

The Flourishing Family Discussion Guide

Chapter 1: A God-Sized View of Children

1. In light of your journey toward a new parenting paradigm, what are the core values and aspirations you hold for your own parenting? How do these ideals align with the concept of viewing children as image bearers of God?
2. Reflect on a recent parenting challenge where you responded in a way you later regretted. How can you apply the principle of choosing “growth over guilt” in this situation? What steps can you take to learn from the experience and grow as a parent?
3. Can you recall an instance from your upbringing in which your parents’ actions toward you failed to demonstrate your inherent worth as an image bearer of God? How does this memory fuel your commitment to parent differently and instill a sense of respect and dignity in your own children?
4. How can you strike a balance between reflecting on your own childhood experiences and actively engaging in intentional parenting practices? What practical steps can you take to translate your reflections into positive actions that align with your aspirations for parenting?

Chapter 2: The Power of Abiding

1. What does abiding in Christ look like for you right now? Even if your margin of time is small, what’s one way you can bring more awareness of Christ’s life-giving, peacemaking presence in your life throughout the day?
2. As you consider the fruit of the Spirit, which one do you most hope to bring into your home, particularly as you engage with your children? What practical shift might you make to support that desire?
3. What specific activities or practices consistently help you reset and find peace in the midst of chaos? How can you prioritize incorporating them into your routine? Who (if anyone) do you need to reach out to in order to help you prioritize these habits?
4. When it comes to spiritual disciplines, what practice do you find most helpful in cultivating inner peace and calm so that they can overflow into your family?

Chapter 3: Cultivating Inner Peace

1. How would you describe your current level of inner peace? What aspects of your life contribute positively or negatively to this state?
2. How do you typically respond to your own emotions, especially the difficult ones? How might your children be learning from your example?
3. Consider a time when you reacted with frustration or impatience toward your child’s behavior. How might the situation have unfolded differently if you’d responded calmly? What steps can you take to cultivate patient responses in the future?
4. What specific techniques might you adopt to enhance your physical calmness during high-stress parenting moments? How might these practices positively impact your children’s emotional development?

Chapter 4: Playing the Long Game

1. Recall a situation in which fear influenced your parenting decision, perhaps even leading you to punish your child harshly. How did this approach affect your child's response and overall well-being? Reflect on how the principle of parenting with unconditional love might have altered the outcome.
2. Consider a recent instance when your child exhibited behaviors resembling obedience or compliance. Could these behaviors have been linked to survival instincts like flight, freeze, or fawn? How might understanding this reshape your approach to discipline?
3. The parable of the good, good Father illustrates a father's choice to show unmerited favor and affection. How does this resonate with your own parenting journey? Can you identify moments when extending grace and trust yielded positive results that punishment might not have achieved?
4. Think about your ultimate parenting goals and the legacy you want to leave for your children. How does adopting a peace-focused, trust-centered approach align with these aspirations? How might this approach contribute to a more fulfilling and harmonious family dynamic over time?

Chapter 5: Created for Connection

1. Recall a moment of profound connection with your child. How did that interaction make you feel? How can you intentionally cultivate more of these bonding moments?
2. The chapter provides examples of connecting before correcting. How can you adapt these ideas to your family's unique dynamics and interests? Consider one practical way you can implement the "connect" step into your parenting routine.
3. In the context of Christian parenting, how does the concept of secure attachment align with Jesus' teaching and example? How might viewing the concept of secure attachment through a spiritual lens impact your parenting approach and the way you guide your child through challenges?

Chapter 6: Trust-Based Obedience

1. How does a deeper understanding of Jesus' approach to your *own* obedience to Him change your view of your child's obedience? With that understanding in mind, what are some practical ways you can encourage and reassert your unconditional love for your children?
2. Think about a current issue or conflict you are having with your child. How could you become a channel of God's mercy within that circumstance? How do you think that could change the dynamic?
3. Spend time reflecting on the visions and dreams you have for your children as fully developed adults. Who do you want them to be? What qualities do you want them to possess? Knowing that right now they are just children, what are some practical ways you can actively remind yourself of that truth?

Chapter 7: Cultivating Respect in Conflict

1. How does the concept of pausing before reacting resonate with you? Can you recall a recent situation when taking a moment to pause could have led to a more respectful

interaction with your child? What strategies could you implement to incorporate the “Pause” step of the PEACE Plan into your parenting approach?

2. Reflect on a recent conflict you had with your child. What were the underlying emotions within you and your child in that situation? How might acknowledging these emotions have changed the dynamic? How can you better communicate your own emotions without placing responsibility for them on your child?
3. If you grew up in a home where respect for parents was demanded, not earned, what challenges do you see to internalizing the idea that respect starts with you as the parent? What steps can you take to prioritize this paradigm shift?
4. Review the PEACE Plan outlined in this chapter (see page 117). Choose one step that you find particularly challenging or intriguing. How can you practice incorporating this into your interactions with your child over the next week? What potential positive changes do you anticipate as a result?

Chapter 8: Identifying the Root of Misbehavior

1. How would considering the root of misbehavior change the way you interact with your child in difficult moments?
2. When reflecting on your approach to parenting, do you find yourself often dwelling on the sin nature of your children, or do you avoid the issue of sin altogether? What would a healthy, balanced view of sin in relation to misbehavior look like for your family?
3. As you consider the way God reached out to Adam and Eve following the Fall (see page 148), what action do you most want to emulate when connecting with a misbehaving child?
4. Recall an instance from your childhood when you remember choosing to sin. How would you have wanted your parents to respond to you? What would it have looked like for you to have received mercy and grace in that situation?

Chapter 9: Discipline as Discipleship

1. What does accountability mean to you as a parent? How can you teach your children about accountability with gentleness and grace, as opposed to pain and punishment?
2. When you have suffered in your own life—whether now or in the past—does a part of you believe that this difficulty is a sign of God’s rejection or disapproval? How can you remind yourself (and your children) of the truth of people’s belovedness, even in suffering?
3. Think of an area in your child’s life in which you’d like them to grow or improve. How does changing your perspective of your role as a parent to that of a trainer or coach alter the way you approach and tend to that area in their lives?
4. The topic of discipline and consequences in parenting can be filled with tension and misunderstanding. What are some Bible verses (either from this chapter or elsewhere in Scripture) that can serve as anchors as you endeavor to align yourself with God’s view?

Chapter 10: What about the Rod?

1. Think back to the last time you spanked a child or saw a child getting spanked. What could have been done differently prior to that moment? What strategies do you need in

interacting with your child during difficult situations to help you before you get to the point of wanting to spank them?

2. What messages might we be communicating to a child when we spank them? Are those messages beneficial to them? Do they help them find and follow Jesus?
3. What do you find most surprising about the meaning and context of the “rod” verses? How do they impact your view of spanking?

Chapter 11: Fostering Wisdom

1. What piece of wisdom passed down to you during your childhood do you treasure most?
2. What are ways you can partner *with* your children in these growing years, giving them the opportunity to practice and gain wisdom for their future?
3. Think of a recent situation in which your child displayed wisdom. How can you retroactively show them appreciation and pride for that moment?

Chapter 12: Parenting with Peace

1. What legacy do you want to leave your children? What actions can you take today that will contribute to that legacy?
2. How has your view of and relationship with Jesus changed as you’ve walked through these chapters? How can you begin to impart that new wisdom to your children?
3. As you consider the journey you’ve been on in these pages, what are some of your most valuable takeaways? What’s one actionable step you can take today as a peacemaker parent?