



LET'S BEGIN HERE

We've all blown it as parents and grandparents—we've blown it as people! We've spoken harshly or rashly. We have falsely accused. We have said or done things that have eroded the confidence of those we care about. The space between our wrongs and our loved ones feels like an impassible chasm. Reconciliation seems impossible, perhaps because too much time has passed or because fear keeps us silent and paralyzed.

The same Spirit who resurrected Jesus from the dead lives in us. God can do the impossible. Not only is God able, but He is willing to restore the “years the locusts have eaten” (Joel 2:25 NIV).

Let's learn more about what to do when we've blown it.



DIGGING DEEPER

The focus of this *Searching the Scriptures* study is on application. Application is allowing the Bible's lessons to take a hold of our lives—causing us to examine ourselves and act on what we have learned. The lessons of humility and restoration are vital takeaways for reconciliation. Even if we don't have children, these lessons are applicable to relationships with our loved ones, classmates, and coworkers. At some point in our life, we will blow it. Application of Scripture informs how to respond after we blow it.

Chuck Swindoll calls this the painful reality of being human, and then he summarizes how those painful realities manifest themselves:

- First: We are all imperfect, including our children.
- Second: We cannot change the past. It is set in stone.
- Third: We are personally responsible for our own wrongs.

Quotable

The goodness of our God is greater than the badness of our failures. He will graciously give you a future and a hope, even with the children with whom you may still feel a sense of distance.

— Charles R. Swindoll



Which one of these painful realities of being human most pricks your heart right now? Why?

Chuck's sermon outlines five steps to attempt reconciliation when we've blown it. Let's take each step in turn and apply each to our own situation—whether with children or our coworkers or peers.

Step 1: Humble Yourself

One poop diaper change is all the proof we need that parenting isn't the role one would choose for the glory and constant affirmation. Good parenting takes steady, behind-the-scenes, sometimes undignified faithfulness. Still, we can allow pride to creep into our parenting in how we relate to our children. For example, we cannot be humble parents and yet never admit that we were wrong.

Read Chuck's words about common-sense parenting: "There's no magic in the Christian's home. There's no wand to wave over the situation. You as a parent have a job to do. It's thankless. It's sometimes unappreciated. . . . You have to do the strong talk. It takes reproof. It takes honest confrontation. It takes your standing your ground, setting boundaries, and not giving in, no matter how much the child may threaten, scream, or deny. The boundaries are set. And good common sense will lead you in how you carry that out."

Thankless and *unappreciated* are words unassociated with pride, but these words are also often closely related to service.

Read Matthew 11:29. How does Jesus describe Himself?



Name someone whom you have observed to be humble. What characteristics convey his or her humility?

Read Matthew 18:3–5.

Who is the greatest in heaven?

How does a child display humility?

When we welcome children, who else is welcomed?

Step 2: Pray

When applying the Bible to our lives, it's important to *pray vulnerably*. Application isn't for perfect people; it's for people who are keenly aware that they need God's help. Vulnerable prayers happen when we open up our blind spots, shortcomings, fears, and impatience to the Spirit. God doesn't despise a humble, vulnerable heart—instead, He delights in exalting the humble.



One of the best examples of vulnerable prayer can be found in the Psalms, where David writes:

Search me, O God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
Point out anything in me that offends you,
and lead me along the path of everlasting life. (Psalm 139:23–24)

Here are some questions to help us zero in on vulnerable specifics (instead of the generic “Oh Lord, help me to do better!”) when we’ve blown it:

- Is there someone I’ve hurt and haven’t reconciled with?
- Is there a person I need to stop running from?
- Do I have bad habits to break?
- Do I need to shift gears or change direction?
- Is there someone I must forgive? Is there someone I must ask for forgiveness?

Write down one or two more examples of questions that will aid you in praying vulnerable, specific prayers.

Step 3: Stop Blaming Others

Another important step in applying God’s Word to our lives is the step of confession. Forgiveness and cleansing are on the other side of confession (1 John 1:9). We cannot, however, receive the healing God desires for us if we continue to blame other people or circumstances for our own bad choices.

The first and most important confession we can ever make is a confession of faith. Bible studies and attempts to apply God’s Word to our lives are fruitless efforts if we are not connected to the vine. Jesus is the vine; we cannot bear fruit without Him (John 15:5).



Take this time to write down your commitment to Jesus. If you are not certain you have committed to Jesus, stop everything and read this link on [How to Begin a Relationship with God](#).

Step 4: Make Yourself Available and Vulnerable

Have you ever found it easier to confess your failures to God than to another person? Part of the confidence we have in talking to God is healthy. He is our Father, and we should have an open and honest relationship with Him. That said, God always, always expects His children to be in peaceable relationship with Him *and* with other people. Sometimes we run to God yet avoid other people. It can be a daunting challenge to be vulnerable with the people closest to us! There's no guarantee that our kids will appreciate a broken spirit and a contrite heart . . . at least not at first.

Yet, it's a risk God encourages us to take. Jesus said in Matthew 5:23–24: “if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.”

Ask the Lord to help you remember any offenses that your children (or spouse, coworker, peer, etc.) have against you. Write them down.

Look at your calendar and make some deadlines to contact each person that the Spirit has brought to mind.



Write down your prayer asking the Lord for help in having a soft, open heart in communicating with the people you've named.

In his message, Chuck shared his pithy advice for having frank and vulnerable conversations:

Number one: Don't hide anything.

Number two: Don't hurry the process. You don't need to get closure right then.

Number three: Don't hold onto anything in the past. Don't bring it up again.

Step 5: Trust God to Bring Healing and Change

The King James Version of Psalm 37:5 says, "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." Rest. Rest in the Lord. When we have honored God with our confession and our action, we then rely on Him to bring about change. We can be confident and grateful that even if the one with whom we attempted to reconcile never grants us forgiveness or reconciliation, we are loved and forgiven by God.

Read and meditate on Isaiah 58. Write down the promises and words of encouragement that you find.





A FINAL PRAYER

Fanny J. Crosby's verses to the hymn "Let Me Cling to Thee" is our prayer:

*Jesus, let me cling to thee,
Show thy mercy now to me;
I am lonely, weak, oppressed;
I am weary, give me rest.*

*Should I wander from thy side,
Thou, my ever faithful guide,
Wilt restore me to the right,
And in darkness grant me light.*

*Thou wilt hear my soul's complaint,
Thou wilt cheer me when I faint,
Thou hast suffered death for me,
Jesus, let me cling to thee.*

*Fold me in thy arms of love,
Give me comfort from above;
May thy Spirit's gentle power
Save and keep me hour by hour.¹*

Endnote

1. Fanny J. Crosby, "Let Me Cling to Thee," public domain.



BIBLICAL PARENTING

What to Do When You've Blown It

Isaiah 58:6–12; Joel 2:23–26

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



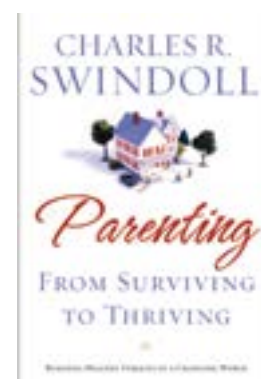
Tools for Digging Deeper



Biblical Parenting
by Charles R. Swindoll
CD series



**Top Temptations
Fathers Face**
by Charles R. Swindoll
booklet



**Parenting: From Surviving
to Thriving**
by Charles R. Swindoll
softcover book

For these and related resources, visit www.insightworld.org/store
or call USA 1-800-772-8888 • AUSTRALIA +61 3 9762 6613 • CANADA 1-800-663-7639 • UK +44 1306 640156

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.



www.insight.org | www.insightworld.org

Copyright © 2012, 2017 by Charles R. Swindoll, Inc. All rights are reserved worldwide. Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application