



# Support, Shepherd, and Send Out Our Kids

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**BIBLE  
GEEKS**

13-SESSION GUIDED STUDY  
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[biblegeeks.fm/trainingwheels](https://biblegeeks.fm/trainingwheels)

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## INTRODUCTION

# “Like Riding a Bike”



**PREPARE FOR LAUNCH**  
Preview the 13 Session-Study  
[Watch the video](#) or read below.



### BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to our introduction to this guided study, **Weekly episode #139, “I Can’t Turn!”** to help you prepare for the upcoming sessions. [biblegeeks.fm/139](https://biblegeeks.fm/139)



**W**hat do people mean when they say something is “like riding a bike”? How is snowboarding or learning a language in any way “like riding a bike”? They mean it tends to stick with you once you get it — it becomes ingrained so time doesn't wipe away all your practice. In some ways, training up a child is like teaching them to ride a bike. You put on training wheels before they can balance independently. And then, eventually, you take them off and hold the back of their seat. But at some point, it's time to let go so they can ride on their own, and maybe fall a few times. So, as we begin, let's explore the great responsibility we have as parents to support, shepherd, and send our kids out into the world.



### THE BIG IDEA OF THIS 13-SESSION STUDY

Our leadership throughout our children's lives ingrains the truths, traits, and habits they'll need.

Scripture gives us an encouraging principle when it says, “*Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it*” (Prov. 22:6). In other words, when we teach them to live well, they won't easily forget it.



**Sessions**  
**1 to 4**

We try to provide **stable foundations** for our children early on. We focus on our covenant bond with our spouse. We make God the center of our home. We speak truthfully and we train them with love and care.



**Sessions**  
**5 to 10**

As they grow, we **shepherd and shape** them, looking heavenward to God's example and urging them to follow us. We get clear about our goals, grab life's tiny teaching moments, and model God's grace in their lives. And we communicate clearly and openly with them.



**Sessions**  
**11 to 13**

One day we'll **send them out** into the world, always there for them through troubling times, praying that we've done our best to instill a dedication to God. Imagine the blessing of calling our adult children “Brother” or “Sister” in Christ. What a gift, but what a task we have before us!



### THE BIG QUESTION

How has this study propelled you into better parenting?

SESSION  
**1**

THE CONVERSATION STARTER  
**“Sinkhole Alley”**



STABLE FOUNDATIONS

Launch your study with this  
**CONVERSATION STARTER**

[Watch the video](#) or read it below.



READ

Before the study, take a moment to read Matt. 19:6-9; Mal. 2:14-16; and Eph 5:22-33



BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to **Weekly episode #140, “I Don’t Use Recipes,”** before your study, as an example of a conversation led by this study guide.

[biblegeeks.fm/140](https://biblegeeks.fm/140)



**T**here's a terrifying place in Florida called "sinkhole alley" — a three-county-wide swath of land known to swallow houses whole! Imagine enjoying a Saturday morning off, watching cartoons with your family, when suddenly the foundation beneath you erodes, leaving you fighting for your lives in your pajamas. We like to think of our home as a safe place, but what makes it safe? What's the bedrock on which a stable family is built?



THE BIG IDEA

The marriage covenant is God's foundation for a stable family.

Jesus says that in marriage, we become *"no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate"* (Matt. 19:6). So a rock-solid marriage begins with reverence for God and the one-ness he creates. *"Because the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth ... your companion and your wife by covenant"* (Mal. 2:14).

And as the next verse highlights, our honor for our spouse affects our children. *"Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth"* (Mal. 2:15). Sometimes couples split apart; sometimes they drift apart. But non-stop fighting and unfaithfulness will weaken the foundation of your family, eroding the bedrock on which you once hoped to build.

So, grow your love for your spouse, stay on the same page, and work out your differences in a way that honors Christ (Eph. 5:21). Sacrifice for each other, holding your relationship above all others — even above a relationship with your children! Mutual love and respect act as the reinforced concrete to keep that sinkhole from ever forming. As Paul said, *"However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband"* (Eph. 5:33).



THE BIG QUESTION

How are you fostering stability in your relationship?

# Marital Stability

SOLIDIFY YOUR MARITAL FOUNDATION

## INTRODUCTION



Launch the study with a **CONVERSATION STARTER** on the Big Idea.

Read, listen, or watch “Sinkhole Alley” – [biblegeeks.fm/daily-244](https://biblegeeks.fm/daily-244) ▶▶▶



**ICE BREAKER** — Get everyone engaged and talking.

Did you ever try to pit one parent against another growing up?

How'd that work out?

## ACT I



**JESUS SAID** — Matthew 19:6-9

What's the main point of this passage?

What insights and applications do you take from these words of Christ? What do we need to get from these words that – if understood and applied – has the power to change a life or a family?

Is there anything else here you find helpful or interesting? Anything you've never noticed before – or have always loved about these words?

# Marital Stability

SOLIDIFY YOUR MARITAL FOUNDATION

## ACT II



### HEAVY WORDS — Covenant

The Hebrew word for “covenant” (בְּרִית – “berit”) referred to “a solemn commitment guaranteeing promises or obligations”<sup>1</sup>. How seriously should we take covenants? Why? Consider the following passages and jot down your observations and insights. If you’re studying in a group, choose one passage you want to share something about, and prepare a few notes. Gen. 8:20-9:17; 15:1-20; Josh. 9:1-27; Jer. 34:17-20; 31:31-37

What do you learn about the marriage covenant in Malachi 2:10-16?

What’s your biggest takeaway about marriage from these passages and this word?

## ACT III



### REACH OUT — Connect with each other with this question.

How have you dealt with disagreements in your marriage through the years?

## WRAP UP



### THE CHALLENGE — Ready to put it into practice?

Ask your spouse where you need to get on the same page, and talk through whatever issues you both see.



### REQUEST — Go to God in a closing prayer.

For example: “Holy Father, help us not to separate what you’ve joined together” (cf. Matt. 19:6).



### NEXT SESSION — Devotion to God

Prepare by reading Luke 1:46-56; 2:22-52

1 - Williamson, P. R. (2003). Covenant. In T. D. Alexander & D. W. Baker (Eds.), *Dictionary of the Old Testament: Pentateuch* (p. 139). InterVarsity Press.

SESSION  
**2**

THE CONVERSATION STARTER

# “Almost Ancient”



STABLE FOUNDATIONS

Launch your study with this  
**CONVERSATION STARTER**

Watch the video or read it below.



READ

Before the study, take a moment to read Luke 1:46-56; 2:22-52



BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to **Weekly episode #141, “I Just Cleaned That!”** before your study, as an example of a conversation led by this study guide.

[biblegeeks.fm/141](https://biblegeeks.fm/141)



**M**ost kids don't like watching anything black-and-white. When a film from the '90s is an "old movie," the family of the '50s seems almost ancient. What'd they do with their free time without the internet? As outdated as it may sound, many families invested in quality time, eating meals together, going to church every week, and studying the Bible regularly. No, life wasn't perfect. But are these "old-fashioned" priorities a thing of the past? Maybe with all our distractions, the foundation of our families has weakened. Adrift in a sea of activities, perhaps we've lost touch with the value of deep devotion to God together.



THE BIG IDEA

Worship isn't just what we do as a family – it's who we are.

The "*Lord builds the house*" (Ps. 127:1) when he's the heart of the home. Jesus grew up in a home where honoring God was the norm. The family "*went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover*" (Luke 2:41) — it wasn't a question; it was just what they did. They were poor, but they sacrificed what little they had to God, as he commanded (Luke 2:22-24). Before Mary and Joseph ever had kids, they were worshipers at their core. Listen to the beautiful words of devotion Mary spoke before Jesus' birth — "*My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior ... for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name*" (Luke 1:46-49). It's only fitting that when Jesus was twelve, he continued the legacy, planting himself in the temple to discuss God's word (Luke 2:49).

So make devotion the core of your marriage from the earliest moments, before the kids come. Lay those habits and commitments deep, like concrete footers beneath your house. Serve, pray, and consistently assemble with the church, never too busy to show up for the One who showed up for us. Just imagine what might happen if more families took the "old fashioned" approach of Jesus' upbringing.



THE BIG QUESTION

Is glorifying God the heart and soul of your family?

# Devotion to God

DEEPEN YOUR DEVOTION TO GOD AS A FAMILY

## INTRODUCTION

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Launch the study with a **CONVERSATION STARTER** on the Big Idea.

Read, listen, or watch "Almost Ancient" – [biblegeeks.fm/daily-245](https://biblegeeks.fm/daily-245) ▶▶▶



**ICE BREAKER** — Get everyone engaged and talking.

Have you ever wanted to pull a "Ferris Bueller" with worship and take a day off?

## ACT I

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**FINDING JESUS** — Luke 1:46-56; 2:22-52

What's the main point of this passage?

What insights and applications do you take from these words of Christ? What do we need to get from these words that – if understood and applied – has the power to change a life or a family?

Is there anything else here you find helpful or interesting? Anything you've never noticed before – or have always loved about these words?



# Devotion to God

DEEPEN YOUR DEVOTION TO GOD AS A FAMILY

## ACT II



### POETRY IN MOTION — Psalm 127 & 128

These psalms are designed as a pairing, expressing together God's blessing on the family that prioritizes him. Prepare to move through them quickly, drawing out an insight from each section. When studying in a group, consider having one person assigned to each section, and then having a brief group discussion for that section. (For example, one person shares their thoughts on Psalm 127:1-2, then the group discusses, followed by another person sharing their thoughts on Psalm 127:3-5, etc.)

#### Psalm 127:1-2

Main Point:

Key Verse:

Key Word:

Insight/Application:

#### Psalm 127:3-5

Main Point:

Key Verse:

Key Word:

Insight/Application:

#### Psalm 128:1-2

Main Point:

Key Verse:

Key Word:

Insight/Application:

#### Psalm 128:3-6

Main Point:

Key Verse:

Key Word:

Insight/Application:

# Devotion to God

DEEPEN YOUR DEVOTION TO GOD AS A FAMILY

## ACT III

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**REACH OUT** — Connect with each other with this question.

What have you done to keep worship from feeling like a chore, rather than a privilege?

## WRAP UP

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**THE CHALLENGE** — Ready to put it into practice?

Sing a song of praise to God as a family.



**REQUEST** — Go to God in a closing prayer.

For example: "Oh God, please accept my sacrifice of praise to you today" (cf. Luke 2:22-24).



**NEXT SESSION** — Integrity

Prepare by reading Luke 16:10-13; James 5:12; Heb. 12:3-12

SESSION  
**3**

THE CONVERSATION STARTER

# “Structural Integrity”



STABLE FOUNDATIONS

Launch your study with this  
**CONVERSATION STARTER**  
[Watch the video](#) or read it below.



## READ

Before the study, take a moment to read Luke 16:10-13; James 5:12; and Hebrews 12:3-12.



## BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to **Weekly episode #142, “Who’s Your Daddy?”** before your study, as an example of a conversation led by this study guide.

[biblegeeks.fm/142](https://biblegeeks.fm/142)



**T**he *New Yorker* called it “The Fifty-Nine-Story Crisis.” In June of 1978, a college student called renowned structural engineer William LeMessurier to say a massive skyscraper he designed wasn’t sound. His building, the Citigroup Center, was the world’s seventh-tallest at the time. At first, he blew it off, but upon inspection, he realized that someone switched the welded joints to cheaper bolts during construction. It was such a small change, but it would’ve spelled disaster in a strong wind. And Midtown Manhattan isn’t the only place where a lack of structural integrity can bring down the house. As we lay the foundation for our children, how do we stay true to God’s original design for the home, giving their lives the stability they need?



## THE BIG IDEA

**Integrity reinforces our kids’ structural support system.**

It’s not enough to keep the *big* promises — you’ve got to keep the *little* ones too. Jesus reminds us that “*one who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much*” (Luke 16:10). Every time you make good on a promise, it’s like you’re using God’s original — trustworthy — building material. But if you start to break your word, it won’t take long before their trust in you comes tumbling down.

Whatever we say, we do. We’re trustworthy and reliable — a good quality to have as a parent and in all other relationships. As James said, “*let your ‘yes’ be yes and your ‘no’ be no*” (James 5:12). Developing integrity isn’t always fun or convenient, but through repetition and followthrough we strengthen our kid’s trust in us.

Set clear boundaries and expectations ahead of time so they know the consequences before they act. No waffling or excuses, we view discipline as an act of love — just like God does! “*My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord ... For the Lord disciplines the one he loves ...*” (Heb. 12:5-6).



## THE BIG QUESTION

**Do your kids see you as someone who always keeps your commitments?**

# Integrity

REFLECT GOD'S STRUCTURE AND DISCIPLINE AT HOME

## INTRODUCTION



Launch the study with a **CONVERSATION STARTER** on the Big Idea.

Read, listen, or watch "Structural Integrity" – [biblegeeks.fm/daily-246](https://biblegeeks.fm/daily-246) ▶▶



**ICE BREAKER** — Get everyone engaged and talking.

How do you feel when you're not sure how someone will react?

## ACT I



**JESUS SAID** — Luke 16:10-13

What's the main point of this passage?

What insights and applications do you take from these words of Christ? What do we need to get from these words that – if understood and applied – has the power to change a life or a family?

Is there anything else here you find helpful or interesting? Anything you've never noticed before – or have always loved about these words?

# Integrity

REFLECT GOD'S STRUCTURE AND DISCIPLINE AT HOME

## ACT II



### TOP 4 PROVERBS — Integrity

Look through the list below (or any other resource you want to use) and choose four favorite Proverbs about integrity. Then jot down a few notes on the application or insight you take from each verse. What do you appreciate about how it's said and the wisdom it contains? How have you seen the principle in action?

Prov. 1:3; 3:5,11-12; 4:23-27; 6:1-3; 10:9,19; 11:3; 12:22; 19:1; 20:7,25; 21:3; 22:11; 25:14; 28:6,13; 29:17

Proverb #1 \_\_\_\_\_

Proverb #2 \_\_\_\_\_

Proverb #3 \_\_\_\_\_

Proverb #4 \_\_\_\_\_

# Integrity

REFLECT GOD'S STRUCTURE AND DISCIPLINE AT HOME

## ACT III

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**REACH OUT** — Connect with each other with this question.

When do you find it a challenge to stay consistent as a parent?

## WRAP UP

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**THE CHALLENGE** — Ready to put it into practice?

Sit down with your spouse and evaluate your consistency, discipline, and followthrough.



**REQUEST** — Go to God in a closing prayer.

For example: "Righteous Lord, help me handle life's matters with honesty" (cf. Luke 16:10).



**NEXT SESSION** — Training, Not Frustrating

Prepare by reading Matt. 11:25-30; Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20-21

SESSION  
**4**

THE CONVERSATION STARTER  
**“Built to Bend”**



STABLE FOUNDATIONS

Launch your study with this  
**CONVERSATION STARTER**

Watch the video or read it below.



READ

Before the study, take a moment to read Matt. 11:25-30; Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20-21.



BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to **Weekly episode #143, “Snuggling?!”** before your study, as an example of a conversation led by this study guide.

[biblegeeks.fm/143](https://biblegeeks.fm/143)



Imagine a few hundred thousand people crammed shoulder to shoulder on the Golden Gate Bridge. Their immense weight slowly flattens the gently curved roadway. Will it buckle from the pressure? Well, that's what happened on its 50th anniversary, when the iconic bridge welcomed 300,000 pedestrians to cross. Fortunately, the bridge was built to bend. And that same "bend but don't break" approach can help us lay a stable foundation for our kids. Rather than pushing them past their breaking point, the Lord teaches us to train them with wisdom, patience, and love.



THE BIG IDEA

When discipline demoralizes our kids, we do more harm than good.

Scripture commands, "*do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged*" (Col. 3:21). Other translations say not to, "*antagonize*" (NASB), "*embitter*" (NIV), or "*aggravate your children*" (NLT). Our decisions, words, and approval bear so much weight with them, and we have to carry that influence responsibly. If we aim to "*bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*" (Eph. 6:4), we won't compromise on God's standards. But his compassion needs to lead us just as much as his justice.

We all need room to fail and still find love and support. The purpose of discipline is training, not punishment, so our discipline needs to prioritize our child's growth and wellbeing. If we humiliate them, don't be surprised if they stop learning whatever we intended to teach them.

Christ gives his disciples a challenging way to respond when we feel angry (Matt. 5:21-26) or attacked (Matt. 5:38-42). We don't get a pass on a Christlike response just because they're our kids. Parenting can get overwhelming. We're so invested in our aspirations for our kids, wanting them to have impeccable character. But if we expect perfection, we hold them to unreasonable standards we can't live up to ourselves. That's a lot of pressure! Let's aim to offer our kids the same grace, patience, and gentleness God offers to us.



THE BIG QUESTION

Does your love for your child show even in discipline?

# Training, Not Frustrating

TRAIN WITH WISDOM, PATIENCE, AND LOVE

## INTRODUCTION

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Launch the study with a **CONVERSATION STARTER** on the Big Idea.

Read, listen, or watch “Built to Bend” – [biblegeeks.fm/daily-247](https://biblegeeks.fm/daily-247) ▶▶▶



**ICE BREAKER** — Get everyone engaged and talking.

Have you ever gotten so discouraged you wanted to give up and stop trying to do something?

## ACT I

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**LIKE THE TEACHER:** Matt. 11:25-30

What’s the main point of this passage?

What insights and applications do you take from these words of Christ? What do we need to get from these words that – if understood and applied – has the power to change a life or a family?

Is there anything else here you find helpful or interesting? Anything you’ve never noticed before – or have always loved about these words?



# Training, Not Frustrating

TRAIN WITH WISDOM, PATIENCE, AND LOVE

## ACT II



### WHAT'S THE DEAL? — When does training become frustrating?

How can we discern the difference (cf. Heb. 5:14; Phil. 1:9-11) between profitable discipline and provoking our children (Col. 3:21)? What are the characteristics and effects of each? Can you think of any Bible examples?

## ACT III



### REACH OUT — Connect with each other with this question.

What do you do to keep your cool with your child when tensions are high?

## WRAP UP



### THE CHALLENGE — Ready to put it into practice?

Hug your kids and tell them what you appreciate about their character.



### REQUEST — Go to God in a closing prayer.

For example: "Holy God, let my yoke be easy like Christ's is" (cf. Matt. 11:30).



### NEXT SESSION — God, the Perfect Father

Prepare by reading Matt. 7:7-11; Hos. 11:1-9; James 1:16-18

SESSION  
**5**

THE CONVERSATION STARTER

# “We Were Experts”



SHEPHERDING & SHAPING

Launch your study with this  
**CONVERSATION STARTER**

Watch the video or read it below.



## READ

Before the study, take a moment to read Matt. 7:7-11; Hos. 11:1-9; James 1:16-18



## BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to **Weekly episode #144, “Things Are Changing, Man!”** before your study, as an example of a conversation led by this study guide.

[biblegeeks.fm/144](https://biblegeeks.fm/144)



**B**efore we had kids, we were all perfect parents ... at least in our minds! We'd read the books and we'd studied the parents around us — we were experts in child-rearing, with all the answers on "What to Expect When You're Expecting" and beyond! Everything made sense until we walked out of the hospital with our newborn in our arms and realized we didn't know what we were doing! And it wouldn't get any easier as they grew up. So, where do we turn when the strategies don't work, and everyone has a different opinion? It's easy to forget you have the best parenting example ever available to you. His book isn't in the parenting section, but our heavenly Father is the only perfect parent. So as we try to give our kids a stable foundation and shape them into the people we hope they'll become, what can we learn from God about parenting?



## THE BIG IDEA

**We can find our way in our parenting dilemmas by looking up.**

Maybe you had fantastic parents, or maybe not. But your primary model can't come from them or any earthly source. When you need illumination, consider how the "*Father of lights*" (James 1:17) deals with his children.

Despite our failures, God constantly shows us his love (Eph. 1:3-14; Matt. 7:11). Do our kids see our love for them as clearly? He fights for us (Neh. 4:20), protects us (2 Thess. 3:3), and provides for us (Matt. 6:26-33). He leads and patiently corrects us (Joel 2:12-13). He gives us room to choose wrong but never gives up on us (Hosea 11:1-9).

The Father doesn't foster our sense of entitlement by indulging our every desire, but he does give us what we need (James 4:2-3). Sometimes, what we need is discipline (Heb. 12:8-9). And sometimes, it's grace (Eph. 2:4-10). God does the difficult work of shepherding and shaping us. May we all develop as parents in his image.



## THE BIG QUESTION

**What do you still have to learn from God about parenting?**

# God, the Perfect Father

PARENT LIKE YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER

## INTRODUCTION



Launch the study with a **CONVERSATION STARTER** on the Big Idea.

Read, listen, or watch “We Were Experts” – [biblegeeks.fm/daily-248](https://biblegeeks.fm/daily-248) ▶▶



**ICE BREAKER** — Get everyone engaged and talking.

What did you know about parenting before having kids that you realized you didn't know after having kids?

## ACT I



**JESUS SAID: Matt. 7:7-11**

What's the main point of this passage?

What insights and applications do you take from these words of Christ? What do we need to get from these words that – if understood and applied – has the power to change a life or a family?

Is there anything else here you find helpful or interesting? Anything you've never noticed before – or have always loved about these words?

# God, the Perfect Father

PARENT LIKE YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER

## ACT II

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### DEEP THOUGHTS — Parenting Lessons from God

What does God do for his children?

How does God treat his children differently than many human parents?

What Bible story (or stories) illustrate God's parenting best to you?

Take a few moments to reflect on all that you know about God as a Father. What's one lesson that stands out to you? What do you most want to imitate?

## ACT III

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### REACH OUT — Connect with each other with this question.

What do you do to keep your cool with your child when tensions are high?

## WRAP UP

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### THE CHALLENGE — Ready to put it into practice?

Explore a quality of God's parenting with a new or expecting parent.



### REQUEST — Go to God in a closing prayer.

For example: "Dearest Father, help me to follow your example of leadership and love" (cf. 1 John 3:2-3).



### NEXT SESSION — Example & Influence

Prepare by reading John 1:35-51; 10:7-18; Matt. 28:16-20

SESSION  
**6**

THE CONVERSATION STARTER

# “Jesus’ Twelve Kids”



SHEPHERDING & SHAPING

Launch your study with this  
**CONVERSATION STARTER**

Watch the video or read it below.



READ

Before the study, take a moment to read John 1:35-51; 10:7-18; Matt. 28:16-20



BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to **Weekly episode #145, “Go Cast Out Some Demons!”** before your study, as an example of a conversation led by this study guide.

[biblegeeks.fm/145](https://biblegeeks.fm/145)



**E**ver heard about Jesus' twelve kids? No, he never married or had children, but he wasn't a typical bachelor either. From the beginning of his ministry, he "adopted" a dozen men from various backgrounds into his inner circle. They followed him around, listened to his teaching, and watched him work. They asked a ton of questions, like most children do, and were usually confused by his answers. He gave instructions and watched as they obeyed or failed. Jesus wasn't a parent, but in a way, he was the perfect example of practical parenting. So, let's look to the Good Shepherd to show us how to shepherd our children well.



THE BIG IDEA

Your life speaks volumes to those following behind you.

Our kids need someone to show the way. So, we take a cue from Jesus' playbook and invite them to "Follow" (John 1:35-51). Or as Paul said, "*Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ*" (1 Cor. 11:1). We're not perfect, but they're watching whether we realize it or not. Some people are sent to foreign soil to bring the gospel. You're sent to disciple your kids, "*teaching them to observe*" Christ's commands (Matt. 28:19). Like disciples spent every day with the Master, learning to "*follow in his steps*" (1 Peter 2:21), our kids spend their formative years right next to us. But, as they study you, what do they learn? Do they see consistent joy, gratitude, and prayer (1 Thess. 5:16-18)? Are they learning to see people with generosity and patience (1 Cor. 13:4-7)? What will they learn about work, friendship, money, and the opposite sex? And will they come to love Jesus and the story of salvation?

Shepherding isn't glamorous; it's messy, costly, and exhausting. But in his limitless love, Christ committed himself to the gritty, sacrificial work of leading his sheep (John 10:11). And as we spend ourselves in the thankless job of parenting, may our kids see Christ in us!



THE BIG QUESTION

Are you comfortable telling your children to walk like you?

# Example & Influence

SHOW YOUR CHILDREN WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT

## INTRODUCTION



Launch the study with a **CONVERSATION STARTER** on the Big Idea.

Read, listen, or watch “Jesus’ Twelve Kids” – [biblegeeks.fm/daily-249](https://biblegeeks.fm/daily-249) ▶▶



**ICE BREAKER** — Get everyone engaged and talking.

Who has been like a parent to you, that wasn't a parent themselves?

## ACT I



**LIKE THE MASTER: John 1:35-51**

What's the main point of this passage?

What insights and applications do you take from these words of Christ? What do we need to get from these words that – if understood and applied – has the power to change a life or a family?

Is there anything else here you find helpful or interesting? Anything you've never noticed before – or have always loved about these words?

# Example & Influence

SHOW YOUR CHILDREN WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT

## ACT II

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### SCRIPTURE DU JOUR: John 10:7-18

First, let's summarize what Jesus says in this passage, giving each section a title:

- I. (10:7-9)
- II. (10:10-13)
- III. (10:14-16)
- IV. (10:17-18)

What's your favorite verse in this passage, and why?

What does this passage teach you about how Jesus shepherds?

How are parents like shepherds and children like sheep?

How could the principles revealed in this passage make a difference in your life this week?

## ACT III

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### REACH OUT — Connect with each other with this question.

What challenges have you faced while shepherding your children?

## WRAP UP

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### THE CHALLENGE — Ready to put it into practice?

Choose an activity to do with your child that Christ did with his disciples.



### REQUEST — Go to God in a closing prayer.

For example: "God, help me shepherd like your Son" (cf. John 10:11).



### NEXT SESSION — Parenting Goals

Prepare by reading Matt. 7:12-27; 2 Tim. 1:3-7; Ezek. 18:1-32

SESSION  
**7**

THE CONVERSATION STARTER

# “The Mouth of Babes”



SHEPHERDING & SHAPING

Launch your study with this  
**CONVERSATION STARTER**

[Watch the video](#) or read it below.



READ

Before the study, take a moment to read Matt. 7:12-27; 2 Tim. 1:3-7; Ezek. 18:1-32



BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to **Weekly episode #146, “These Are My Emotions”** before your study, as an example of a conversation led by this study guide.

[biblegeeks.fm/146](https://biblegeeks.fm/146)



**L**ittle kids don't usually have a filter for their words. Sometimes they surprise us with unexpected wisdom beyond their pint-sized proportions. And other times — most other times — they say things in public that make you want to crawl in a hole from embarrassment. If you don't have a budding young philosopher in the house, maybe "Out of the mouth of babes" sounds more like a punchline than a blessing. So how much control do we *really* have over what our kids say or do despite our best efforts? As we shepherd and shape our children, it's important to accept our limitations and take responsibility for what we control.



THE BIG IDEA

**Good parenting is a daily choice you make, not the result of your child's choices.**

Your success or failure as a parent doesn't depend on your kid's response. Imagine if we judged God, the Perfect Father, by the same criteria. If the majority walk the broad road to destruction (Matt. 7:13-14), does that mean God is a failure (Isaiah 1:2)? Of course not! People make their own decisions and are responsible for their actions (Ezek. 18:4) — and that includes our children.

So, what's your goal as a parent? We need to get clear on that before we start evaluating ourselves. For example, we aim to pass our faith to our kids, like Timothy's grandmother and mother did (2 Tim. 1:3-7). That's the right goal, as long as we take responsibility for the part we control. So do your part every day, planting and watering your child's heart (1 Cor. 3:6), and leave the growth to God.

Parents aren't all-knowing masters or experts. We just have twenty or thirty more years of experience. That's not nothing, but don't overestimate it either. Don't feel pressure to be "The Father" or "The Mother" with all the answers. Instead, stay humble, offering wisdom, love, and discipline as you guide them, support them, and correct them.



THE BIG QUESTION

**How will you know if you've done a good job as a parent?**



# Parenting Goals

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

## INTRODUCTION



Launch the study with a **CONVERSATION STARTER** on the Big Idea.

Read, listen, or watch “The Mouth of Babes” – [biblegeeks.fm/daily-250](https://biblegeeks.fm/daily-250) ▶▶



**ICE BREAKER** — Get everyone engaged and talking.

What’s the most embarrassing thing your child has said or done in public?

## ACT I



**JESUS SAID: Matt. 7:12-27**

What’s the main point of this passage?

What insights and applications do you take from these words of Christ? What do we need to get from these words that – if understood and applied – has the power to change a life or a family?

Is there anything else here you find helpful or interesting? Anything you’ve never noticed before – or have always loved about these words?

# Parenting Goals

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

## ACT II



### DO YOU UNDERSTAND? Ezekiel 18

What “proverb” did these exiled people quote to each other, as they complained about their circumstances (Ezek. 18:2)?

What did God think about that popular saying (Ezek. 18:3-4)?

After introducing his rebuttal (18:1-4), the rest of the chapter fleshes the idea out, arguing that:

- 1) The one who does what’s right will \_\_\_\_ (18:5-9).
- 2) If he has an evil son, the son’s blood will be upon \_\_\_\_ (18:10-13).
- 3) If that evil son has a son who learns from his dad’s sins and obeys God, he’ll \_\_\_\_, but that won’t save his father (18:14-18).
- 4) Because in God’s eyes, each one’s righteousness or wickedness rests upon \_\_\_\_ (18:19-20).
- 5) If the wicked turn from their sins to do right, they’ll \_\_\_\_ . And if the righteous turn from good to do evil, they’ll die. God is \_\_\_\_ and has no pleasure in anyone’s death (18:21-32).

How would you summarize the main point of this chapter in your own words?

What are the consequences of rejecting this truth?

How can embracing this truth affect our view of our kids, and our view of ourselves as parents? Does embracing this Biblical truth affect where we put our attention?

Based on the principle of personal responsibility, what are some things you can and should do to influence and direct your child’s choices?

# Parenting Goals

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

## ACT III

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**REACH OUT** — Connect with each other with this question.

What regrets do you have as a parent?

## WRAP UP

---



**THE CHALLENGE** — Ready to put it into practice?

Thank a parent for their work with their children.



**REQUEST** — Go to God in a closing prayer.

For example: "Dear Father, provide the increase as I plant and water in my children's lives" (cf. 1 Cor. 3:6-7).



**NEXT SESSION** — Teaching Moments

Prepare by reading Luke 4:1-13; Deut. 6:1-25; Rom. 2:17-29

# SESSION 8

## THE CONVERSATION STARTER

# “Why?”



## SHEPHERDING & SHAPING

Launch your study with this  
**CONVERSATION STARTER**

[Watch the video](#) or read it below.



### READ

Before the study, take a moment to read Luke 4:1-13; Deut. 6:1-25; Rom. 2:17-29



### BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to **Weekly episode #147, “Wow, That’s So Cool!”** before your study, as an example of a conversation led by this study guide.

[biblegeeks.fm/147](https://biblegeeks.fm/147)



It's time to go to bed," says the parent. "Why?" "Because it's nighttime." "Why?" "Because the sun went down." "Why?" "Because of the rotation of the earth ..." Well, you get the point. Our kids constantly ask questions as their minds collect data at a breakneck speed. A parent can spend a whole day going from "Why are the dinosaurs gone?" to "Why is the sky blue?" to "Why do kids have to obey their parents?" The questions can be as challenging as plentiful. But as parents trying to shape our kids, they also provide something we need to recognize and seize: teachable moments.



### THE BIG IDEA

The world is your child's classroom, whether you're teaching them or not.

They're learning machines, developing their understanding of the world each day. And we're their teachers, helping them get the best information and training. A lot of their education comes from reinforcing and repeating. But we can also meet them in those moments when they're ready to learn — if we pay attention. When their curiosity is piqued, stop and talk through the big questions. When an experience leaves them open to growth, those conversations are worth the time.

The Lord told parents to speak about his instruction all the time. Start by loving the Lord with all of yourself, placing his commandments on *your* heart (Deut. 6:5-6). Only after you *teach yourself* (Rom. 2:21) can you *teach them diligently to your children, and ... talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise* (Deut. 6:7). Whether we're on the go or taking a break, getting ready for breakfast, or getting ready for bed, the things of the Lord fill our hearts, our conversations, and our actions. And when we instill the word in their hearts, we equip them to answer life's "Why" questions with a ready *“it is written”* (Luke 4:1-13).



### THE BIG QUESTION

What are your kids ready to learn, and are you taking the time to engage in those discussions?

# Teaching Moments

SEIZE EACH DAY'S TEACHING MOMENTS

## INTRODUCTION

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Launch the study with a **CONVERSATION STARTER** on the Big Idea.  
Read, listen, or watch "Why?" – [biblegeeks.fm/daily-251](https://biblegeeks.fm/daily-251) ▶▶



**ICE BREAKER** — Get everyone engaged and talking.  
Have your kids ever asked you a question that stumped you?

## ACT I

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**FINDING JESUS: Deut. 6**

As you read through this passage, consider:

What parts of this passage remind you of the character and actions of Christ?

Did Jesus ever quote or reference this passage? What did he teach about it?

How can reflecting on and applying this passage draw us closer to Christ?

# Teaching Moments

SEIZE EACH DAY'S TEACHING MOMENTS

## ACT II

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### FAVORITE THINGS: Teaching Moments

When have you had your best conversations with your kids?

How have you created or seized teaching opportunities in the past?

Can you remember any special memories with your kids that gave you a chance to teach your kids an important lesson or truth?

## ACT III

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### REACH OUT — Connect with each other with this question.

How do you keep your teaching relevant for your kids as they grow?

## WRAP UP

---



### THE CHALLENGE — Ready to put it into practice?

Pause the TV to start a spiritual discussion with your family.



### REQUEST — Go to God in a closing prayer.

For example: "Oh Lord, write your word on my heart as I share it with others" (cf. Deut. 6:6-7).



### NEXT SESSION — Modeling Grace

Prepare by reading Matt. 6:12-15; Rom. 3:23-27; 2 Cor. 12:7-10

SESSION  
**9**

THE CONVERSATION STARTER

# “Practically Perfect”



SHEPHERDING & SHAPING

Launch your study with this  
**CONVERSATION STARTER**

Watch the video or read it below.



## READ

Before the study, take a moment to read Matt. 6:12-15; Rom. 3:23-27; 2 Cor. 12:7-10



## BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to **Weekly episode #148, “A Little Bit of a Baby”** before your study, as an example of a conversation led by this study guide.

[biblegeeks.fm/148](https://biblegeeks.fm/148)



**Y**ou must be kind, you must be witty," goes an old Disney song, as children recite a recipe for their perfect nanny. But when Marry Poppins arrived, maybe you found yourself resentful of her sugary tactics as she tackled every problem gracefully. Unlike her, most of us can't do chores with a "snap" or blow away on an umbrella after a season. Instead, those who aren't "practically perfect in every way" must rely on God's grace. So, as we shape our children, how do we embrace God's favor and reflect it into our children's lives?



## THE BIG IDEA

The gospel of grace gives us a new lens through which we see ourselves, our kids, and our parenting.

God gives us strength in our weakness, help in our struggles, and mercy when we fail. We don't earn his forgiveness, and we shouldn't require that from our children. We've all *"sinned ... and are justified by his grace as a gift"* (Rom. 3:23-24). And we forgive because of who we are, not because others have earned it.

So there's no "perfect parent" award or "parenting police." Christ commands whole-life devotion — to *"be perfect"* or complete *"as your heavenly Father is perfect"* (Matt. 5:44). But Jesus says that starts by seeing our need for grace before God (Matt. 5:3). Don't miss how owning and admitting our mistakes eases the burden of "perfection" on our children. Make space for them to drop their guard and open up to you. Extend them the same graciousness God gives us (Titus 2:11-14).

While losing our temper at our kids is wrong, choosing not to repair and apologize creates a bigger issue. Remember, God forgives those who forgive others (Matt. 6:15). And forgiveness goes both ways! If we expect our kids to say, "Sorry," when they're wrong, are we willing to model that for them? When we admit our mistakes and ask for forgiveness, we show them our priority is repairing the relationship.



## THE BIG QUESTION

Do you need to rely more on God's grace in your parenting?

SESSION  
**9**

STUDY GUIDE

# Modeling Grace

REFLECT GOD'S GRACE IN YOUR PARENTING

## INTRODUCTION



Launch the study with a **CONVERSATION STARTER** on the Big Idea. Read, listen, or watch “Practically Perfect” – [biblegeeks.fm/daily-252](https://biblegeeks.fm/daily-252) ▶▶



**ICE BREAKER** — Get everyone engaged and talking.

When someone apologizes to you, how does that change your feelings toward them?

## ACT I



**FINDING JESUS: 2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

As you read through this passage, consider: Where do you see Jesus in this passage?

What does the passage reveal about Christ’s character?

How can reflecting on and applying this passage draw us closer to Christ?



# Modeling Grace

REFLECT GOD'S GRACE IN YOUR PARENTING

## ACT II



### THE A-TEAM: Merciful & Gracious People

We've found that drafting a "fantasy team" of Bible people makes for a fun and edifying way to discuss Scriptural examples. So prepare by making your "draft board" below, listing your favorite examples of merciful and gracious people in the Bible. Next to each name, note why you would choose them, and how they showed mercy.

**NOTE: Jesus is everyone's top choice & unavailable for selection in this draft! Feel free to discuss his mercy and grace before you begin the process though (2 Cor. 8:9; 1 Tim. 1:16-18).**

#1

#2

#3

#4

#5

IF YOU'RE STUDYING IN A GROUP, break into groups and work together to choose your "A-Team" of mercy, tracking each team and discussing each pick as they're made. Warning: Be ready for the other team to "steal" your top choices! At the end, review the two teams and acknowledge all of the great examples of mercy in Scripture for us to imitate. Who almost made the cut? What do all of these people have in common (besides their graciousness)?

## ACT III



**REACH OUT — Connect with each other with this question.**

Which is harder to deal with: your mistakes or your child's? Why?

# Modeling Grace

REFLECT GOD'S GRACE IN YOUR PARENTING

## WRAP UP

---



### THE CHALLENGE — Ready to put it into practice?

Share a personal struggle or shortcoming you've had with someone.



### REQUEST — Go to God in a closing prayer.

For example: "Oh God, help me see my shortcomings clearly before serving others" (cf. Matt. 7:3-5).



### NEXT SESSION — Communication

Prepare by reading John 10:3-4; James 1:19-27; Col. 4:5-6

SESSION  
**10**

THE CONVERSATION STARTER

# “Eloquent Orations”



SHEPHERDING & SHAPING

Launch your study with this  
**CONVERSATION STARTER**

[Watch the video](#) or read it below.



## READ

Before the study, take a moment to read John 10:3-4; James 1:19-27; Col. 4:5-6



## BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to **Weekly episode #149, “The Real Groaners”** before your study, as an example of a conversation led by this study guide.

[biblegeeks.fm/149](https://biblegeeks.fm/149)



**T**heir eyes glaze over. They stare off into the distance. Your words wash over them in waves of nonsensical noise. Like Charlie Brown's teacher, have you ever felt like your eloquent orations to your kids sound more like, "Wah wah woh wah wah" in their ears? Have we lost the ability to speak our child's language somewhere along the way? Is it even possible to communicate clearly with your kids? So as we shepherd and shape them, let's be more purposeful with what we say and how we say it.



## THE BIG IDEA

**You can talk at your child and make a lot of noise, or you can talk to them and get through.**

Following Christ's example, our kids should know our voice (John 10:3-4). But it's more than recognizing the sound of someone's voice — it's about connecting with the meaning of the message. If our message isn't received, we're not communicating. Are we being understood? Or are we just spraying them with a sea of senseless sounds?

Communication isn't a one-way activity but a two-way dialogue. Listen to them — getting to know *their* voice — and consider how best to respond. It takes knowing yourself and your child to have a successful conversation. As we invest in becoming their sounding-board, we'd do well to be "*quick to hear, slow to speak*," controlling our tongues (James 1:19, 26). We communicate better when we commit to knowing our kids' world, where they're coming from, and what they're trying to tell us. Are you an effective listener or always doing the talking?

Season your words with grace (Col. 4:5-6), mindful of your headspace and attitude. Are you under control or losing your cool? A small child understands tone even when they don't grasp all the words. Whatever your child's age, how you say things can matter just as much as what you say. And remember that they will mirror what you talk about and how you say it.



## THE BIG QUESTION

**Are you invested in hearing your kids and helping them to hear you?**

SESSION  
**10**

# Communication

BE PURPOSEFUL WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION

## INTRODUCTION



Launch the study with a **CONVERSATION STARTER** on the Big Idea.

Read, listen, or watch “Eloquent Orations” – [biblegeeks.fm/daily-253](https://biblegeeks.fm/daily-253) ▶▶



**ICE BREAKER** — Get everyone engaged and talking.

Did your parents ever answer “Because I said so”? What other non-answers do parents love to give?

## ACT I



**LIKE THE TEACHER: John 10:3-4**

What’s the main point of this passage?

What insights and applications do you take from these words of Christ? What do we need to get from these words that – if understood and applied – has the power to change a life or a family?

Is there anything else here you find helpful or interesting? Anything you’ve never noticed before – or have always loved about these words?

SESSION  
**10**

# Communication

BE PURPOSEFUL WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION

## ACT II



### TOP 4 PROVERBS: Communication

Look through the list below (or any other resource you want to use) and choose four favorite Proverbs about communication, particularly keeping in mind how you interact with your kids. Then jot down a few notes on the application or insight you take from each verse. What do you appreciate about how it's said and the wisdom it contains? How have you seen the principle in action? How does this principle affect how you communicate as a parent?

**In group studies**, take turns sharing a favorite proverb. Larger classes may want to break into groups for discussion.

Prov. 1:5, 8-9; 10:8, 11, 13, 19-21; 12:18-19, 25; 13:3; 15:1-2, 4, 23, 26; 16:20-24; 17:27-28; 18:2, 4, 13, 21; 20:12; 24:26; 25:11-12, 15; 26:4-5; 27:5; 29:20

**Proverb #1** \_\_\_\_\_

**Proverb #2** \_\_\_\_\_

**Proverb #3** \_\_\_\_\_

**Proverb #4** \_\_\_\_\_

# Communication

BE PURPOSEFUL WITH YOUR COMMUNICATION

## ACT III

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**REACH OUT** — Connect with each other with this question.

How has listening to your child helped you know how to lead them?

## WRAP UP

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**THE CHALLENGE** — Ready to put it into practice?

Go on a "date night" with your child and ask them about their interests.



**REQUEST** — Go to God in a closing prayer.

For example: "Almighty Father, teach me to listen to others the way you listen to me" (cf. Jer. 29:12).



**NEXT SESSION** — Guiding Through Trouble

Prepare by reading Luke 15:11-31; John 17:6-19; Ps. 23:4-6

SESSION  
**11**

THE CONVERSATION STARTER  
**“Bubble Wrap”**



SENDING THEM OUT

Launch your study with this  
**CONVERSATION STARTER**  
[Watch the video](#) or read it below.



READ

Before the study, take  
a moment to read  
Luke 15:11-31;  
John 17:6-19; Ps. 23:4-6



BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to  
Weekly episode #150,  
“Uhn-tss Uhn-tss Uhn-  
tss” before your study,  
as an example of a  
conversation led by  
this study guide.

[biblegeeks.fm/150](https://biblegeeks.fm/150)



**A**lmost everything seems life-threatening to a newborn baby, especially when you're a first-time parent. A loose blanket in their crib, a small toy, stairs, pets, coffee table corners, and especially the dreaded electrical outlets all seem to pose a mortal danger to small children. You might wrap your child in bubble wrap if it wasn't such a potential choking hazard! But it doesn't get easier as our kids grow up. There's always danger lurking around the next corner. Though "helicopter parenting" is tempting, someday they'll need to face difficulties without you. So, as we prepare to send our kids out into the world, how do we empower them and guide them through life's obstacles?



THE BIG IDEA

As we send our children into the world, we can't protect them from every danger.

Our kids, like all of us, may travel "*through the valley of the shadow of death*" someday (Ps. 23:4). We may grieve over the life they've chosen, as David did with Absalom (2 Sam. 19:4). Maybe we'll mourn for the treatment they've unfairly endured, like Mary at her son's crucifixion (John 19:26). With storms on the horizon, let's build our homes on solid ground now, shepherding and shaping them according to the Lord's pattern.

Be there for them, always available to step in and help when they're ready for our support. Our kids should know that we'll **always** love them, no matter the mistakes they've made or the situation in which they've found themselves. Remember how the prodigal son's "*father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him*" (Luke 15:20)?

But here's some good news: we have a helper who cares about them even more than we do. So get on your knees every day, pleading for his protection over them, as Job did for his children (Job 1:5). When we feel powerless to step in and rescue them, call on the Almighty Father to "*keep them from the evil one*" (John 17:15).



THE BIG QUESTION

How will you respond when your child fails their tests?

# Guiding Through Trouble

GUIDE YOUR KIDS THROUGH LIFE'S DIFFICULTIES

## INTRODUCTION



Launch the study with a **CONVERSATION STARTER** on the Big Idea. Read, listen, or watch “Bubble Wrap” – [biblegeeks.fm/daily-254](https://biblegeeks.fm/daily-254) ▶▶



**ICE BREAKER** — Get everyone engaged and talking.

What modern day child safety devices did you survive without?

## ACT I



**JESUS SAID: John 17:12-19**

What’s the main point of this passage?

What insights and applications do you take from these words of Christ? What do we need to get from these words that – if understood and applied – has the power to change a life or a family?

Is there anything else here you find helpful or interesting? Anything you’ve never noticed before – or have always loved about these words?



SESSION  
**11**

# Guiding Through Trouble

GUIDE YOUR KIDS THROUGH LIFE'S DIFFICULTIES

## ACT II



### HERE'S THE STORY: The Prodigal Son

In your own words, summarize each section of the story identified below.

**In group studies**, take turns summarizing the sections until the group has told the whole story. Then discuss your answers to the questions at the bottom.

**Luke 15:11-12**

**Luke 15:13-16**

**Luke 15:17-21**

**Luke 15:22-24**

**Luke 15:25-30**

**Luke 15:31-32**

How might a father in this situation would feel when his son takes his inheritance and goes?

How did the father view his long-lost son while away (15:24, 32)? What does that tell you?

What do we learn about God from this father's response to his younger son – both at the beginning and the end of the story?

What can you learn from the Father about parenting?

What's the main point of this passage? What key truths did Jesus want his hearers to take away from the story?

# Guiding Through Trouble

GUIDE YOUR KIDS THROUGH LIFE'S DIFFICULTIES

## ACT III

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**REACH OUT** — Connect with each other with this question.

What do you learn about God as you watch your children make their own decisions?

## WRAP UP

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**THE CHALLENGE** — Ready to put it into practice?

Make a plan with your spouse about how you'll handle your own "prodigal moments," before they happen.



**REQUEST** — Go to God in a closing prayer.

For example: "Dear Lord, lead our little ones to always return home" (cf. Luke 15:24).



**NEXT SESSION** — Lasting Direction

Prepare by reading 1 Sam. 1:1-28; Ps. 139:1-16; John 15:4-10

SESSION  
**12**

THE CONVERSATION STARTER

# “Mona Lisa Smile”



SENDING THEM OUT

Launch your study with this  
**CONVERSATION STARTER**

Watch the video or read it below.



READ

Before the study, take a moment to read 1 Sam. 1:1-28; Ps. 139:1-16; John 15:4-10



BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to **Weekly episode #151, “I Think We’re Out for Good”** before your study, as an example of a conversation led by this study guide.

[biblegeeks.fm/151](https://biblegeeks.fm/151)



Imagine if your job was to take care of a priceless work of art. When da Vinci painted the world's most beloved portrait, he couldn't have known that over six million people would flock to see that famous, enigmatic, Mona Lisa smile every year. Experts say it's worth over \$860 million — a treasure the Louvre staff have the immense responsibility of protecting and sharing with the world. But we're called to take care of even greater masterpieces, created by an Artist beyond comparison. So before we send our children into the world, let's prepare them for a life dedicated to their Maker.



THE BIG IDEA

God made our kids for his glory, not ours.

Though we're glad they belong to us, we want them to belong to him. As Hannah said, *“For this child I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my petition that I made to him. Therefore I have lent him to the Lord. As long as he lives, he is lent to the Lord”* (1 Sam. 1:27-28). Hannah didn't know who Samuel would become or his significance in God's work. But she dedicated him to God and instilled a sense of identity as God's servant.

God knew our kids before we did, forming them *“fearfully and wonderfully”* in the womb. All their days are in his book (Psalm 139:1-5, 13-15). He's the source, the vine that'll make their lives fruitful. And as they abide in him, he'll answer their prayers and keep them in his love (John 15:4-10). When they believe God works mightily in them (Eph. 3:20; Phil. 2:13), it changes how they see themselves.

Devote your kids to God in your heart, training them in his way, surrendering their future to his care, and praying for his will to be done in their lives. We're stewards entrusted with these precious souls, readying them for life beyond our care. So as we receive children from the Lord, may they give themselves to him.



THE BIG QUESTION

Do you see yourself as a steward, preparing your kids for life without you?

SESSION  
**12**

# Lasting Direction

PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR A LIFE OF SERVICE TO GOD

## INTRODUCTION



Launch the study with a **CONVERSATION STARTER** on the Big Idea. Read, listen, or watch “Mona Lisa Smile” – [biblegeeks.fm/daily-255](https://www.biblegeeks.fm/daily-255) ▶▶



**ICE BREAKER** — Get everyone engaged and talking.

What's one thing you don't miss about when your kids were small?

## ACT I



**FINDING JESUS: 1 Sam. 2:1-10 & Luke 1:46-55**

Compare the circumstances and content of these two songs – one from Hannah and one from Mary. How are the circumstances similar? How are the songs similar?

As you read through these two passages, consider: Where do you see Jesus in these texts? What parts of these passages remind you of the character and actions of Christ?

What do we need to get from this passage that – if understood and applied – has the power to change us?

SESSION  
**12**

STUDY GUIDE

# Lasting Direction

PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR A LIFE OF SERVICE TO GOD

## ACT II



### HELLO, MY NAME IS: Hannah

Before we dive into this character study of Hannah, read 1 Samuel chapters 1-3.

### Setting The Stage

Hannah's story takes place in the time of the judges (cf. Judg. 21:25) in the hill country of Ephraim, right in the middle of Israel, where Hannah's husband is from and also where Shiloh was – the place where the ark and tabernacle rested during this period.

### Telling The Story

SET UP: Two Wives of Elkanah (1 Sam. 1:1-2): What do you learn about Hannah's family here?

SCENE 1: Hannah Grieves (1 Sam. 1:3-8): What is the family dynamic? What's Hannah's state of mind? Anything else jump out at you in this section?

SCENE 2: Hannah Prays (1 Sam. 1:9-20): Imagine the scene as the family feasts before the Lord. What does Hannah do? What does Eli see? How is she changed at the end of this scene?

SCENE 3: Hannah Lends (1 Sam. 1:21-28): When God answers her prayer, what does Hannah do? What strikes you about this passage?

EPILOGUE: Who Samuel Becomes (1 Sam. 2-3): What do you notice about the young Samuel's life and character?

### Applying the Scripture

How do you think Hannah's sacrificial devotion impacted Samuel?

What do you take from the contrast between Eli's parenting (e.g. 1 Sam. 2:22-25, 29) and Hannah's relationship with Samuel? What do you think the inspired writer wanted us to take to heart from the interweaving of these two families' stories?

# Lasting Direction

PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR A LIFE OF SERVICE TO GOD

## ACT III

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**REACH OUT** — Connect with each other with this question.

How does the thought of an "empty nest" sound to you?

## WRAP UP

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**THE CHALLENGE** — Ready to put it into practice?

Check in with a young person about how they want to serve God when they grow up.



**REQUEST** — Go to God in a closing prayer.

For example: "Holy Father, keep our children from the evil one as they go out into the world" (cf. John 17:15).



**NEXT SESSION** — Lasting Direction

Prepare by reading Matt. 12:46-50; Titus 1:5-9; 3 John 2-4

SESSION  
**13**

THE CONVERSATION STARTER

# “The Greatest Gift”



SENDING THEM OUT

Launch your study with this  
**CONVERSATION STARTER**  
Watch the video or read it below.



READ

Before the study, take a moment to read Matt. 12:46-50; Titus 1:5-9; 3 John 2-4



BONUS RESOURCE

Feel free to listen to **Weekly episode #152, “Are You Beaming Right Now?”** before your study, as an example of a conversation led by this study guide.

[biblegeeks.fm/152](https://biblegeeks.fm/152)



**A** macaroni necklace. A glitter-bomb birthday card. A "World's Best Dad" coffee cup. If you've ever opened a present from your child, you know it's not the money they spent that makes it valuable. Instead, it's how the gift expresses their love. That's why parents can honestly say, "It's the thought that counts." But what's the greatest gift a parent could receive from their children? We've given stability and shepherding, but what do we hope we've prepared them to do? We send them out, hoping to rejoice with them when our Lord becomes their Lord.



THE BIG IDEA

What a gift – when a "son" or "daughter" becomes a "brother" or "sister" in Christ.

Imagine the day we serve our King alongside them as adults! While hopefully, everyone loves their kids, maybe not everyone likes them. Some children grow up and become people you don't admire or enjoy being around. That's why we work every day to bring them under the shepherding and shaping influence of God. Faithful children don't happen by accident but by continually placing the Lord above all in a family's life (Titus 1:5-6).

Sometimes we're the bad guy, saying "no" until they learn to say it for themselves. Rather than treating our kindergarteners like buddies, we invest in disciplining them while they're small so that eventually, we can enjoy friendship with healthy, spiritually developed adults. Don't rush the process! And so we send them out into the world — not to leave us forever, but to build their own lives and families on what we've given them. We want to share our lives with their families because that's our family.

As parents, we look down the road beyond the piano recitals, report cards, and career decisions. It's fun to see our kids succeed, but life is full of hard choices. They need to know that if they lose their soul, they've lost everything (Mark 8:36). So keep the faith and remind them every day about the greatest gift ever given: salvation in Jesus!



THE BIG QUESTION

Will your kids become people you enjoy being around?

SESSION  
**13**

# Rejoicing in Obedience

REJOICE WHEN YOUR CHILDREN FOLLOW THE LORD

## INTRODUCTION



Launch the study with a **CONVERSATION STARTER** on the Big Idea. Read, listen, or watch “The Greatest Gift” – [biblegeeks.fm/daily-256](https://biblegeeks.fm/daily-256) ▶▶



**ICE BREAKER** — Get everyone engaged and talking.

What's the best Mother's Day or Father's Day present you've received?

## ACT I



**JESUS SAID: Matt. 12:46-50**

What's the main point of this passage?

What insights and applications do you take from these words of Christ? What do we need to get from these words that – if understood and applied – has the power to change a life or a family?

Is there anything else here you find helpful or interesting? Anything you've never noticed before – or have always loved about these words?



SESSION  
**13**

# Rejoicing in Obedience

REJOICE WHEN YOUR CHILDREN FOLLOW THE LORD

## ACT II



### HEAVY WORDS: Honor

We might not think much about honor, but the writers of both the Old and New Testaments spoke directly to a culture where honor and shame were fundamental concerns of daily life. When we honor someone, we see their **worth** and give **weight** to who they are. The Greek word for “honor” (τιμῆ – “timē”) means “price, value” and then secondly, “honor, reverence”<sup>1</sup>. The root of the Hebrew word for “honor” (כָּבוֹד – “kabod”) “literally means heavy or weighty. The figurative meaning, however, is far more common: ‘to give weight to someone.’”<sup>2</sup>. If you’re studying in a group, choose one passage you want to share something about, and prepare a few notes.

Matt. 15:3-9; Rom. 12:10; 13:7; Eph. 6:2; 1 Peter 1:7; 2:7, 17; 3:7; John 4:44; 5:23; 12:26

How would you define the English word “honor”?

What do you learn about honor from Scripture?

How can kids honor their parents? Is there a time for parents to show honor to kids?

What’s your biggest takeaway about relationships from these passages and this word?

<sup>1</sup> -William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (BDAG)

<sup>2</sup> - Sam Hamstra Jr., “Honor,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*

# Rejoicing in Obedience

REJOICE WHEN YOUR CHILDREN FOLLOW THE LORD

## ACT III

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**REACH OUT** — Connect with each other with this question.

How does the thought of an "empty nest" sound to you?

## WRAP UP

---



**THE CHALLENGE** — Ready to put it into practice?

Check in with a young person about how they want to serve God when they grow up.



**REQUEST** — Go to God in a closing prayer.

For example: "God, give our children a heart of wisdom" (cf. Prov. 10:1).

## CONCLUSION

# “Don’t Lose Momentum”



**WRAP UP THE STUDY**  
A Summary of All 13 Big Ideas ►  
Watch the video or read it below.



**H**ere's the thing about riding a bike that may seem counterintuitive: the faster you go, the easier it gets to balance. You'd think the rider keeps the bike from falling over, but the bike's inertia makes a big difference too. Just send a bike speeding away without you, and you'd be surprised how far it goes. If you don't lose momentum, riding becomes a breeze. But momentum is also super important for parenting. Slow down, or stop following God's pattern, and things get a whole lot harder! So, as we wrap up our Training Wheels study, let's look back at the big ideas we've tackled, considering how they help us maintain our forward progress with our kids.



### STABLE FOUNDATIONS

- The marriage covenant is God's foundation for a stable family.
- Worship isn't just what we do as a family – it's who we are.
- Integrity reinforces our kids' structural support system.
- When discipline demoralizes our kids, we do more harm than good.



### SHEPHERDING & SHAPING

- We can find our way in our parenting dilemmas by looking up.
- Your life speaks volumes to those following behind you.
- Good parenting is a daily choice you make, not the result of your child's choices.
- The world is your child's classroom, whether you're teaching them or not.
- The gospel of grace gives us a new lens to see ourselves, our kids, and our parenting.
- You can talk at your child and make a lot of noise, or you can talk to them and get through.



### SENDING THEM OUT

- As we send our children into the world, we can't protect them from every danger.
- Our kids were created for his glory, not ours.
- What a gift – when a "son" or "daughter" becomes a "brother" or "sister" in Christ.



### THE BIG QUESTION

How has this study propelled you into better parenting?



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