

DR. JAMES DOBSON



Building a Family Legacy

Shaping the Next Generation of Women

Bringing
Up

GIRLS

Dr. James
DOBSON

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Bringing Up Girls

DR. JAMES DOBSON



Building a Family Legacy

Shaping the Next Generation of Women

Bringing

Up!

GIRLS

Dr. James

DOBSON



*An Imprint of
Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.*

Visit Tyndale online at www.tyndale.com.

Visit Tyndale Momentum online at www.tyndalemomentum.com.

TYNDALE, *Tyndale Momentum*, and the Tyndale Momentum logo are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. Tyndale Momentum is an imprint of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Building a Family Legacy is a registered trademark of Siggie, LLC.

Bringing Up Girls: Practical Advice and Encouragement for Those Shaping the Next Generation of Women

Copyright © 2010 by James C. Dobson. All rights reserved.

Cover photos of girls by Jimi Allen, copyright © by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.

Author photograph of daisy copyright © Royce DeGrie/Getty. All rights reserved.

Designed by Julie Chen

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the Holy Bible, *New International Version*,[®] NIV.[®] Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by Biblica, Inc.[®] Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com.

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version.[®] Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the *Holy Bible*, King James Version.

Scripture quotations marked NASB are taken from the New American Standard Bible,[®] copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Dobson, James C., date.

Bringing up girls : practical advice and encouragement for those shaping the next generation of women / James Dobson.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references (p.).

ISBN 978-1-4143-0127-3 (hc)

1. Parenting—Religious aspects—Christianity. 2. Girls—Religious life. I. Title.

BV4529.D6315 2010

248.8'45—dc22 2010001869

ISBN 978-1-4143-3648-0 (International Trade Paper Edition)

ISBN 978-1-4143-9132-8 (sc)

Printed in the United States of America

20 19 18 17 16 15 14
7 6 5 4 3 2 1

TABLE
OF
CONTENTS

	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	<i>ix</i>
1	THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF GIRLS	1
2	GIRLS IN PERIL	5
3	THE FAIR SEX	13
4	WHY SHE IS WHO SHE IS	25
5	TEACHING GIRLS TO BE LADIES	37
6	EMBARRASSING THE ANGELS	53
7	GIRLS AND THEIR MOTHERS	59
8	YOUNG WOMEN TALK ABOUT THEIR FATHERS	71
9	WHY DADDIES MATTER	87
10	FATHERS TO DAUGHTERS	99
11	CINDERELLA AT THE BALL	105
12	THE OBSESSION WITH BEAUTY	115
13	RELATED QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	133
14	THE RIVER OF CULTURE	151
15	CONSEQUENCES	167
16	GOOD NEWS ABOUT GIRLS	183
17	CHARMING YOUR DAUGHTER	195
18	PUBERTY AND ADOLESCENCE	199
19	BULLIES, BUDDIES, AND BEST FRIENDS	209

20	QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT PUBERTY AND ADOLESCENCE	231
21	PROTECTING YOUR DAUGHTER FROM INVASIVE TECHNOLOGY	245
22	THE LAST WORD	257
	ADDENDUM: HELPFUL RESOURCES FOR PARENTS	269
	NOTES	273



THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF GIRLS

A FEW YEARS AGO I wrote a book called *Bringing Up Boys*,¹ which has sold more than 2 million copies. Ever since it was released, people on the street, in restaurants, or in airports have approached me and asked, “When are you going to write *Bringing Up Girls*?” My publisher has posed the same question every time we’ve been together. Now, even kids have begun to hound me. This scrawled letter came to my office recently:

Dear Dr. James Dobson,

I’m 6 years old. I have two older brothers. I would like to know when you are going to write Bringing Up Girls? Because my mom really wants to train girls. I appreciate your work on the book.

Julie

Okay, Julie. You win. I’ll do it. And I thank you for the nice note. I’ll bet your mom put you up to writing me, because the girl she wants to train . . . is *you*. I hope to meet you someday because you sound like a very special six-year-old.

I have received thousands of other interesting letters from boys and girls, most of whom are older than Julie. Some have been rather angry with me because they blame me for the way their parents disciplined them. A college student sent me a poem to express that sentiment a few years ago. It read:

Bringing Up Girls

*Roses are red and violets are blue
When I was a kid, I got spanked 'cause of you*

One of my favorite letters came from a fourteen-year-old girl named Tiffany, who was steaming when she wrote. She came right to the point:

*I hate you dr dobson.
i had to watch the dumbest movie today about sex. you made
the movie. HA! like you'd know anything about it. also my mom has
started not letting me go to movies she has not read reviews about,
thanks to your gay little "plugged in" program. now i have no social
life since all my friends go to the movies and see good movies. all i can
watch is ella enchanted. woo-pa-dee-do!*

Then Tiffany took off the gloves. She must have seen a very old picture of me wearing out-of-date glasses, which prompted this last jab:

*i hope you get some new glasses. because physiologist or not, your
other ones take up your whole face.
Love Always, Tiffany*

What a sweet girl. Only a fourteen-year-old could start a letter declaring that she hates me and end with assurances of eternal love. I'll bet Tiffany is a challenge for her mom and dad, but there are better days coming. The parents I am advising today were testy kids like Tiffany when I wrote my first book on child rearing, but now something rather funny has happened. They have grown up and produced strong-willed children of their own, and they're looking for help. It is rewarding for me to watch a second generation of moms and dads learn to deal with the same issues and problems that they presented to their parents twenty-five years ago. Who knows? Maybe I'll have an opportunity to advise a third generation when Tiffany's first baby comes along. She and other young moms from her generation will see things from an entirely different perspective then. But I am getting ahead of myself.

The title I have chosen for this book, *Bringing Up Girls*, makes a fundamental assertion. It assumes that parents have the responsibility of not simply overseeing the growth and development of their girls (and boys) but of raising them purposely—building into them certain qualities and traits of character. Wise King Solomon addressed that obligation more than 2,900 years ago when he wrote, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6, KJV). The apostle Paul added another dimension when he said, "Fathers, do not exasperate

your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

Think for a moment about the implications of those Scriptures. Do they mean that a child should be taught to revere God and His Son, Jesus Christ, and to understand the spiritual dimension of life? Yes, that is their first and most important meaning. But I believe they instruct us to do more than that.

Children are a gift from God, and we are stewards of their welfare. Training up our daughters in this sense implies helping them to navigate the cultural minefields that lie in their paths—teaching them eternal values, talents, and perspectives. It means instilling within them an appreciation for truthfulness, trustworthiness, self-discipline, self-control, generosity, and sweetness of spirit. It means teaching them modesty, morality, and manners. It means helping them overcome the natural inclination toward selfishness, aggressiveness, violence, and slovenliness. It means teaching them to work and learn and think. That is just the beginning, which is why parenthood is such a daunting responsibility, requiring careful forethought and planning. This is what we will be talking about in the pages that follow.

The passion I feel for the subject at hand is related to the daughter who still calls me Dad. She is grown now, but I love her like I did when we were first introduced in the delivery room. Something electric occurred between us on that mystical night, and it endures today. When Danae was three years old, I was a professor of pediatrics at a medical school and a researcher at a large children’s hospital. Five days a week, as I prepared for my long commute through Los Angeles traffic, Danae would cry. She didn’t want me to go. I always gave her a big hug and promised to hurry home that afternoon, but she was heartbroken. I can still see this precious kid standing in the doorway crying.

Danae was particularly upset one morning as I explained again why Daddy had to go to work. Her beautiful blue eyes welled up with tears, and she said sorrowfully, “It’s all right, Daddy. I forgive you.”

I asked my daughter a few weeks ago if she remembered those days. She has a remarkably vivid memory of her childhood, which is almost scary at times. She not only remembered her tears on the morning I was describing, but she recalled something that I had forgotten.

One day when she was three, she and her mother came to the front yard to wave at me as I drove away. I had already backed out of the driveway, however, and didn’t see them standing there. Danae recalls that she sobbed in disappointment. But when I was a long block away, I happened to catch a glimpse of my little family in my rearview mirror. They were still frantically waving good-bye. As I was going around the corner, I put my

arm out the window and waved in return. Even after all these years, Danae remembers the excitement she felt at that moment when her daddy saw her and returned her wave.

How could I, and indeed, how could *we* allow ourselves to get so busy with the cares of life that we would neglect our vulnerable little boys and girls and leave them unprotected from evil influences? How could we fail to give them the love and attention they crave? And how could we send them into a dangerous world without laying a secure foundation to hold them steady? No other priority comes close to this responsibility to raise our children, as Solomon said, in the way they should go. This is where we will head in the pages that follow.

We will be discussing information, approaches, answers, solutions, and recommendations that have stood the test of time. Our focus will be on the influence of mothers, fathers, teachers, and peers. We'll deal with girls of all ages, from babyhood to adulthood, and will consider the land mines that surely lie ahead. We'll talk about teaching girls to be ladies. We will discuss the search for self-worth, sexual awakening, single parenting, emotional development, and the how-tos of raising girls. And of course, we'll deal with puberty, adolescence, and the obsession with beauty.

Ultimately, we will talk about spiritual training at home and why moral purity must be taught from the preschool years to the empty nest. Therein lies our hope. There is so much to be said here. More than three thousand pages of research and reference material have been accumulated in preparation for this book. It is my thirty-third and has taken me more than three years to complete. What took me so long was trying to decide what to leave out. Everything seemed significant to me.

What I will share with you, moms and dads, has become my obsession. I get a lump in my throat when I think of those precious kids who know so little about life, and I worry about how we can protect their innocence and preserve the joys of childhood.

That is our task. So get a cup of hot coffee or put on a kettle of tea, settle down in a comfortable chair, and let's talk together.