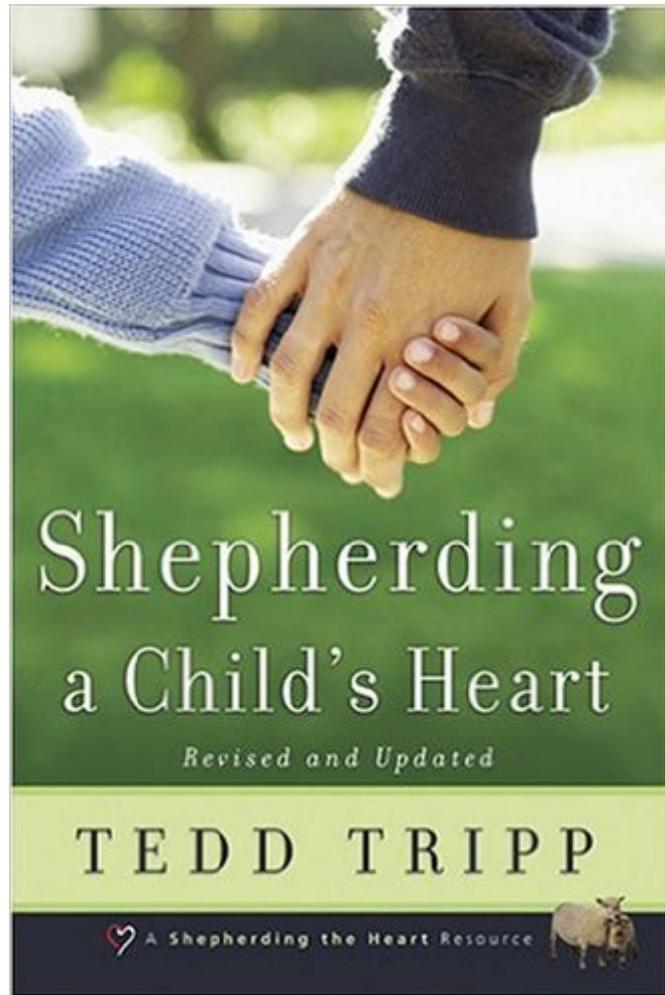


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# Shepherding A Child's Heart



## **Synopsis**

Written for parents with children of any age, this insightful book provides perspectives and procedures for shepherding your child's heart into the paths of life. *Shepherding a Child's Heart* gives fresh biblical approaches to child rearing.

## **Book Information**

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Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (736 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,386 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #40 inÂ  Books > Parenting & Relationships > Parenting #91 inÂ  Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Christian Living #283 inÂ  Books > Religion & Spirituality

## **Customer Reviews**

Written in 1995 and revised in 2005, *Shepherding a Child's Heart* contains some truly timeless truths about children: they are sinners in need of Christ. With this foundational assumption, author Tripp lays out what he believes parents should do according to Scriptures in order to shepherd their children into loving submission under their Creator. The first half of the book breaks down what Tripp believes to be "foundations for child rearing." In this section, he writes about short and long term goals in raising children and about methods, biblical and unbiblical, for accomplishing them. The second half of the book focuses on the stages of childhood and the objectives and techniques unique to each stage. Much of this book is excellent. Discipline, the brunt of the book, is not punitive, but restorative. Tripp rightly clarifies that a child's disobedience is rebellion against God and against His command to honor and obey one's parents, and he urges parents to help their children understand this concept. Understanding this opens a door for parents to talk about grace and our need of Christ's supernatural strength to do what He calls us to do. The focus of discipline is not on changing behavior, but addressing a child's heart. The "why" of behavior is weighted far more heavily than the "what." There are two major flaws in the book, in my opinion. The first is the lack of control that the author gives a child over his own life . Up until the teenage years, parents are urged

to make all decisions and to assert authority simply to teach a child submission. Tripp maintains that "when we allow our children to become independent decision makers we give them a false idea of liberty and a mistaken notion of freedom.

I read this book because it seems to have such a polarizing effect on those who read it. Wow. Either this is a one-stop parenting book, or it's a license to abuse children written by a nut! There's no in-between, is there! Well, yes there is. I'll give this book a solid three stars, and here's why, from a free thinking Christian perspective (I'd like to think). First of all, contrary to some of the more hysterical one-star reviewers, experiencing a few moments of sting from the buttocks is not the worst thing that can happen to a child, and it's not child abuse or perverted. It's what's happened to untold millions of children throughout history who became adults who contributed to their civilizations. I believe the dominant form of child abuse occurring in our culture today is neglect. Leaving a child on his or her own to grow up as an undisciplined, untrustworthy narcissist is a far greater abuse to a child than the "spankings" it might have taken at an early age to teach a child accountability. Tripp's "spanking doctrine" is described within a context of communication and consistency, and within that context makes sense. Children are often irrational, and often don't respond to complex psychological manipulation techniques or reasoned negotiation. Spanking to me is a last resort. I think I've spanked one of my two sons an average of once a year, and not out of venting rage but because at the time there was nothing else I could do to end a bad situation. Truth be told, I'd likely be a better person than I am today if I'd been raised according to all the principles described in this book. Hurts to write that, but there it is. However, the author's biblical mandate for spanking is just plain poor logic.

The key thing that distinguishes Tripp's book from most parenting books is that he rightly understands that our goal in parenting is not to produce children who are obedient, nor is it to produce children who are happy. Rather, both of these are the beneficial result of raising our children in such a way that we are always addressing the issues of the heart (selfishness, rebelliousness, discontent, etc.) rather than just working on the externals. Tripp gives some very practical advice to this end: how to recognise the "teachable moments", how to spank, the problems with strategies that don't work (e.g. bargaining or bribery). He also makes it clear that discipline only works in an atmosphere of trust and communication. I was very pleasantly surprised to see someone agree with me that in a situation where you "know" your child has done something wrong, but you don't have the evidence to prove it, the right thing to do is to encourage honesty on their

part, but if necessary to let them get by with it, rather than acting on a presupposition that might be wrong and injuring the trust between parent and child. He also writes a good bit about parenting goals and strategies for different age groups (from toddlerhood to teenage). The book does have its flaws, though. The most serious is that Tripp does not do a sufficient job of setting the context of what we are about in parenting. Doug Wilson's *Standing on the Promises* does that well, and should be viewed as a necessary companion to this book.

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