore, of supernatural origin – Jesus walking on the stormy waters of the Sea of Galilee, for example, or raising Lazarus from death to life. Indeed, occurrences of that sort are miracles, but Scripture itself, being of supernatural origin, is itself a *bona fide* miracle. Consider, for example, that the Book of Genesis begins with a statement of scientific fact: to wit, the universe came into being as an inconceivably immense burst of light (Genesis 1:3), popularly known as the Big Bang. In the first few seconds of the Big Bang, so-called dark matter and dark energy separated from light matter and energy, an astrophysical fact described in Genesis 1:4 (When reading this scripture, consider that God has not yet formed the sun, moon, and stars, so the words *night* and *day* as used in this verse do not mean what they meant from day 4 on.). Moses describes planet Earth as initially covered in water, a primal state that scientists have verified. As Israeli astrophysicist Gerald Schroeder (*The Science of God*, 2009) has pointed out,

the creation sequence described in Genesis for days 1 through 6, culminating in God creating human beings, fits with scientific findings. The only logical explanation for how Moses – *sans* scientific instruments much less a knowledge base in astrophysics or paleontology – knew how the universe began and the precise sequence of creation is that God personally revealed it to him! That most definitely qualifies as miraculous.

One of the miracles of the Bible is that it deals with everything germane to human living. The truth of Scripture, because it is Ultimate Truth, knows no boundaries – temporal, cultural or otherwise. If one opens the Bible seeking advice on how to properly resolve a marital issue according to God's Will, the Bible will become, in that person's hands, before his or her eyes, a marriage manual, and a *perfect* one at that. If one comes to the Bible seeking advice on a matter of business ethics, the Bible will become, in that person's hands, before that person's eyes, a manual on business ethics – and again, a *perfect* one. Where Judeo-Christian scripture is concerned, what one seeks, one will find, and what one finds, in every instance, is pure, unalloyed truth.

As with marital and ethical issues, if one comes to the Bible seeking advice and guidance on parenting matters, the Bible will become, in that person's hands and before his very eyes, a parenting manual. Furthermore, as with the above examples, the Bible's parenting guidance is impeccable. It is without flaw and equally applicable to every child. Human beings, however, are not without flaw. We are inclined toward sin and error in all our ways. Using God's flawless Word as one's parenting manual does not mean one will do a flawless job of raising children. It simply means one will be led in a proper direction and make considerably less error.

The following statement is an incontrovertible fact: ***Imperfect human beings will do a far better job of raising children if they rely on God's Perfect Parenting Plan than if they rely on advice and guidance provided by other imperfect human beings.***

That, in a nutshell, explains why today's parents are having so many more problems than did parents of several generations ago. In the 1960s, America unplugged from God's Word when it came to the raising of children (along with just about everything else) and plugged instead into a brand-new, untested body of parenting advice based on never-verified (and still unverified) psychological theory. As the influence of that theory-based advice has increased, so have America's childrearing problems. Correlation does not prove cause, but correlation can be evidence of cause. In this case, correlation and cause-and-effect are one and the same. Psychological parenting theory threw American parenting off the biblical beaten path and parents have been wandering, directionless, ever since.

Today's young parents are experiencing problems with their children that their great-grandparents – generally speaking, folks who raised children in the 1950s and before – could not have imagined. Those old-timers could not have imagined belligerent defiance on the part of preschool children ever being commonplace. They could not have imagined school-age children throwing full-blown hissy fits in the classroom and public places. They would have scoffed at the absurdity of reasonably intelligent four-year-olds still acting as if they cannot fathom the purpose of a toilet. The list goes on. The current state of parenting affairs is bad for children, parents, schools, churches, communities, and culture. It is bad for everyone and everything. It bodes ill for America.

American parents need to get back on the proper parenting path, the one laid out by God in His Word. God has provided parents with a perfect parenting plan. Understanding that plan does not require a doctorate in divinity. It reveals itself to all who seek it. Furthermore, unlike the post-1960s psychological paradigm, God's Plan is simple to understand and execute. Best of all, it benefits all concerned.

Why did most parents of two-plus generations ago seem so relaxed in their approach to childrearing and why is that no longer the case? Because the former relied, whether wittingly or not, on scripture-based principles while the greater number of today's parents – including many parents who would sincerely identify as Bible-believing Christians – are relying on parenting direction based on psychological falsehoods. Thus, their parenting paths are not straight (Proverbs 3:6). Thus, they are almost constantly coping with one problem or another. In turn, they experience frequent episodes of parenting stress in the form of frustration, anxiety, and guilt. Ironically, when said parents arrive at the ends of their proverbial ropes, they are inclined to seek help from psychologists – people who represent the very source of their problems.

Your author is a duly licensed psychologist; therefore, I absolutely know that the following statement is true: ***Psychology is the most atheistic profession ever developed, and intentionally so.*** I am by no means saying that all psychologists are atheists. I am, however, asserting that psychology is a secular philosophy that attempts to explain human behavior in terms that oppose a biblical understanding of human beings. Psychology scoffs, for example, at the idea of original sin. According to psychology, human beings are born pure, unsullied, without fault – moral blank slates, if you will. They do bad things not because they come into the world bearing an innate proclivity toward doing bad things but because their pure natures are

corrupted by bad parenting and other “traumatic” life experiences (few of which were considered traumatic before psychologists defined them as such).

Furthermore, and most important, every single one of the psychologists responsible for modern psychological thought, and therefore modern parenting theory, was a radical atheist. That includes B. F. Skinner, the psychologist behind the behavior modification theory that informs today’s failed approach to child discipline. It includes Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, the humanistic psychologists responsible for the demonic lie that high regard (esteem) for one’s self is the brass ring of *la dolce vita*. It includes Sigmund Freud, the so-called “Father of Modern Psychology,” who is on record as saying that people who believe in a Supreme Supernatural Being are mentally ill. There are no exceptions to the psychology-is-an-atheistic-philosophy rule. Psychology is based on cleverly phrased falsehoods. It is an example of the “deceptive philosophies” Paul warned of in his epistle to the Colossians (2:8, see Chapter ___).

It should go without saying that human beings cannot be properly understood by someone who eliminates our Creator from the equation. As such, a psychologist’s ability to be helpful is seriously compromised (and that applies as well to a significant number of so-called Christian psychologists). Researchers have found, for example, that most people who seek psychological counseling do not obtain better emotional and mental health. On average, of three people who see psychologists because of troubles in their lives, one becomes even more troubled and one testifies to no change. That leaves but one who claims improvement. Would you see a medical doctor with a similar record? How about an auto mechanic?

Take it from one who is a member of the club, psychology is a secular religion that one believes in by faith. It has a priesthood, doctrine, supposedly “healing” rituals, idols, and

inquisitions. But the characteristic that most qualifies psychology as religion is its promise that a human being can be regenerated – cleansed of negative, self-destructive thoughts, habits, and emotions – through a process conducted by another person who also suffers, as do all human beings, from negative and self-destructive thoughts, habits, and emotions. The proposition is absurd on its face. Authentic transformation occurs through Christ and Christ alone.

Regarding the raising of children, psychology has been a wrecking ball. Since American parents began taking their marching orders from mental health professionals, the *per capita* expansion of the profession of child and adolescent psychology has outpaced every other health-care field. Meanwhile, every indicator of positive mental health in America's children has gone (and is still going) steadily downhill. School achievement is considerably lower. The lives of many teens are perpetual personal soap operas, marked by one "issue" and "trigger event" after another. The child and teen suicide rate is ten times what it was in the early 1960s. A significant number of today's kids are even anxious and confused concerning the gender to which God assigned them.

A journalist once asked me if there was *anything* about post-1960s psychological parenting that improves over pre-1960s traditional childrearing.

My answer: "No, nothing. Wrong thinking leads to dysfunctional, counterproductive behavior. Psychological parenting has been a disaster for everyone except psychologists, who have profited greatly from the destruction their bogus theories, diagnoses, and therapies have wrought."

The person asking the question was thinking that perhaps we could take some aspects of old-fashioned, Bible-based childrearing and some aspects of modern psychological

parenting, put them together and come up a hybrid superior to both. But there is absolutely nothing redeemable about psychological parenting theory. We need to dispose of it, all of it. There is no third path between traditional, biblical childrearing and the pseudo-scientific paradigm that has gripped America since the 1960s.

God's childrearing plan (and, therefore, His plan for the family) is simple. It is free of theory and confirmed by common sense. Interesting enough, and paradoxically, God's childrearing plan is also corroborated by social science research. Literally, it makes *perfect* sense. And because the architect of said parenting design is the Great Architect Himself, it works! And that, when all is said and done, is what truly matters.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other." – *Genesis 11:5 – 7*

Since its inception, the purveyors of postmodern psychological parenting have produced more than one hundred thousand books promoting their progressive theories. To put that into perspective, if said books are one inch thick on average and were carefully placed one atop another, the resulting stack of books would reach 8,333 feet into the clouds! As of 2021, the world's tallest building – the Burj Khalifa in Dubai – is 2,717 feet tall. Fancy that! Our hypothetical stack of parenting books is slightly more than three times the height of the world's tallest building!

I call that imaginary stack of books the Tower of Parent-Babble. The reference, of course, is to the story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11). That peculiar tale begins with all of mankind speaking one language and being of one purpose, however mischievous it was. When God sees the massive structure they are building, intending to reach the heavens and "make a name for [themselves]," He confuses their language such that they are no longer able to understand one

another and, therefore, accomplish a common purpose. With that, God puts a stop to their grandiose project and scatters them across the face of the earth.

I am a member of the last generation of children to be raised by adults who were of one mind when it came to children. In the 1950s, the decade of my childhood, it was rare to find a husband and wife who did not agree concerning their kids. Parents agreed with their children's teachers. A child who got into trouble at school got into even more trouble at home. His explanation of what had happened never trumped the teacher's report. When it came to children, neighbors agreed. Parents of different faiths agreed. Even parents of no faith agreed with parents of faith!

It was not so long ago that nearly everyone in America was on the same childrearing page – one defined by biblical principles. Back then, the primary aim of rearing a child was that of producing a good citizen, which was accomplished, everyone agreed, by teaching right from wrong – instilling, in other words, a functional moral compass. In that regard, even atheists agreed that right and wrong were defined by universal principles set forth in the Ten Commandments (or at least commandments 5 through 10, those referring to one's obligations to parents and neighbors). In effect, everyone spoke the same childrearing "language."

Then, as the 1960s waned, members of the mental health professions – psychologists, mostly – began claiming, in one voice, that traditional childrearing was harmful to a child's psyche. Supposedly, that time-honored approach caused children to repress traumatic memories, hide their true feelings, and not be capable of independent thought. Mind you, the mental health community advanced these ludicrous assertions without a shred of confirming evidence. (Take my word for it, folks, we are talking about some of the most intellectually

arrogant people in the human-sphere.) Nonetheless, because the public (a) tends to be somewhat awed by psychologists and (b) believes that capital letters after one's name means the person in question is an expert, mental health professionals were able to persuade parents to abandon tried-and-true childrearing and embrace an untested philosophy founded on one falsehood after another.

The new experts also promoted the idea that a child's upbringing needed to be defined by his or her "individual differences." Eventually, most of these supposed differences were transformed into diagnoses, the most notorious of which are attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), and early-onset bipolar disorder (EOBD). In short order, one childrearing language became many. As various forms of parent-speak proliferated, childrearing confusion set in and parents were no longer able to understand and relate to one another.

"Well," one parent says to another, "you just don't understand what it's like to live with a child who is ADHD. His therapist says that normal means of discipline aren't going to work with him."

"Our adoption specialist has told us that we must parent Suzie with the trauma of her adoption uppermost in mind," says the mother of a hyper-petulant eight-year-old who was adopted at birth. Trauma?

Yet another parent claims that her five-year-old "has a sensory disorder that causes her to reject certain foods and requires that I cook her special meals."

In no time at all, the confusion and miscommunication of Babel was upon us once again, only this time it concerned children. In the 1950s, it was rare to find a husband and wife who

could not come to agreement concerning their children. Today, many parents are not on the same page with one another, teachers, neighbors, or their children’s grandparents. A significant number of said parents aren’t even in the same *book* with one another! Today, childrearing is called “parenting,” and has been since 1970. One might think that the terms are interchangeable, but they are not. As the following chart describes, the differences are profound:

Pre-1960s CHILDREARING	Post-1960s PARENTING
Childrearing “experts” are elders in one’s extended family, church, or community	Parenting “experts” are mental health professionals
The family is adult-centered	The family is child-centered
Focus on instilling functional moral compass, a proper understanding of right versus wrong	Focus on assisting children toward academic, athletic, and artistic achievement
Parents teach respect for others	Parents attempt to instill high self-esteem
Parents function as authority figures	Parents attempt to be liked by their children
Children have chores	Children have activities, but few chores
Children are not BIG DEALS	Children are Idols
Relatively stress-free	Highly stressful, especially for women
Parents are married first, parents second	Parenting comes first, being married second
Child’s behavior of paramount importance	Child’s feelings of paramount importance

Two entirely different ways of regarding and approaching children will lead to two entirely different outcomes and, sure enough, the outcomes of pre-1960s childrearing and post-1960s *parenting* are as different as night and day. Childrearing is simple and straightforward. Parenting is confusing and difficult. Parenting wears people out, especially mothers. Parenting damages marriages. Parenting has decimated the mental health of children. Parenting requires expert assistance. Parenting leads to diagnoses and prescriptions for psychiatric drugs. Post-1960s *parenting* is bad mojo.

This book is a clarion call for the restoration of the simple straightforwardness of mere childrearing (albeit I reluctantly use the word *parenting* when the alternative is awkward). The restoration of mere childrearing requires an understanding of its biblical underpinnings. I pray that this book will lead you, the reader, toward that understanding. May everyone in your family profit greatly from the retro-journey you have chosen to undertake!

FOR PERSONAL PONDERING AND GROUP DISCUSSION

1. If to this point in your journey as a parent, you have been *parenting* rather than merely raising children, what difficulties have you encountered as a result? What difference(s) do you think mere childrearing would have made?
2. If you want to stop *parenting* and begin raising your kids according to traditional understandings and biblical principles, what, exactly, do you need to begin doing to make the necessary course correction? (Refer to the above chart.)
3. Is there something about *parenting* that you feel you want to keep? If so, why?