

# Parenting



## Discussion Aids



In the busyness of life even the most important things can be neglected. Parents desire to be purposeful and focused with their children but often struggle to make time for purposeful parenting. Our culture tries to lull the parent into complacency and prioritize the wrong goals. Not bad goals but goals such as “Ensure your child is happy” or “Make sure your child behaves in public” or “Make sure they get good grades so they can be successful.” Instead, the believer is to pursue goals which are grounded in biblical teaching.

These discussion aids are intended to build conversation around core issues common to parents. They are designed to be used in a small group setting as a way to seek truth and dispel myths from Satan and our society. Sharing our joys and struggles with others can be challenging, yet beneficial and encouraging. Satan wants us to believe we are the only one struggling, thereby isolating us and keeping us in darkness and shame. Satan would also desire for us to be overwhelmed by the role of parenting or so underwhelmed by the role that we either neglect it or don't see the need for continued growth.

*John 17:17* “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.” Each lesson has theme verses followed by a few questions to provoke conversation. The intent of these lessons is to cause each one to consider God's Word, receive encouragement and challenge from fellow believers, and see your strengths and weaknesses as a parent.

While covering each session in prayer, it is our hope each participant may grow in their likeness to Christ and God might be glorified as you study.

*Proverbs 23:12* “Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.”

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# Relationship with Children

*Colossians 3:17-23* “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;”

1. Outline what the above verses in *Colossians* tell us about relationships. Describe why this instruction might be given in the Bible.
2. Identify and describe what you consider to be important aspects of relationships. (i.e. trust, commitment, time)
3. Analyze which of these aspects are areas of strength in your parent-child relationship and which are weaker areas.

4. If you were to ask someone who knows you well (spouse, child, friend), what would they desire from you in regards to your relationship with them? Does this suggest any area of improvement you should consider?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What are at least two relational things you will purposefully do this week in an effort to build a stronger relationship with your child?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Who can you ask to help you examine your ongoing efforts to strengthen your relationships with the Lord, your spouse, and your child(ren)? Why did you choose this person?

# Seasons of Parenting

*Proverbs 29:21 “He that delicately bringeth up his servant from a child shall have him become his son at the length.”*

**Season of Being a Servant:** Love and nurture (ages 0-2)

**Season of Authority:** Increase in structure, consistency, and expectations (ages 3-12)

**Season of Mentoring:** Increase in instruction, guidance, and support (ages 13-18)

**Season of Friendship:** Reduced authority in child’s life (18+)

1. Make a list of the names and ages of your children. Identify and describe what season of parenting you are in with each of your children.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Depending on each parent’s personality and background, transitions between some seasons may be more difficult than others. Look at the seasons and describe which will likely be the most challenging for you and why?

3. Are you stuck in a season of parenting which requires a transition into a different season? For example, you have a 16 year old son and are stuck in the servant season with them.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Examine your current parenting approach and determine if it fits with the age and maturity of your child/ren. Develop a plan for how and when you will shift your parenting approach.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Summarize how thinking about different seasons of parenting affects how you view your role as a parent.



# Communication as a Parent

*Proverbs 18:13* “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”

*Proverbs 25:11* “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.”

*Ephesians 4:29* “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

1. Describe what your expectations (for self and child) are in communicating with your child/ren. Describe what you would like communication with your child/ren to look like.
2. Keeping the above verses in mind, identify how these scriptures support your answer to the previous question and how these verses may change your answer.
3. Predict what areas of communication (listening, speaking, kindness, giving instruction, etc.) with your child/ren you think others would identify as your strengths and weaknesses.

4. Compare your strength/weakness areas of parental communication with strength/weakness areas you saw in your own parent's communication.
5. Develop a plan for improving communication with your child/ren. Identify areas of communication you would like to improve, how you will go about growing in this area of communication, and who you could ask for help and accountability.
6. Summarize what communicating with your child/ren in a manner consistent with Godly principles looks like.

# Instructing Your Child

*Psalm 34:11 “Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord.”*

*Proverbs 23:12 “Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge.”*

1. You are constantly teaching your child/ren. What are 3 life-long lessons/messages you want to teach your child/ren?
2. Recall recent examples when you were able to instruct your child in something that is important to you and your family.
3. Describe your teaching style and identify how it matches or opposes your child’s learning style.

4. How can parents help children listen to and follow the instruction from *Proverbs 23:12*?
  
5. Think about what your child may be learning from your instruction (what you typically focus on, what you get frustrated/excited about, etc.) and what you are hoping they are learning from you. Do they match up? Why or why not?
  
6. Explain how you see correction and grace working together for instruction. Which comes more naturally for you--correction or grace? Why?
  
7. Choose one thing you want to teach your child/ren this week and develop a plan for how you will instruct them.

# Discipleship & Parenting

*Deuteronomy 6:4-9* “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

1. Define discipleship. How would you distinguish instruction from discipleship?
2. Evaluate how you have been discipled by others and their impact on your life.
3. In many ways your children are your disciples. How we behave is largely a product of what we believe. Our children see our beliefs in what we do or don't do and this impacts the way they see the world and what they believe is important in life. What does your life tell your children about what is most important to you?

4. *Deuteronomy 6:4-9* describes a community of believers living out God's commandments in their daily interactions. How can you apply these verses to providing discipleship for your child/ren?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Develop a list of areas where you provide adequate discipleship for your children and areas you would like to provide more/different discipleship.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Explain what makes discipleship appealing and challenging for you.

# Problem Solving: The Parenting Challenges

*Proverbs 16:20* “He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.”

*Romans 15:1* “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”

1. Clearly define a challenge you are currently experiencing with your child/ren and how that challenge affects you as a parent.
2. Describe something that would be helpful for you in this parenting challenge. What barriers exist to not being able to receive that help?
3. Take some time to discover what you would like to learn or how you would like to grow through this challenge.

4. Analyze your current approach in trying to address this challenge and ways you can shift your approach. (This might be things you can do to help fix the problem or things you can do to receive more support through the challenge.)
  
5. Arrange a regular time to reach out for support, input, prayer, and meditation as you walk through this challenge. Who will you reach out to and how will you consistently let others come along side you and carry out *Galatians 6:2*?
  
6. One common temptation for parents is to wrap their value/ worth as a parent around the behavior of their children. How will you seek to be faithful to your calling as a parent without basing your “value” as a parent upon your child/ren’s behavior?



# Parenting Styles

*John 1:14* “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

1. Believers are to be conformed into the image of Christ (*Romans 8:29*). This, in part, means to be full of grace and truth. Define “grace” and “truth” in the role of parenting.
  
2. Circle which of the two you more easily identify with as a parent: grace or truth. Why?
  
3. Does your parenting approach need to shift toward being more grace-filled or more truth-filled? What is one possible area of parenting you could practice making this shift? How will you make this change?

4. If married, compare and contrast your parenting approach with your spouse's approach. How can you both work together to ensure your parenting is full of grace and truth?
5. Summarize what you think could be the impact (on you and your child/ren) of shifting your parenting style to more fully reflect how Christ interacts with you and I.
6. How will you assess your progress of shifting toward being full of "*grace*" and "*truth*" when it comes to your role as a parent? Who will help with this assessment?

# Decision Making in the Family: Too Strict?

*Colossians 3:21 "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."*

1. Using your own words, describe what you believe this verse in *Colossians* is telling parents.
2. All children get angry at their parents from time to time. Distinguish between a parent provoking their child to anger and a parent who is lovingly stepping into their role as a parent in a situation which can still cause anger.
3. What actions/ inactions from you tend to upset your child? What can you learn about yourself and your child from this list of actions/ inactions?

4. Scripture instructs the believer in what is righteous and what is unrighteous. These items could be called absolute truths and are true for all people all the time. They could include truths such as sexual sin, drunkenness, idolatry, or lying. There are also lots of areas in daily living where parents are not given specific instruction in the Word on what to do such as hair style, supper time, or when to do homework. Parents must set boundaries with their child/ren, and yet parents need to be careful not to set up rigid boundaries around things that are not biblical absolute truths. Analyze things you and your child tend to have conflict about. Where do you need to hold onto those boundaries and where do you need to consider allowing your child/ren freedom to be different from you?
  
5. Develop a plan for how you might recreate expectations around the house and how you might talk with your child about why you will be making these adjustments. Share your plan with another parent and get their feedback.
  
6. Determine barriers for you and for your child in implementing these expectations in your home. How will you overcome these barriers?

# Decision Making in the Family: Too Lenient?

*Proverbs 13:24 “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.”*

1. Relate what you believe this verse in *Proverbs* is telling parents.
2. All children need correction and need to be pointed to the Savior Jesus Christ. Explain why correction is such an important part of parenthood.
3. Part of correction is disciplining wrong behavior and putting boundaries in place which are often not appreciated. Where is it difficult for you to apply discipline or enforce boundaries with your child/ren?

4. Examine what tends to keep you from setting/enforcing boundaries with your child. How will you address these hurdles so you can step into your role of correcting your child when they are living according to the “flesh” rather than according to the “Spirit”?
  
5. Develop a plan for consistently and fairly stepping into your role of correcting your child. It would be wise to start by identifying one behavior you plan to start consistently confronting.
  
6. Who can be a support in your effort to step into your role of disciplining your child? How can this individual be most helpful in supporting you in this effort?

# Temperament

*Psalm 139:14* “I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.”

*1 Corinthians 12:4-6* “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.”

1. *Psalm 139:14* tells us “we have been fearfully and wonderfully made.” There is no denying that what God makes, He makes good for His purposes. He has placed gifts and talents within each of us. Identify a gift or talent God has wonderfully given each member of your family, including yourself (gifts, talents, etc.).
2. Think about how God has uniquely created and blessed each of your family members. Who in the family do you share similar gifts with and who do you differ from?
3. Often people find it easier to appreciate and enjoy others with similar gifts and more difficult to appreciate/recognize gifts others have which may differ from their own (*1 Corinthians 12:14-23*). Now that you have identified gifts each of your children have, how can use this information to change the way you interact with them and how you see their behavior?

4. Select one strength/gift each of the family members have and outline where you see that gift show up in their lives.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Develop a plan for how you can remember how God has gifted each of your family members and how you will regularly verbally express thanks/appreciation to them for the strengths God has given them.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. Analyze how God might want to use your family for His glory given the gifts He has distributed to each family member.



# Shaping Your Child's Sexual Character

*1 Thessalonians 5:21 "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."*

*Hebrews 5:14 "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."*

1. Describe how your own parents approached the topic of sexual character as you were growing up.
2. Identify thoughts and feelings that arise with the topic of "Shaping Your Child's Sexual Character".
3. What principles do you see in the verses above that apply to parenting, specifically in the areas of teaching truth? Predict what will happen if you do not address the topic of sexual character with your child/ren. (i.e. How or from whom will they learn about sex?)

4. Compare and contrast the risks and benefits of being your child's primary teacher regarding the topic of sex.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Design a plan that will allow for openness in your home and will allow for difficult topics like sex to be discussed for the sake of learning, growth, and instilling biblical truths into your child's heart.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
6. How can you and your spouse support each other in teaching your child/ren concerning God's design for their body and sex?

# Shaping Your Teen's Character

*Judges 2:7-11* “And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim:”

*2 Timothy 2:22* “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

1. Parenting teens is full of opportunity and challenge. Describe what you enjoy and what you find difficult about parenting a teen.
  
2. The verses in *Judges* capture the shift that can occur from one generation to another. Parents cannot convert their children so they must focus on being faithful in growing their personal relationship with the Lord as well as teaching truth to their teen. In what ways are you growing your relationship with God while also teaching truth to your teen?

3. Choose one or two character traits you would like to focus on developing in your teen.
  
4. Step back for a moment and analyze what the Lord is doing through your teen to grow you. Describe how you are becoming more sanctified through parenting your teen.
  
5. Explain the difference between interactions with your teen that focus on their heart versus interactions that focus merely on their behavior.
  
6. Develop a plan for how you can more purposefully focus on your teen's heart instead of solely their behavior.





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