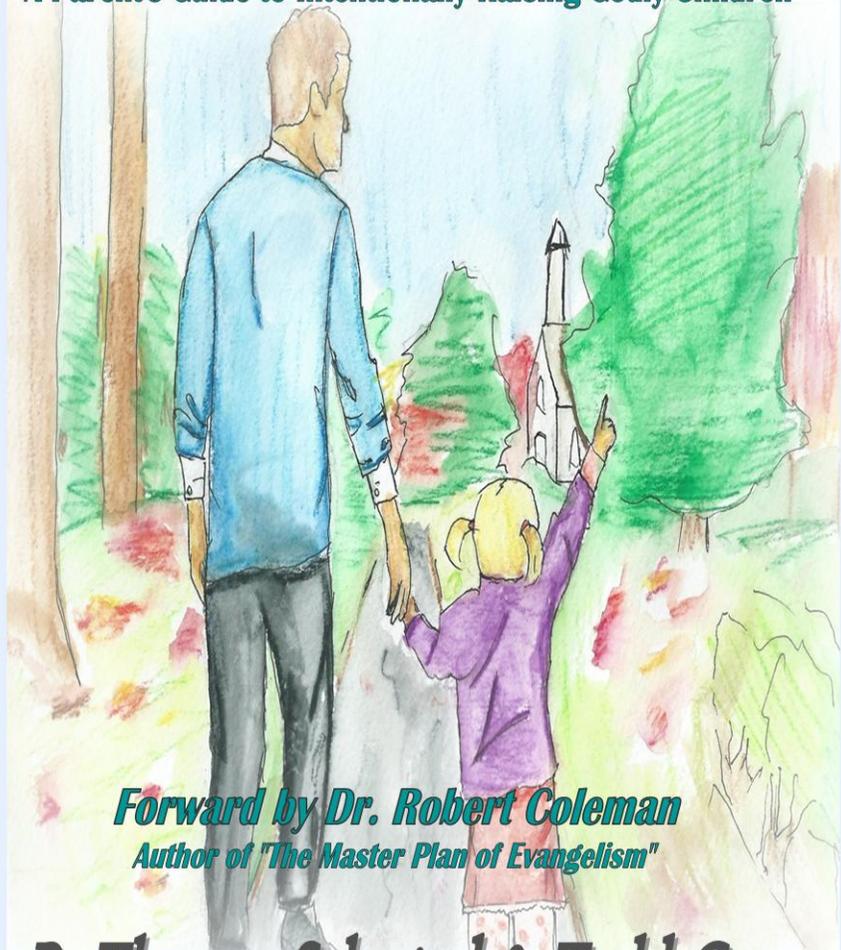


Heritage Parenting

A Parent's Guide to Intentionally Raising Godly Children



Forward by Dr. Robert Coleman
Author of "The Master Plan of Evangelism"

R. Thomas Schwind & Todd Gates

The book that will change the way you look at Christian parenting.

Heritage Parenting

A Parent's Guide to Intentionally Raising
Godly Children

Dr. R. Thomas Schwind
&
Rev. Todd Gates

Heritage Parenting

Copyright 2015 by
R. Thomas Schwind and R. Todd Gates
All Rights Reserved

Published by
SVM Media, Marysville, Ohio
A Division of SycamoreView Ministries, LLC

ISBN Number 978-0-9905280-0-5
Library of Congress Control Number- 2015903360

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.”

Scripture quotations from THE MESSAGE. Copyright © by Eugene H. Peterson 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 2000, 2001, 2002. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Cover Art by Chloe Gates, 2014

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise except as permitted under the United States Copywriting Act, without prior written permission of the authors.

God is at work telling a story of restoration and redemption through your family. Never buy into the myth that you need to become the “right” kind of parent before God can use you in your child’s lives. Instead, learn to cooperate with whatever God desires to do in your heart today so your children will have a front-row seat to the grace and goodness of God.

Reggie Joiner

Heritage Parenting

Table of Contents

Preface.....	iv
A Word about our Word – Disciple[ing]	vii
Introduction.....	viii
Forward by Dr. Robert Coleman.....	x
Heritage Parenting	xii
SECTION 1 - UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES	
Chapter 1 – The World We Know	2
Chapter 2 – Parents: the Most Important Influence	6
Chapter 3 – Fallen Away: Describing the Problem	11
Chapter 4 – You Don’t Know What You Don’t Know.....	18
Chapter 5 – If You Fail to Plan, You Plan to Fail	26
Chapter 6 – The Ripple Effect.....	37
Chapter 7 – The Challenge of Worldview.....	41
SECTION 2 - THE DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS	
Chapter 8 – Making Disciples	50
Chapter 9 – Understanding The Process.....	55
Chapter 10 – Selection.....	62
Chapter 11 – Association.....	67
Chapter 12 – Consecration	75
Chapter 13 – Impartation.....	83
Chapter 14 – Demonstration.....	87
Chapter 15 – Delegation	94
Chapter 16 – Supervision.....	99
Chapter 17 – Reproduction	103

Schwind & Gates

SECTION 3 - MAKING THE CONNECTION

Chapter 18 – Why Study Child Development?	110
Chapter 19 – Cognitive Development	118
Chapter 20 – Psychosocial Development.....	133
Chapter 21 – Moral Development.....	150
Chapter 22 – Christ in the Developmental Stages	171

SECTION 4 – REASON FOR HOPE

Chapter 23 – The 7 Pillars of the Christian Family	176
Chapter 24 – Family Discipleship.....	183
Chapter 25 – Lifestyle Discipleship.....	188

THE SEVEN PILLARS

Chapter 26 – P urpose & The Great Commission	194
Chapter 27 – I ntegrity & God’s Provision.....	201
Chapter 28 – L eadership & Parental Training of Children.....	209
Chapter 29 – L ife-style & Life-Style Discipleship	216
Chapter 30 – A ttitude & Humility and Admonition	225
Chapter 31 – R elationship & Keeping Children’s Hearts	236
Chapter 32 – S ervice & Family Service to God	242
Chapter 33 – We Are Not Alone.....	246
Afterward.....	249

APPENDIX

Appendix A – Small Group & Application Manual	253
Appendix B – Erikson’s Adult Stages.....	273
Appendix C – The Heinz Dilemma	277
Appendix D – Scripture Reading List.....	279
Appendix E – Christian Parenting from Proverbs	281
Appendix F – Christian Parent’s Resources.....	283

Heritage Parenting

What is Heritage Parenting? In a relay race, runners must pass the baton to the next runner. The first runner passes the baton and so finishes their share of the race. The next runner carries on the baton until their portion comes to an end and they pass on the baton. The last runner crosses the finish line. Heritage Parenting recognizes the timeless nature of the Gospel and a parent's responsibility and joy of effectively transmitting the truth of the Good News on to their children through the mentoring pattern of Jesus Christ.

In spite of the rampant individualism in western society, Heritage Parents recognize the decisive nature of the Gospel. They realize that the Christian faith is a timeless truth to be passed on to their children, who will pass it on to their own children. As a Heritage Parent, you will have the joy of effectively passing on your faith to your children.

However, this passing of the faith does not happen in a vacuum. Real hindrances to this process exist. Statistics show that most young people drop out of the faith community, question or even lose the faith of their childhood. Some hindrances we cannot control, such as the nature of the worldly system. Some hindrances come out of our own ignorance of how faith is passed and disciples are made.

In the first section, we explore the common practices of passing on the faith and their ineffectiveness. Then we delve into the nature of making disciples, duplicating the pattern Jesus employed with the Twelve. After that, we equip you with knowledge about the nature of children and the processes of growing up to increase your communication and empathy. In the final section, we offer a general paradigm of Christian family, Biblical models of parenting, and principles you can apply to your own family within your own context.

Make no mistake. Heritage Parenting is NOT "Seven Steps to a Happy Family." We feel we cannot possibly tell you how to handle your personal situation. No book of parenting laws will cover every situation. However, we do believe that adopting the Biblical

perspectives and principles found in this book will put you well on your way to effectively passing faith's baton to your child.

Our first prayer is this book will help you understand the importance of passing on God's heritage to your children. And since knowing and doing are sometimes disconnected, our second prayer is that this book will assist you in passing on a living faith, God's Heritage, to your children.

The Great Commission all comes down to "Heritage Parenting." The pattern that Jesus used to develop His disciples can be used to raise disciples in your own home. Your children are a gift to you, a heritage, if you will. They bless us in their childhood and they bless their community and world as they move out of our care. To implant the Gospel in them is to bless and evangelize the future.

Our Third Prayer hopes for you that when you have passed the baton, you will be able to say along with St. Paul, "... *I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.*" (Acts 20:24)

Ps 127:3 Children are the heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him.

Ps 119:111-112 Your statutes are my heritage forever; they are the joy of my heart. My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.

Heritage Parenting

[Jesus] Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be used to his own advantage;
rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:6-11

Section 1

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES

SECTION 1 - UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUES

Chapter 1 – The World We Know

The typical parent spends less than one hour per week in meaningful interaction with each of his or her children.

Researcher George Barna

The world's many dangers make parenting a tricky business. No longer is it enough just to provide the physical needs of our offspring. Instead of the daily challenges faced by earlier generations, we often feel overwhelmed by our new parenting struggles. In real ways, we face obstacles unimaginable to earlier generations of Christians. The challenges and temptations confronting our children would boggle the imaginations of our ancestors.

Every type of sin and vice flaunts itself (and many can be found after a quick search on the Internet). Everywhere we see an invitation to covet and a multitude of opportunities to be separated from our money. We find many appeals to provide salvation through government, through a movement, through a product, through social acceptance, through many things. Our children can easily respond to the lure of other, "cooler" religious messages.

We have a multitude of opportunities to sin. Though we like to think of ourselves as more advanced than historical figures, we are not really, not in the "human department." Even a quick read of the Bible and historical documents shows that people have not changed. Those historical stories describe people behaving the same way folks do today. It's not exactly a stretch to say we see the same stories in the Bible as we do on TV. King David's little incident involving Bathsheba would make a juicy drama indeed. (2 Samuel 11 & 12)

The Bible still describes us accurately today because human nature, our character apart from grace, has not changed. Circumstances, technologies, and culture have dramatically changed

but human hopes and dreams, faults and limitations have not. Likewise, the egocentric, rebellious heart of man has never altered. It was the same for Moses as in Jesus's day, and the story remains the same today. Through all the blessings and benefits we now enjoy, we are still as stubborn and stiff-necked, as self-centered as any generation that ever lived.

Hundreds of generations before us, faithful parents toiled tirelessly at keeping their children safe from harm. They wanted for their children the same things we want; blessing and happiness. Those parents worked hard to make sure their children were fed and clothed and taught an occupation. Children and grandchildren learned from their extended family who provided for each other. They warned them about the consequences of sin but never had to deal with the information society's massive opportunity for temptation.

No longer is praying for our daily sustenance enough. We live in a culture "rich in things and poor in soul", unsupportive of the practice of Christian faith, often hostile even to the mention of the name of Jesus. We live in an era where the church has become afraid to take a stand on Godly truth. Organizational development and church growth have taken the place of evangelism, and hollow optimism replaces the gospel in some pulpits.

Unsurprisingly, young adults leave the church in record numbers. Most young people seek purpose and answers for living their life. Studies show they would actually prefer to find answers through the beliefs of their parents. However, the world provides answers which seem simple and apparent enough - more power, more status, more money, more things. But the truth is, that the world's answers have never worked in the long term. They only *seem* to be the right answers: solutions to the questions posed by the world, in the world's terms and while using human philosophy. How do you get justice? Revenge. How do you receive blessing? Buy it. How do you deal with pain? Lawsuit.

Our children grow into adulthood in a society that fails to see the real issues like suffering, inferiority, and desire. Not to mention the

Heritage Parenting

reality of evil. So, in a real sense we try to teach our kids to be deeper, more complex, more global thinkers than society can recognize. It's not society's fault, what can you expect from leaders and followers who don't look to God and the wisdom of Holy Scripture for guidance? It's all a little more complicated for a Christian wanting to believe that, "The real trick for living is loving people and using things— not the other way around."

We want to teach our kids to do well, to be successful, to be joyful. Our heart's desire is for them to follow God's ways because He is the source of all wisdom. Since God authored the universe and every living thing therein, who could have better advice on how to deal with the problems of living? But we look around us and see a world geared toward providing ungodly wisdom and self-centered life solutions.

This Goliath of secular values comes to the battle lines armored in worldly wisdom, with the weapon of media, camouflaged in "relevant" churches and infiltrating our home with the thinly veiled idols of popular culture.

We anxiously ask ourselves, "How do I, a flawed sinner saved by grace, compete against the juggernaut of society?" This Goliath of secular values comes to the battle lines armored in worldly wisdom, with the weapon of media, camouflaged in "relevant" churches and infiltrating our home with the thinly veiled idols of popular culture. Often our children's peers have already been co-opted with those ungodly assumptions and mindset.

The prognosis seems bleak. Truly, society may have broken the faith: the church may have missed the boat; we parents may have even fallen short but the gospel of Jesus Christ cannot fail our children. So let's not despair, there is actually plenty of good news.

APPLICATION

List two or three things that you learned or found interesting:

1

2

3

Reflection and Discussion Questions

- 1) What issues do your children deal with (or will deal with) that you didn't have to growing up?
- 2) What is an issue you had to deal with growing up that your parents didn't have to deal with?
- 3) What were your parent's issues growing up?
- 4) What do you think about this statement, "Our earth is degenerate these days; there are signs that the world is speedily coming to an end; bribery and corruption are common; children no longer obey their parents; and the end of the world is evidently approaching." - a message carved on an Assyrian stone tablet.¹
- 5) What are your thoughts about the Assyrian quote? Do you think our culture is getting better, staying the same or heading south? Why? What are the implications as parents?

Chapter 2 – Parents: the Most Important Influence

Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them. James Baldwin

Who do you think has the most influence on your children's spiritual and religious life? Given all the press, all the hype, we think you'll be surprised to hear the answer. It may make you pause, even feel a little intimidated, but the truth is out there. Research shows parents still influence their children more than any other single factor!

Recent studies verify the wisdom of the Bible regarding nurturing and raising children. The Bible clearly shows parents being the ones God has given the privilege and responsibility of raising the next generation of Christians. We know the importance of our children to our families and to our hearts. If you ever cooed over a baby picture, you know we are wired to love our children. And yet, we rarely reflect on their eternal importance. Those precious children hold the key to the future of the gospel, and we have been given the holy privilege of leading them to become strong, effective disciples of Jesus Christ.

We have seen too many ridiculous surveys and pollsters pretending to measure up to the truth standards of scriptures. We observe that newscasters often cite surveys as if they were truth, or justification of certain positions on issues. Certainly, this means something in a democracy, but often they are little more than a high tech way of saying "see, everybody's doing it."

Scripture stands alone as the great rock of authority. However, we do accept the wise use of surveys when looking at people's attitudes. In our research here, we have included thoughtful studies from some great Christian thinkers to show a wider perspective and to encourage parents. We want to show you how important you are to your children. Even when feeling as if we have little impact on our children's spiritual life, nothing could be further from the truth.

Parents, you are far more influential in your children's spiritual development than you realize. Additionally, the fact that parents

don't understand their importance can, itself, be detrimental to our children. Consider this from researcher George Barna:

...surveys point out that most parents underestimate the influence they can exert on their children. Consequently, they often neglect emphasis upon activities that would strengthen their relational bond with the children. Many parents, even those who are born again Christians, also overlook the need to foster a deeper connection between their children and God, or to enhance the child's worldview as a critical component of their decision-making skills.²

Barna's research shows that most of us don't realize the power of parenting. Because of that, we often overlook opportunities to develop that influence further. Partly because parents bought into the mindset that we don't really matter, we don't clearly see the payoff in disciple[ing] our children. (Please see "A Word about our Word" on page vii of the front matter for why we use this particular spelling of discipling.) Even though a deep connection with God remains the most valuable inheritance we can pass on, our parental "low self-esteem" gets in the way.

The revealing book *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers*³ by Christian Smith and Melinda Lunquist Denton is based on one of the largest ever surveys taken in regards to teenagers in

America. The National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR), is a comprehensive survey of over 3,300 teenagers that included in-depth follow-up interviews with over 250 of the respondents.

The findings in this study are consistent with the other research we found. For example, two surprising and hopeful findings about teens jumped out at us, "Most are quite content to follow in their parents footsteps."⁴ In like manner, we discovered "the vast majority are happy simply to accept the one religion in which they were raised."⁵

It may be hard to believe but research shows most teens are quite content to follow in their parents footsteps and the vast majority are happy simply to accept the one religion in which they were raised.

Heritage Parenting

This important study exposes the deep desire kids have to learn from their parents and to connect with the values their parents consider important. Given all the hype about the rebellious nature of young people, this information could certainly come as a surprise. But this is only the beginning of the surprises.

Given all the pushback of youth, parents have been led to believe teenage rebellion is normal. However, this large study gives an equally gargantuan finding on the importance of the parents influence on their children's spiritual development. "Contrary to popular misguided cultural stereotypes and frequent parental misperceptions, we believe that **the evidence clearly shows that the single most important social influence on the religious and spiritual lives of adolescents is their parents.**"⁶

You should feel empowered now that you are beginning to unlearn the false lessons of our culture. Parents are important! YOU ARE CRITICAL to the spiritual future of your children. Regardless of what pop culture tells us, our kids not only need, but WANT, a common path to salvation. Both kids and parents can become confused by the media's messages of teenage rebellion but the reality is somewhat different. Teenagers separating themselves from their parent's identity is nothing new.

Bringing this subject even further into the light is more research by Princeton Seminary Professor Kenda Creasy Dean. As *Professor of Youth, Church and Culture*, she did extensive follow-up work with the teens from the original NSYR study we mentioned above. This extension of the research of Christian Smith (*Soul Searching*) is found in her book *Almost Christian: What The Faith Of Our Teenagers Is Telling The American Church*⁷ goes into greater detail, spending more time with the same teenagers who were part of the original survey.

Dean's findings confirmed the importance of the parents teaching their children. In fact, second of the five major findings from her research is, "**Most U.S. teenagers mirror their parents' religious faith.**"⁸ Isn't that amazing? Parents interpret the things we see and hear so differently. We too often let the popular wisdom color our views and assume our children don't want to share our religious faith.

As parents, we need to grab hold and cling to the job of disciple[ing] our kids. Parenting rarely finds success in an overnight miracle and raising children in the faith similarly takes time. But that faith download takes on such importance when Dean writes, **“Parents matter most when it comes to the religious formation of their children.** While grandparents, other relatives, mentors and youth ministers are also influential, parents are by far the most important predictors of teenagers’ religious lives.”⁹

Later on in this book, we will explain in greater detail the importance of the parent's faith to their children’s faith. Just as a teacher cannot impart knowledge they don't have, neither can a parent pass on a faith they don't own. However, in our ministry we have discovered that even the least theologically astute parent who instills in their child a loving loyalty to God has presented them with a valuable treasure.

We sum up with another of Dean's findings, **“The best way to get most youth more involved in and serious about their faith communities is to get their parents more involved in and serious about their faith communities.”**¹⁰ Being in relationship with your child and being in love with God cannot help but to inspire the same growing faith in the hearts of your child.

Heritage Parenting

APPLICATION

List two or three things that you learned or found interesting:

1

2

3

Reflection and Discussion Questions

- 1) What's something your parents used to say to you as a child that you promised yourself you'd never say, but now you catch yourself saying all the time?
- 2) Who has made the biggest impact on you? Explain.
- 3) What do you think about this statement, "Research shows parents still influence their children more than any other single factor!"
- 4) What was the most meaningful statistic or insight you gained from this chapter? Why?
- 5) Are you encouraged or discouraged from your findings?
- 6) Is it a good thing that your children will mirror your faith? What can you do to make this mirror clearer?

Schwind & Gates

Get Your Copy of
Heritage Parenting

at

www.heritageparenting.com

and

Amazon.com

Join the blog and discussion on

www.myheritagefamily.com

Heritage Parenting

¹ F. Philip Rice, *Morality and Youth*, (Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1980) p15.

² George Barna, "Barna Finds Four Mega-Themes in Recent Research," <http://www.barna.org/culture-articles/89> [accessed February 8, 2010].

³ Christian Smith, with Melinda Lundquist Denton, *Soul Searching The Religious and Spiritual Lives of American Teenagers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁴ Smith, *Soul Searching*, 260.

⁵ Smith, *Soul Searching*, 260.

⁶ Smith, *Soul Searching*, 261.

⁷ Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What The Faith Of Our Teenagers Is Telling The American Church* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).⁸ Dean, *Almost Christian*, 18.

⁹ Dean, *Almost Christian*, 18.

¹⁰ Dean, *Almost Christian*, 109.