

## *Parenting: The Early Years*

With Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott

Richardson, TX: BluefishTV, 2007. DVD video set including

*The Parent You Want to Be*

by Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott

Grand Rapids MI: Zondervan, 2007. Book, 198 pages.

Reviewed by Hans and Julie Fairbank

Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott begin with the following question; “What kind of parent [do] you want to be?” In their book, they attempt to answer this “most important question you [as a parent] will ever explore.” As groundwork for this intimate self-evaluation, they help parents identify and categorize their ten “top traits.” Extensive surveys conducted by the authors have identified ten most important Christian parental traits such as: *affirming, patient, attentive, visionary, comforting, prayerful*, etc. The authors assert that a parent can identify their own strong and weak traits and in so doing better equip themselves to become the “parent you want to be.” Clearly, the ultimate goal is to train and nurture one’s children to become who you want *them* to be; yet the Parrotts have approached this goal in an unexpected manner. The sub-title of their book is revealing: “Who You Are Matters More than What You Do.” By focusing, not on the children and *their* behavior, but on the parent’s own character and behavior, the authors have provided an excellent resource for parents yearning to rear children who will reach their full potential in Christ.

The DVD video series, “Parenting: The Early Years,” features the Parrotts prominently and explains the “top traits,” with content similar to the book version but featuring real couples and families. Parents are shown dealing with the typical challenges faced in parenting young children. The families are diverse in their cultural and economic backgrounds, as well as in their demographics. Two-parent families, single-parent families, and blended families are featured, some with only one child, others with several. The interviews and in-home features are open, honest, and sometimes edgy.

The Parrott’s book and videos are excellent companions to each other. They are easily understood, concise and do not overload the reader or viewer with too much information at a given time. The study guide for the DVD series helps reinforce the information touched on in the videos. Those watching the series can dig even deeper into who they are, where they are in their parenting, and where they want to be.

In *The Adventist Home*, Ellen White says, “Give some of your leisure hours to your children; associate with them in their work and in their sports, and win their confidence. Cultivate their friendship. . . . Let parents become acquainted with their children, seeking to understand their tastes and dispositions, entering into their feelings, and drawing out what is in their hearts” (AH 192, 193). In *The Parent You Want to Be* Les and Leslie Parrott write, “During . . . times of simply hanging out with their parents, kids tend to open up more easily . . . and explore issues in greater depth.” This is just one example of how the themes of these different authors, though written over 100 years apart, mirror each other. Many of the “top traits” listed by the Parrotts—patience, affirmation, attentiveness, connection and prayerfulness—can all be found within Mrs. White’s counsel to parents. In *Child*

*Guidance* Mrs. White states that “fathers and mothers [are to] teach their children with kindness and affection. . . . [and to] instruct them patiently” (CG 33, 244).

The book and video series express the common-sense themes that parents should stop, listen, think, and speak softly. The Parrots’ material is well grounded in biblical principles. In fact, much of what they present for parents can be found in 1 Corinthians 13. The characteristics of patience, kindness, comforting, and attentiveness are found in Paul’s definition of true love. The truth expressed by James that we should be “swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath” (James 1:19) is also a prevailing message throughout the Parrott’s book and videos.

In summary, both book and video series do an excellent job in accomplishing what they set out to do. Through them we get a fresh look at parenting young children and glean valuable insights into raising children in a Christian home. By focusing more on who you are as a parent and “being” the kind of person you want your children to emulate, the Parrotts have laid out an excellent blueprint for parents to follow.

## References

White, E. G. (1954). *Child guidance*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

White, E. G. (1952). *The Adventist home*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

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