

# Parenting on Purpose

I love reading books and my favourite genre is biographies. Mostly I read to be inspired rather than to escape and, almost always, engaging with someone else's true life story is inspiring.

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Hugh Halter's book *Righteous Brood* is available as an ebook from [www.missionpublishing.com](http://www.missionpublishing.com)

So I eagerly read the book *Righteous Brood* by Hugh Halter, knowing it was part biography and partly in a topic area I am passionate about - families being missional together. And I wasn't disappointed!

Several years ago I picked up a great parenting phrase: "You can parent on purpose or you can parent by accident." When you parent on purpose you think about where you want to get to and then you take the steps daily, weekly and yearly to get there.

This is exactly what Halter is talking about. As parents it is easy to have wishes or dreams for our children's future, but unless we do something and take deliberate action, (to quote Halter) "*they are just emotional wishes we hold out for*".

What a salient reminder to live life with purpose! Halter explores the idea that when it comes to living life on mission, many of us are waiting until the kids grow up or we aren't SO busy or wounds or brokenness are fully dealt with. This misses the point that a life of mission is just that - the life we live (with all its complexities), pointing others to Jesus.

The risk of waiting until the time is right or just making space for one parent to get involved in some sort of initiative that connects the world with Jesus is that the kids don't get to see that Jesus changes lives. It's all just talk - and perhaps this is one of the key reasons why young people leave the church. A head full of knowledge, but a heart and mind wondering if Jesus really makes a difference.

When you look around your church, how many families see themselves as sent to the world to speak out and show the love of Jesus? I wonder if my kids will think my mum and dad planted a church or my family planted a church? I wonder if the kids will think Mum talked to people about Jesus or we looked for opportunities to tell people about Jesus; that Dad invited people over for meals or we had people over for meals? If I'm going to parent on purpose then my focus needs to shift from "How do I live a sent life?", to "How can we as a family live sent lives?"

Whether or not my children embrace a life of faith for themselves is out of my control, but I can give them a childhood that shows them that when they see what God is doing and join Him in it, they will see that Jesus is changing lives.

## STORIES OF PURPOSE...



At Revive last year we deliberately chose a workshop we could do together as a family. We went to the workshop on the global issue of consumerism and poverty. It was such a great opportunity to learn together and think through our response as a family. It impacted all of us.



Our church has fun kid's days that the kids are encouraged to invite their friends to. I talk to my children about who they would like to invite. The kids talk to their friends and I chat with their parents offering lifts and lunch with our family afterwards.



My brother and I work with my parents to fill as many Operation Christmas Child shoe boxes as we can. We even have a kick off party where we invite friends to get involved too. At the party we make something to put in the boxes like a tie-dye shirt or drawstring bag. Last year we managed to fill 130 boxes. Every box is filled with a specific "special" girl/boy in mind and we spend months thinking about what we can put into the boxes. I want to make a difference.

Jessica age 9

Dad and I went to Bangkok, Cambodia and to the Thai Burma border. We told stories from the Bible to prisoners, visited slums, saw the work of Global Interaction and taught English to children. It really made me think about how our lives are so different. It made me think about how much I have in life and how easily I can take it all for granted.

Madison age 13



After experiencing the power of generous hospitality from others, our family made a purposeful decision to be more hospitable. When people come for a meal, we're all involved - our boys stay for the conversation. Visitors are often shocked when the boys leave the table quietly and do the washing up.

Three nights a week we have more than our family for dinner. That's a lot of washing up! One of those nights is a friend from church who has schizophrenia and this is his main meal of the week. There's always room for someone to sleepover too, and when we go on holiday, our house is available for people who need a place to stay. To our boys, this has become normal life for a Christian family, but it's very different from the way I grew up!

