



Parenting for Christians

Raising them Up

ISRAEL WAYNE

First printing: April 2020

Copyright © 2020 by Israel Wayne. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission from the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations in articles and reviews. For information write:

New Leaf Press, P.O. Box 726, Green Forest, AR 72638
New Leaf Press is a division of the New Leaf Publishing Group, Inc.

ISBN: 978-0-89221-765-6

Digital ISBN: 978-1-61458-749-1

Library of Congress Number: 2020934456

Cover by Diana Bogardus

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the English Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations noted NKJV are from the New King James Version, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations noted NIV are from the New International Version®, copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide.

Scripture quotations noted NLT are from the New Living Translation, copyright ©1996, 2004, 2007, 2013, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations noted NASB are from the New American Standard Bible®, copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations noted KJV are from the King James Version of the Bible.

Please consider requesting that a copy of this volume
be purchased by your local library system.

Printed in the United States of America

Please visit our website for other great titles: www.newleafpress.com

For information regarding author interviews,
please contact the publicity department at (870) 438-5288.



Contents

Introduction.....	5
1. Losing a Generation	11
2. The Battle for the Family	15
3. Techno-Parenting	21
4. Teaching Your Children About Purity.....	43
5. The Power of Influence	51
6. Apologetics Begins at Home	61
7. The Seven-Year Teaching Method	65
8. How I Taught My Children to Sit Still and Be Quiet.....	69
9. Heart Check for Parents	79
10. Be the Parent	89
11. Child Discipline	101
12. Gospel-Centered Parenting.....	113
13. Will a Trained Child Depart?.....	119
14. Why Some Children Leave the Faith	123
15. The Perfect Family Syndrome	135
16. Helping the Difficult Child	145
17. Serious Fun.....	151
18. Hospitality: It's Not Just for Women Anymore	157
19. Living on One Income (Brook)	161
20. Allowance — What Should Parents Do?.....	167
21. Passing the Baton — Teens/Young Adults.....	171
22. Parenting by Grace	177
About the Authors.....	181

Introduction

A lady approached me at a conference recently, picked up a copy of one of my books, and asked, “Is this book focused more on the ‘big picture,’ or is it ‘practical and how-to?’” I told her it was both but that it focused more on the macro-view, with micro-application. She said, “Oh, I’m not interested then. I don’t care why my child behaves the way he does, I just want something that will fix the problem.” I tried to explain to her that we will approach treatment differently based on what we believe is causing the problem. If our child’s leg hurts, it matters drastically whether he or she has broken a bone or been stung by a wasp. Giving him or her a tranquilizer may numb the pain, but the cause really does make a difference.

After some conversation, I told her, “The way you describe what you are looking for makes me think of someone who is obsessed with knowing how to drive a new car. They want to learn about the wipers, the radio, the brakes, the windows, the seat controls, and the rearview mirror. Finally, they say, ‘I have this car figured out! I’m ready to drive!’ We may ask, ‘Where are you going?’ to which they may reply, ‘Oh, that doesn’t matter. I just want to drive. It doesn’t matter where.’ ” For me, as a parent, destination is of utmost importance. Eternity in heaven with my Lord and Savior is the goal that I have for each of my ten children. It matters very much where this car is headed.

In this book, I will be focusing primarily on the big picture. I believe parenting is a lot like a thousand-piece puzzle. Most parents have the pieces all spread out on the table; they just need help putting them together. They know a lot of Bible verses, but they don’t have a biblical theology of parenting. It’s my ambition to show them the box top.

I’m going to shoot straight with you right from the beginning. The book that most parents need is not the one they are looking for.

Raising Them Up

Most parents want a book that will “fix their child” in three easy steps, in 30 days (or less). While understandable, this expectation is wrongheaded and will never work. The problem lies far more with us, the parents, than it does with our child. If we don’t understand that truth, we will only remain frustrated and disappointed with our child.

Jesus explained the situation this way:

Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye (Luke 6:39b–42).

Parenting is discipleship. Your child is learning from you. You are the teacher. Far more is caught than taught in parenting. Children listen to what you say, but they watch how you live. When you are slack in dealing with character issues in your own life, it short circuits your ability to effectively reach your child’s heart. You can be so focused on helping your child with his or her speck that you don’t realize he or she is tuning you out because all the child can see is the beam protruding from your own proverbial eye. Like it or not, the problem is almost always with us, not ultimately with our children.

The far greater need is to fundamentally change our own hearts and minds as parents. As a principle, that simply **MUST** happen before any change will come for our youth. But authors know that suggesting the parent is the one who needs to change the most is offensive to most readers. Books that focus more on the parent than the child aren’t popular and won’t sell well. So, such books go unwritten. Instead, we have lots of “cheerleader” books that tell you what a great job you are doing. Or titles full of behavior modification techniques that are supposed to train our children to have good

manners. With enough tips, tricks, and methods, it is believed we can modify our child's behavior to become socially acceptable. Perhaps we can learn the perfect approach to timeouts, or some magic cure that will solve bickering, sibling rivalry, laziness, backtalking, media addiction, lying, stealing, bad attitudes, apathy, angry outbursts, rebellion, inattention, or any other number of "fruits" that annoy, inconvenience, and embarrass us. Sadly, most books focus on trimming the branches and never really get to the heart of the matter (the roots). Therefore, even after the parent has finished reading the popular parenting book, all the behavioral issues in the children stay the same (or get worse) despite lots of pontification on the topic.

This book will not flail at branches but will take an axe to the heart of the real problem. While recognizing there is great value in science and brain research, this book presupposes that your child is more than mere neurons firing in a random universe (only to be understood and treated biologically). Your child is a complex being made up of body, mind, soul, and spirit. Every facet of the complete person needs to be evaluated and understood.

It is my belief that the Bible is not merely a group of moral lessons or philosophical ideas. I believe it is the inspired, inerrant, infallible, timeless Word of God. When we read the Bible, it should be understood as being the revealed truth of God Himself.

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1:20–21).

If the revealed Word of God is not your starting point, you will be very frustrated with this book. I will be using a lot of Scripture because I believe God knows better than you and me.

Raising Them Up

My wife, Brook, and I, at the time of this writing, have ten children (five boys and five girls) ranging in age from 19 years to nine months. We currently have four teenagers still living at home (although our oldest is now working full-time outside our home). So, we get a lot of opportunity to put into practice what I will be talking to you about in this book. But despite all of the experience we have had in our own parenting journey, and despite having some great mentors who have taught us (many that I consider to be true experts on parenting), I believe that we really have no wisdom or insights that will be beneficial to you. The Apostle Paul said, “For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh” (Rom. 7:18a). The only wisdom we have, we received from God.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above. . . (James 1:17).

For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? (1 Cor. 4:7).

It is our desire to impart to you the wisdom that is from above, not worldly humanistic wisdom (see 1 Cor. 3:19 and James 3:15).

And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Yet among the mature we do impart wisdom, although it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory (1 Cor. 2:3–7).

Ofentimes, God’s wisdom seems counter-intuitive and backward to the way we would be inclined to think. We tend to foolishly rely on our own understanding (see Prov. 3:5–7). The Bible says, “There

Parenting for Christians

is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death” (Prov. 14:12). We want no part of that ungodly wisdom that will shipwreck our marriages and result in our children floundering in life. We need something solid, stable, and trustworthy. We don’t want to build our houses on the shifting sand of popular opinion, trends, fads, and pop psychology (see Matt. 7:24–27). We want to build our family on the rock of Christ Jesus (our only sure foundation).

This will seem foolish to many who do not have the Spirit of Christ within them. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned (and you need to have God’s Spirit living in you to do that).

Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor. 2:12–14).

At this point, some of you will want to bail out on this book, and we understand that. There are lots of other books out there that will teach you how to count to three, hold your breath, snap your wrist with a rubber band, and hand out stickers as a way to change your rebellious child. But if you care enough to risk having to make changes in your own way of thinking and living, then let’s walk together on this path of learning to parent our children after the ways of God.

As we move forward, I (Israel) will be doing the bulk of the writing. Brook’s input has permeated this entire manuscript, even if it is in my voice. When Brook is speaking uniquely, it will be specified in the text.

Chapter 1

Losing a Generation

Baby Boomers and the Jesus Movement

I grew up in the 1980s in the Evangelical church culture. At the time, baby boomers (those born from 1946–1964) were recognizing the mistakes their parents had made by being so career-driven and focused on material gain. The boomers rejected their parents' values in the 1960s, and many of them became the “hippie” generation. They threw convention to the wind and became wild young adults, embracing free love, drugs, social protests, and rock and roll. Their excessive hedonistic lifestyles (seeking mainly pleasure and temporal satisfaction) created a lot of emptiness and regret that haunted them (especially in their later years when they became parents).

In the 1970s, God moved powerfully among that generation in what sociologists now call “The Jesus Movement.” It was an authentic move of God that led many of these hippies to find faith in Christ. While they were the most unlikely candidates to ever end up in church, many of these folks got married, held steady jobs, and eventually became “the establishment.” As parents, they wanted a different life for their children, but they often didn't know how to best direct the next generation against the foolish choices they made in their own youth. As an antidote to their childhood with no boundaries, some of them looked for highly rigid structures that were rule-based and formulaic for their children. Legalism is an easy trap for some parents to fall into.

Many boomers were raised in non-Christian homes or merely nominal ones where church attendance was erratic and happened

Raising Them Up

mostly on Christmas and Easter. When these folks got saved, they had a radical encounter (an experience) with Jesus that was real and genuine. The problem is that they weren't taught how to effectively disciple their children. Most of them assumed that the church would do it. Or they prayed that God would somehow "zap" their child with the Holy Ghost and they would just "get it."

Seventy Percent of Churched Youth Fall Away

Unfortunately, the data is in, and the "formula-based" or "hope-they-figure-it-out" approaches did not work. In fact, they failed miserably. In the first quarter of the twenty-first century, we have found young people leaving the faith of their parents in massive numbers. There are many studies on this mass exodus from church conducted by groups like Barna Research Group, America's Research Group, Pew Research, Nehemiah Institute, the Southern Baptist Council on Family Life, the Gen2 Survey, and others. Nearly all of them state that 60–88% (a consistent average of 70%) of all churched youth leave the church before they graduate from high school!

To make matters worse, of those few who make it through high school with their faith intact, an additional 70% will deny their Christian faith before the end of their freshman year at a secular college or university.¹

If you look at biblical worldview, it is even worse! According to the Barna Group, "The research data showed that one pattern emerged loud and clear: young adults rarely possess a biblical worldview. The current study found that less than one-half of one percent of adults in the Mosaic generation – i.e., those aged 18 to 23 – have a biblical worldview."²

This is a scary prospect for the future of the Christian church in the West. Churches all over Europe and North America are closing. Church buildings, in places where the fires of the Reformation burned brightest, are now empty. They are being bought up by

1. From a study by CampusRenewal.org, <https://onenewsnow.com/church/2017/08/13/ministries-tackle-70-rate-of-college-students-leaving-faith>.

2. <https://www.barna.com/research/barna-survey-examines-changes-in-worldview-among-christians-over-the-past-13-years/>.

liquor stores, antique malls, and museums. Surely this grieves the heart of our Lord! When this scenario plays out in our own families, it is not merely statistics — it's devastating.

What Can We Do?

If we hope to turn the tide and see the effective discipleship of our youth, we are going to have to return to a gospel-centered approach to parenting. We will need to shake ourselves loose from the humanistic reasoning of our age and dare to think and act biblically. It has been said that to keep trying the same methods that have proven to fail and expecting different results is a definition of insanity.

We need to develop a theology of parenting. I believe the Bible speaks authoritatively to every sector of life. The good news for us is that Scripture is not silent on this issue. We don't need to be left uncertain in a world that seeks to submerge our families in its influence. God's Word contains everything we need to live godly lives.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence (2 Pet. 1:3).

Before we begin to put the pieces back together, let's back up, get a 30,000-foot view, and see where things began to go wrong for the Christian family. Knowing how things broke down in American society will help us be better equipped to avoid making toxic mistakes as we move forward into the future.

Chapter 2

The Battle for the Family

Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching (Prov. 1:8).

Although it is never objectively accurate to say that a certain time period was “the good old days,” there are many positive values that our society has lost in the past 150 years. One of the most tragic of these losses was the disintegration of the family culture, especially multi-generational connections and legacies.

Because many of us have never experienced the benefits of the family culture in our lifetimes, we may not even recognize our collective loss. Imagine with me, if you can, a culture where you are surrounded with people who know and love you. There are parents, uncles and aunts, cousins, grandparents, and even on occasion great-grandparents. Living, working, playing, and worshiping with these loved ones creates a wonderful sense of security and stability. You know who you are, to a great extent, because of your relationships with your surrounding family. Family can serve as a fixed reference point, linking you to geography and the past in a way no other friendship or community can.

Allow me to outline some of the paradigm shifts that have occurred in American culture over the past 150 years. They have brought about a disconnected and individualistic society that has replaced the previous family-centered culture.

The Breakdown of the Family Culture

I would say that the breakdown of the family culture in America began largely after the Civil War in 1865. Over 620,000 American

Raising Them Up

men died in a war that left virtually every family missing a loved one. In the Reconstruction that followed, men and women often left their homes and began to work in factories, taking advantage of the new breakthroughs of invention and industry. Prior to the Civil War, most Americans were agrarian. Rural families worked on farms or owned family businesses.

The Industrial Revolution

At the turn of the twentieth century, it became clear that the machine was the way of the future. From Eli Whitney's cotton gin to Henry Ford's automobile, from the steam engine to the success of the Wright Brothers' flying machine, people were finding faster and more efficient ways to do everything, including get around.

Wise families started their own businesses and hired family members to keep their income "in house." Around the turn of the twentieth century, many families became famous for developing financial systems that grew the family wealth exponentially. The Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, Studebakers, the J.P. Morgan family, and later the Kennedys, are all examples of family wealth. Whether you admire or disdain that kind of economic nepotism, you must admit they knew the collective potential of the family culture. For most families, however, mass production and factory labor took at least one parent (usually the father) away from the home into the "workforce."

Government Education

In 1852, Horace Mann had established the first government-controlled, compulsory attendance school system in Massachusetts. This model spread around the country, and before long, not only was the father removed from the home, but the children were as well. Instead of working alongside their parents, receiving an education through family enterprise (and supplemented with either homeschooling or formal academics in a community-controlled, parent-directed educational co-op), students were now enrolled in "assembly-line" educational factories utilizing the same modernistic principles that were revolutionizing every other industry.

More important than the physical separation that occurred through mandatory governmental education was the emotional

distance that was experienced as children embraced the culture of “social education.” Friendships through the “peer group” replaced the family as the child’s primary, foundational relationship.

Women’s Liberation

Eventually, the twentieth century “Feminist Movement” put most mothers into the workplace as well, effectively removing the central hub of the family from the home. Mothers were convinced to leave the education of their children to trained and certified “experts.” With the additional tax burden placed on families because of state-funded schools and other ever-widening government-funded social programs, many families felt the need to have two incomes just to make ends meet. There is no way to estimate the effect that the so-called “Women’s Liberation” movement has had on the lives of millions of children. Children need both parents (ideally) to be emotionally and socially balanced, but they especially need the daily nurturing of their mothers.

While some point to the positive gains made through equal rights movements like Women’s Liberation, the “freeing” of women from their families has devastated the family culture. Women’s Liberation mainly “freed” women from their children and made them slaves to their jobs. It’s not merely a matter of men and women working a job outside of the home; it is a mindset shift from parents being responsible for the care and nurturing of their own offspring to an expectation that the government is supposed to provide for all of our needs from the cradle to the grave, and we all work to support an overgrown bureaucracy that seeks to do for us what we should be doing for ourselves.

Mass distribution of the birth control pill in 1950 further liberated women from children, encouraging them to limit their family size to one or two children. Daycares began to spring up in order to allow mothers to place babies who were only a few weeks old into the hands of unknown caretakers. Increasingly, family life was sacrificed on the altar of economic pursuits. This has become the overwhelming trend in most of Europe and Asia as well. Many nations have fallen behind the 2.1 childbirth ratio needed to keep a society economically viable, and they have slipped into economic recession. There are more

Raising Them Up

senior citizens to care for and not enough wage earners (or family members who care) to provide for them. The United States has a current birth rate of 1.73 children per household (in 2018)¹ and is the only nation in the world that is losing population by birth but gaining by immigration. In the long run, such an approach is not economically viable and will cause a national economic collapse.

Mass Transportation

Mass transportation had a massive impact on reshaping American families. As new economic opportunities beckoned, families uprooted from the old home place and took off across the country. The railroad, and later the automobile and the airplane, gave people a mobility that changed the landscape of America. Since the telegraph, and eventually the telephone, allowed families to keep in touch over the miles, many families made the choice to exchange local relationships with their extended families for distance ones. This geographical distance removed economic interdependence and thereby removed a primary reason for staying connected. Working together for a common goal is great cement to bond relationships.

Shifting from a “Folk Culture” to a “Popular (Pop) Culture”

America quickly shifted from a “Folk Culture” (where people grew up in a close-knit community and had a producer mentality) to a “Pop Culture” (where individualists worked to earn enough money to purchase entertainment). Rather than producing bluegrass music on the porch with friends and neighbors (with instruments we made ourselves), we now isolate ourselves from others, listening on our earbuds to music we downloaded from the Internet. Art was no longer something we produced in communal relationships (like the old quilting circles); it became a commodity we would buy. This shift in thinking from being creative to being passive sponges of information has been devastating to our culture.

Mass Media and the Creation of a Mass Culture

With the advent of radio and eventually television, all Americans, regardless of their geography, had access to the same news

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/vsrr/vsrr-007-508.pdf>.

and information. Mass media and standardized education helped to shape a general culture. Rather than localized, provincial folk or agrarian cultures (that informed your views and values), Americans were increasingly adopting the mass ideas of corporate advertising and government propaganda. Regardless of your geography, you were watching the same television shows, hearing the same commercials, and using the same textbooks as everyone else in America.

What's the Big Deal?

To some, none of this is important. If the values of the current popular trends have already become your own, then who cares about all this cultural distinctiveness and familial identity? Who cares about the family culture and being connected to the generations who precede and follow you? Who cares about ensuring mechanisms of restraint, accountability, responsibility, and obligation within the larger family context? Who cares about passing on values from your children to their children and to generations who have not yet been born?

If these values are not important to you, then rest assured that your task is easy. All you need to do is absolutely nothing in order to ensure that your children will embrace whatever cultural trends happen to be hip at the moment. If you want your children to grow up to love only themselves, think only of themselves, see no obligation to their parents or grandparents, make all of their major life choices with no regard for how it impacts their extended families, or to be simply users and consumers rather than creative producers and artisans, then your task is very easy indeed. Just do nothing as hard as you can. Send your children to any local government school, let them grow up with their little brains saturated in television, video games, and other multimedia, and never, ever encourage them to build, read books, dream, play outside, have discussions with their gray-headed relatives, or see themselves as part of a family unit. Raising one more self-absorbed, media-gorged, financially irresponsible individual who feels no responsibility outside him or herself is very easy indeed. Just follow the cultural current.

Raising Them Up

Our Mission (Should We Choose to Accept It)

It takes work to pass on family values. It takes work to maintain family relationships. It takes work to think in terms of a multi-generational vision. For me, the work is worth it.

I don't want to merely curse the darkness. We can't turn back the clock and become Amish (although I'm sure I'd enjoy that — about 60% of the time!). Perhaps we can find creative ways to use technology and communication tools to keep us together rather than to split us apart. Maybe we can find ways to live in this twenty-first century without being absorbed in the narcissism of it all. Perhaps we can keep the positive and enduring values of the generations past while enjoying the comforts and conveniences of our modern age. The one thing I can assure you, however, is that strong family bonds and the transmission of the right kinds of values never happen by accident. It takes intentionality, focus, planning, and a lot of hard work. Let's learn from the lessons of the past and seek to shine a light for future generations.