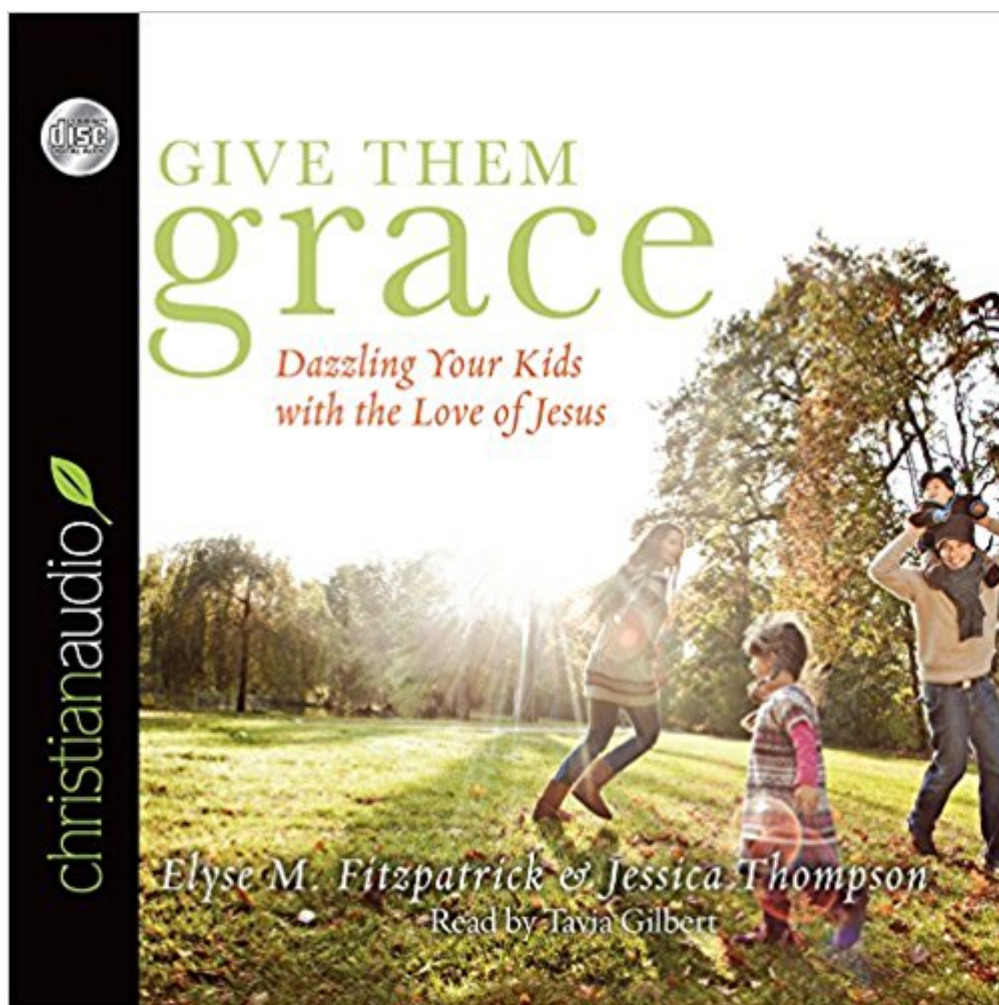


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# Give Them Grace: Dazzling Your Kids With The Love Of Jesus



## Synopsis

A guide to help Christians parent their children with grace and an emphasis on the cross. How are parents to raise children so they don't become Pharisees (legalists) or prodigals (rebels)? It's all about grace-filled, gospel-driven parenting, says the mother/daughter team of Elyse Fitzpatrick and Jessica Thompson. Christian parents, in their desire to raise godly children, can tend toward rule-centered discipline. There is, however, a far more effective method--a grace-motivated approach that begins with the glorious truth of God's love for sinners. In *Give Them Grace*, parents will learn how to connect the benefits of the cross--especially regeneration, adoption, and justification--to their children's daily lives. Chapters address topics such as our inability to follow the law perfectly, God's forgiveness and love displayed at the cross, and what true heart obedience looks like. Fitzpatrick and Thompson also discuss discipline, dealing with popular culture, and evangelism as a way of life. Parents will find this book a great resource for raising grace-filled, Jesus-loving kids. Â

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

So many Christian parents fall into the trap of asking the law to do in the hearts of their children what only grace can accomplish. Armed with threats, manipulation, and guilt, they attempt to create change that only the cross of Jesus Christ makes possible. It is so encouraging to read a parenting book that points parents to the grace of the cross and shows them how to be instruments of that grace in the lives of their children. Paul Tripp, President, Paul Tripp Ministries In our human attempts to raise good and godly kids, we often forget that God extended his best grace to us. We

are not full of grace on our own; we desperately need his grace. Elyse Fitzpatrick and her daughter, Jessica, provide a great tool to guide parents down the road of gracious parenting. I commend it to you. James MacDonald, Senior Pastor, Harvest Bible Chapel, Chicagoland Area; radio teacher, Walk in the Word Elyse Fitzpatrick continues her never-ending quest to churn out grace-filled, Christ-centered, gospel-saturated books. And now she's done it again with her daughter, Jessica, coauthoring this excellent parenting book! If you are a parent, get online and order your copy of Give Them Grace today! --Deepak Reju Pastor of Biblical Counseling and Families, Capitol Hill Baptist Church

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The authors, mother and daughter remind us that parenting is not only hard but also impossible. Yes, we need to nurture, teach, discipline, train, pray, and model, but we must not depend on our parenting skills to change the hearts of our children. Instead, they counsel parents to rely on the faithfulness of Jesus, our great high priest, to change their hearts. Grace for both parents and children flows through the pages of this book; I only wish I had read it at the beginning of my parenting instead of the end. Rose Marie Miller, missionary; author, From Fear to Freedom This is not just a book on parenting; this is deep training in the gospel. Elyse Fitzpatrick shows parents how to model themselves after the heavenly Father, who changed his children not by wrath and the law but by grace. A lot of books talk about gospel-centeredness in theory; this book shows you how to apply it to one of life's most important relationships. --J. D. Greear, Senior Pastor, The Summit Church, Durham, North Carolina

“So many Christian parents fall into the trap of asking the law to do in the hearts of their children what only grace can accomplish. Armed with threats, manipulation, and guilt, they attempt to create change that only the cross of Jesus Christ makes possible. It is so encouraging to read a parenting book that points parents to the grace of the cross and shows them how to be instruments of that grace in the lives of their children.” —Paul David Tripp, President, Paul Tripp Ministries; author, *What Did You Expect?*

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Elyse Fitzpatrick and Jessica Thompson explain what makes Christian parenting unique: it isn’t merely about turning out “good” kids; it’s about pointing all of our kids to the Savior. While rules are a necessary part of parenting, Elyse and Jessica say, they aren’t the primary theme, the work of Christ is. The law doesn’t transform the heart...It only hardens them in pride (because they’re

successfully obeying it) or despair (because they aren't pg. 68). One of the strengths of Give Them Grace is that it not only encourages the parent to give grace to his/her children, but it also gives a good measure of grace to the parent. Here are a few quotes to whet your appetite: We must trust in His "ability to transform hearts, not in our ability to be consistent or faithful...Freedom to love and enjoy our children flows out of the knowledge that God saves them in spite of our best efforts, not because of them. Salvation of the Lord" (pg. 53). It's not up to me; it's a work of God. "When we're quietly resting in grace, we'll have grace to give our children, too. When we're freed from the ultimate responsibility of being their savior, we'll find our parenting burden becoming easy and light" (pg. 55). Elyse and Jessica touch briefly on idolatry and unbelief as it pertains to parenting: "We have far too high a view of our ability to shape our children and far too low a view of God's love and trustworthiness. So we multiply techniques and try to control the outcome" (pg. 57). In Give Them Grace, Elyse and Jessica also make much of God. This book is encouraging, Gospel-centered, and grace-filled through and through. In spite of all of the strengths of this book, I do have a few reservations. 1.) The authors don't make children apologize unless they are truly sorry (pg. 67, 101, 104) lest they be hypocritical. "If we encourage our children to ask for forgiveness when their hearts haven't been stricken by the rod of the Holy Spirit's conviction, we are training them to be hypocritical. We are inadvertently teaching them that false professions of sorrow will satisfy God. God is never pleased with outward proclamations of devotions when the heart is far from him (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:7-9); in fact, he hates it. The truth is that we can never know with any certainty whether proclamations of repentance are true, because only God knows the heart (Jer. 17:5)...Rather than insisting on an immediate show of repentance, you should give your children time to respond to the prompting of the Holy Spirit" (pg. 104). Although this looks good at face value, I could easily use this same logic to say that my children need not obey, attend church, sing praises to God, etc. unless they truly desired to, however, I don't think that this should be the case at all. John Piper has a very helpful article on this subject: "Why Require Unregenerate Children to Act Like They're Good?" @ [...]. 2.) The authors repeatedly assert that obedience results from a heart of gratitude for all that God has done for us in Christ without providing any Scripture references to support this notion (ex. pg. 48, 54, 83, 106, 108). Again, I have found Biblical teaching from John Piper helpful on this subject. It has been a few years since I have looked over that material, but I need to review it again. An initial article that might help one begin to consider this topic is: "Is Gratitude A Bad Motivation for Obeying God?" @ [...]. 3.) The authors make an unhelpful distinction between regenerate and unregenerate children (ex. pg. 48). A "Chart of Common Problems and the Gospel" includes suggested conversation for the child who isn't a Christian and the one who is. Dan

Cason articulates this concern quite nicely in his review for Westminster: "I found the attempt to separate children into 'regenerate' (Christian) and 'unregenerate' (non-Christian) categories somewhat confusing. Presumably you determine what category your child is in based on his or her public profession of faith. They believe that, until you're able to discern that your child is a Christian, you cannot expect her or him to obey. Thus, you should only present the gospel." This brings us back to reservation number one. ;) I am still weighing the above matters and have not had sufficient time to ponder them in-depth. As a result, my thoughts are not well-articulated and severely lacking. However, my review is due, so I've treated the matters as carefully as I can at this time. I hope the links will help you to begin to study these matters for yourself. Overall, *Give Them Grace* is an encouraging and thought-provoking read. I am still processing much of the material. While there is much to commend, there is also much to ponder and carefully weigh. I don't agree with others who have said that it is THE BEST parenting book, but God has used it as a means of grace to me and for that I am grateful. \*Many thanks to Crossway for providing me with a copy of this book in exchange for my honest opinion!

I really wanted to love this book. The first part of the had me hopeful, though wary. All in all, the theology is good (hence 2 stars) and a new perspective on parenting from grace could produce a much needed change in our families and churches... but the application is completely out of touch, and developmentally inappropriate in many examples. The dialogue examples are verbose and unrealistic, very heavy use of the doctrine of total depravity, which would be enough to discourage even the most spirited child. I am thoroughly Reformed myself, but am always disappointed to see capable and intelligent authors completely overlook or dismiss the leaps and bounds made in recent years toward understanding the developmental psychology of small children. I don't understand how anyone could truly believe a 20-30min mini-sermon is going to produce heart-changing results in a preschooler. And the tone of superiority in the authors' language, especially in the questions for reflection at the end of each chapter, was a big put off. Further, they have a lot to say about "crushing a proud child's heart", and hardly anything helpful to say on how to model Christ-like behavior, proactive parenting, and love and grace in ACTION. There is a thick air of hypocrisy in between the lines of this book. Once I got to the section on discipline, and the very disappointing page on spanking, I put it down. Lazy, predictable treatment on the issue of corporal punishment; typical cut and paste defense from the rod verses in the book of Proverbs that you can find on any conservative Christian blog on parenting (I am not necessarily anti-corporal punishment in all cases, but the issue certainly deserves a more intelligent and sensitive treatment than the one given here). I

may finish the last portion of the book for the hope of gleaning some small kernels of wisdom (and maybe I'll end up amending this in the case that they address some of the area in which I found it lacking), but honestly it's simply not worth the time if you are a busy homeschooling mother like me. After a string of very disappointing books on Christian parenting, I just have to say this: Pick up your Bible as often as you have time and be constant and consistent in prayer (alone, with your husband, with your children). Submit to Christ in all things and let the Spirit lead you in doing what is best for your children. Maybe that's a little too precious for some, but honestly your family will likely be much better off than with any other 5-star method packed in a pretty book with a catchy tagline.

This book really changed the way I thought about parenting. I have read other Christian parenting materials and felt like I wasn't measuring up when my children wouldn't listen to me right away, the first time, and with a good attitude. In this book, I learned about the importance of showing God's grace and presenting the gospel in my parenting. I think I've seen one other book about grace-based parenting but this was totally new to me. It really changed my thinking in terms of just trying to raise good kids who listen versus kids who truly understand the concept of grace. I think for this book to be helpful, the parent really needs to understand God's grace in his/her life first before he/she can teach it to their children. Having said that, one difficulty I had with this book was in practical application. The authors give examples but they seemed geared towards older children rather than younger children. I know that some readers may think the book isn't worth it if you can't apply it practically. For me, I think that the book is not meant to be a cookie cutter type of parenting book (e.g., "if you do A, then B will happen") but rather it created a paradigm shift in my thinking. It's not about creating moralistic, trophy children but children who understand what Jesus did for them and how they can always start anew when they fall short.

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