

LANCE AND BROOKE INGRAM

FOUNDATIONS

365

A year of quick biblical
declarations to help parents
build a child's identity

Before We Begin

from author Lance Ingram

It hit me one day like a freight train. My 7-year-old son had jumped in the car after school and was passionately telling me about all he had learned that day...Greek mythology, algebra, and spelling words that even I had to look up to discover their meaning. Then he segued into a conversation about the cities he was building in his *Minecraft* video game at home. In that moment, driving down the road in my 16-year-old Nissan Pathfinder with my son in the back seat, I grimaced...because I realized that our children are capable of understanding *far* more than we think. And right there as I drove down that highway in Alabama, I whispered to myself, "Why is my child's school challenging my son more *intellectually* than we are challenging him *spiritually*? We gotta step it up."

See, the world will challenge our children with ideas, words, and principles that they may not understand because that's how a person grows—by being *stretched*. Yet, at home, we withhold critical, pivotal, life-changing, holy-cow-that's-important, biblical truth from our kids because we're afraid it's too advanced or complex for them to comprehend. We have no problem stretching our children to be great in athletics, dance, music, and the classroom, but we hesitate to stretch them spiritually. As a result, their true identity doesn't grow...or it gets misplanted in worthless, worldly labels. Their roots then grow in the world, not the Word.

We must wake up...because I've got news for us as parents: Someone is *going* to control the all-important narrative of what our children believe about themselves, about this world, and about God. Will it be us? Will we get ahead of the world's narrative on all of the crucial topics of life? Or will we lazily let the world and its institutions define our children and create an alternate narrative about who they are and why they exist?

We as parents must be *completely confident* in this stance: We would much rather err on the side of challenging our kids *too*

much than not enough. We would rather them leave the house not understanding every part of God's Word than leave the house not having heard God's Word at all. We as parents will never fail our children by over-challenging them with the Bible. We will never fail our children by giving them too much depth from God's Word. We can only fail by *not* sharing the Word. That is the only path to failure.

We must sober up because our spiritual enemy wants to use the world—popular culture, the government, schools, news outlets, social media, and other secular voices—to establish the principles that guide our children. Our enemy wants to redefine *truth*. And he ultimately wants to *own* our kids' *identity*. He wants to confuse them about who they are so he can steal the great purpose for which God created them. We cannot sit by idly. We must equip our kids for spiritual war. And as for me and my wife, we are gonna use *Foundations 365* to *fight*. We will fight for the only truth—God's Word, Jesus Christ—to be the foundation of our children's identity. Hey, if our kids can learn about Greek gods at school, you better believe they are going to learn about the one and only living God at home.

Be confident in the blueprint.

In *Foundations 365*, we have done our best to whittle down and simplify an entire year of crucial biblical principles so that our kids get something precise and practical each day from God's Word. Yes, it will be challenging for young kids especially to understand at times. That's okay. They'll ask questions about the meaning of certain principles and words. That's a *great* thing. And while we might not know all the answers, these questions will spark conversations. They will present opportunities to talk to our kids about the practicality of the Bible. We can then do our best to teach them in those moments. And if we are confused and don't know an answer, we can say, "I don't know," and we can ask someone who *does* know the answer—a pastor, a spiritual authority, or strong man or woman of the faith.

One thing is certain about beginning this building process: we as parents *must* be confident that what we are doing is right, good, and necessary *regardless* of a child's immediate response. Our kids may not understand all the scripture they hear, but they still need to hear it. They may not grasp all the

verses we share, but we still need to share them. Faith comes by *hearing* the Word of God, so no matter what, it *will* build our children's faith (Romans 10:17). And when God's Word is sent out, it *always* produces fruit (Isaiah 55:11). So we share. That's our responsibility. The results are up to God and His promises.

Foundations 365 was made for children of every age, from 2 all the way to 22. There is much intentionality behind this resource's design. Here are a few things to keep in mind before we begin:

For children ages 2 to 6, this is the **excavation** phase, when we are doing the initial groundwork...clearing the trees and leveling the dirt to prepare our children *for* the foundation. At this early age, of course they are not going to understand everything in *Foundations 365*, and that's *expected*. They may only pick up a word here or there to file away, but at least they are beginning to build a vocabulary of foundational phrases and principles to shape their identity in Jesus. Most of all, from an early age, they are seeing parents who are fighting for them daily and consistently. This is invaluable. This resource will have nothing inappropriate for a 2-year-old to hear but nothing irrelevant for a 22-year-old to hear. We must be confident in letting even our infants hear God's Word in its full counsel. Even if that's all they do—hear it—God will do supernatural things in our children...things that don't even require them to understand.

For children ages 7 to 12, this is the **foundation** phase, when we begin pouring the concrete and laying the steel rebar for their identity. In this late childhood and early adolescent age range, we believe this resource will be monumental in helping them understand who they are, who God is, how real Jesus is, how powerful the Holy Spirit is, and what it means to live with eternity in mind.

For children ages 13 to 22, this is the **construction** phase, when we are building the walls, stacking the bricks, and refining the details of what it means to be temples of the Holy Spirit. For kids in these pivotal identity-forming years, we see this tool being a go-to weapon in their biblical arsenal. *Foundations 365* will reinforce our sons' and daughters' identities in the tough seasons and uncomfortable transitions of being teenagers and college kids.

#WinOneMinute

One intentional minute a day. 365 days a year.

The beautiful thing about *Foundations 365* is that it equips us as parents to be the *equippers*. We aren't pawning off the responsibility of our children's spiritual maturity on web apps or youth pastors. We can be *engaged*. We can be the developers. This resource will *daily* cement our children's growth in God's Word and empower us to leave a legacy that goes far beyond developing kids with good manners, school achievements, sports awards, artistic talents, and career skills. We will teach our children *spiritual survival skills*...how to thrive and remain full of life in a world full of darkness.

No matter the age of our children, we as fathers and mothers are set to "win one minute" with our children. We are prepared. We are ready to take 60 to 90 intentional seconds—every single day—to build our children on a foundation that will sustain them through the storms of life. The stakes are priceless in this war for the next generation. We must pass the baton with meticulous strategy, relentless effort, and yearly consistency as our children absorb the truth like sponges.

A minute may feel insignificant and inconsequential, but 365 of them multiplied by 10 or 15 years adds up to great significance and consequence. It may seem like our little deposits are having no impact, but as we repeat these investments day in and day out, the exponential, compounding results of this intentional fight will become glaringly obvious over time. One day we will look up and see that our children have grown into mighty spiritual warriors.

It's time to fight. It's time to train our warriors. This isn't some casual game. This is spiritual war. Let's get to work. Let's get to winning.

January 1

Tell your child to declare this truth:

The Bible is the key to my most satisfying life.

Speak this scripture to your child:

"My child, never forget the things I have taught you. Store [God's] commands in your heart. If you do this, you will live many years, and your life will be satisfying." - Proverbs 3:1-2

Pray this over your child:

God, You have given us this special book called the Holy Bible, and it contains *Your* words. It is Your voice spoken with absolute authority. It is *the* standard. It is truth. It is the only foundation for freedom, and it is the only information that makes life make sense. God, Your Word holds everything together. We trust it. We build our lives on it and base our living around it. God, Your Book not only reveals who You are, but also, who *we* are. Your Word is the only key in existence that can unlock the door to our hearts and show us the pathway for our most satisfying life. God, the world's ideas and standards of how to live our lives will *always* lead us to confusion and disappointment, but Your Word leads to true life. We want to store Your commands in our hearts and minds so that we experience peace and fulfillment. God, teach us Your truths every day as we grow in You this year. In Jesus' name we pray this.

January 2

Tell your child to declare this truth:

God is Creator of everything.

Speak this scripture to your child:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the deep waters. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters." - Genesis 1:1-2

Pray this over your child:

God, we know You are real. We declare right now that You rule over everything—time, space, matter, life, science...the entire universe came from You and is under Your control. God, You exist. You have existed from the beginning, and You are Creator of everything we see and everything we don't see. Earth and all of its creatures didn't evolve from scientific matter; You made them all. It is no accident that our planet is perfectly situated in space to provide just the right amount of oxygen, gravity, light, and heat for us to survive. You *invented* science, and You created the radiant sun, cobalt blue skies, sapphire seas, majestic mountains, roaring lions, thunderous lightning, monstrous oak trees, and every living being. God, Your artistry is unavoidable when we see the wispy, cotton candy clouds of breathtaking sunrises and piercing orange light of spectacular sunsets. You even painted jaw-dropping galaxies that we as humans haven't discovered yet. Everything in nature points to Your existence. All of creation sings of Your glory. God, we have absolutely no clue how big You really are. We praise You for Your creativity and power. In Jesus' name we pray this.