

Grace-Filled Parenting (25-pack)

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GRACE-FILLED PARENTING

There is nothing more important to consistent, faithful, patient, loving, and effective parenting than to understand what God has given you in the grace of his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Understanding God's grace will change you, and as it changes you, it will change the way you relate to and parent your children.

God doesn't call people to be parents because they are able. If you read your Bible carefully, you will understand that God doesn't call able people to do important things. Abraham wasn't able. Moses wasn't able. David wasn't able. The disciples weren't able, and the story goes on.

The reason for this is that there are no able people out there. They just don't exist. And they surely don't exist as parents. God did not create human beings to be independently able; he designed us to be dependent. It's not a sign of personal weakness or failure of character to feel unable as a parent. None of us has the natural storehouse of wisdom, strength, patience, mercy, and perseverance that every parent needs in order to do his or her job well.

Since independent ability, like independent righteousness, is a delusion, why would a God of perfect wisdom ask inadequate people to do such an important job? The answer is so crucial to grasp.

God calls unable people to do important things because ultimately what he's working on is not your immediate success, but that you would come to know him, to love him, to rest in his grace, and to live for his glory. God calls unable people to do the impossible so that in your search for help, you would find more than help—you would find him.

God never sends you into anything without going with you. He never tells you to do something without giving you what you need to do it. This is the story of the whole Bible. This is why God sent his Son to earth. But what does this have to do with parenting? Everything! It means that if you are God's child—if you have placed your trust in his Son, Jesus Christ, as your Savior from your inherent sin—it is impossible for you to be left to your own limited package of resources.

God is in you and with you! In the morning, when you dread getting out of bed and facing another hard parenting day, God is with you. He is with you when your children are in your face and disrespectful. He is with you when you fall into bed with a combination of exhaustion and regret. He gifts you with his presence. And he will not turn his back on you until what he has called you to do as a parent is complete.

What do you have as a Christian parent? You have the best thing ever and with it you have hope. You have God in every moment of the day. But, will you remember that you do?

God's grace works to open your eyes to see yourself as a parent accurately.

If you fall into thinking that you (as the parent) keep God's law perfectly, then you expect the people around you to do the same. This self-righteousness will have a negative effect on your relationship with your children and the way you handle their weakness and failures.

So here's what God does in all of our lives. He uses things like our marriages and our parenting to expose thoughts, attitudes, and desires in our hearts that we previously denied were there. God uses irritation, impatience, anger, and lack of gentleness and joy to show how much we need his forgiving and transforming grace.

God's plan is to make his invisible grace visible to children by sending parents of grace to give grace to children who need it. And parents who know they need grace tend to want to give grace to children who are just like them.

God's grace grows and changes you as a parent.

Remember the gospel; although the power of sin has been broken in the beautiful justifying mercies of Jesus Christ, the presence of sin still remains with us. So God's present zeal is to progressively deliver us from the remaining hold that sin has on us.

Think about how beautiful this is. In every moment you are parenting your children, the heavenly Father is parenting you. As you are lovingly confronting your children with the hope that they would confess their need and commit to change, the heavenly Father is confronting you. God hasn't just sent you to do his work in the lives of your children; he will use the lives of your children to advance his work in you.

God's grace liberates you from the prison of regret.

One of the most beautiful things about God's grace is that it welcomes you to fresh starts and new beginnings. Way too many parents are paralyzed by the "what ifs" and "if onlys." Yes, you will make mistakes. Yes, you will learn and grow as a parent. Yes, you will look back and be embarrassed by things you said and things you did. If you're at all humble as a parent, you will look back with some regret.

But it's important to understand that although regret is a sign of a humble heart, it is also dangerous and debilitating to live in regret. Living in regret robs you of your confidence. It weakens or steals your hope. And for all of its remembering, regret can be tragically forgetful. It tends to forget the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the cross, Jesus bore the entire burden of our guilt and our shame. On the cross, Jesus

purchased, by the shedding of his blood, our complete forgiveness: past, present, and future. This means we can boldly come to him in our failure, receive his forgiveness, deposit our regret at his feet, and move on to new and better ways of doing what he's called us to do as parents.

God has called you to be a parent. How does he give you what you need for this calling? He gives you what you need by giving you himself, and in giving you himself, he showers his amazing, forgiving, rescuing, transforming, empowering, and wisdom-giving grace down on you. The one who called you to this very important job is with you. And because he is always with you, you as a parent can always have hope.

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