

**HOW TO  
RUIN  
YOUR  
CHILD IN  
7 EASY  
STEPS**

*TAME YOUR VICES, NURTURE THEIR VIRTUES*

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## ***10 WAYS TO RUIN YOUR CHILD THROUGH PRIDE***

1. Build your life around yourself. It's all about you.
2. Never *show* your kids how to live, just *tell* them.
3. When you meet resistance, work on the rules first, not the relationship.
4. Never doubt yourself. You've got this. You don't need anyone else.
5. Remind your children that you're better than they are—at everything. It builds character.
6. Never admit you were wrong. You will lose respect if you're not constantly perfect.
7. Church is for weak people. You're strong enough to do this without God.
8. Don't answer to anyone. Push away any friend who starts to question you.
9. Find ways to get others to serve you. You deserve it.
10. Other people have pride problems, not you.

## ***10 WAYS TO RUIN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE THROUGH LUST***

1. If you want it, get it now. Sooner is always better.
2. Doing whatever feels good is true freedom.
3. Talk to your kids about how mean God is and how much He hates fun.
4. Talk about marriage as if it were a prison so your kids will know they need to sow their wild oats as much as possible now.
5. Give rules without reasons.
6. Teach your kids that sex is all about the body. It has nothing to do with the heart, mind, emotions, or spirit.
7. Watch whatever you want. What you look at has no effect on your heart.
8. Secrets are safe. As long as you don't get caught, no one will get hurt.
9. You can handle temptation. Get as close as possible to prove how strong you are.
10. If you get hooked on something, don't tell anyone. You can fix it on your own.

## ***10 WAYS TO RUIN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE THROUGH ENVY***

1. Look in the mirror and figure out what God made wrong about you so you can fix it.
2. Compare your children to one another so they'll know who is ahead.
3. Your strengths don't matter. Focus on where you are weak.
4. Image is everything. If you want to be a better person, spend more on your appearance.
5. Withhold attention and affection from your children unless they perform well in competition with others.
6. Find friends you can commiserate with about all the stuff you don't have yet.
7. Watch lots of advertising. It's a great source of truth.
8. Help your kids express rage when they lose a competition so they'll remember winning is everything.
9. Use social media to keep up with the Joneses.
10. God only loves perfect people, so try harder.

## ***10 WAYS TO RUIN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE THROUGH GREED***

1. More is always better.
2. A great parent is one who gives his or her kids every single thing they want.
3. If you have to give, let everyone know what a sacrifice it is.
4. Talk to your kids about how evil rich people are. Rich means anyone with more than you.
5. Don't assign toys to your kids; let them fight it out to see who gets them, to prepare for the real world.
6. If there's a lag in the conversation, talk about yourself.
7. Avoid exposing your kids to poor people. That's just sad.
8. Save way more than you need for retirement. Real life starts then.
9. Given the choice, always work more hours instead of spending more time with your children. Think of how much happier they will be with all the extra stuff you'll be able to buy for them.
10. Avoid new relationships. They always cost time and money.

## ***10 WAYS TO RUIN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE THROUGH GLUTTONY***

1. Never be satisfied.
2. If a little doesn't make you happy, you just need more.
3. Religion is all about getting to heaven. That spiritual stuff doesn't help here on earth.
4. Go, go, go, 24-7. Maximizing your time is how you win.
5. Don't let church keep you from experiencing more in life. Sunday is just another day.
6. Fasting is a waste of time. What possible good could come from telling your appetites "no"?
7. Let your children dictate their own schedules for eating and sleeping, and they'll be happy.
8. It's a high-tech world. Prepare your kids for it with unlimited screen time.
9. Keep your eyes on your phone when spending time with your kids so they can see your commitment to work.
10. God never wants you to go without. If you have enough faith, you'll get whatever you want right away.

## ***10 WAYS TO RUIN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE THROUGH SLOTH***

1. Work is for fools. You're smart enough to get around it.
2. Know what's required on a job so you don't do anything extra.
3. Don't let making a life get in the way of making a living.
4. The purpose of all learning is to make money. Otherwise, why bother expanding your mind?
5. Happiness comes from eliminating risk. Don't do anything new if there's a chance of loss.
6. Teach your kids to cut their losses. If you fail at something once, don't do it any more.
7. Dreaming, not planning, is what gets things done.
8. Don't let your kids try things on their own. They might fail if you're not there to guide them every step of the way.
9. Manage your expectations. You're probably not going to be great at anything.
10. You can do it—tomorrow!

## ***10 WAYS TO RUIN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE THROUGH ANGER***

1. Rights are for you. Responsibilities are for other people.
2. Ignore the injustices in the world; they might distract you from your own problems.
3. Let your kids hear you curse and yell when someone irritates you, so they'll know how important it is to stand up for themselves.
4. When it comes to discipline, go with the flow. Whatever you feel in the heat of the moment is probably right.
5. Change the rules frequently.
6. Never apologize. The past is the past. *Hakuna matata*.
7. When kids fight, the main thing is for them to not bother you. They'll figure it out.
8. Model morality by pointing out everyone else's sins.
9. Teach your children that, as Christians, we are morally superior to all other people.
10. Model for your children the main point of the whole Bible: God's mad at you.



## ***10 WAYS TO RUIN YOUR CHILD'S LIFE THROUGH DISTORTING THE VIRTUES***

1. Virtue means being a naive goody-goody with no concept of the real world.
2. Humility means putting yourself down.
3. Chastity means being a prude and never enjoying anything.
4. Kindness means acting nice to people you don't really like.
5. Charity means giving just enough money away in public that people think you are a good person—plus it's a tax deduction.
6. Temperance means having enough willpower to “just say no” without help from anyone.
7. Diligence means feeling as if you've never worked hard enough or long enough.
8. Patience means suffering in silence because it won't do any good to complain.
9. Vice is always more fun than virtue, but God doesn't like fun.
10. Virtue means conforming. Your vices make you unique.

**QUESTIONS  
FOR INDIVIDUAL  
REFLECTION OR  
GROUP DISCUSSION**

## CHAPTERS 1 AND 2: PRIDE

1. How would you define pride?
2. What does God's attitude toward pride reveal to you about His character? How do you see humility demonstrated by Jesus? See James 4:6.
3. Do you have any scratches or scars from times in your life when you told God or others, "I've got this; I don't need your help"? What have you learned from those experiences? See Proverbs 3:5 NRSV.
4. Which would you say that you tend to rely on more to influence your children: your authority and power or your influence through relationship?
5. Does it cause you concern that your children may become much like you when they are grown, or does it give you hope? What changes do you need to make in yourself to provide the best model for them?

6. Review the “Four Ways to Humble Yourself.” What are some immediate actions you plan to take to help your children avoid pride? Are there long-term changes you need to begin making as well? Who will help hold you accountable to implement your plan?

## CHAPTER 3: LUST

1. How would you define lust?
2. What does God’s attitude toward lust reveal to you about His character? How do you see purity demonstrated by Jesus? See 1 Thessalonians 4:3–8.
3. Why is it important to communicate to our children that God is not opposed to pleasure? What messages about morality and pleasure are you sending to your children?
4. What have you learned from your own past struggles with lust and addictive behaviors? How are you finding the accountability and support that you need now?
5. How do you help your children avoid the trap of secret sins while allowing them appropriate

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levels of privacy for their age? What additional safeguards do you think are necessary in today's digital world?

6. Review the “Three Steps to Breaking the Chain.” Make a plan for how you will put one or more of these steps into action in your family, and share it with someone whom you can trust to support you.

## CHAPTER 4: ENVY

1. How would you define envy?

2. What does God's attitude toward envy reveal to you about His character? How do you see acceptance demonstrated by Jesus?

3. Recall a time that you struggled with envy because you compared yourself with others. What can you learn from your experience that you could pass on to your children?

4. Do you know which aspects of their identities your children struggle to accept about themselves? How could you have a conversation with your children to uncover any self-rejection they are experiencing?

5. What language do you need to use more of to help your children learn to accept themselves and celebrate their strengths? What language do you need to use less often? See Colossians 3:10.

6. Review the “Eight Unenvious Steps.” Pick one or two to try out in the next week, and then revisit the list to see if there are others you should implement.

## CHAPTER 5: GREED

1. How do you define greed?
2. What does God’s opposition to greed reveal to you about His character? How do you see generosity demonstrated by Jesus?
3. How has greed affected your relationships in the past? Share an example with your children of how you had to choose between focusing on people and focusing on things, and what you learned from that experience.
4. The deadly sin of greed has its roots in the fear of not having enough. What triggers that fear in your own heart? When do your

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children most struggle with that fear? See Matthew 6:25–27.

5. Review the “Three Greed Busters.” Is there one that stands out for your family to use? Write down your strategy for putting it into practice.

## CHAPTER 6: GLUTTONY

1. How do you define gluttony?
2. What does God’s opposition to gluttony reveal to you about His character? How do you see self-discipline demonstrated by Jesus?
3. How is it possible to be “blessed by less”? Share an experience with your children when you learned that you could actually experience more joy by having less of something for a season. See 2 Corinthians 12:7–10.
4. Does the concept of “rhythm” rather than “balance” resonate with you as a way to bring health to your family life? When is the last time you evaluated your schedule to see if your life is “in rhythm”?

5. Review the “Three Wolf Tamers.” Set a date that you want to start using one of them, and ask your spouse or a friend to check in on your progress.

## CHAPTER 7: SLOTH

1. How do you define sloth? See Proverbs 6:6–11.
2. What does God’s opposition to sloth reveal to you about His character? How do you see diligence demonstrated by Jesus?
3. Have you had an experience when you either experienced a reward because of diligence or lost an opportunity due to laziness? Share what you learned with your children.
4. Would you say your children are like the ant—self-motivated by a greater purpose in life—or are they only motivated by external pressure? How can you help each of them gain a vision for a higher calling in life?
5. Have you or your children experienced a failure or loss that has caused you to give in to despair? How can you reawaken hope in your family? See Psalm 51:12.



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6. Review the “Three Cups of Coffee.” Brainstorm some creative ways to have a conversation with each of your children about at least one of these, and then pick one idea to put into action.

## CHAPTER 8: WRATH

1. How would you define wrath? From God’s point of view, what are the appropriate situations for “righteous anger”?

2. Have you ever thought of humanity (including yourself) as having a God-given responsibility to bring justice to the world? What experiences have you had with justice or injustice that could provide a teaching moment for your children? See Micah 6:8.

3. Do you need to apologize to anyone in your house for hurtful things you have said or done in an outburst of anger?

4. Are the rules in your house set up in a way that promotes the idea of justice to your children? Are there steps you need to take to make sure the rules are clear, the consequences are just, and the enforcement is consistent?

5. Review the “Three Temper Tamers.” Ask yourself which one you most needed to hear for yourself and then which one might most apply to each of your children. Pray through your ideas and make a commitment to God to work on the one(s) that need work.

## CHAPTER 9: THE VIRTUES

1. How would you define virtue? How would it reshape your parenting to think of virtue not merely as doing the right thing in the present but also as forming habits that shape whom your children will become tomorrow?

2. What does God’s desire for His children to grow in virtue reflect about His character? How do you see the virtues perfected in Jesus? See Proverbs 23:15–16 NLT.

3. Trying to implement all seven virtues at one time could be overwhelming. How can you develop a plan for working through them gradually? Consider establishing a virtue of the week or month in your home. Brainstorm small ways you could reinforce that virtue through words and actions throughout that week or month.

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4. Create a chart with all seven virtues, and post it on your refrigerator or some other visible place to track your progress. Consider keeping a virtues journal to record your journey and the life lessons you gain along the way.

## CHAPTER 11: WHAT IF IT'S TOO LATE?

1. Do you have regrets about your parenting that are keeping you stuck in the past? Confessing our sins to God is always the first step, but verbalizing our mistakes to another person can sometimes help in gaining closure. Find a trusted friend or wise counselor with whom you can talk through your regrets, not so you can make excuses but so you can find the best ways to move forward.

2. How can you work through taking appropriate responsibility for your own failures and move forward into trusting God to “work all things together for good” (Romans 8:28) in your children’s lives?

3. What “second chapter” calling is God putting in your heart? How are you responding to His loving offer of hope for the future?