

FOREWORD BY KORIE ROBERTSON

author of *Strong and Kind* and star of A&E's *Duck Dynasty*



RAISING *Amazing*

**Bringing Up Kids Who Love God,
Like Their Family, and Do the Dishes**

WITHOUT BEING ASKED

MONICA SWANSON

ZONDERVAN BOOKS

Raising Amazing

Copyright © 2023 by Monica Swanson

Requests for information should be addressed to:

Zondervan, 3900 Sparks Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546

Zondervan titles may be purchased in bulk for educational, business, fundraising, or sales promotional use. For information, please email SpecialMarkets@Zondervan.com.

ISBN 978-0-310-36526-6 (softcover)

ISBN 978-0-310-36528-0 (audio)

ISBN 978-0-310-36527-3 (ebook)

Scripture quotations unless otherwise indicated are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.Zondervan.com. The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.®

Scripture quotations marked ESV are taken from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®). Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked ISV are taken from the International Standard Version, copyright © 1995–2014 by ISV Foundation. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED INTERNATIONALLY. Used by permission of Davidson Press, LLC.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the King James Version, public domain.

Scripture quotations marked MSG are taken from *THE MESSAGE*. Copyright © 1993, 2002, 2018 by Eugene H. Peterson. Used by permission of NavPress. All rights reserved. Represented by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation. © 1996, 2004, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Any internet addresses (websites, blogs, etc.) and telephone numbers in this book are offered as a resource. They are not intended in any way to be or imply an endorsement by Zondervan, nor does Zondervan vouch for the content of these sites and numbers for the life of this book.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other—except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

The information in this book has been carefully researched by the author and is intended to be a source of information only. Readers are urged to consult with medical or other professional advisors to address specific issues. The author and the publisher assume no responsibility for any injuries suffered or damages incurred during or as a result of the use or application of the information contained herein.

Cover design: Faceout Studio, Spencer Fuller

Interior design: Name goes here

Printed in the United States of America

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 /LSC/ 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents

Foreword by Korie Robertson

Acknowledgments

A Note to Readers: Three Important Things—and a Special Word to Dads

1. All-In: Fully Embrace Your Role as Parent
2. Welcome Aboard: Lead Your Family on an Intentional Trajectory
3. Parentamorphosis: Model an Amazing Life
4. The Very Most Important Thing: Make Faith the Highest Priority
5. Focus on the Foundation: Give the Gift of a Healthy Marriage
6. The Secret Weapon or the Greatest Danger: Understand the Power of Influences
7. Home Base: Make Your Home the Hub
8. Nos and Yeses: Parent with Your Kids' Very Best in Mind
9. Dish Duty: Make Character a Really Big Deal
10. The Struggle Is Real (and Also Good): Remember Adversity Grows Character
11. Help Siblings Become Friends: Cultivate Connections That Last a Lifetime
12. How They Spend Their Days: Navigate School, Sports, Hobbies, and Free Time
13. All the Screens!: Make Good Choices about Technology
14. First Tracks: Talk to Your Kids about Everything
15. Where Amazing Begins and Ends: A Final Note from Monica

Resources

Notes

Foreword

When my husband, Willie, and I first met, there was no way we could have imagined all that was ahead for us. The day we got married, all we knew was that we loved each other and hoped to one day grow a family that would honor God. If someone had told us then that we would raise six children, that we would one day have a reality television show about our family, that we would travel the world and have the opportunity to influence millions through ministry and social media, we would have laughed. (Well, first we would have asked what a reality TV show and social media were. It was 1992!)

While being new parents is never easy, with all our hearts Willie and I believed that God's Word had the wisdom we needed to raise our kids well. We'd been shown that example in the lives of our families of origin, and we still believe it today. While we never parented perfectly, we kept returning to God's principles and trusted in his guidance as we raised each child. Now as we're beginning to see the next generation come up in our grandbabies, we could not be more convinced that God knows what he's doing and that his ways are always better than what we could ever imagine!

I met Monica when I came on her podcast to talk about my book *Strong and Kind: Raising Kids of Character*. As we spoke that day, I knew that though we lived across a continent and one big ocean from each other, Monica and I shared a heart for raising kids who love Jesus and love each other. Kids of character and faith. Mine grew up riding four-wheelers, and Monica's grew up riding waves, but we shared the same goal of pointing our children to the true meaning of success: loving God and loving others. Praying that our children would stay in the center of God's will, wherever he might place them.

Willie and I always told our kids that no matter what they did, if they were following God and staying true to his Word, they could trust him to lead them. True success is to live a life that pleases our heavenly Father, a life that exudes the fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control. This is done in the small things just as much as in the big ones. Nothing makes us prouder than seeing our kids live lives that honor God, whether or not anyone sees them doing it!

Recently, Monica's son Luke won the World Junior Surfing Championships. I saw his post-win interview, and I loved hearing him say to the camera, "Before the final, my mom texted me to remind me that when I win, I need to remember to thank God." I love that he gave credit to his mom in that moment but even more importantly that he gave the glory to God. That's what true success looks like!

Only God knows what our kids will grow up to be or do, but what a joy it is to partner with him in the process. And what a gift that he gives us other women and men to encourage and inspire us to keep doing the good, hard work of parenting. We all may be separated by miles or hills or oceans, but I hope you read this book—as Monica and her husband share their stories and offer wisdom from God's Word to help you along—as though it's a virtual mentor. Whether you're just getting started or are smack-dab in the middle of parenting, I'm over here cheering for you and believing that God will lead as you're busy raising your own amazing kids!

Korie Robertson