

## Message Discussion Guide THE GOSPEL AND PARENTING

*The Church at Brook Hills,*

*Dr. David Platt*

*June 1, 2008*

*Ephesians 6:1-4*

This guide is to help you facilitate discussion with your Small Group. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. Your role is to facilitate this experience not to complete the discussion guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid teaching task list.

### **Connect . . .**

*Use one or both of the following options to introduce the discussion time to follow.*

#### **Option 1**

Explain David's opening sermon statistics that state between 80-90% of students will leave the church by the time they are in their second year of college.

Why do you think the statistics are so high?

Could a lack of spiritual support from family play a large role in these statistics?

How much influence does a parent have on his/her children?

What person in your life influenced your spiritual development the most? Why? How?

#### **Option 2**

Read the following story and then answer the questions below:

B.J. Higgins' life was filled with involvement with missions and a maturity level rarely seen in fifteen-year olds. His last mission trip was to Peru, where he contracted a deadly illness. After returning to the States and battling for six weeks, B. J. exemplified putting Christ above himself as his life on this earth ended.

Despite the heartbreak of his parents, B.J.'s mom said "Don't be the reason your kids aren't in God's will! Don't you be the roadblock. That's the very opposite of what B.J. stood for. You cannot be the reason your kids don't go."<sup>1</sup>

- How do you think B.J.'s parents responded to his obedience that led to his death? How would you have responded?
- What does the mom's response to his death indicate about her conviction of the purpose of parenting?
- How did she view her responsibility to her son?

### **Review the Message . . .**

#### **Three Foundations . . .**

- **The Word is sufficient.**
- **The home is central.**
- **The Gospel is necessary.**
  - **The Gospel is our source of salvation.**
  - **The Gospel is our source of transformation.**

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<sup>1</sup>Higgins, Brent & Deanna. *I Would Die for You: One Student's story of Passion, Service & Faith.* Revell: Grand Rapids, 2008, p. 200.

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### Discussion Questions

- Enlist a volunteer to read 2 Peter 1:2-3. Based on verse 3, what has God given to His followers for them to use in life?
- What is Peter saying about Scripture and its importance in the life of a Christ-follower?
- Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Who does the author imply is the primary teacher of God's Word? What does this say about the role of the home in the life of a child and to the spread of God's Word?
- Remembering that Scripture is clear that all people are sinners (Rom. 3:23), what difference does the Gospel make in a parent/child relationship?

### Application . . .

- In parenting a child, a parent needs a lot of practical advice that is not expressly given in Scripture. What is the danger of bypassing the Word of God when we are looking for answers for our parenting needs?
- In what ways has our North American church culture made it easy to entrust spiritual education to the church? Why do so many of us feel comfortable in handing over the disciple-making responsibility of our children?
- How can we establish our homes as the primary source of disciple-making in our children's lives?
- How do we depend on the Holy Spirit to help us in parenting? What role do we allow the Holy Spirit to play in changing our children's lives?

### Parents . . .

- **God gives you children by His grace.**
- **God gives you children for His glory.**
  - **The goal of biblical parenting is NOT to help your children . . .**
    - **Get a great education.**
    - **Be a great athlete.**
    - **Go on great dates.**
    - **Have a great career.**
    - **Make great money.**
  - **To goal of biblical parenting is to help your children accomplish a great commission.**
- **Commands for parents . . .**
  - **Instruct your children so they know the Word.**
    - **We must have a verbal commitment to the Word in our homes.**
    - **We must have a visible commitment to the Word in our homes.**
  - **Train your children so they show the Word.**
    - **Our children will not be what they cannot see.**
- **A caution for parents . . .**
  - **Discipline your children with love that leads them toward God, not with anger that leads them away from God.**

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### Discussion Questions

- Enlist a volunteer to read Ephesians 6:1-4.
- Considering verse 4, how does Paul indicate that fathers/parents are to bring up their children? Therefore, what is the purpose of parenting?
- What are the ways that Deuteronomy 6:7-9 instruct parents to “show” the word to their children?
- Note that the root word for discipline and disciple are the same. What does this indicate about the necessity for discipline in parenting?
- Paul instructs fathers/parents to not provoke their children to anger. Knowing that children can often get angry with a parent, what kind of discipline is Paul encouraging? [Note the difference between discipline which drives a child away and discipline that draws a child closer]

### Application . . .

- If the life of a child is to bring glory to God, how does that affect the way that we view our children and our role in their lives?
- How are we leading our children to become more like Christ?
- What percentage of our conversations at home revolve around spiritual matters? If our children mimicked our commitment to the Word of God, what would their lives look like?
- How would we honestly react to a child leaving home to participate in international missions? Why would we discourage it? Why would we encourage it?

### Children . . .

- You are made by God.
- You are responsible to God.
- **Commands for children . . .**
  - Honor your parents with your attitude.
  - Obey your parents with your actions.
    - Hear what they say.
    - Do what they say.
- **A caution for children . . .**
  - To dishonor or disobey your parents is to rebel against God.

### Discussion Questions

- Read Ephesians 6:1-2. What command does Paul give to children? How does he tell them to do this?
- What does the phrase “in the Lord” in verse 1 indicate about the reason or design for children to obey their parents? What does it mean if a child doesn’t obey his/her parents?
- What does it mean for a child to honor his/her parents? What does it mean for a child to obey his/her parents?

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### Application . . .

- Until what age are children required to fulfill these commands? Are there limitations or exceptions on obeying parents?
- How does an adult child honor and obey his/her parents while maintaining a separate family?
- Is it possible for children to obey parents and not honor them?
- If children consistently disobey their parents, how much more might they disobey God? How can teaching children to honor and obey their parents affect their relationship with God? With other authority figures?
- If children are commanded to obey their parents, how does that affect the responsibility of parents to lead?

### Two Promises . . .

- **As we honor Christ in our relationships as children and parents, God says . . .**
  - I will **satisfy** your lives.
  - I will **multiply** your legacy.

### Discussion Questions

- Read Ephesians 6:2-3.
- What is the promise to children who obey their parents?
- Of the commandments dealing with human relationships, why do you think the command to obey and honor one's parents is listed first?
- Note that David stated that the promise of living long on the earth was originally spoken in the context of God's people. In this context it meant that these people would be known as His people and would continue in their relationship with God. Based on this understanding, what did it mean to Paul's audience?

### Application . . .

- How does a parent/child relationship impact our lives?
- How can a parent/child relationship impact the way that we make disciples of all nations?
- What are some steps that we can take to create or mend a broken parent/child relationship?