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Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family



Synopsis

What is your calling as a parent? In the midst of folding laundry, coordinating carpool schedules, and breaking up fights, many parents get lost. Feeling pressure to do everything "right" and raise up "good" children, it's easy to lose sight of our ultimate purpose as parents in the quest for practical tips and guaranteed formulas. 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. Rather, we need the rescuing grace of God—grace that has the power to shape how we view everything we do as parents. Freed from the burden of trying to manufacture life-change in our children's hearts, we can embrace a grand perspective of parenting overflowing with vision, purpose, and joy.

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Customer Reviews

I've read many parenting books and have enjoyed the parenting tips and how-to's from those books. What I appreciate about this book by Paul David Tripp is it really gets to the heart of parenting. We do not own our children. We are ambassadors--we are tools in the hand of God to bring change, but we can't change our children. This is something I've been dwelling on in my parenting journey over the years. It seems as if most parents are stressed, overworked, and lack joy in their children. Tripp reminds us that God gives us peace and security in parenting. We don't have to fix our kids. We can let God do that. Tripp discusses what "ownership" parenting looks like. The results are parents who try to control their kids with fear, shame, and rewards. Instead of loving our children and being used

by God, we manipulate, coerce, and use tactics that don't bring change. Instead, all our efforts bring stressful home lives and children who disobey. Ownership parenting is not how God designed us to live as parents. Tripp takes us on the journey of what parenting should look like as ambassadors for Christ. We can rest knowing that God will take care of our children. Tripp talks extensively about grace. Through the entire book, he talks about how we can't live up to the standard and how our children can't either. This is the background of the book: grace. So if you read the book and think "wow, he's telling me to do a lot of stuff" and you become overwhelmed, it's because you need to remember the backdrop of grace that he's talked about from the beginning. The entire book points to the gospel of grace, not works. Yes, there are wise and helpful things we as parents "should" do. To be honest, the chapter on "Character" made me feel sad.

Rather than writing a "how-to" or method-based book on parenting, Paul Tripp has given us a valuable resource that clearly lays out some biblical principles that must affect our parenting. Then from that basis, some suggestions, methods, and ideas are given. But the emphasis is on making sure that the parent understands the biblical principles that must inform our parenting. Tripp does a very good job of this. What I appreciate is that you may or I may differ on the application of the principle to specific choices in parenting; nevertheless, the principles are thoroughly biblical and since this is where the emphasis is, all Christian, Bible-believing parents should find this an extremely valuable resource. Here are the chapters and the principles laid out:

1. Calling - Nothing is more important in your life than being one of God's tools to form a human soul
2. Grace: God never calls you to a task without giving you what you need to do it. He never sends you without going with you.
3. Law: Your children need God's law, but you cannot ask the law to do what only grace can accomplish.
4. Inability: Recognizing what you are unable to do is essential to good parenting.
5. Identity: If you are not resting as a parent in your identity in Christ, you will look for identity in your children.
6. Process: You must be committed as a parent to long-view parenting because change is a process and not an event.
7. Lost: As a parent you're not dealing just with bad behavior, but a condition that causes bad behavior.
8. Authority: One of the foundational heart issues in the life of every child is authority. Teaching and modeling the protective beauty of authority is one of the foundations of good parenting.
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Anyone who has approached the task of parenting can appreciate how easy it is to imagine perfect success for you and your children, but how quickly reality can shatter that illusion. This creates a massive opportunity for parenting books that promise all kinds of advice and solutions. And I've read

a few, and avoided many more. Without trying to take a broad swipe at other types of parenting books, just understand that this book focuses less on the "how to", and more on how God supplies you for this work, by His grace. Perhaps what is so invaluable about this particular book, is the depth of insight into human character--and not only that of children, but also especially ours as adults!! Tripp has reflected extensively on how our role in parenting mirror's God's relationship to us. Any parent who has paused to reflect on this comparison can realize how quickly our failings and sins come to the surface, and how incomparably poor our patience, compassion, slowness to anger, etc, are to God's love toward us. Now that could be a despairing reality--but as Tripp ably shows, the grace of God is far deeper than our sins and failings, and is the only hope for forgiveness and transformation. Thus it becomes deeply comforting, as we learn how God would patiently teach us and forgive us. Paul Tripp's book distinguishes itself by the theological approach of the book. For those in the Lutheran or Reformed tradition of the faith, they will recognize the Law & Gospel approach--with an emphasis on the exclusive power of the Gospel to save and to transform our lives.

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