



# A QUICK GUIDE TO BUILDING A GREAT CHRISTIAN HOME

## BE DIFFERENT

When I was a kid, I knew my family—my home—was different. And for many of my growing up years I would have told you that I preferred “cool” over “different.” Today I celebrate the “different” that defined this place.

As for the idea of calling my book, *The Most Important Place on Earth*, I admit to borrowing the trademark slogan for a little “amusement park” that was only seven miles from my house in Orlando. As you probably know, Walt Disney World calls itself “The Happiest Place on Earth.”

And so, since I was using Walt Disney’s idea, I decided to do a little research on this remarkable man and the things he said.

In 1955, when Disneyland in California was christened, Walt said, “I don’t want the public to see the world they live in while they’re in the Park. I want them to feel like they’re in another world.”

What a sweet definition of your home. Another world. Different.

## BE INTENTIONAL

Being a weekend-warrior kind of guy, I’ve made friends over the years with clerks at the tool rental centers near my home. But from the moment I pulled out of the parking lots of these places, tools in the trunk—or hitched to the back of my car—I had a sort-of panicked sense. I

needed to get straight to the task at hand. The meter was running.

This describes how I felt when my kids were young. Deep inside I knew that time was not on my side. These children were growing up. Fast. There was a fragment of urgency deep in my heart. What I did as their parent was going to count. God had given these kids one set of parents. And we were it. No do-overs. Good thing His promise was to grant us wisdom when we asked for it...wisdom to sustain us for the task.

## BE AN “OFFICIAL” CHRISTIAN HOME

Over the years I’ve noticed that people like to put names on their homes. I’m not talking about the printing on their mailboxes here; I’m talking about something else.

If you’ve ever visited Chicago during the summer, you can’t help but notice yard signs. These folks are happy to tell the world what their home is. “We’re a Cubbies home.”

Of course, there are other kinds of homes. American homes. Republican homes or Democratic homes. All these are fine. But how about a “Christian home?” Your home can be an official Christian home. And what’s so great about that? Ah, good question.

In a Christian home there’s grace. And in a grace-filled home there’s salvation. There’s forgiveness. There’s hope. Genuine happiness. There’s purpose there. Peace. And God’s power there...for the kids and their parents. Who wouldn’t want to live in a place like that?

## BE SERIOUS ABOUT WORDS

When my kids were small we rented a video—remember VHS tapes at Blockbuster?—of *The Three Amigos*. If you’re looking for an intellectually stimulating experience, this isn’t it. But for a good laugh, you’ve come to the right place.

An acting and singing troupe, The Three Amigos would perform great acts of bravery and heroic deeds...on the silver screen. Of course, it was all fantasy.

But for a little town in the southwest who called on these three to save them from the authentic and treacherous “El Guapo” and his marauders, The Three Amigos were the real thing. Then one hot afternoon, there came the predictable confrontation between the bad guys and these silly singers. And, as you might expect, El Guapo wasn’t humored. In fact, one of his men pulled out his pistol and shot “Dusty Bottoms” in the arm, knocking him from his horse.

When Dusty touched the place where the bullet had grazed him, he called out to his buddies. “Oh, great, real bullets.”

When our girls were small, we decided that in our home we were all carrying loaded guns—our mouths. Our words. And these words had the power to heal, to encourage, to forgive...or to knock members of our family off their horses. We were serious about words.

## BE AWARE OF WHO IS IN CONTROL

One of the fascinating things about our culture is the seemingly rampant outbreak of the “blame game.” For every negative nuance in a person’s life, someone is at fault. Someone other than us. One day Jesus and His disciples were walking along a road when they passed by a man—probably a beggar—who was blind. “Rabbi,” they asked the Savior, “who sinned, this man or his parents?”

The disciples gave Jesus two selections to choose from: (1) the blind man, or (2) his parents. Jesus chose: (3) none of the above.

His answer may be confusing to you. Jesus said, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but that the works of God should be revealed in him” (John 9:3).

In a Christian home, we understand—at least we accept—this mystery called the sovereignty of God. This is not a fatalistic thing. We don’t throw our hands up in despair and say, “We’re just puppets on a string. What’s the use?” Rather, God’s providence provides comfort and hope.

“Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin?” Jesus asked. “And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will” (Matthew 10:29). And if God keeps track of these little creatures, imagine how carefully He watches over you and your family.

## BE REAL

The purpose of reminding you of these important things is to underscore your primary responsibility in your Christian home. You’re the parent. You’re not the policeman, patrolling the family room, looking for a chance to issue a citation. You’re not the hall monitor or a driving instructor or Santa Claus, making a list and checking it twice. You’re not a boarder, coming and going at will. And you’re not a librarian, making certain that all the desks are in straight rows and no one speaks above a whisper.

You’re the dad. You’re the mom. And your job is to create a place—a happy and safe place—for your family, an atmosphere that assures everyone is celebrated. When they’re at your place, they’re really home. This is a very good thing.