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STRAWBERRY PARENTING

GROW KIDS WHO THRIVE

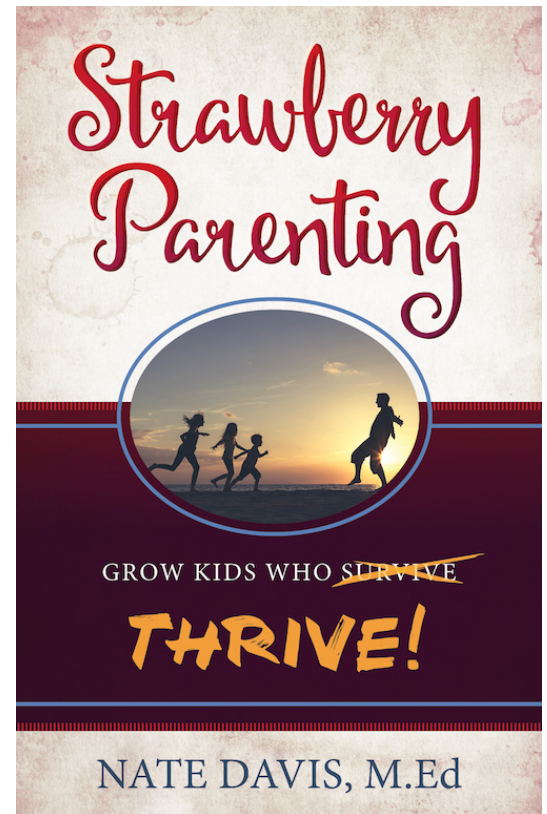
NATE DAVIS, M.ED.

Though Scripture is full of principles for parents to follow, the moment-by-moment application of those truths is often shrouded in mystery and intrigue. Christian parenting is not as straightforward as we had hoped.

With four children, thirty nieces and nephews, and hundreds of students, Nate Davis has been making daily observations of child development for nearly three decades. Filtering these invaluable observations through his understanding of the Bible and of farming, Nate illustrates principles that will help illuminate the mysteries of parenting.

Each chapter of *Strawberry Parenting* begins with the musings of the "Old Farmer," who matter-of-factly grows strawberries with 100 percent reliance on the ancient Laws of the Harvest. Then the chapter transitions to the real-life struggles of modern-day parents who by God's grace come to rely on the eternal principles of God's Word.

Strawberry Parenting is filled with real-life examples of modern-day heroes. The author combines the eternal principles of God's Word with the ancient Laws of the Harvest to help you embrace the startling mysteries of parenting. Divided into 30 devotion-length chapters with study questions, *Strawberry Parenting* is perfect for a small group Bible study or personal devotional time.



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Deep River
B O O K S



About the Author

NATE DAVIS, M.ED

Nate Davis is a teacher, coach, and principal who loves to help children thrive. He grew up in Alaska in a large Christian family

that took their faith, fishing, and flying seriously. Nate went to LeTourneau College thinking God might call him to be an engineer to build towers and bridges. Instead, God called him to be an educator to build scholars and athletes. He earned bachelor's degrees in education and mathematics from the University of Alaska Anchorage and his master's degree in educational leadership from Seattle Pacific University. Nate and his wife, Sherri, have four grown children and dozens of state championship athletes who, by God's grace alone, are walking well with their Lord. Nate and Sherri now reside in Port Alsworth, Alaska, where they are happy to serve at Tanalian School and Tanalian Bible Camp. Nate has been a longtime friend of ACSI (Association of Christian Schools International) and is honored to be a Van Lunen Fellow.

Connect with the Author

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Suggested Interview Questions

For Nate Davis, author of

Strawberry Parenting

Grow Kids Who Thrive

Q: Why did you name your parenting book *Strawberry Parenting*?

A: While I was working my urban strawberry patch one day, the Lord gave me the idea for this parenting book. He revealed to me several of the analogies that compare gardening to parenting. Also, two of my chapters specifically refer to Strawberry Runners—and strawberries are universally famous for throwing out runners to re-populate. To be honest, to demonstrate most of the biblical parenting principles, it really could have been any fruit of the garden. However, I do love eating and growing strawberries, and I suppose if there was one fruit that my family and friends associate with me, it would be strawberries.

Q: Why do you emphasize “Mysteries” in your parenting book?

A: There are many books, Christian and non-Christian, that present parenting “principles.” And, though this book is centered and founded on biblical principles, the twist of this book is the call for all of us to recognize that these principles are *really hard* to apply in real life with your own children. It is hard to let God produce the fruit. We want to force it. It is hard to realize we have 100% joy and responsibility to train our children, but 0% control of the outcome. It is hard to Let Go of our teenagers to prepare them to leave the home. It is hard to embrace the fact that the stronger we want our children to be outside the home, the more we must Let Go inside the home. To me, these struggles and paradoxes are best described as “Mysteries.” Also, most people like a good mystery to read, so I’m thinking there may be a bit of intrigue and marketing as well.

Q: What inspired you to write this book?

A: I have no greater joy than to watch children walk in truth! I have seen way too many children merely surviving in their teenage years... I want to see them thrive! I have no greater frustration than to watch well-intentioned parents unknowingly break God’s parenting principles. I love helping children thrive! And though with Christ I’ve done my personal best to help children thrive in my own circles for the last 30 years, I realized God had given me these gifts to share with other parents, pastors, teachers, and coaches as well. I realized that if I could write down the lessons that God had taught me, it would help thousands of others to train up children to thrive as well.

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Think of the 2 Timothy 2:2 Principle: “and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also!” I also wanted to provide a legacy to my own children and grandchildren—to write down what God had taught

Q: What experience do you have in training children and parents biblically?

A: By God’s grace alone, He called me to education. This has been my primary training ground in watching God “complete His work” in growing up children. I was a math teacher and coach (basketball, wrestling, cross-country running, and track and field) for seven years in public schools before God called me to Christian education. While in public schools, I worked actively with Youth for Christ and Campus Life clubs to share the gospel with students after school. At Grace Christian School, I was a math teacher, assistant principal, principal, superintendent, and associate pastor over a seventeen-year period. Currently, I am a public school principal in Alaska and a teen missions team leader at church. By God’s grace, He has allowed me to co-lead wonderful teen missions teams to Russian, Guatemala, Alaska villages, and Cambodia, learning much from teenagers about parenting. By God’s grace, He has blessed my athletic teams with a couple dozen state championships. I think this is significant, because we were able to accomplish all this together with joy, intensity, and camaraderie in the Lord, without the motivations of guilt, fear, revenge, or intimidation as the world might try. I now count these student-athletes-missionaries of mine as friends and comrades in the Gospel. God’s principles work out to make humble and confident champions for life as He ripens the fruit in the lives of the children.

I believe education (teaching and coaching) is crucial in understanding how to train up children, because teachers, coaches, and principals see hundreds of students each day. We are the only parents who get to practice God’s principles for an entire career. Most parents only get one or two shots at child training—that is, their own children. I wanted to pass on to ALL parents what Christian educators have all been learning every day for decades.

Q: What is the most important principle in this book?

A: The most important principle is “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth!” More and more I’ve come to understand that parents have a huge responsibility and joy to train up their children in the way that they should go—but *only God causes growth*. Parents should be constantly cultivating the hearts, planting seeds, watering the plants, fertilizing, weeding, and pruning... but only God ripens the fruit.

What does this look like? Embracing this principle gives parents *great purpose* and intentionality in their parenting... but it also gives parents *great peace* to know that only their heavenly Father and Divine Farmer can give life, cause growth, and produce the fruits of the

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Spirit in their children. This gives the parents great purpose AND great peace. Most parents, in my experience, are unnecessarily lacking in one of these areas. The most intentional parents often have the least amount of peace and joy in helping their children thrive. On the other hand, the parents that seem to have the most peace and joy in parenting are often the ones who are doing the least to intentionally train up their children. It is a wonderful thing to embrace God's ways: to have great purpose along with God's gift of peace... as we pray without ceasing and enjoy casting our cares upon Him... because apart from God we can do nothing... but with God all things are possible.

Q: Have you seen other parents try to use these principles—and did they work? What are some of the best success stories?

A: Absolutely! I've incorporated several "best stories" into the book. At the end of each chapter, I relate a true life happening of a friend or family member to illustrate the chapter.

Q: What's the best way to start implementing these principles?

A: I would read the whole book in its entirety and then look to lead a small group Bible study. It's only in wrestling with, speaking about, and listening to others speak about these different mysteries that one will start to develop his or her own theology of parenting. This is not a book about copycatting a family where kids turned out well. I was writing the book while my children were still growing up and before all of my children were "fully cooked." I teach that parenting is really about living life in the Spirit—walking in the Spirit and not in the flesh. Parents cultivate the child's heart through prayer to receive the Gospel. We water the child's heart by making the Bible tasty to him or her. Only the Son can bring life—spiritual photosynthesis. Then, once the child is a "new creation," as the child abides in the vine of Christ, the Father brings forth the fruits of the Spirit in the child. Parenting according to the Mysteries of the Strawberry means embracing both the role of the parent and the fact that the results (the fruit) can only come from the Father.

Q: What is your personal background?

A: Mom and Dad and both of their parents were Bible-believing Christians who took their parenting roles seriously. My parents and grandparents helped start a Christian school (Cook Inlet Academy) in Soldotna, Alaska, so we children could grow up with a stronger Christian worldview. I graduated from CIA and went to LeTourneau College, thinking God might call me to be an engineer to build towers and bridges for people. Instead, God called me to become an educator to build scholars and athletes for Christ. I graduated from the University of Alaska Anchorage with one bachelor's degree in education and another bachelor's in math. Later, I graduated with a master's degree in educational leadership from Seattle Pacific University.

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I owned an airplane before I owned a car. As a hobby, I become a pilot at age eighteen and still fly today to support my hunting and fishing habits and to bring groceries to our house. I jumped out of an airplane when I was nineteen. I raced cross country running trails at two different colleges and ran one 26.2-mile marathon in Dallas, TX, in under three hours and ran two Mount Marathons in Seward under 60 minutes—the great mountain race of Alaska.

I married my high school sweetheart, Sherri, at age 20, and this year [2018] we celebrate 33 years of wonderful marriage by God's grace alone. God blessed us with four children and by God's grace alone they are walking well with our King and have all married beautiful (or handsome) kingdom warriors. We have one two grandsons and a granddaughter. Today, Sherri and I serve at Tanalian Bible Camp and Tanalian School in Port Alsworth, Alaska. Port Alsworth is a unique village in Alaska that consists almost entirely of Christian families and ministries. It is a fly-in-only village, meaning there are no roads coming or going. There are no stores or restaurants. All goods and mail are flown in. Port Alsworth is full of beautiful kingdom warriors who live in community, encouraging each other and advancing the gospel.

Q: Who are your mentors?

A: My own parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, aunts, and uncles who treasure God's Word and have demonstrated child training to me.

The writings of the Bible, Max Lucado, Randy Alcorn, John Piper, C.S. Lewis, Miles Stanford, and J.R.R. Tolkien.

Don and Jan Stump—of Alaska, Idaho, and Colorado fame. Humble servant leaders in the kingdom of Jesus who have served in several Christian and public schools and in leadership positions at Association of Christian Schools International as well as other ministries.

Erling Hofseth and the late Karen Beyers—two of my very prayerful and godly fellow administrators at Grace Christian School.

The late Chuck Crapuchettes—of Alaska. Founder of Cook Inlet Academy in Soldotna, Alaska... longtime family friend and education administration mentor.

Keith Lauwers—the Pastor of Alaska has served formally in several different churches in the last 50 years and has served informally to hundreds of Alaskans all around Alaska.

Larry Huntsperger—the teaching pastor and writer of Peninsula Bible Fellowship in Soldotna, Alaska.

Fred Crowell— founder and CEO, author and speaker, of Northwest Basketball Camps of Spokane, WA.

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