

BIBLICAL PARENTING

STUDY SIX

Delighting in Your Children

1 Thessalonians 2:5–12

May we become reacquainted with what it means to delight in our children, to find pleasure in them and them in us.

—Charles R. Swindoll

WHEN you pray, how do you address the Lord? When Jesus taught His disciples how to pray, He didn't use impersonal, clinical, or stuffy terminology to talk to God. Instead, Jesus simply said, "Our *Father*" (Matthew 6:9, emphasis added).

We've been adopted into God's family, and we, too, can call Him "Father" (Romans 8:15)—how extraordinary! And, according to the psalmist, God delights in His children:

*The LORD directs the steps of the godly.
He delights in every detail of their lives.* (Psalm 37:23)

One of the most profound ways parents can teach their children a sound theology of God is to *delight* in their children as God delights in them. This doesn't mean unbridled and undisciplined indulgence; neither does it mean intractable and inflexible discipline.

What does it mean to delight in one's children as a reflection of God's delight? Let's take a look.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

As you open God’s Word to find guidance on delighting in your children, pause to reflect on His delight in you. Let David’s words guide your reflection:

*I love you, LORD;
you are my strength.
The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my savior;
my God is my rock, in whom I find protection.
He is my shield, the power that saves me,
and my place of safety.
I called on the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and he saved me from my enemies. . . .
He led me to a place of safety;
he rescued me because he delights in me. (Psalm 18:1–3; 19)*

Do you truly believe that God delights in you? Linger on the final four words of verse 19: “he delights in me.” Open your heart to receive God’s delight in you as you say the words aloud, *God delights in me*. He does indeed! In prayer, receive His fatherly love toward you and thank God for His care and encouragement.



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TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Through His Word, God reveals how to pass along what we've received. Like five beacons guiding a ship to harbor to deliver its lifesaving goods, five passages in Scripture help us deliver God's delight to our children.



Observation: Biblical Words That Portray a Happy Home

A topical Bible study in the *Searching the Scriptures* method involves examining a single concept in various passages. One verse or passage offers one shade of meaning, and as we examine other passages on the same theme, we can add colors and hues to our understanding to form a complete picture.¹

In Chuck Swindoll's message, he examined five passages on parenting that help explain how to delight in your child. Use the chart on the next page as a guide to read these passages at NetBible.org and to discover for yourself the meanings of the words on which Chuck focused.

When you click on the Bible verse link, you'll see two panels on the NetBible.org website. On the left panel, you'll see the English version of the text. Select the Hebrew or Greek tab on the right panel, which reveals the Scripture in that language. Now you can view the English Bible and Hebrew or Greek Bible side-by-side.

To find the definition of a Hebrew or Greek word, select a word in the English Bible, such as *delight* in Proverbs 3:12. The Hebrew word will be highlighted in the same verse on the right panel, and a text box containing the definition of the word will appear. If you double-click on the Hebrew or Greek word, you can choose between a "Strong's Search" (which shows other passages in which the Hebrew or Greek word appears) or a "Word Study" (which gives more lexical information).

In the following chart, look up the verse at NetBible.org, and write down your summary of the definition of each word as it appears in the New English Translation (NET Bible). (Remember: select the Hebrew or Greek tab on the right panel to open the Hebrew or Greek Bible. Then select the English word in the verse on the left panel to reveal the Hebrew or Greek word and the definition.) We'll list the verses in the order that Chuck explains them in his message.



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Verse	Word	Definition
<i>Proverbs 3:12</i>	“delights” (<i>ratsah</i>)	
<i>Hebrews 12:6</i>	“accepts” (<i>paradechomai</i>)	
<i>Ephesians 6:4</i>	“raise . . . up” (<i>ektrepho</i>), “discipline” (<i>paideia</i>), and “instruction” (<i>nouthesia</i>)	
<i>1 Thessalonians 2:7</i>	“caring” (<i>thalpo</i>)	
<i>1 Thessalonians 2:11–12</i>	“exhorting” (<i>parakaleo</i>), “encouraging” (<i>paramuteomai</i>), and “insisting” (<i>marturomai</i>)	



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Interpretation: Delighting Enhances Self-Worth

Review this list of terms: *delights, accepts, raise up, discipline, instruction, caring, exhorting, encouraging, and insisting*. What a wonderful description of parenting at its best! These actions boost your children's self-esteem and communicate that they are worth your attention and affection. Parents have a unique role to nourish and cherish their children, to draw out their true personality in a warm, accepting environment. Tie a mental string around this list of words by summing up the concepts in a few sentences.



Correlation: Word Pictures for Delighting in Our Children

Word pictures also convey the concept of delighting in our children, and none are more instructive than those in Psalm 127:3–5. Read these verses and in the space below explain the meaning of the metaphors: *gift, reward, arrows, and quiver*.

*Children are a gift from the LORD;
they are a reward from him.*

*Children born to a young man
are like arrows in a warrior's hands.*

How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of them!

He will not be put to shame when he confronts his accusers at the city gates.



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We'll look more closely at Psalm 127 and 128 in the next study, "Delightful Memories Your Children Won't Forget," which further explores the "delighting" concept in parenting. For now, think of your children as God's special gifts for you to guide while they live in your home. What's the result of delighting in your children? Joy! We can provide our children something that all children need and deserve: a happy home.

It's essential if you delight in your child that you spend time with that child regardless of the age. It's essential that the words you say to your children are words of courtesy and kindness and respect. It's essential that the confidence you have in your children is communicated to them. You give discernment, and you give counsel, but you are there to encourage them on their way. —Chuck Swindoll



Application: How to Follow Through

How can we follow through with these biblical principles for parenting? Chuck summed up his message with four "Ls" of delighting in children.

- Delight in **lingering** around them. Enjoy spending time with your children and having meals with them with the television off and no distracting handheld devices.
- Delight in **listening** to them. Pay attention when they have something to say. Ask questions and discover their dreams.
- Delight in **learning** alongside them. Do projects together, read to your children, and grow together.
- Delight in **laughing** with them. Funny stuff happens in the family all the time. Lighten up! Laugh about life and tell humorous stories from your past. Having fun together is an essential ingredient in delighting in your child.

Which of these lessons can you apply this week in your home?



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Need more practical suggestions on how to delight in your children? Here are a few. The possibilities are endless!

- Make a surprise visit to your elementary-school-aged child at school.
- Ask your adult child how you can pray for him or her each week.
- Write and frame a prayer for your child, praising God for him or her, and naming unique things that you love about him or her.
- For each of your children, write words of encouragement in dry-erase marker on his or her bathroom mirror.
- Take your children out for interview dates: take lots of selfies, eat yummy food, and ask them interview questions.
- Make a list of all the gifts you see in each child. Pray through them, dedicating each gift to God.
- Make sure that when you connect with your children (no matter their age), you look directly at *them*. Put ALL your devices away and communicate nonverbally that you are listening.

Picture one of the children in your life. Jot down some ways that you intend to delight in him or her this week.

Love cherishes and nourishes, it discovers, gets involved, and listens with caring. Love draws out the other person, boosts his or her self-esteem, and is essential for you and your child to enjoy life together. In a word, to love is to *delight* in your child.



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A FINAL PRAYER

Father, what a joy it is to call You Father. Please help me to reflect Your delight and love for Your children in how I delight and love mine. Thank You for blessing me with these children. Help me to dedicate them to You and guide them in the paths that You have laid for them. Amen.

ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."



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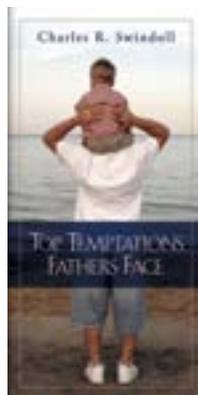
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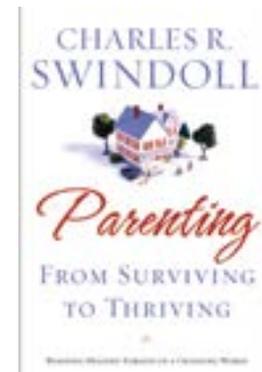
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2020 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, executive vice president of Pastoral Ministries, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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