

When the Holy Spirit Directs Your Family

In *Becoming a Spiritually Healthy Family: Avoiding the 6 Dysfunctional Parenting Styles*, Dr. Michelle Anthony unpacks six common dysfunctional parenting styles that we fall into out of habit, lack of attention, or just oversight due to busyness. If you long to show your children Jesus but don't know how to do it, you'll find hope in this practical guide to creating a relentlessly grace-filled home that is focused on God as first in charge.

Becoming a Spiritually Healthy Family was made for that “freak-out” moment nearly all parents have when they realize their child's view of God largely comes from what he or she learns at home. While the task is intimidating, parents can avoid the temptation to ignore, outsource or overcompensate and find balance in letting the Lord become the Director of their family's story.

Anthony points out that while some dysfunction is simply the reality of living in an imperfect world, truly painful dysfunction comes when we choose to sit in the Director's chair of our life—pursuing abundant life instead of pursuing Christ. By surrendering the pen and allowing God to write the script as He sees fit, parents can guide their children into the abundant life Jesus offers, even in the midst of day-to-day living. This inspiring guide offers practical ideas to get parents unstuck in their family journey of faith.

Q: What does a spiritually healthy family look like?

A spiritually healthy family is made up of members who, in a relationship with Jesus, seek to understand and live a surrendered life to God's plan and will. Through God's Word they learn this plan, are convicted by God's Spirit to

understand sin areas and allow forgiveness and grace to heal broken places in their lives. They understand that without God's help and power, they will not be able to live in peace or victory.

Q: *Becoming a Spiritually Healthy Family* shares a number of stories from parents trying to make Christ the director of their families—what is the common thread you see in spiritually healthy families?

Spiritually healthy families still make mistakes and have sin in their lives; however they are endeavoring to live in reality, and they own up to their shortcomings and mistakes. They keep short accounts with God and others so a one-time offense does not have to become a habit or character flaw.

Q: You use a picture of the relationship between a director and an actor to illustrate our relationship with God. Why did you choose that analogy?

James Dean once said, "When an actor plays a scene the way the director intended, it isn't acting, it's following directions." I love the idea that our Christian lives are simply waking up every morning and following directions from God. There is security in living our lives "on script," but in order to do so we must give up our need to be in control. We must give up the entitlement to have it our own way. Submission to Christ is one of the most difficult parts of living a spiritually healthy life.

Q: You talk about living "on script." What do you mean by that?

"Living on script" is simply a metaphor for surrendering the need to control my own life, to accept the life God has given me and to play out that life, as written, for His glory and my good. It acknowledges I am not God and He knows better. He sees the beginning from the end and is working things together to accomplish His plans. It is His story, not mine. But I do

play a part in it. If I don't play my part, no one else will.

Q: In *Becoming a Spiritually Healthy Family*, you encourage parents to go beyond chore charts and good behavior. What do you mean by that?

Sometimes we are seduced into believing that somehow in the abundance of good deeds and behavior we have achieved spiritual health or faith. However, the Bible is clear that there is a distinct difference between good people and redeemed people. Good people will never be "good enough" to be in a relationship with a holy God. Redeemed people are made right with God because Jesus is good and He took the penalty for sin. When we accept His goodness, He makes us clean. When we try to achieve it on our own we will remain far from God. We want to make sure we are passing on faith to our children, not the counterfeit.

Q: What role does a mission statement serve for a spiritually healthy family?

It serves as a compass. It keeps us focused on the things we declare are most important. Life is full of distractions, and without it we will consistently find ourselves with competing agendas and priorities.