

## Rite of Passage Parenting

### Introduction

#### "WHAT'S WRONG WITH OUR KIDS, ANYWAY?"

Recently, I was talking to my son about my latest writing project. He said, "Dad, what do you expect to accomplish with this book?"

I was **shocked** that he asked such a profound, thought-provoking question. My boys generally ask things such as, "Dad, can I borrow five dollars?" (If you have been a parent very long, you know that the word borrow has a different connotation than it did when we were kids. It now means, "Thanks, Dad-say good-bye to your money.")

Since Caleb asked a serious question, I thought I would give him a serious answer. I said, "Parents today are called the 'lost generation' because we have lost the tools to develop capable, responsible, self-reliant children. I want to help 'lost generation' parents become good parents."

Without even thinking, my son said, "Dad, bad parents don't buy books."

Like Caleb, I am convinced that if you have bought this book, you are a good parent-someone who wants to become the best parent that you can possibly be. I admire anyone who is willing to take the time to learn the tools for effective parenting. You can't take the journey without making that first step-and you've done it!

As I thought about my son's question, I realized I easily could have told him that I wanted to fix it for today's parents. Fix it is a phrase that holds special meaning for me. When I was in high school, I had to take the dreaded speech class. Because I did not enunciate very clearly, people couldn't understand what I was saying. Every day before class, I would pray for Jesus to come back right away. There is nothing more terrifying for a kid who doesn't speak clearly than to stand in front of a group and talk.

My speech teacher was a member of our church, and she would regularly invite me over to her house to give me extra help. During one of my visits, she told me, "Walker, whatever you do when you graduate, don't do anything that requires verbal skills." She handed me a list of all the jobs she thought I might consider: mechanic, carpenter, draftsman-any occupation where I could use something other than speech. I got the message.

Soon after that, when I was only twenty years old, God called me to preach. Most of the people who knew me were immediately convinced that the Lord had made

his first mistake. Being young and naive, I thought if God called you to do something, you were supposed to start that day. I began looking for a place that would let me preach.