



### LET'S BEGIN HERE

Your child is like a beautiful tapestry knit together by God, the master weaver of the soul. David marveled at God's delicate handiwork:

You formed my inward parts;  
You wove me in my mother's womb. (Psalm 139:13)

Your child's hair texture, eye color, voice timbre, and body shape; personality, interests, moods, and abilities—God entwines all these intricate threads in a unique pattern to create the masterpiece that is your child.

These characteristics, or *bents*, become more visible over time. Each stage of your child's lifespan—infancy, childhood, adolescence, early adulthood—reveals new and more features of God's design.

Your job as a parent, as we learned in the previous study of Proverbs 22:6, is to fit your training to your child so that it is in keeping with his or her individual gift or bent.

Seeing the bent accurately is the first parental task; responding appropriately is the second. In this study and the next, we'll take a closer look at the concept of bents, both toward good and evil. As you search Scripture for God's guidance in these important parental tasks of discovering and responding, pause to pray for insight from His Word.



### DIGGING DEEPER

According to Psalm 139, God's creative work in our child's life began long before you saw your newborn's face. David composed this ancient hymn in four stanzas. Tune your ear to its message as you read, and summarize what you hear from the verses under each heading.

## Quotable

*Fit your training  
to your child so  
that it is in keeping  
with his or her  
individual gift  
or bent.*

— Charles R. Swindoll



Verses 1–6—God Knows Me.

Verses 7–12—God Is with Me.

Verses 13–18—God Made Me.

Verses 19–24—God, Search Me.

Just as God was “intimately acquainted” with David’s ways, so also is He with your child’s ways (verse 3). The Hebrew word for *ways* is the same word used in Proverbs 22:6 and includes every aspect of your child’s being. Your child’s sitting and rising (behaviors), ups and downs (moods), comings and goings (pursuits), and even his or her thoughts that are so secret to you are pages of an open book to God. How can God read your child so well? Because He is the author. He wrote the manuscript!



Notice God's hand in the composition of your child as you observe the repeated words and concepts.

For You formed my inward parts;  
You wove me in my mother's womb.  
I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
Wonderful are Your works,  
And my soul knows it very well.  
My frame was not hidden from You,  
When I was made in secret,  
And skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. (Psalm 139:13–15)

Reread these verses, and this time highlight in yellow the actions associated with God. Then, highlight in green the actions associated with David.



### *How-To Tip*

To highlight text in the pdf viewer, click the “select tool,” and use the I-beam cursor to select the text. Right-click on the highlighted text, and click on properties to choose a different color.

Let's *correlate* the key actions to other biblical texts to enhance the meaning of some of the words that you highlighted. Look up the verses below in the version noted, and then write down the meaning in the space provided.

“You *formed* . . .” (Psalm 139:13, emphasis added). Compare with God's action in Melchizedek's blessing of Abram in Genesis 14:19 NLT.



“... wove me ...” and “... skillfully wrought ...” (139:13, 15). Compare with Job’s clothing metaphor in Job 10:11 NIV and the making of the curtain in the tabernacle in Exodus 26:36 NIV.

“... made in secret ...” (139:16). Compare with the protective place of God in Psalm 32:7 NIV.



### *Searching the Scriptures Tip*

Digging into a biblical word can unearth rich nuggets of truth. When you discover a gem, polish it into a *principle*. A principle is a statement based on a truth that transcends time and culture; it applies to all people, from the rock-slinging shepherds of David’s era to the selfie-clicking millennials of the postmodern age. Below are some truths from the text, followed by principles. We’ll get you started with the first principle, then you can create your own.

TRUTH: God Himself, not some impersonal force of nature, forms each person at conception in the womb.

PRINCIPLE: We should value each person as a creation of God.

ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES:



TRUTH: Because God made my child, He knows all aspects of my child.

PRINCIPLE: I can ask God for understanding and insight into my child.

ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES:

TRUTH: God made my child unique in body, mind, gifts, abilities, interests, and needs.

PRINCIPLE: I should accept my child and avoid favoritism.

ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES:

TRUTH: My child is fearfully and wonderfully made.

PRINCIPLE: I can take delight in my child as a wonderful treasure from God.

ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES:

Summing up, you can conclude the following: *God Himself knit together the fine details of my child. The workshop for His marvelous creation was the protected and secret place of the womb.*

The next verse describes the great care that God takes in watching over the creative process at my child's "unformed" embryonic stage when He is coding His instructions into the strands of my child's DNA.

Your eyes have seen my unformed substance;  
And in Your book were all written  
The days that were ordained for me,  
When as yet there was not one of them. (Psalm 139:16)



No wonder God knows the “days” of your child’s life—He formed his or her “ways”! Your child is no mere product of biological chance, in the same way that a palace is no mere pile of randomly tossed bricks. A skilled architect supervised the building process from imagination to blueprints to construction. And so did God, the divine Architect, watch over the masterful design of your child.

### Bring It Home

As a parent, you can **cooperate** with your child’s good bents by watching over your child with the same diligence that God took in His design.

- Avoid re-bending God’s bents. In other words, don’t try to bend artists into athletes!
- Applaud your child’s marvelous qualities when they emerge.
- Celebrate your child’s unique bents, rather than compare or show favoritism.
- Nurture your child’s self-image as you tell the story of his or her divine design.

And don’t forget to tell the rest of the story, which includes not only their good bents but also their bents toward sin. In the next study, we’ll take a closer look at David’s admission, “In sin my mother conceived me” (Psalm 51:5) and Paul’s teaching about how “sin entered into the world, and death through sin” (Romans 5:12). We’ll learn about your child’s inclinations to sin, how the “rod and reproof give wisdom” (Proverbs 29:15), and steps to **counteract** the sinful bents.

For now, what are some specific ways that you can cooperate with the good bents? Resist the temptation to force your child into your own mold, and don’t be shy about verbalizing your praise and encouragement!



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, help me understand what it means to be a faithful, fair, consistent parent who rears Your children You give us in a way that pleases you and cooperates with Your plan. In Jesus’ name, amen.*



# BIBLICAL PARENTING

## The Bents in Your Baby

*Selected Scriptures*

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

STUDY



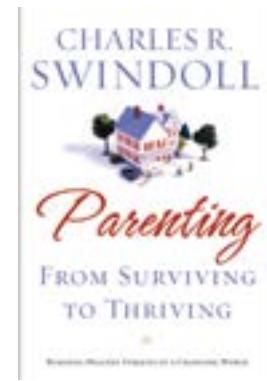
### Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2017 broadcast, this Searching the Scriptures study was developed by the Pastoral Ministries Department in collaboration with Mark Tobey, based upon the original outlines, charts, and sermon transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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