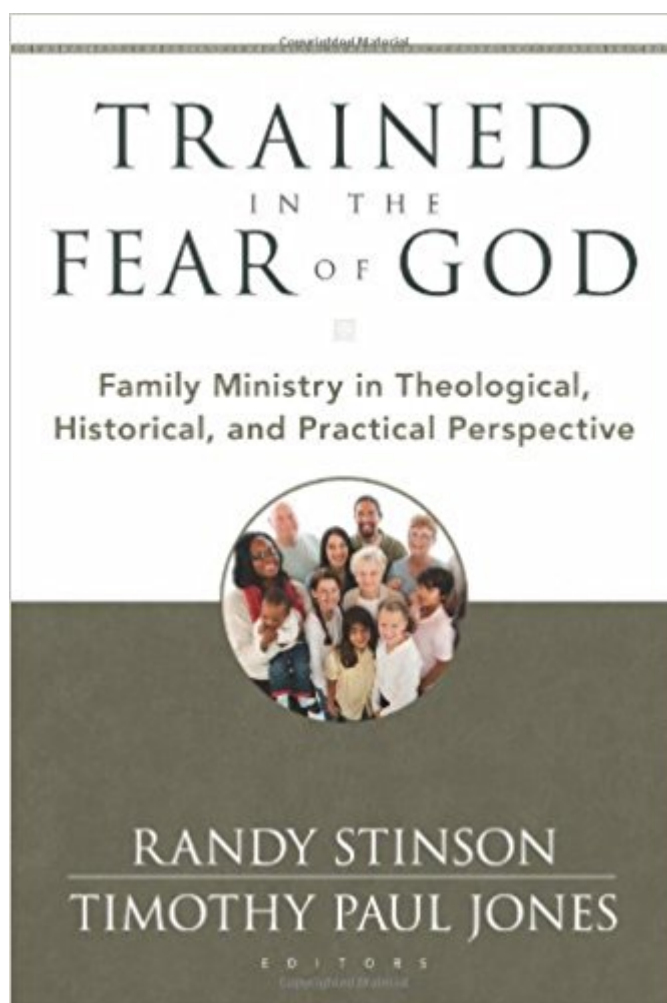


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Trained In The Fear Of God: Family Ministry In Theological, Historical, And Practical Perspective



Synopsis

Dr. Randy Stinson and Dr. Timothy Paul Jones have been the primary architects of the theological foundations for what has become known as "family-equipping ministry" – a recognition that the generations need one another and that parents have an inherent responsibility for the discipleship of their children.

Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: Kregel Academic & Professional; 53809th edition (August 19, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0825439078

ISBN-13: 978-0825439070

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 8.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #272,782 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #112 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Ministry & Evangelism > Children's Ministry #539 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Ministry & Evangelism > Evangelism #55553 in Books > Religion & Spirituality

Customer Reviews

Randy Stinson (PhD, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) is dean of the School of Church Ministries at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville and serves as president of the Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. Timothy Paul Jones (PhD, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) is professor of leadership and church ministry at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has written a number of books, including *Misquoting Truth* and *Perspectives on Family Ministry*.

There is a classic story (that probably has Jewish roots) about a new bride that is cooking her first big dinner for her husband. She decides to go with a recipe that has stood the test of time; a roast that was passed down to her by her mother, who in turn had learned it from her mother. Part of the recipe called for cutting off the ends of the roast. The husband, is astonished by this. He asks, "why in the world do you cut off the ends of the roast? That is the best part!". Her reply is simple, "That's the way my mom always made it". Later on in the week the new bride decides to question her mom about this practice of lopping off the ends of the roast. The mother's reply is the same as the

daughter's, "that was always the way my mom made it". The two curious ladies decide to ask grandma why she cut off the ends of the roast. She says, "I always cut off the ends of the roast because that is the only way that I could get it to fit in the pan". The point of the story is that generations upon generations can dutifully follow a tradition without even understanding it. What is worse when ripped from its original intention the new generation's following of a practice is not only stupid it is also quite unhelpful and maybe even harmful. What happened with the grandmother and her roast is that she taught the daughter the practice but never explained why she did it. The daughter then was not able to contextualize the recipe for her own setting and so she slavishly followed a tradition and handed an unnecessary "must" down to her own daughter. What is true of a three generations of ladies cooking a roast is just as true of many churches. There are various practices and strategies that have become a "must" to churches but the historical, theological, and even practical reasons for doing them have not been handed down. As a result of this oversight churches either neglect to key biblical practices (such as parents discipling their children) or they slavishly follow extrabiblical traditions without really knowing the reason why.

Summary

Trained in the Fear of God is a book compiled by Timothy Paul Jones and Randy Stinson that aims at providing these historical, theological, and practical reasons for engaging in family-equipping ministry. Family-equipping ministry is "the process of intentionally and persistently coordinating a congregation's proclamation and practices so that parents are acknowledged, trained, and held accountable as primary disciple-makers in their children's lives". It's not a program to be added to your church but a philosophy of doing family ministry that attaches itself to everything the church does. This philosophy of ministry is catching on in many churches. It is the philosophy of youth, student, and family ministry at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and is quickly spreading to many other institutions. It is filling a void that is left in many other approaches to family ministry. As such many churches are adopting it. With such a spreading one of the dangers is that family-equipping ministry will just become the latest program and two generations from now it will become the next "lopping off the end of the roast" and its theological, historical, and practical foundations will be neglected.

Trained in the Fear of God is divided into three sections: Biblical and Theological Framework, Historical Foundations, and Practice. They are not titled that, but that is essentially the way the book is broken up. There are seventeen different chapters from different contributors (many of them are professors at SBTs). The reader is encouraged to check out the Table of Contents. The book not only makes a compelling case for the necessity of family ministry it also paints a picture of what family ministry looks like in practice. There are helpful chapters that engage cultural misrepresentations (Al Mohler's chapter on Homosexuality as an example). There

are chapters that deal with family ministry in various contexts (Kevin Smith's chapter on Family Discipleship and the African American Experience). There is even a chapter on the child's brain and how family ministry helps to shape the child's brain. There is much to offer in these pages. Should You Buy It? If you are a church leader you should really consider buying this book. I am convinced that Family-Equipping Ministry (whatever it looks like in your particular context) is the way that churches need to minister to families. Every church that buys "how-to" books for moving towards family ministry needs to be certain to also purchase this book. It will build a foundation that will answer the question of "why" for generations to come. If you are a mom or dad you should also buy this book. It will not only help you to see your valuable role in discipling your children but it will provide helps in doing so. In places where the book itself does not answer the "how-to" questions it will point you to other resources that will. I highly recommend this book. Also as a little tip I would suggest looking up the Table of Contents and then doing a Google Search for the articles. You might be surprised what you find while you are waiting to purchase the book. It's a little pricy but worth every penny. Churches need this book as a resource, so do schools, and so do parents.

Theological, Historical, and Practical Perspective. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2011. Stinson and Jones have compiled and edited a preeminent work for current church leaders seeking to not only find practical, current definitions of family ministry models, but also provide biblical and historical explanations of familial leadership and church guidance. Since Stinson and Jones clearly champion the family-equipping model of ministry within the church, this book leans strongly into the implementation of such. Nevertheless, the insight provided from such authors as Bruce A. Ware, R. Albert Mohler, Jr., Kevin L. Smith, Brian Haynes, and more places this work as required reading for all in church and family ministry leadership. Haynes chapter is especially helpful, as his work on milestones and rites of passage experiences not only provides a practical road map, but biblical insight into the needs of such.

I have not read this whole book, but it's definitely not because I don't want to, this is a hefty book and it's not one to just read through in a day or two. I'm about half way through and everything has been so good about this book - if you're wanting more information on family ministry whether it's family equipping or family integrated churches, this book will help in understanding how to implement and why parents, and especially dads should be equipped in how to train their children up in God's Word. This book really hits home for me since we're looking for a church that doesn't segregate according to age - I've yet to see in the Bible how age segregation is Biblical and with my

children being homeschooled most of the Sunday school curricula are written at a level below that of my children since we integrate God's Word into our school day. The book is divided into three parts: The Character of God and the Created Order: A Biblical and Theological Framework for Considering Family Relationships Covenants and Community: Family Discipleship in Christian History Growing the Family of God: Guiding a Congregation toward Theologically Grounded Family Ministry Within each part there are chapters that cover the following, although this is not an exhaustive list by any means: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: The Trinity as Theological Foundation for Family Ministry, Bruce A. Ware Male and Female, He Created Them: Gender Roles and Relationships in Biblical Perspective, Randy Stinson Among Your Company at Home: Family Discipleship in the Late Ancient and Medieval Churches, C. Michael Wren Jr The Pastor's Home as Paradigm for the Church's Family Ministry, David Prince Family Ministry, the Priority or a Priority? Lilly Park If your church is segregated by ages and you or your Pastor is looking for a new direction to make sure that youth are being taught by those who God ordained should be teaching them then this book is a great place to start. By understanding the past and the present as well as each model of a family ministry church, we can begin to have parents taking their God given responsibility and training up children in the home, where ultimately it's supposed to be happening all day, every day and all the time. **I was provided a copy of this book from Kregel Publications in exchange for my honest review, no other compensation was given.

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