

# ADOPTIVE PARENTING

## FAMILY BACKGROUND

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Vernon (10), Brooklyn (7), Emma (3), Seth (infant)

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## BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF PARENTING

Parenting class BFL notes:

<http://www.fbcdurham.org/journeying/bible-for-life/bfl-class-notes/christian-parenting/>

### 1. CHILDREN ARE HUMAN BEINGS CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

**Genesis 1:27** *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.*

**Matthew 19:13-15** *Then children were brought to him that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." And he laid his hands on them and went away.*

### 2. CHILDREN ARE A BLESSING FROM THE LORD

**Psalms 127:3-5** *Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!*

### 3. CHILDREN HAVE FALLEN NATURES

**Proverbs 22:15** *Folly is bound up in the heart of a child.*

*Certain new theologians dispute original sin, which is the only part of Christian theology which can really be proved." — G. K. Chesterton, Orthodoxy*

### 4. CHRISTIAN PARENTS DO NOT GUARANTEE CHRISTIAN CHILDREN

Bringing children in to a Christian home will not “magically” make them Christian.

## ADOPTION REQUIRES LOSS

All children who are eligible for adoption or foster care have experienced some kind of trauma and loss.

## PARENTING A TRAUMATIZED CHILD

How should we parent children differently in light of their prior trauma or loss?

### 1. BE WILLING TO ADAPT YOUR PARENTING STYLE

Not just your parenting style, but your entire family life will need to be flexible to meet the unique needs of the new children in the family.

## 2. BE WILLING TO SEEK AND RECEIVE HELP

Adopting children is a demanding task and requires the time and resources of more than one family.

## 3. REALIZE THAT ATTACHMENT MAY NOT COME EASILY

For every year a child lived outside the adoptive family, expect the same number of years to pass before that child feels perfectly at home in his or her new family.

## SPIRITUAL BATTLES

***Ephesians 2:1–3** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.*

## ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

The habits, instructions, and values taught to children from hard places, left uncorrected, will prove damaging to their lives.

## SATAN'S MAD

Before they were adopted into a Christian family, these children belonged to Satan. He still wants to keep them and will not let them go easily.

## LOST IN A DELUSION

Insensitivity to the gospel due to the world and the devil can quickly turn into hardened hearts in the flesh. The flesh of children from hard places can be baffling: rejecting all that is good, and pursuing evil for the sake of wickedness.

***Ephesians 2:4–10** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

## DEALING WITH QUESTIONS

From the time the child is a baby, talk about adoption. The very young child will not be able to understand, but the repeated words will lodge in their minds.

## ADOPTIVE PARENTING RESOURCES

***Adopted for Life* by Russell Moore.** This book is a fantastic overview of adoption theology. If you're just beginning to consider adoption, or if you're in the midst of it and could use some encouragement, or if your family member is adopting and you think they are crazy, start here!

***The Connected Child* by Karyn Purvis.** This is a wonderful resource for understanding and addressing numerous issues that come with parenting troubled children. Dr. Purvis is a Christian parent as well as a respected expert in her field; these two things together offer both practical solutions and an eternal, God-centered perspective.

***Empowered to Connect:*** This is a website with lots of resources from Dr. Purvis and others.  
<http://empoweredtoconnect.org/>

***Adopting the Hurt Child* by Gregory Keck and Regina Kupecky.** This book discusses a number of issues related to adopting troubled kids, including attachment, bonding, international adoption, finding effective therapy, and practical advice.

***Give Them Grace* by Elyse Fitzpatrick and Jessica Thompson.** This is not adoption-specific, but it is my favorite book on parenting! It discusses both the theology and practice of parenting from a gospel-centered perspective. I love that the practical sections include help for correcting both believing and non-believing children—in both situations, the gospel is the central message, but the implications are different for those who claim Christ and those who don't. I re-read this book every couple of months for parenting encouragement and advice.