

TEN SECRETS FOR A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY

Adrian Rogers

 **CROSSWAY**
WHEATON, ILLINOIS

Ten Secrets for a Successful Family

Copyright © 1996 by Adrian Rogers

Published by Crossway
1300 Crescent Street
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publisher, except as provided by USA copyright law.

Cover design/illustration: Cindy Kiple

First printing, 1996

First trade paperback edition, 1998

Printed in the United States of America

Unless otherwise indicated, Bible quotations are taken from the King James Version

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Rogers, Adrian.

Ten secrets for a successful family : a perfect ten for homes that win /
Adrian Rogers.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 13: 978-1-58134-033-4

ISBN 10: 1-58134-033-8

1. Family—Religious life. 2. Child rearing—Religious aspects—
Christianity. 3. Ten commandments. I. Title.

BV4526.2.R64 1996

248.4—dc20

95-52024

CH	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10	
21	20	19	18	17	16	15	14	13	12	11	10

This work is gratefully dedicated to my family,
the strong heartbeat of my life:

JOYCE

*childhood sweetheart, wife, partner, love,
friend, and godly mother*

STEVE

*firstborn son, creative musician,
man of God, faithful husband, and father*

GAYLE

*firstborn daughter, counselor, leader,
godly wife, and mother*

PHILIP

*our son in heaven
we can hardly wait to see you*

DAVID

*loyal son, missionary, theologian,
bold witness, loving husband and father*

JANICE

*baby daughter, creative teacher,
loving wife and mother*

MY GRANDCHILDREN

they are the greatest!

*“Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that feareth
the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments.
His seed shall be mighty upon earth: the generation
of the upright shall be blessed.”*

—Psalm 112:1-2

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments / ix

Introduction / xi

1. It Takes God to Make a Home / 15
 2. One God Per Family / 29
 3. Learning Family Worship / 41
 4. The Name Above All Names / 55
 5. How to Make the Rest Day the Best Day / 71
 6. Has the Nuclear Family Bombed? / 85
 7. Families That Choose Life / 101
 8. The Key to a Magnificent Marriage / 115
 9. Honesty: Don't Leave Home Without It / 131
 10. Truth or Consequences / 145
 11. The Secret of Satisfaction / 161
 12. A Word of Encouragement / 177
- Notes / 191*

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank my coworkers and friends whose encouragement and support helped to bring this book into being: the staff at Love Worth Finding Ministries; Linda Glance, my faithful secretary who spent many hours typing portions of this material; President Lane Dennis, Vice President Leonard Goss, Managing Editor Ted Griffin, and all the great folks at Crossway Books; and my editor and friend, Philip Rawley.

INTRODUCTION

I have one great burning ambition in my life apart from maintaining my personal devotional love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

That ambition, that desire, that objective is that my family—my wife, children, and grandchildren—know and love the Lord Jesus Christ and that they love one another. My life’s verse, Psalm 112:1–2, as quoted in the dedication of this book, reflects the prayer and desire of my heart. Closely related to that is 3 John 4—“I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

I want my family to be a successful family. I want my home to be a home that wins. I don’t measure success by the “B’s”—brains, bucks, beauty, brawn, and bigness. Sometimes these can be “killer B’s.”

My heart’s desire is that my family love God and love one another; and that while they are doing it, they will be an example to bring this lost world to Jesus Christ.

But today all of the artillery of hell seems to be aimed at the nuclear family—humanism, relativism, materialism, hedonism. This book is written to give the family some weapons for the warfare. The chief weapon in our arsenal is truth that brings a fixed standard for right and wrong, and that truth is encapsulated in the Ten Commandments.

I am afraid that our generation has thought the Ten Commandments

are more or less like corn flakes—familiar, old, and not very exciting. But I want to encourage you to “taste them again for the first time.”

I have sometimes called the Ten Commandments “a perfect ten for homes that win.” They are just that. These Commandments are not accidental or incidental but fundamental.

I am told that a salesman was driving through the country trying to get to a certain city. He came to a fork in the road and stopped to question a farmer. “Does it make any difference which of these roads I take?” The farmer answered, “Not to me it doesn’t.”

I am afraid that many of America’s politicians, preachers, and teachers feel the same way. I can tell you, however, that when it comes to righteousness and truth, it makes a great deal of difference which road we take.

The Ten Commandments were given primarily to the home, and they were to be taught by fathers to their children and grandchildren, as we will see later in this book.

These Commandments are rock-ribbed and ironclad, but they are not cold, rigid restrictions. Properly understood, they are the liberating laws of life.

Jesus did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it. When we know Him in repentance and faith, the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us (Romans 8:4).

Don’t be afraid of God’s holy law. Don’t let legalism make the law a burden, and don’t allow license to make the law an irrelevancy.

In legalism, the law is my master.

In license, the law is my enemy.

In liberty, the law is my friend.

I send this work from my hand to your heart with a prayer and with confidence. My confidence is based on two things:

The Ten Commandments are part of the infallible, inerrant Word of God. I have great confidence there.

Also, at this stage of life I have personal experience that generates confidence. I am reminded of the preacher who said that when he was young he had four sermons on child-rearing and no children. He confessed that later he had four children and no sermons.

I have four children and plenty of experience. I have been a pas-

tor for four decades. I have pastored small churches with a few dozen members, and my present congregation numbers over 25,000.

But the real experience I cherish is that of a happy husband who married his childhood sweetheart and is passionately in love with her. I have four godly and happily married children and seven incredible grandchildren.

Bragging? Nope! Just praising God for His goodness.

I trust that the Ten Commandments will be the basis of godliness in your home. My prayer is that your home will discover God's "perfect ten," and that as a result it will be a little colony of heaven down here on earth.

1

IT TAKES GOD TO MAKE A HOME

The life of the nation is the life of the family written large.

—Plato

Something terrible is happening in America. We are losing out spiritually in our homes, and the results of our loss are being felt in every corner of society.

Let me give you two illustrations to help set the stage for what I want to share with you in this book. Not too long ago the cover of *Newsweek* magazine was emblazoned with the word *Shame*. Under it was the question, “How do we bring back a sense of right and wrong?” That’s quite a topic for the secular press to be tackling, wouldn’t you agree?

The article says, “Shame—that’s something they have over in Japan, isn’t it? Our country’s about shamelessness. Here we have TV shows where people tell the world about bestiality inside their bedroom—and the world yawns.”¹ In an accompanying sidebar article, Kenneth Woodward writes:

Ninety percent of Americans say they believe in God. Yet the urgent sense of personal sin has all but disappeared in the current upbeat style in American religion. . . . In earlier eras, ministers regularly exhorted congregations to humbly “confess

our sins.” But the aging baby boomers who are rushing back to church do not want to hear sermons that might rattle their self-esteem. And many clergy, who are competing in a buyer’s market feel they cannot afford to alienate.²

Now, if we are losing the battle for basic decency and subsequently for our homes, then somebody better be rattling our self-esteem! The preacher’s job is not to fill the auditorium, but to fill the pulpit.

Whether people want to hear the truth or not, we’ve got to stop marketing religion and pandering to people’s desires. Our nation’s moral and spiritual crisis is much too deep-rooted to allow for superficial fixes. Even nonreligious people in America are beginning to realize that we are facing disintegration as a society. This is a problem of fundamental values.

No wonder our young people are so confused. I feel sorry for today’s youth, which brings me to my second illustration. I saw a young man in an airport recently. I suppose he was about eighteen years of age. He had an earring in one ear, a lot of facial hair, and he was wearing a T-shirt.

I took out my pen and wrote down what it said on the back of that shirt. Here it is: “I am not scared. I am not afraid. I am an animal. I will eat you alive if I have to. NO FEAR.” This was the first shirt of that kind I had seen. Now there is a whole line of clothing with that basic theme.

This young man wanted the world to know he was not afraid. But you know something? I think he was very much afraid.

We used to have a cat. When a dog would come around, our cat would puff up real big. But the reason he puffed up was because he was afraid of that dog. This generation may talk big, but it experiences a great deal of fear—and much of it is homemade.

LOSING A GENERATION

So we are raising a generation of youngsters who feel like animals, ready to eat us alive! And why shouldn’t they? They’ve been systematically taught that they *are* animals, that they were not created in the image of God. Instead, they are accidents of nature. That’s why that teenager in the airport felt it was important to advertise that he was not afraid—because he was an animal.

With this kind of mind-set, is it any wonder that our children and

young people often behave like animals? More than 100,000 of our young people are caged in prisons today. More than a million teenage girls in America will get pregnant this year. And more than ten million minors are infected with sexually transmitted diseases. So much for the animal farm!

It doesn't sound like our homes are very successful, does it? But the thesis and the heart of this book is that we *can* have homes that win—homes that not merely survive, but thrive.

God has a plan to give us successful homes. It is given to us in His Word and is communicated in divine shorthand in the Ten Commandments, His perfect law. If we want to have homes that win, we can rediscover God's will as revealed in His Ten Commandments. That's my primary goal for this book—to give you a strategy and a plan to transport God's perfect plan for the home from the pages of Scripture right into your living room. Obviously, biblical instruction on the home is not confined to the Ten Commandments. But in this book our focus will be primarily on that crucial and foundational section of the Word of God. This is not the totality of God's communication on the subject, but it is a good starting point and is a strategic portion of what God wants to say to us.

Many of our young people today could not recite the Ten Commandments if their lives depended on it, even many who are members of Bible-teaching churches. One reason is that their parents don't know the Commandments either, except for some vague idea of right and wrong. Today kids have computers in their bedrooms, but they're becoming roadkill on the information highway.

There is a war going on in America, a battle for the soul of our nation. The battleground is the home, and *the issue is truth*. Satan has aimed all of the artillery of hell at our homes, and every shell in that artillery is a lie.

Satan's chief weapon is deception. The devil would rather peddle a lie than a barrel of whiskey or a kilo of illegal drugs any day. Satan would rather get you to believe a wrong thing than to do a wrong thing. He is the sinister minister of destruction.

Why? Because a lie is the most dangerous thing on the face of this earth. It is antithetical to God, who is the Truth and whose Word is truth (John 17:17). Satan is a pusher of lies, because the thought is the father

of the deed. And if he can get a nation to move away from truth, if the foundation is destroyed, what can the righteous do?

Recent polls indicate that the majority of Americans no longer believe in absolute truth. And here's the frightening thing—some 62 percent of the people who call themselves evangelical Bible believers say there is no such thing as absolute truth. Now you can begin to see why our generation has lost its standards, its moorings, its moral compass. We now have morality by majority, and the result is chaos in society.

I'm weary of hearing about the religious right and the religious left. The issue is not right or left. The issue is right and wrong. Let me say again, the issue is truth.

God has given us His Ten Commandments, His unfailing and perfect plan for life, and we'll never have homes that are victorious and happy without them. They may be "secrets" to the world, but they are God's clear revelation to anyone who will heed them and teach them to their children. That's what I want to help you do in this book.

I realize that to some people the Ten Commandments may fall into the category of black-and-white television—okay for its time, but sort of out of date. But as we begin this study my challenge to you is to hear and heed them afresh.

PREPARING THE WAY

In the chapters that follow we will look at each of the Ten Commandments in detail, and at the end of each chapter I will give you some specific ideas to help you communicate God's truth to your family.

But before we home in on Exodus 20, I want to show you how vital this is and prepare the way by considering what many people believe to be the most important passage in all of the Old Testament—Deuteronomy 6:1-9, which includes the great *Shema* of Israel. Here Moses tells us how we are to observe and teach God's Commandments.

Something hit me like a hammer as I was pondering this passage in the preparation of these studies. It clearly shows how God wants to communicate the Ten Commandments to His people. Are you ready for it? Here it is: from father to son. It's that simple.

The Ten Commandments were not meant to be taught primarily in the public school, the halls of government, or the boardrooms of busi-

ness. These places may be well and good, and the truth of God is certainly needed there, but they are not God's ideal plan. The primary setting for the communication of the Ten Commandments is the home. With that in mind, let's consider the teachings and applications of this great text.

The book of Deuteronomy is Moses' farewell address to the people of Israel just before they entered the Promised Land. He was reminding the people of God's dealings with them and was preparing them to live in a way that would please God and guarantee them a future. Moses knew that God's answer to the chaos of pagan society was the family, and he wanted to strengthen and equip Israel's families to stand strong.

To set the context of Deuteronomy 6, we need to back up to chapter 5. In verses 6-21 of that chapter, Moses restated the Ten Commandments as he had received them from the Lord on Mount Sinai. Notice verse 29, where Moses is speaking for God and says:

Oh that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and *with their children for ever!* (emphasis mine)

Let me tell you, it will not be well with us and with our children if we do not make some radical changes and begin teaching the Ten Commandments in our homes.

Now look at the opening verses of Deuteronomy 6:

Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it: that thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, *which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.* Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.

—Verses 1-3, emphasis mine

God says that if you want your home and your nation to last, then take these Commandments and hand them down from father to son.

What a wonderful “winning streak” that would be for our homes—God’s Commandments being handed down generation after generation.

We need homes that succeed with God because our kids have lost something. I’m very concerned about the generation growing up today. So many children and young people attend churches filled with squishy theology, where the authority of the Word of God is questioned and the life of the Lord Jesus Christ is not being manifest, where the worship is empty and futile.

It has well been said that in the fifties kids lost their innocence. They seemed to be liberated by music and films and cars and money.

Then after losing their innocence, in the sixties kids lost their authority. During that decade of rebellion, young people challenged every authority—their parents, teachers, religion, government. But nothing replaced those authorities, so the youth were left without anything to believe.

That led to a loss of the ability to love in the seventies and especially in the eighties, the so-called “me-decade.” Having lost their ability to love, young people substituted sex for love without knowing the difference.

So in our day, having lost their innocence, authority, and ability to love, our youth have lost their hope. That’s why young people in the bloom of life are taking their lives. They have lost any confidence in the future. It breaks my heart to see this happening.

James Madison is called the father of the American Constitution. Here is what he said about our nation: “We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future of our politics upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God.”

Madison said that America had staked everything on the ability of its people to govern themselves and control themselves according to the Ten Commandments. That’s an incredible statement! It wasn’t a pulpit-pounding preacher who said that. It was the father of the Constitution.

But the Ten Commandments have been all but lost in our homes. And even though I said above that the public schools are not God’s primary place for the communication of the Commandments, at least