

## BIBLICAL PARENTING STUDY TWO

### The Bents in Your Baby

#### *Selected Scriptures*

*Fit your training to your child so that it is in keeping with his or her individual gift or bent.*

—Charles R. Swindoll

**Y**OUR child is like a beautiful tapestry knit together by God, the master weaver of the soul. David marveled at God's delicate handiwork:

*You formed my inward parts;  
You wove me in my mother's womb.* (Psalm 139:13 NASB)

Your child's hair texture, eye color, voice timbre, and body shape; personality, interests, moods, and abilities—God entwines all these intricate threads in a unique pattern to create the masterpiece that is your child.

These characteristics, or *bents*, become more visible over time. Each stage of your child's lifespan—infancy, childhood, adolescence, early adulthood—reveals new features of God's design. Your job as a parent, as we learned in the previous study of Proverbs 22:6, is to fit your training to your child so that it is in keeping with his or her individual gift or bent.

Seeing the bent accurately is the first parental task; responding appropriately is the second. In this study and the next, we'll take a closer look at the concept of bents, both toward good and evil. As you search the Scriptures for God's guidance in these important parental tasks of discovering and responding, pause to pray for insight from His Word.



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### **PREPARE YOUR HEART**

Make the psalmist's prayer your own as you begin your study.

*Open my eyes to see  
the wonderful truths in your instructions. (Psalm 119:18)*



### **TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES**

Open the Word and read [Psalm 139](#) focusing on each phrase and letting it sink in. In his book, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs*, Chuck Swindoll encourages careful reading of Scripture:

In order to become astute observers, we need to read as if for the first time. When we train ourselves to see God's Word with fresh eyes, chances are good that we'll notice details we've never seen there before.<sup>1</sup>

What do you see in this Psalm that you may have never noticed before?



### **Observation: The Origin of Your Child's Bents**

Observation is the first step in the *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study.<sup>2</sup> As you look closely at Psalm 139, can you see a progression of thoughts? David composed this ancient hymn in four stanzas that reveal individual themes as the passage unfolds. Having overviewed the Psalm, can you now tune your ear to the Psalm's personal message for your child?

Imagine God saying these words to him or her. Summarize the verses under each heading as your child might understand them.



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God Knows Me—Psalm 139:1–6

God Is with Me—Psalm 139:7–12

God Made Me—Psalm 139:13–18

God Search Me—Psalm 139:19–24



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Just as God was “intimately acquainted” with David’s ways, so also is He with your child’s ways (Psalm 139:3 NASB). The Hebrew word for *ways* is the same word used in Proverbs 22:6 and includes every aspect of your child’s being. Your child’s sitting and rising (behaviors), ups and downs (moods), comings and goings (pursuits), and even his or her thoughts that are so secret to you are pages of an open book to God. How can God read your child so well? Because He is the author of your child!



### **Interpretation: God’s Hand in Your Child’s Life**

Digging into a biblical term can unearth rich nuggets of truth. When you discover a gem, polish it into a *principle*. A principle is a statement based on a truth that transcends time and culture; it applies to all people, from the shepherds of David’s era to the millennials of the postmodern age. Below are some truths from the text, followed by principles. We’ll get you started with one principle, and then you can create your own as you consider God’s hand in your child’s life as expressed in Psalm 139:13–15:

*You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body  
and knit me together in my mother’s womb.  
Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex!  
Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it.  
You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion,  
as I was woven together in the dark of the womb.*

TRUTH: God Himself—not some impersonal force of nature—forms each person at conception in the womb.

PRINCIPLE: We should value each person as a creation of God.

ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES:



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TRUTH: Because God made my child, He knows all aspects of my child.

PRINCIPLE: I can ask God for understanding and insight into my child.

ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES:

TRUTH: God made my child unique in body, mind, gifts, abilities, interests, and needs.

PRINCIPLE: I should accept my child and avoid favoritism.

ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES:



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TRUTH: My child is fearfully and wonderfully made.

PRINCIPLE: I can take delight in my child as a wonderful treasure from God.

ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES:

God Himself knit together the fine details of my child, and the workshop for His marvelous creation was the protected and secret place of the womb. The next verse describes the great care that God takes in watching over the creative process at my child's "unformed" embryonic stage when He is coding His instructions into the strands of my child's DNA.

*You saw me before I was born.  
Every day of my life was recorded in your book.  
Every moment was laid out  
before a single day had passed. (Psalm 139:16)*

No wonder God knows the "days" of your child's life—He formed his or her "ways"! Your child is no mere byproduct of biological chance, in the same way that a palace is no mere pile of randomly tossed bricks. A skilled architect supervised the building process from imagination to blueprints to construction. And so did God, the divine Architect, watch over the masterful design of your child.



### **Correlation: The Beauty of God's Handiwork**

Let's correlate the key actions to other biblical texts to enhance the meaning of some of the words from Psalm 139. Look up the verses below in the version noted, and then write down the meaning in the space provided.



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“You *formed . . . wove . . . skillfully wrought . . .*” (Psalm 139:13, 15 NASB, emphasis added). Compare with Job’s clothing metaphor in [Job 10:11](#) and the making of the curtain in the tabernacle in [Exodus 26:36](#).

“. . . made in *secret . . .*” (139:15 NASB, emphasis added). Compare with the protective place of God in [Psalm 32:7](#).

What a wonderful work of God is your child!

*Parenting has moments of great ecstasy when you take delight in your children. When you find certain things in their lives delightful, tell them. Let them know that. Let them know they delight you. Express to them how grateful you are for the way God has put them together. —Chuck Swindoll*



### **Application: The Starting Place**

As a parent, you can cooperate with your child’s good bents by watching over your child with the same diligence that God took in His design.

- *Avoid re-bending God’s bents.* In other words, don’t try to “bend” children whom God designed to be artists into athletes!
- *Applaud your child’s marvelous qualities when they emerge.* Let your child know the wonderful ways God has made him or her.



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- *Celebrate your child's unique bents, rather than compare or show favoritism.* Be careful not to tell one child that he or she is better than another child.
- *Nurture your child's self-image as you tell the story of his or her divine design.* Recite to him or her the wonderful truths of Psalm 139!

Resist the temptation to force your child into your own mold, and don't hesitate to verbalize your praise and encouragement. What are some specific ways that you can nurture or cooperate with the good bents in your child?

Like everyone, your child has godly bents *and* sinful bents. In the following study, we'll take a closer look at David's admission, "In sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5 NASB) and Paul's teaching about how "sin entered into the world, and death through sin" (Romans 5:12 NASB). We'll learn about your child's inclinations to sin and how the "rod and reproof give wisdom" (Proverbs 29:15 NASB). While we *cooperate* with our child's good bents, we take steps to *counteract* the sinful bents. The next study reveals how.



### **A FINAL PRAYER**

*Father, help me to see Your fingerprints on my child's soul. Your handiwork began at conception, and You continue to shape and mold. Unite me with Your creative work in my child's life—and help me to grow as well, to be the person You made me to be. In Jesus' name, amen.*

### ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 95.
2. 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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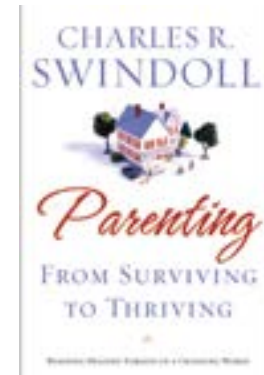
**Tools for Digging Deeper**



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by Charles R. Swindoll  
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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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