

Reparenting

A Re-opportunity To Have A Happy Childhood

**A Workbook Using Biblical
Principles to Overcome
Childhood Deficits
Volume 1**

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**Dr. Larry Gilliam
Deborah Freeman and David Majors**

Preface by Frank Minirth, M.D., Ph.D.



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Unless otherwise noted, all Scriptures are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

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Dedication

It is with pleasure and deep appreciation that I dedicate this volume to “Little Debbie,” the severely abused little child within Deborah Freeman, without whom this book would lack the vital personal touch.

With God’s help she valiantly worked her own way through the steps and the process of reparenting, and then proceeded to retrace each painful footprint in order to mark the trail for other wounded inner children to follow.

Thanks, until you are better repaid! (Luke 14:14.)

—Dr. Larry Gilliam

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Foreword

There are three things I would like for the reader to keep in mind as you make your way through this workbook.

One is that the book is intended to be practical, conversational, and user-friendly. To this end we have taken some liberties at the expense of scholarship and tradition. We are OK with that if you are.

The second thing is that I have used this material and approach effectively for about thirty years in counseling and in seminars. I am not guessing, experimenting, or trying to prove anything about the content. God blesses it because it was His idea. It works and it will work for you, if you will stick with it, meet the conditions, and give it time.

Finally, the two-volume thing is not a bad idea. The first volume is sort of pre-op. It is necessary preparation that gets you ready for the heavier experience. The second volume walks you through the actual therapy, which can complete your reparenting.

My instructions are to put it in writing and make it available. The rest is up to you.

—Dr. Larry Gilliam

Preface

Working through childhood issues, moving from the past to the present, taking specific steps in a nurturing journey, and growing in Christ are premises of reparenting. With skill analogous to that of a virtuoso, Dr. Gilliam elucidates a myriad of exciting details of reparenting. Unfortunately, many Christian fathers do not know Ephesians 6:4 which says, “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” Too often, a child will repeat a dysfunctional pattern. “Reparenting” offers tools to abate this pernicious pattern.

My gifted colleague uses a plethora of verses in his task of laying out the principles of re-parenting. Consistent with this desire, I could not help but muse a bit on Isaiah 43:18-19a, “Do not remember the former things, Nor consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing.” Just as God helped the Israelites of yesteryear with the concept of moving beyond the past, God can help us today. One caveat I offer; although this journey is too emotional for a few, for most the journey is refreshing and resplendent. The goal is to embrace Romans 8:15, “For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’”

Finally, as I read this book I was reminded of Ockham’s Razor of the fourteenth century which stated that explanations should be kept as simple as possible. Dr. Gilliam has done an exemplary job of taking an abstruse subject and making it both pellucid and pragmatic.

—Frank Minirth, M.D., Ph.D.

Introduction

The What and Why of Reparenting

Reparenting is not the same as parenting, although one's potential for effective parenting will probably be enhanced by it. It is not the same as family therapy, although one's ability to maintain healthy, satisfying relationships with family members (or anyone else) will probably be improved as a result of the experience. Reparenting might be thought of as a re-opportunity to have a happy childhood. Here is a little more sophisticated way of saying the same thing: Reparenting is another opportunity for individual adult believers to grow through and progress beyond certain personal deficits or limitations from childhood, that may cause them to back into the future while focused on a painful past.

This is a good definition, because deep inside you there is a part of you that still thinks, feels, and reacts like you did as a child. That emotional child, wounded or healthy, will stay with you throughout your whole life, and it is that part of you which is the most sensitive to the pain you experienced earlier in your life. Whenever you get in touch with that emotional child, even today, you probably find that some of the pain is still as fresh as the day that it happened.

You see, time alone does not bring about healing to these kinds of wounds. There are actually steps and a process that you must go through to nurture and to heal the child within you. This process is called Reparenting, and it includes the mentality that Christ described when He spoke of the need for us to become like a little child. Of course, He does not want us to be child*ish* after we have grown up, as it says in 1 Cor. 13:11, but He does want us to become more child*like* in several ways, as He implies in Matt. 18:2-5 and 19:13-14.

Since no one had perfect parents, and no one was a perfect child, all of us reached adulthood with certain deficits from our original upbringing—some greater than others. As adults, we cannot go back and demand that our parents somehow rewind our lives and correct everything that we feel should have been different. It *is* possible, however, even today, to tap three effective resources for the reparenting roles of nurturance, affirmation, and guidance which allow the vulnerable little inner child to grow and experience healing. One resource is your adult self; the second is another caring person or support group, and the third is God, Himself.

When you accept your personal role in allowing this to happen, tap the resources of another caring person, and apply the biblical principles which allow God to fulfill the missing dimensions, your reparenting can be completed. You will then find that, in this regard, it is really “never too late to have a happy childhood!”

—Dr. Larry Gilliam

The V-I-T-A-L Format

I do consider the format to be vital. The approach, the strategy, the process, and the sequence all figure into the format, and to a large extent, depend upon it.

As I recall, Alice in Wonderland once asked some character which road she should take. The simple but profound reply was, “It depends on where you want to get to.”

Imagine a couple starting on a vacation, and the husband, who is to do the driving, asks his wife for a road map. “Which one?” she responds. “It really doesn’t matter,” he replies, “Just grab one and let’s get started.”

Someone attempted to define the word *format* by noting that it is made up of the two smaller words, *form* and *at*. His conclusion was, “It must be some kind of *form* that helps you figure out where you’re *at*!” Bingo. That will work.

“Whether you end up as a placemat or a doormat,
Can vitally depend upon your basic format.”

Each chapter, therefore, has been purposely designed to follow the pattern shown below, the initials of which appropriately spell the acrostic, V-I-T-A-L.

VANTAGE POINT—This is defined in *Funk and Wagnall’s New International Dictionary* as a strategic position affording perspective. That is a fancy way of saying, “Where am I, and how does the answer fit into the total picture?” This seems like a good way to start each chapter.

INPUT FROM DR. G.—This includes the basic material of the chapter. It may sound a little academic at times, but it is the information necessary for the next step or next point of progress.

TAKING IT PERSONALLY—This is your opportunity to mentally explore how the basic material relates to your unique situation. It is designed to be thought-provoking, to elicit insight, and to stimulate processing.

APPLICATION—This section takes on the flavor of laboratory experience. It involves something to do. It includes action-type answers to the question, “So what?”

“LITTLE DEBBIE” DID IT!—This is the ongoing true story of how “Little Debbie” (severely and repeatedly abused as a child) and her adult counterpart Deborah struggled their way

through each step described in this book. It details each point of Little Debbie's progress and reveals the accompanying roles into which her adult, Deborah, was thrust during the process. This segment will encourage you to keep repeating to yourself throughout your journey, "If Little Debbie did it, then I can do it too!" And with God's help, you can.

VOLUME I

Chapter One

Getting Started

Vantage Point

Acknowledge that there is probably a good reason why this book is in your hands right now. Gain perspective by reading and considering the poem which follows:

The fact that you are reading this book
Can hardly be denied;
Which means you must have picked it up
To take a look inside.
And if there is a part of you
That wants to ask, "Why would one?"
Just be assured your reason is
Most probably a good one!

Not merely some coincidence
Or random speculation,
More likely one component
Of a grander explanation.
Right now there's only one thing
To accept and understand:
It really is no accident
This book is in your hand!

So give yourself permission
Not to be omniscient, please,
And let yourself put all the
Whys and *whos* and *whats* at ease.
There is a time and sequence yet,
And stuff that isn't sorted,
And any "bottom-lining" now
Would tend to be distorted.

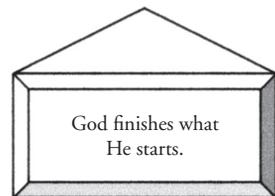
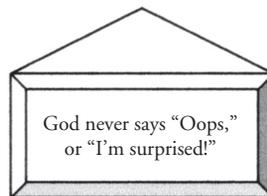
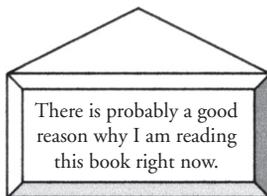
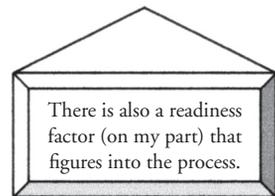
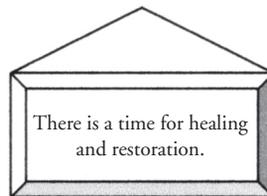
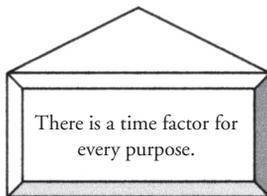
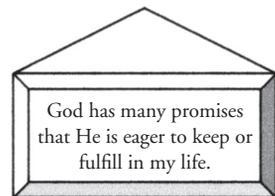
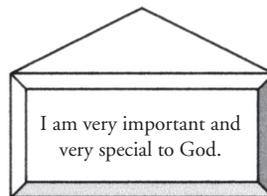
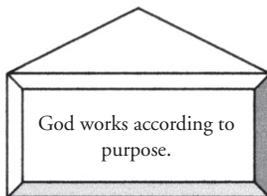
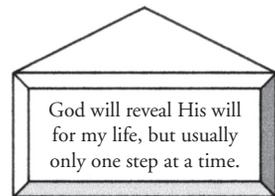
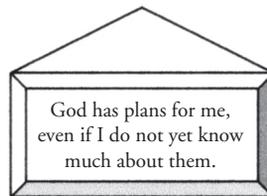
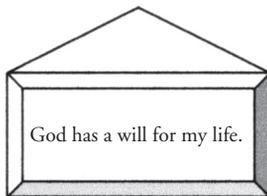
The Scripture says a ready, willing mind
Is all you lack,
And "readiness to will" will start
You moving down the track.*
Assuming Jesus Christ already
Lives within your heart,**
You're ready to begin, so simply
Turn the page...and start!

*2 Cor. 8:11-12.

**To be certain of this vital prerequisite, turn to page 26.

Input from Dr. G.

So you made it through the poem. So far, so good. Now let's drive a few nails on which to hang your thoughts. Do this by drawing a nail like the one which follows (🔩) to secure the cord for each of the plaques below: (Hold it! Only draw nails for the plaques where you can accept their statements as true!)



If you can accept all of the above statements as true, sign below:

“I can acknowledge that there is probably a good reason why this book is in my hands right now, and that I probably should keep reading it and working in it.”

Signature

Date

If you cannot accept all of the above statements as true, read and review the following scriptural truths, and then see if you can honestly accept the rest of the statements.

SCRIPTURAL TRUTHS TO READ AND REVIEW:

You were chosen before the foundation of the world...	Eph. 1:4
You were planned according to the good pleasure of His will...	Eph. 1:5
God has purposed in Himself to reveal to us His will...	Eph. 1:9
God is at work in all things to accomplish His purposes...	Eph. 1:11
God is working in you both to will and to do His pleasure...	Phil. 2:13
He has called you according to His plan and purpose...	Rom. 8:28
His plans for you are good, not evil...	Jer. 29:11
There is a time to every purpose under heaven...	Ecc. 3:1
There is a time to heal...a time to build up...	Ecc. 3:3
God has given to us exceeding great and precious promises...	2 Pet. 1:4
He is able and willing to fulfill those promises in our lives...	Rom. 4:20-21
He makes everything beautiful in its time...	Ecc. 3:11
There must be a readiness to will, then a willing mind...	2 Cor. 8:11
Achievement comes out of a ready, willing mind...	2 Cor. 8:12
People get transformed as God's will unfolds...	Rom. 12:2
People usually progress sequentially, one step at a time...	2 Pet. 1:5
You are very special to God; He knows all about you...	Ps. 139:13-17
God will restore health unto you...heal your wounds...	Jer. 30:17
He that has begun a good work in you will complete it...	Phil. 1:6
Your part in the process is	
to study...	2 Tim 2:15
to remain faithful...	Matt 25:23
to persevere...	2 Tim. 4:7-8

Taking It Personally

Mentally explore how the material presented so far relates (or does not relate) to your unique belief system. Allow the material to be thought provoking, to elicit insight, and to stimulate processing. Let it be OK if it raises questions, doubts, or even objections that you cannot resolve right now. Just keep moving through this chapter for now, according to the following instructions:

1. After you have read and reviewed the scriptural truths on page 21, stop and take time to pray. Ask God to give you the faith and grace to accept those truths at face value. Ask Him also to write those truths on the tables of your heart so that they become a part of your belief system. Include in your prayer the request that you will be able to see the relationship between the scriptural truths and the statements on the plaques. Finish your prayer with any additional requests you wish which relate to your successful completion of the process of reparenting. Write out your prayer in your own words below, and then pray it sincerely to the Lord.

2. Look again at the statements on the plaques. If there were any that you could not accept earlier, reconsider those statements in the light of the scriptural truths you reviewed above. Draw in the nails for any additional plaques that you will now accept in view of the scriptural truths.
3. If you still cannot accept all of the statements as true, do your best to explain why the remaining statements are so hard for you to accept. What is there about them that makes them so difficult for you? (*If you have already drawn in all the nails for all the plaques, skip to number four*).

4. Next, read the words to the song “Doubt Your Doubts,” which follow. Read them first to yourself silently, then read them again aloud so that you can hear your own voice saying the words. You may have to get into a car or go into some private room for this verbal exercise, but please find some safe, appropriate place to do it.

“DOUBT YOUR DOUBTS”

I've got a song, I'll pass it along,
You'll find the message very strong,
Just pack it away, there'll come the day,
You'll need to sing along.
'Cause though you're a believer
You'll sometimes start to doubt,
So, learn this verse and let's rehearse
The way to work it all out....

First, you take your doubt and you use its own clout
To turn the whole thing round about,
And instead of doubting your belief
You doubt your doubt and you find relief
What a relief,...to believe your belief,...
And to doubt your doubt 'til you doubt it on out!
(Don't believe your doubt...)
Give your belief all the benefit of the doubt!
Ending: Give your belief all the benefit of the doubt!

Doubt your doubt,
Doubt your doubt,
Doubt your doubt!

(This song by Dr. Larry Gilliam is available as a musical recording.)

5. Now, look once again at the scriptural truths a few pages back. Your assignment is to read aloud the scriptural truths and the words to the song above alternately until you have heard your own voice reading both at least three times. This exercise may seem silly to you, but the two sets of words will blend and sink in, because, faith comes by hearing (Rom. 10:17), and this is especially effective when you are hearing yourself confess scriptural truth (Rom. 10:9-10). The purpose is for these foundational truths to be written indelibly on the tables of your heart (2 Cor. 3:3) in preparation for the process of Reparenting.

Application

Re-read the *first two verses* of the poem at the beginning of Chapter One. Give some thought as to what these verses mean and what God may want to accomplish in your life through this workbook. What would you like to accomplish? What is the significance of the timing? What about the factor of “readiness”? What thoughts or feelings are you experiencing while pondering and exploring these questions? *Attempt to answer these questions below.*

Now, re-read the *last two verses* of the same poem. Think about the meaning of each line or sentence separately, as shown below. Express in your own words what each line or sentence means to you, then place your initials in the designated blanks to indicate that you are willing to apply that meaning (or at least to give it a try).

Verse 3, line 1: “So give yourself permission not to be omniscient, please,” *Meaning* (in your own words):

Initial to indicate that you will try to apply the meaning: _____

Verse 3, line 2: “And let yourself put all the *whys* and *whos* and *whats* at ease.” *Meaning* (in your own words):

Initial to indicate that you will try to apply the meaning: _____

Verse 3, line 3: “There is a time and sequence yet, and stuff that isn’t sorted,”

Meaning (in your own words):

Initial to indicate that you will try to apply the meaning: _____

Verse 3, line 4: “And any ‘bottom-lining’ now would tend to be distorted.”

Meaning (in your own words):

Initial to indicate that you will try to apply the meaning: _____

Verse 4, line 1: “The Scripture says a ready, willing mind is all you lack,”

Meaning (in your own words):

Initial to indicate that you will try to apply the meaning: _____

Verse 4 line 2: “And ‘readiness to will’ will start you moving down the track.”

Meaning (in your own words):

Initial to indicate that you will try to apply the meaning: _____

Verse 4, line 3: “Assuming Jesus Christ already lives within your heart,”

Meaning (in your own words):

Initial to indicate that you will try to apply the meaning: _____

Verse 4, line 4: “You’re ready to begin, so simply turn the page and start!”

Meaning (in your own words):

Initial to indicate that you will try to apply the meaning: _____

***Stop Here!
Check Your
Prerequisites!***



Verse four of the poem above is based mostly on 2 Cor. 8:11-12. Those Scripture verses say that your mind must be ready and willing, but that there must first be “a readiness to will.” That is like someone saying, “I may not want to, but at least I want to want to!” That’s an OK way to get started.

Better still, however, is to set your mind and your will to proceed consistently and progressively even when you don’t want to (or don’t even want to want to), but you continue because it is good, healthy, the right thing to do, and high time (if not past time) to do it! The Bible calls this kind of determination “setting your face like a flint” toward some goal or destination (Is. 50:7).

Verse four of the poem above also makes the assumption that you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, and therefore have a spiritual power-source within you that will empower you during this journey. If you do not, you will be more like a person in a sailboat caught out on a lake during a blustery storm. Such a one would be totally at the mercy of the natural forces.

With Jesus Christ in your heart, however, your analogy would be more accurately like an in-board motorboat in the same storm, but with a power source on the inside to drive your vessel safely to its destination. John 1:12 says, “As many as received Him (that’s Jesus), to them gave He power—to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” Settle it now. It is a prerequisite. If you need help with this important decision, feel free to call the Dayspring Center for Counseling and Development at 972-258-0022

Little Debbie Did It

I figured my adult life was about as normal as anyone else’s. After all, I was a Christian myself and had married a Christian man. We were both active in church, and I taught in a Christian school. God had blessed us with a healthy baby boy. To those who crossed our path, we looked like the perfect Christian family.

Truly, God had blessed me with my wonderful husband and our first child. I enjoyed serving God and teaching in a Christian school—most of the time. However, Dr. G’s annual chapel presentation about the root of bitterness always left me a little agitated. Every time he talked

about the woman who had been repeatedly sexually abused by a number of perpetrators, I thought, “Yep, I know about that, but I’ve dealt with it; and that’s in the past.” Each time I heard the presentation, I professionally buried my feelings and dismissed any application of the principles to my own life, watching instead for any student who might need my counsel after such an impacting chapel message.

Several years later, Dr. G began teaching a Counselor Aide Course. He invited my husband and me to attend. I had helped prepare materials for the seminar and had some idea of what Dr. G would present. I saw it as a great opportunity for my husband to hear all the wonderful principles I’d heard and for God to work in his life. I had, after all, I thought, applied most of the principles myself.

Any counselor’s aide needs to be familiar with how to help someone overcome a root of bitterness. So that was, of course, the focus of one night’s presentation. Knowing what was coming, I mentally went through the presentation almost before Dr. G got to the next point. Somewhere along the way, it became impossible to bury my feelings any more. I wept through the rest of the seminar that evening.

A dear friend and I were cleaning up following the seminar. She said, “I noticed you were crying tonight.”

I thought, “*Who didn’t notice?*”

She continued, “If you ever want to talk about it, I’m willing to listen,” and reached to give me a hug.

I shoved her away, burst into tears, and hurried to the car where my husband was waiting.

My uncharacteristic response to my friend startled and frightened me. I felt a sudden burst of anger and a desire to lash out at someone—any one. I knew I had to do something with the anger I felt before I hurt one or the other of our children, since, by then, God had blessed us also with a daughter.

It was time for me to deal with the past I’d stuffed, vowing never to talk about it again.

Postscript from Deborah (Little Debbie’s Adult)

My sudden awareness that it was time to deal with the past I’d stuffed away is an example of the “readiness to will.” Even though I had vowed never to talk about it again, I found myself willing to be willing. Later, I was able to express the “readiness to will” through the acrostic which follows:

Realizing
Everything I've
Already
Done
Is
Not
Enough to
Solve the
Situation—

Trusting
Obediently that

Wholeness
Is
Likely near at
Last!

I recognized that, in spite of my previous efforts to turn loose of the past, there was still major healing to be done in my life. Perhaps the process of Reparenting held an answer. I was ready to be willing to give it a try.