

## Introduction

Have you ever been surprised how, in a very short time, your child grew so much? The same question better asked is, 'When was the last time you were amazed at how much they had grown?' All parents have experienced such moments of amazement. But what so often follows one of those ah-ha moments is an equally amazing yet sobering realization. Your rapidly growing child has so much more to learn and possess in order to be prepared for the responsibilities and realities that life will force upon them.

We (BCC, Keith and Donna) have found that children are very eager for and receptive to the challenge and process of 'growing up'. Our experience is that the parents or primary care givers would do well to realize this and act upon it in a timely and effective way that truly meets the needs of the child. Children will never reach abundant, fruitful living on their own. They will only grow to the degree we involve ourselves in teaching, leading and modeling this life for them. When we diligently do our part, they will have the capacity to establish and maintain life giving, joy filled relationships. They will thrive in life. With a completeness of character and a heart that lacks nothing they will embrace both the thrilling and the difficult times!

The relationship your child has with God is vital. They must know how to relate with the God that has mapped out every detail of their life's path and who promises to walk close by them on their journey. At a very young age children can be taught how to establish and grow their personal relationship with God. It is very easy for parents to underestimate the importance of this relationship. If we have, we become frustrated and weary; we get mixed up in our parenting. We take upon ourselves more of God's role and give Him more of the responsibilities that we should be shouldering.

The relationship your child has with you and other family members is an ever present feature of the path they are on. Their greatest moments will most often include you and family; so also will some of their deepest hurts and struggles. But, these hurts and struggles are opportunities along the path for you to parent your child; to equip them with the maturity they need.

We are all with our children on this journey. *Wherever* you are, you will find this guidebook extremely helpful. It will introduce you and your child to the same principles we have utilized for years in our counseling of marriages and families. It will guide you to rightly apply them and experience their power! You will be encouraged as you experience your child opening up and responding to both you and God. God will bless your family in ways unimaginable as you walk this path with your child. Don't be surprised when at some point in the process your eyes are opened and you realize how 'grown up' your child has become. The bigger surprise comes when you see how much you have grown!

**Enjoy!**