

Spiritual Parenting

✖ Michelle Anthony | David C. Cook

Michelle Anthony, family pastor at Rockharbor Church, has a passion to help parents. She encourages and empowers them with her latest book, *Spiritual Parenting: An Awakening for Today's Families*, which released this month. She took some time out to talk about her book.

What is the theme behind *Spiritual Parenting*?

Michelle Anthony: I think oftentimes when people hear “spiritual parenting,” they think of maybe perfect parenting, but I really wanted to get back to the root of what spiritual parenting is. Things that are spiritual are things that are eternal, so I like to say that spiritual parenting isn't perfect parenting—it's parenting from a spiritual or eternal perspective.

I feel that oftentimes we can immerse ourselves with good parenting techniques that are really not eternal. They just help us get through the day. Those things are needed and those things are essential. But I really felt like there was a void out there to the things that mattered most to me when I was raising my children and that was really getting at the heart, and I longed for a place to discuss those things and a place where we could be inspired. Someone once said that when you're raising children, the days are long, but the years are short. That was really the gist behind that title. Yes, the days are long, but we have them in our homes for such a short time.

What are some of the practical ways of spiritual parenting?

Anthony: I wanted to share my own journey. There's nothing magical about it. God was really calling me away from just

trying to manage their behavior so they would look clean and shiny on the outside, that I wouldn't be embarrassed as a parent and people would think we did this job well. And also out of fear. As God was pulling me away from managing my children's behavior, He inspired me to do something bigger and more, which is to create environments in my home where the Holy Spirit would be the person that's involved in my child's life. He would do that when and as He chose. I couldn't control that, in that moment I wanted that bad behavior to stop, although I could do it for that moment, I couldn't really heal what was in the heart of my child. And so I didn't want a false security that I was just dealing with the outside and there wasn't a transformation on the inside. It really came down to: What's my part? If God's part is to transform, then my part is to create environments in my home where He can freely be at work. The book talks about faith in the beginning and how that has to be our goal, but then it untucks 10 environments that have practical life stories, how I messed up, how I just so needed to depend on God and what my children's experiences were in those environments.

How do you approach people about their own parenting techniques they're sensitive about?

Anthony: I don't espouse a technique but ask parents to surrender themselves and their techniques. "God, you created this child. They're uniquely designed by You. Only You know their future. Will You help me parent this child in this moment, not just for this moment, but with eternity in mind?"

In the midst of this bad attitude and defiance, God might be doing something so much bigger, and I don't want to miss it. When I encounter parents from all different kinds of techniques and backgrounds, I think it's something freeing about this for them. We just pile guilt on ourselves. We pile a lot of pressure that God never intended. There's something freeing about releasing that.

[Click here to purchase this book.](#)