

BIBLICAL PARENTING

Straightening Granddad's Bent

Exodus 20:4–6; 34:5–9



LET'S BEGIN HERE

So far in our study, we've learned that biblical parenting involves training our children *according to their bents*, not according to the way we've decided they should go (Proverbs 22:6). Your child was born with divinely stitched patterns already in place (Psalm 139:13–16). Your job is to discover the way your child is made, cooperate with the good bents, and counteract the evil bents.

What *beneficial* bents have you detected in your child? In the list below, use the select tool to highlight the characteristics that most describe your child.

Artistic	Sensitive	Athletic
Thoughtful	Verbal	Organized
Creative	Competitive	Carefree
Focused	Relational	Task-oriented
Boisterous	Reserved	Musical
Introverted	Extroverted	Industrious
Easygoing	Builder	Inquisitive

This list can go on and on. As the years go by and each stage passes, keep on developing and encouraging these treasures.

As you do, also watch for the *detrimental* bents. These are the streaks of clay in the marble, the presence of sin that you must counteract. What are these negative bents? Where do they originate? How can you help your child deal with them? Let's find out from God's Word.

Quotable

During their child's formative years, parents cooperate with the good bents and counteract the evil, for both are present in every child.

— Charles R. Swindoll





DIGGING DEEPER

Every child is born with a sin nature, which is a general bent toward wrongdoing. David lamented, “For I was born a sinner—yes, from the moment my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5 NLT). How can a child be born a sinner?

Imputed Sin

According to the apostle Paul, the bloodline of sin’s curse can be traced to the first human: “When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned” (Romans 5:12 NLT).

This cute and snuggly masterpiece of God’s creation who is your child bears an imprint of sin that was transmitted from Adam—including sin’s condition, *guilt*, and sin’s consequence: *spiritual death*. Theologians call this “imputed sin.”



Searching the Scriptures Tip

A handy guide to Christian theology is *Basic Theology* by Charles C. Ryrie. In this volume, you’ll find concise explanations and biblical support for your understanding of who God is, the nature of sin, and Christ’s provision for salvation.

No amount of personal merit can pardon guilt or give eternal life; only God can counteract your child’s sin nature by giving your child a new nature in Christ. Read the following verses and insert your child’s name in the blanks:

“God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for _____ sin, so that _____ could be made right with God through Christ.” (2 Corinthians 5:21 NLT)

“This means that _____ who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought _____ back to himself through Christ.” (5:17–18)

This is the gospel in a nutshell. God sent His Son, Jesus, to bear your child’s guilt on the cross. He offers your child His Son’s righteous standing as a free gift for your child to receive by faith. Share this good news with your child at an early age!



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Your primary responsibility is to lead your child to saving faith.

Read Romans 3:23; 6:23; and 10:9–10, and write out the plan of salvation for you to share with your child. (If you need help formulating the words, we recommend the tracts for children published by EvanTell. Visit www.evantell.org for more information.)

Sinful Choices

You can see the bitter fruit of your child's sin nature in his or her defiance, disobedience, out-of-control temper, sneakiness, and just plain old mischievousness. Be alert, discerning, and determined to counteract these sinful bents. Nip sinful attitudes and actions in the bud by teaching your child to obey and respect authority.

Your second responsibility is to teach your child to submit to authority.

We will shovel deeper into the subject of discipline in study 5, "Shaping the Will with Wisdom." For now, determine to put a stop to your child's sinful choices the moment you see them sprout. Begin by making a list of bents that need attention. Write down how you plan to address them.



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Inherited Patterns

Another source of detrimental bents in your child are the patterns of sin that run like sap through your family tree from generation to generation. These inherited bents are implanted deep within your child's physical, emotional, and spiritual DNA.

Your third responsibility is to counteract sinful family patterns.

When a child acts just like his or her parent, grandparent, or even great grandparent, we sometimes say, "The acorn didn't fall far from the tree." Seeds of drug dependency, a hot temper, power and control, and other sin problems can sprout from the same family root.

God warned His people about generational sins. Read the following verses, and note the repeating phrases: Exodus 20:5–6; 34:6–7; Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 5:8–9.

The word *iniquity* in the phrase "visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren" (Exodus 35:7) is from a Hebrew word meaning "to bend, to twist, to distort, to pervert." Bents of this sort tend to run in families, even to the third and fourth generation. However, the lineage of God's lovingkindness stretches to thousands!

Look up these verses, and write down the ways that *iniquity* is connected to God's atoning mercy: Leviticus 16:22; Isaiah 53:6.



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Although children can catch their parents' disease, God has the cure in the atonement of His Son foreshadowed in the sacrificial system and prophesied by Isaiah. By God's grace and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, family patterns of inherited sin can stop with your child—but it takes insight, awareness, and diligence. Stand with God against these inherited sins for the sake of your child!

Bring It Home

In the next study, we'll examine a biblical case study of inherited sins being passed from generation to generation. In preparation, conclude this study by completing your own case study of the inherited physical, psychological, and spiritual bents in your family.

You will need separate pieces of paper. On the first page, list the physical bents of your child's great-grandparents, grandparents, and parents that may be passed down, such as inherited diseases like cancer, heart disease, or diabetes. On the second page, list the psychological/emotional bents, such as depression, anxiety issues, chemical dependencies, relationship problems. And on the third page, list the spiritual bents, such as immorality, abuse, rebellion against God, even satanic strongholds.

Share your findings with a trusted family member, and compare notes to discover more insights into the bents in your family tree. In the space below, write down the inherited patterns that you want to stop. Make an action plan regarding the resources you need and the steps you will take. With God's grace and help, the inherited sins in your family can stop with your generation, and His mercy will transform your family for generations to come!

A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I need help. Family change is a complicated process, and I need discernment. I need courage to face the facts. I need understanding to be able to call inherited sin what it is rather than rationalize around it. Help me in this challenging task, and cover my children and their children with your healing mercy for many generations to come. In Jesus' name, amen.



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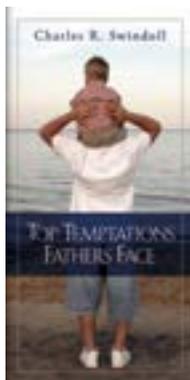
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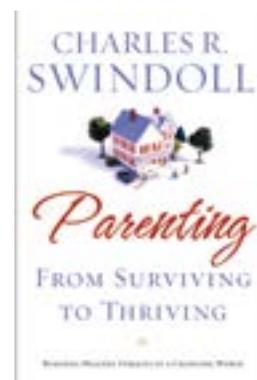
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2017 broadcast, this Searching the Scriptures study was developed by the Pastoral Ministries Department in collaboration with Mark Tobey, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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