



PARENTING

STEPS FOR SUCCESSFUL PARENTING



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BY JUNE HUNT



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Dear friend,

Never will I forget the day when I was with my mother at Skillern's Drugstore. We were there only ten minutes, but that was long enough for me to spy what, at that time, was touted as "the biggest nickel candy bar you can buy"—a Three Musketeers. My criminal eight-year-old mind thought, *Why shouldn't I take it!*

With my hot little hand, I stole the candy, slipped outside, shoved it into my mouth and swallowed it. Though I knew I didn't have much time, my plan worked like a charm. I felt so clever as I cuddled up next to Mother at the counter, just in time for her to complete her purchases.

On the drive home, Mother looked over at me and asked, "What's that chocolate on your face?"

"Uh ... what ... what chocolate?" I stammered. Although I was startled, I acted innocent.

"The chocolate on your mouth," Mom responded.

"I ... I don't know," I persisted. But clearly, the gig was up. I had been found out.

"We'll talk when we get home," she said with a soft voice. The last five minutes of the drive

seemed like five hours. I knew I had been caught.

As soon as we were in the house, Mother dealt with my deceitfulness. Not with anger, not with hostility, but in a calm, collected way.

“Honey, tell me, what did you do?”

I eked out a bare minimum explanation.

“What kind of candy did you steal?” she probed.

“I don’t know”—back to my same song and dance. I just didn’t want to tell the truth. Moments later, I thought we were at the end of the ordeal. But no.

Mother continued, “Well honey, we need to drive back to the drugstore, and you’ll need to tell the manager what you did, ask his forgiveness and pay for the candy.” Horror of horrors. I couldn’t believe I would have to go through all that humiliation.

Was that extra trip back to the store inconvenient for Mother? Yes. Was the admission of stealing an embarrassment to Mother? Yes. Was my confession and restitution necessary in the mind of Mother? Yes! And why? Because she recognized that in order to do *positive parenting*, there needed to be *negative consequences* for *negative*

behavior. I needed to feel more pain than pleasure over my stealing.

I praise God that I had a parent who handled my crime perfectly. What I saw modeled through Mother was this:

1. Deal with deceitfulness immediately.
2. Determine not to lash out in anger.
3. Don't dismiss wrongdoing—even if it's just for a five-cent crime.


Through Mom's example, I learned this important principle:

*“Whoever can be trusted with very little
can also be trusted with much,
and whoever is dishonest with very little
will also be dishonest with much.”*

(Luke 16:10)

The Bible contains many excellent principles for parents who want to “do it right.” My prayer is that you will confidently move forward with positive steps to successful parenting as found within these pages.

Yours in the Lord's hope,



June Hunt

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Kids are much like kites—struggling to become airborne, yet needing the stability of the string. A kite is not designed to be possessively protected inside the home. Though separation is painful, God designed your role as a parent to prepare your “kite” for flight.

As the fragile frame dives again and again, don't be emotionally torn by the changing winds. Keep running with your child, releasing more and more string into the Lord's sovereign hands.¹





DEFINITIONS

He was a rebel in the house of “the righteous.”

Reared by spiritual giants, it seemed inconceivable that a child of Ruth and Billy Graham would smoke, drink, and engage in fist fights in school hallways. Furthermore, Franklin Graham almost flunked out of a private high school in New York, far from his home nestled in the North Carolina mountains, and he was kicked out of a Christian college for keeping a coed out way past curfew.²

Living in the shadow of the world’s most famous evangelist, Franklin slipped further into the darkness, rejecting the rigidity of religion. At that point, the role of effective parenting could appear futile, even though the Bible says ...

“This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome.”

(1 John 5:3)

WHAT IS the Role of a Parent?

Imagine the continual prayers for Franklin that went up to God's throne of grace by his praying parents, Ruth and Billy Graham.

Then one summer—far from the protective influence of his parents—Franklin headed to the Middle East on a mission trip to help build a Christian medical clinic. For Franklin, it was more about building memories than mission. The ways of the world still held greater appeal than “*the way and the truth and the life*” (John 14:6).

But young Franklin found himself increasingly drawn to the two women who ran the clinic—two servants of God who exhibited daring faith in the midst of dire need. This clinic continually needed more funding, but instead of choosing to send out a public plea, the women simply chose to pray.

Franklin remembers being particularly skeptical on one occasion when the women were asking God for the specific amount of \$1,355 to pay a huge bill, yet because of his care and concern for the women, he quelled the cynicism that had been stirring in his spirit. Three days later, an interesting envelope arrived in the mail. It contained a handwritten note. The short letter read,

“I have heard about the wonderful work you are doing there, and you have been in my thoughts. I had some extra money and wanted to send it to you. Enclosed is a check. Use it any way you see fit.”³

The amount of the check: \$1,355. This miraculous incident was used to draw the heart of a rebel to the faith of his praying parents and into a right relationship with his heavenly Father. The women prayed earnestly and experienced the blessings of the following Scripture:

**“Ask and it will be given to you;
seek and you will find; knock and the
door will be opened to you.”
(Matthew 7:7)**

- ▶ **A parent** is a mother or father with responsibilities as provider and protector, teacher and trainer, defender and discipler of a child.
- ▶ **To parent** means to physically rear, emotionally nurture, and spiritually nourish a child. “Parent” in Greek is *goneus*.⁴
- ▶ **The protective role** of parents is seen in Hebrews 11:23, “By faith Moses’ parents hid him for three months after he was born.”

- ▶ **Parents** are teachers who can exert a powerful influence on the life of their child.

“Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching.”
(Proverbs 1:8)

A Biblical Checklist for Parenting

To determine your biblical accountability as a parent, ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ **Do you regard your children** as a blessing?

“Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him.” (Psalm 127:3)

- ▶ **Do you and your spouse** approach parenting with common goals and actions?

“Do two walk together unless they have agreed to do so?” (Amos 3:3)

- ▶ **Do you take every opportunity** to teach your children spiritual truths?

“These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”
(Deuteronomy 6:6–7)

- ▶ **Do you clearly instruct** your children by doing what is ethically right and just?

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4)

- ▶ **Do you plan ahead** to protect your children from danger?

“By faith Moses’ parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.” (Hebrews 11:23)

- ▶ **Do you provide** for your children’s material needs?

“Children should not have to save up for their parents, but parents for their children.” (2 Corinthians 12:14)

- ▶ **Do you effectively discipline** your children?

“Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.” (Proverbs 29:17)

- ▶ **Do you deserve the respect** and pride of your children?

“Children’s children are a crown to the aged, and parents are the pride of their children.” (Proverbs 17:6)

WHAT IS the Role of a Father?

Billy Graham's love for his rebellious boy reflects the heavenly Father's love for his rebellious children—unconditional and unending.

Franklin Graham never forgot a conversation he had with his father while overseas. Billy sat him down and very deliberately communicated that he could be assured of his love “no matter what he did, where he went, or how he ended up.” He could call “collect from anywhere in the world,” and he would always be welcome at home.⁵

The stubborn love of Franklin's father coupled with persistent prayer on his son's behalf ultimately drove the rebel to his knees in a hotel room. Finally at age 22, Franklin surrendered his life to Christ. And by losing his life, Franklin discovered that he truly found it. Jesus said ...

**“Whoever finds his life will lose it,
and whoever loses his life
for my sake will find it.”
(Matthew 10:39)**

- ▶ **Fathers** beget and/or raise their children.
- ▶ **To father** a child means to accept responsibility for and to provide leadership, guidance, and protection for that child.

- ▶ **“Father”** in Greek is *pater*, derived from a root word that means “nourisher, protector, upholder.”⁶ Children’s perception of their earthly father will profoundly influence the child’s concept of the heavenly Father.

“If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” (Matthew 7:11)

A Biblical Checklist for Fathers

To determine your biblical accountability as a father, ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ **Do you demonstrate reverence for God** before your children?

“Praise the LORD. Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who finds great delight in his commands. His children will be mighty in the land; the generation of the upright will be blessed.” (Psalm 112:1–2)

- ▶ **Do you have a sacrificial love** for your wife?

This kind of love by the father provides one of the greatest forms of security for a child.

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.” (Ephesians 5:25)