



Pastor Helps Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families Redeem Their Past

I wish I had read this book earlier. Ike not only inspires us to believe that change is possible, but he also offers actual practices and exercises that lead to healthy relationships. [Christine Caine, founder of A21 and Propel Women](#)



Good Baggage:
How Your Difficult Childhood Prepared
You for Healthy Relationships
by Ike Miller
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Ike Miller grew up in a dysfunctional home, and the trauma of his past continued to affect his relationships as an adult. But through a process of healing and understanding, Ike learned to let go of the negative habits and mindsets he developed as a child while leveraging his experience to pursue healthy relationships.

Good Baggage: How Your Difficult Childhood Prepared You for Healthy Relationships is Ike's practical guide for navigating that journey. Drawing on scriptural wisdom, psychology and personal experience, Ike helps us understand how our traumatic childhood continues to affect us in ways we may not even realize.

"Ike so brilliantly and thoughtfully lays out a road map to show how difficult circumstances can, if healed properly, actually become a superpower," said [Jefferson Bethke, New York Times bestselling author of Take Back Your Family](#)

"Ike has given us a gift in *Good Baggage*. Instead of allowing the pain of childhood trauma to limit and define our lives, Ike shows us that healing and transformation are possible. As someone who has spent decades working through my own childhood trauma and its impact on my relationships," said [Christine Caine, founder of A21 and Propel Women](#)

The book demonstrates how qualities such as relational intentionality, empathy, and the commitment to develop better relationships than the ones we experienced as children are all valuable components of the baggage we carry. The past can sabotage our present if we let it. But if we choose to learn and grow from our past, we can experience the healthy relationships we all yearn for.

Ike is open to interviews and available to discuss topics like:

- Sorting through your baggage: discarding the bad and keeping the good
- Recognizing the survival mechanisms you learned as a child and how to let go of them
- "Is anything ever really okay?" Addressing the questions we're too afraid to ask
- Finding and using the tools from your past to develop healthy relationships now
- The intersection of faith, theology, and mental health

"The heart of this book is the desire to see the pain of your difficult childhood redeemed," Ike writes, "The things you went through, yes, they harmed you. But that doesn't have to be the end of your story."



About the Author

Ike Miller (PhD, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) leads Bright City Church in Durham, North Carolina, a church he planted in 2018 along with his wife, Sharon Hodde Miller. He has written about the intersection of theology, mental health, and family of origin issues in outlets such as Christianity Today and Missio Alliance. After confronting the impact of his own childhood, including a family history of substance use disorders, Ike has developed a passion for helping others who grew up in difficult circumstances to better understand how those environments continue to impact them and their relationships now.

PRAISE for Good Baggage

'The heart of this book is the desire to see the pain of your difficult childhood redeemed.' This excerpt captures not only the essence of this book but also the deep longing so many have. As a pastor, I'm routinely in conversation with adults who have spent so much time trying to make sense of their childhoods. This is why Ike Miller's work is a great gift. He offers powerful storytelling, poignant insights, and a hope-filled vision of healing that often feels elusive. I'm grateful for this book!" [Rich Villodas](#), lead pastor of New Life Fellowship and author of *Good and Beautiful* and *Kind*

"With pastoral tenderness, Ike helps us unpack each learned behavior or reflex or tendency from our childhood and families of origin. But best of all, he shows us how Jesus can reclaim and redeem them." —[Glenn Packiam](#), lead pastor of Rockharbor Church

"No one outmaneuvers the complexities of their childhood, but *Good Baggage* provides clarity and hope in its aftermath. Ike Miller has masterfully addressed our real questions, offered powerful perspectives, and given us tools to move forward. This book is so critical for pastors and leaders, it should be their next read and on their recommended resource list—it's on mine." [Lisa Whittle](#), author of *God Knows*, Bible teacher, podcast host

"Ike has written an important book. It's important because he is going to help you unpack the baggage of your past. Surprisingly, by loving transformationally, you will see that what you thought was going to break you, Jesus will use to remake you." [Dr. Derwin L. Gray](#), cofounder and lead pastor of Transformation Church and author of the bestselling *The Good Life*





Sample Interview Questions for Ike Miller

Good Baggage:

How Your Difficult Childhood Prepared You for Healthy Relationships

- Can you tell us a little of your own story and how God has redeemed your past to help you have healthy relationships in the present?
 - Why do adult children of dysfunctional families often feel like everything depends on them, as if they are responsible for making everything okay?
 - What is the difference between pursuing a *normal* relationship versus a *healthy* relationship? Which should we focus on?
 - What is *codependency*, and why is it so hindering to healthy relationships?
 - Can you give us an example of a survival mechanism that might have helped us as children but is now harmful to us?
 - How does theology help and/or hurt our ability to heal from our difficult childhoods?
 - Why do children of dysfunctional families often feel different from everyone else? How can this be a strength rather than a weakness?
 - Many of us who grew up in dysfunctional families have a tendency toward emotional intensity. How can we channel this into a healthy relational intentionality?
 - What are some other traits we may have developed as children that can help us form healthy relationships now?
 - Why do many children of dysfunctional families become hopeless romantics? What is the difference between a *hopeless* romantic and a *healthy* romantic?
 - What is the difference between *internalizing* and *externalizing*? How do we strike a healthy balance between the two?
 - What counsel would you offer someone who is just beginning this journey of understanding and redeeming their past?
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