

Table of Contents

Introduction

God's Word Is the Authority	1
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Sins of a Proud Heart

Pride	7
Self-Righteousness	21
Hypocrisy.....	26
Stubbornness/Self-Will	33
Disobedience.....	36
Defiance	44
Scoffer/Scorner	50
Arguing/Contention	56
Brawling Woman.....	66
Vanity/Over-Concern for Beauty	72
Judging Others	76
Confidence in Riches	83

Sins of Discontent

Complaining/Ingratitude.....	90
Selfishness/Greed	97
Envy/Jealousy.....	105
Covetousness	111
Rules for Borrowers	116
Theft	118

Sins of Unbelief

Easily Swayed/Double-Minded	123
Backsliding.....	129
Discouragement/Giving Up.....	135
Depression	144
Fear	150
Worry/Anxiety	157

Sins of an Undisciplined Life

Laziness	163
Unfaithful Employee	177
Haste	183
Impatience/Irritability.....	191
Anger.....	196
Gluttony/Pleasure-Seeking	203
Drunkenness/Drug Abuse	208
Immorality/Sexual Sin	212

Sinful Thought Life	224
Immodesty	232
Wastefulness/Extravagance/Carelessness	236
Sins of the Tongue	
Lying/Deceit/Dishonesty.....	241
Shifting Blame/Making Excuses	248
False Witness	250
Gossip/Slander/Tattletale.....	256
Meddling/Busybody.....	264
Foolish, Unclean Speech	267
Flattery	271
Sins of an Unloving Heart	
Hatred	279
Bitterness	284
Hitting/Biting/Kicking/Harming Others	289
Revenge.....	293
Bullying/Cruelty	297
Unkind, Unwise Speech	307
Insensitivity/Lack of Compassion.....	317
Sins in Relationships	
Bad Friendships.....	324
Poor Manners	333
Teasing/Troublemaking	340
Comparisons of the Obedient and the Disobedient	
Foolishness vs. Wisdom	342
Wickedness vs. Righteousness.....	345
Comparison Worksheet	349
Additional Helps	
Appendix A: Helping Your Children Learn from Scripture	351
Appendix B: Using FIIR for Life-Changing Bible Study	358
Appendix C: Thoughts on Rewarding Children	362
Appendix D: Thoughts on Paying Children for Work	364
Resources	365

Introduction

This book is the result of ignorance, not expertise. Our children are not perfect. On the contrary, they have very clearly inherited their parents' sinful natures. That's why we needed this book! Raising children is a humbling experience; each new baby exposes more of my weaknesses, more of my inadequacies, more of my need to rely on my sovereign Lord for strength and guidance.

We put this book together so that we could use it in our own family. It is the result of our prayer for God's wisdom, "Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad" (1 Kgs. 3:9).

I am not a family counselor; I am just a mother. I am not a Bible scholar; I am just a believer, studying the Bible as the guidebook for my life. The content of this book is simply a record of some of that study.

God's Word has the answers to our questions. Dr. Spock doesn't. Psychologists don't. Politicians don't. A brief glance at our society is proof enough that man's answers, divorced from God's law, are merely roads toward confusion, destruction, and hell.

My generation is the Dr. Spock generation; many of our parents were deceived into believing that man, reason, science, psychology, anything but a faithful interpretation of God's Word, would help them raise their families. Many of us, now parents ourselves, are left floundering with no real examples of how to be a godly father, how to love our husbands and children, how to train a god-fearing generation of young men and women.

We must turn back to the Bible, the source of all wisdom. In it we will find all that we need to know to be godly fathers and mothers.

In a conversation on the way to the grocery store one morning, my 9-year-old son was astonished to discover that most people don't know how to plant a garden anymore! I described my early gardening experiences – standing in the middle of a freshly tilled thistle patch, with a how-to-garden book in one hand, and a shovel in the other. He thought that was pretty funny.

There is a lot of lost territory to reclaim, one step at a time – skills, knowledge, and basic morals have been lost as men and women succumb

to Satan's lie, believing that we can live life apart from God's commands and instructions.

Most of us don't know how to “grow” a family anymore.

We are training our children with the Bible, our how-to book, in one hand, and the rod in the other. This book is a compilation, *far* from exhaustive, of principles we have gleaned from Scripture as we have prayed and searched for answers.

The Bible is the authority. We have simply done some topical arranging, and we offer some ideas for practical application of Biblical principles in everyday life. I'm sure you will be able to add plenty of your own insights as you study the Scriptures given here.

It is our prayer that **For Instruction in Righteousness** will be a tool to help parents like us reclaim a little more territory for our King as we raise up our sons and daughters for His glory.

Pam Forster, 1993

God is faithful. Eighteen years after excitedly studying God's Word and putting this book together, I can still confidently state, without even a hint of doubt, that God's Word is powerful. It changes hearts.

Isaiah 55:11 says, *“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”*

We cannot parent in our own strength and wisdom. We cannot change hearts with our own reasoning and coercing. But we **can** love God and hunger for His Word and teach our children to do the same. We can lead them to the marvelous revelation of God's character and wisdom, graciously given to us in Scripture. We can let our children see how God's Word governs our own lives as we seek Him. We can lovingly present His truth to our children and pray that He will use it to bring them to a lively, loving, obedient faith.

God's Word will not be ineffective. It will accomplish its purposes. We must simply believe and obey, trusting Him with the outcome, and thanking Him for His grace.

Pam Forster, Spring 2011

God's Word Is the Authority

God's Word is our authority for faithfully discipling our children. It needs to be at the center of all our training. We need to be students of the Word, and we need to teach that Word to our children.

Moses outlined the perfect curriculum for parents in Deuteronomy 6:6-9:

First, *"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."* If we are to serve God in training up godly men and women, we must be godly men and women ourselves. **We must love our Lord and King with all our heart, soul, and might.** We will not be given the grace to faithfully train our children until we ourselves have become children of God, saved by faith in Christ's saving work on the cross.

Second, *"And these words which I command you this day shall be in thine heart..."* **God's Word must be in our hearts.** Scripture should be such an integral part of our being that it becomes the very warp into which all the rest of the fabric of life is woven. We must acknowledge His Word as the **final authority** in all areas of life, and we must dedicate ourselves to studying and obeying it.

Third, *"And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the post of thy house, and on thy gates."*

We should **see and apply scriptural principles** during the everyday occurrences of life, and we should **teach them to our children**, both by our words and by our example.

What does God say about the sins that we, as parents, must constantly face in our own hearts, and in day-to-day life with our children? A child needs to know what God says about his behavior. He needs to understand the consequences of sin in his life.

He needs to understand that the authority that we, as parents, exercise over him is delegated by God. When we discipline a child for wrongdoing we do so because God says his action is wrong, not because of any arbitrary standard we have fabricated.

God's Word is always our standard, our pattern, our authority as we examine our own hearts and as we judge our children's actions and discipline them for sinful behaviors and attitudes:

- *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).*
- *"The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Ps. 119:30).*
- *"The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the*