



LIFE STUDIES

Parenting for Healing



A SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM MADE BY PBC

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L.I.F.E STARTER JOURNALING

The Bible journaling method called LIFE Starter was developed to create an easy, yet effective way for people to study the Bible, remember what they read and allow their hearts to get ignited for Jesus Christ.

L.I.F.E. stands for Listen, Investigate, Focus and Engage

L=Listen

In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses

I = Investigate

Next, you investigate the context around the Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F = Focus

The next step is focusing on the text to make it applicable for your own life. What does the text mean today? What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read? Write out a couple sentences detailing what God is saying to you through the text.

E = Engage

The final step in the journaling process is engaging God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

The beautiful thing about this journaling method is that it is short and only takes a few minutes, and it can be done every time you read or study a passage.

SESSION 1: PRIORITIES

Welcome and Program Overview: 10 minutes

Session #1 Teaching: Priorities: 10 minutes

What is your mission in parenting your children? Many times people begin their parenting journey with a picture of what their life and family should look like; big enough house, a pet, children who learn eat their veggies, be respectful and empty the trash without being asked...and then along the way we realize that children have their own personalities, emotional and physical needs and challenges that shape the way they see the world. In the Bible, parents are instructed to impress upon the hearts of their children the commands of the Lord, NOT to make their children turn our picture perfect by the world's standard, or even church culture standards. If our ultimate goal in parenting is anything other than to point our children to God and encourage a relationship with Him, we will likely create an environment of control, frustration and bitterness. If you've never created either a parenting mission statement or list of priorities, that may be something you want to consider.

We often have to remind our children that they can't control the people around them, but they can control themselves and their responses. The same goes for parents. Our prayer may be that our children grow up following God and obeying us and Him, but we can't control whether that happens; that is ultimately the work of the Holy Spirit and our child's choice. What we CAN control is ourselves, what we teach our children and whether they grow up in an environment that points them to God, His grace and His love for us.

None of us plan for our children to have hard experiences like loss, abuse, neglect or developmental challenges, but sometimes children do. Those things all have a powerful and lasting impact on our children that may not look pretty. How can we help them heal and adapt to the challenges that come with these things? Here are some suggestions for parenting goals that keep your focus on what *you* can do.

- Communicate daily that they are loved unconditionally by God and their parents.
- Teach and model grace and patience.
- Make home a physically and emotionally safe place where they know they are always welcome.

Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes

- What are your priorities in parenting?
- Do your actions communicate your priorities?
- Are there priorities you need to change or refocus on?

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes

What did you cover in your small group time? What were the biggest take-aways and action items?

Discuss This Week's Homework on next page: 5 minutes

- Commit to the LIFE Starters Journaling process to allow this study to have the biggest impact.
- Confirm that you two, as a couple, are on the same page with your priorities, how you communicate them and how you may need to refocus them.

SESSION #1

WK. 1 DEVO 1

Re-Read Proverbs 22

Journal about how YOU want to do a better job starting your children off on the right path.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #1

WK. 1 DEVO 2

Read Psalm 127

Are YOU letting the Lord "Build YOUR House?"

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #1

WK. 1 DEVO 3

Read Titus 2:1-15

How are YOU teaching your kids? Are you teaching sound doctrine? Do YOU know sound doctrine?

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #1

WK. 1 DEVO 4

Read Proverbs 3:1-12

Start with trusting in the Lord with ALL YOUR heart, so you can teach your children to do the same. Journal about your level of trust and how you teach that to your children.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION 2: PARENTING TO HEALING

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework & LIFE Starters: 20 minutes
Session #2 Teaching: Parenting Our Kids to Healing: 10 minutes

One of the most beautiful things about the way God made Man is that He made us in His image. We are three parts; body, mind and soul, just as He is three parts. But we live in a fallen world, where sin takes over, bad things happen, and the relationships, bodies and minds that God made have been corrupted by human sin. Thankfully, God knew before we were born what hardships we would go through, and how they would affect us and our families. So, while science shows that toxic stress in any form changes the way our brains work and how our children grow and develop, it also shows that God built us with the ability to heal, through healthy relationships with Him and the people He put in our lives. Juggling healing for ourselves and our children, along with the day to day requirements of parenting is not an easy job. It requires an understanding of how God made us, how He parents us through hardship, and some of the tools that can help our children heal.

There are no easy answers to difficult circumstances, and there are no cookie cutter solutions. We do have Biblical examples of how He loves us, and our responsibility as parents to meet our children's physical, emotional and spiritual needs, regardless of convenience or what we think our parenting journey **should** look like. Just as Jesus met people where they were; on the shore, in a boat, a garden at night or under a sycamore tree, we must meet our kids where they are. We are the parents God wanted for our children. What works for one family may not work for another. **community and sharing of resources.*

In the NT, we are told that John the Baptist "leapt in Elizabeth's womb" when he heard Elizabeth greet Mary. Science shows that children begin forming attachments to their mother in utero, then by learning her voice, eventually seeing her face, and then being held and fed by her. So imaging the confusion that happens internally when the mother whose voice has been heard for 9 months is suddenly gone, for whatever reason. Or does not feed or hold gently to comfort. The stress hormones a mother feels also impacts her growing baby. A child who has these experiences at the time when their brain is developing is receiving confusing and damaging messages about their value, who they can trust, and their development is impacted. The adults blessed with caring for these children cannot approach them as they would a child who had not experienced these things.

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

- Did you experience periods of intense or ongoing family stress as a child? What helped you cope, or not, with that situation?
- What family hardships have your children experienced?
- Have you noticed changes in your children through these challenges?

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes

What did you cover in your small group time? What were the biggest take-aways and action items?

Discuss This Week's Homework on next page: 5 minutes

- Do your LIFE Starter Journalling and make time to continue the discussion from your small group breakout time.

Resource: The Connected Child and Created for Connection

SESSION #2

WK. 2 DEVO 1

Read Philippians 4:4-9

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #2

WK. 2 DEVO 2

Read Isaiah 41

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #2

WK. 2 DEVO 3

Read Jonah 2

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #2

WK. 2 DEVO 4

Read Psalm 91:1-16

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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SESSION 3: TRUST

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework & LIFE Starters: 20 minutes ***Session #3 Teaching: Building Trust: 10 minutes***

Every family faces some kind of crisis or stressful circumstances at some point. Things like working through grief, accommodating a child's health needs, working through trauma... those are all hard enough on our own, let alone doing it while parenting and teaching our kids to do it in a healthy way.

How we deal with difficult family circumstances as parents can have a huge impact on our kids. There is no way we will do everything "right", so thankfully our Father fills in the gaps with His grace, but there are certain things we can do to help our children feel safe with us, know they can trust us, and know they can trust the Lord no matter the circumstances they face.

"When I am afraid I will trust in Him." These verses give perfect examples of how God made us, and our kids. When things are out of our control, when we are in some kind of danger, knowing that we can trust our Father who loves us and has our best interest in mind brings peace. And for our kids, the same is true. Trust is the foundation of a reciprocal relationship. And, science has shown that children who don't have a foundation of trust built with their parents in the formative early years have actual neurological differences than those who do. God made our bodies- He knows what we need.

If you are parenting a child who has experienced trauma or neglect at the hands of people they should have been able to trust; abandonment; loss of a close adult relationship; separation... these children have some catching up to do in regards to trust. Not only do they have to re-build a neurological foundation for trust and having their physical and emotional needs met, they also need to learn to trust a God that they can't see. Until this foundation of trust is built, lessons about obedience, respect, responsibility won't be able to take root. The soil must first be fertilized.

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

- What kinds of things teach a child that they can trust their parent(s)?
- How can we model trust in our Heavenly Father to our children?
- Do you struggle with trusting God with your children and their futures?
- Can you think of any scriptural examples where a parent did or didn't trust God with their children?

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes

What did you cover in your small group time? What were the biggest take-aways and action items?

Discuss This Week's Homework on next page: 5 minutes

- Do your LIFE Starter Journalling and make time to continue the discussion from your small group breakout time.

Resource: The Connected Child and Created for Connection

SESSION #3

WK. 3 DEVO 1

Read 1 John 4:7-21

Journal about ministering around God's love.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #3

WK. 3 DEVO 2

Read Ephesians 6:4-9

Allow your kids to trust you and NOT exasperate them in your parenting style.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #3

WK. 3 DEVO 3

Read Titus 2

Set the example for following God and doing good for your kids.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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SESSION #3

WK. 3 DEVO 4

Read Deuteronomy 6:6-9

Journal about taking the time to “coach” your children well.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today’s Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you’ve learned?

SESSION 4: STRESS AND THE BRAIN

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework & LIFE Starters: 20 minutes
Session #4 Teaching: Stress and the Brain: 10 minutes

Days and nights, weeks, months, seasons, high and low tides, sleep and moon cycles... all examples of how God created the world and our bodies to move in predictable patterns. In a perfect world, these patterns allow for proper physical growth, resulting in healthy relationships, and emotional processing. For children that have experienced trauma or long periods of stress, the fight, flight or freeze impulse takes over and doesn't let go without a lot of healing. Dr. Karyn Purvis, an renowned expert on Childhood Trauma and Development says "Deprivation and harm suffered early in life impact all the ways that a child develops; coordination, ability to learn, social skills, size, and even the neuro-chemical pathways in the brain. These consequences can linger years..." But did you know that God also created healing possibilities for our brains and our children's? Studies show that cementing new habits and behaviors in the brain takes approximately 400 repetitions... **unless** it is done through playful connection. In that case, it takes 10 to 20 repetitions.

Imagine these real-life scenarios: A 4 yr old child comes to the dinner table, sees what is being served and immediately starts melting down and refusing to eat. A toddler in her Foster mother's arms enters a classroom full of people at church and starts screaming and trying to escape. A 10 year old in school starts making nonsense noises and pacing the classroom. These are all behaviors that we might see as sinful defiance or rude behavior if we just look at the surface. But for all children, especially those who have experienced trauma, neglect or abandonment, there is a lot below the surface that is driving the behavior. It's our job as parents to navigate it and help our kids resolve the emotions and teach them positive coping skills.

In these situations behavior was a communication method. Taking time to "be curious" (analyze, ask questions, think before responding) about what is driving a behavior will help you determine the best course of action. The parents had to have grace in the moment, do what they could to bring calm and comfort to the child, and the answers ended up revealing themselves later. The defiant, angry child at the dinner table had once seriously choked on chicken.. His body and brain remembered it, even if he couldn't explain it. The screaming toddler in mom's arms had experienced prenatal drug and alcohol exposure, and the fluorescent lights and crowded room made her brain feel like it was on fire. The boy in the classroom was confused but didn't have the emotional awareness to explain that. 1st Corinthians 13 gives us some great examples of how we can approach the difficult behaviors that we might see in our children.

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

- What kinds of things teach a child that they can trust their parent(s)?
- How can we model trust in our Heavenly Father to our children?
- Do you struggle with trusting God with your children and their futures?
- Can you think of any scriptural examples where a parent did or didn't trust God with their children?

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes

What did you cover in your small group time? What were the biggest take-aways and action items?

Discuss This Week's Homework on next page: 5 minutes

•Do your LIFE Starter Journalling and make time to continue the discussion from your small group breakout time.

Resource: The Whole Brain Child

SESSION #4

WK. 4 DEVO 1

Read 1 Corinthians 13

Journal about how we can approach the difficult behaviors that we might see in our children.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #4

WK. 4 DEVO 2

Read 1 Peter 5:1-11

Journal about being more humble in your approach to leading.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #4

WK. 4 DEVO 3

Read James 5:7-20

Learn to be patient in suffering.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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SESSION #4

WK. 4 DEVO 4

Read Titus 3

What areas can you improve in your modeling of Jesus Christ as a parent?

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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SESSION 5: SHAME AND EMOTIONS

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework & LIFE Starters: 20 minutes
Session #5 Teaching: Shame and Emotions: 15 minutes

Emotions are powerful. God created them as tools for us to use in different ways: in relationships, to protect ourselves, to “move us to motion” when something is wrong and we need to change it. Emotions can also be destructive when they control us and blind us to important truths. One of the most powerful negative emotions is shame. We are all susceptible to it and it sneaks in, often undetected until it has grown and created unseen walls between individuals. Shame tells us that there is something wrong with us and we can't let others see it. It often takes root in us as children, especially through situations where trauma or neglect is present.

When a child receives messages of abandonment, that often becomes a voice of shame in their head telling them that it was their fault or that they were not good enough for someone they loved to want to stay in their lives. When children are misunderstood or not given a voice to speak for themselves, shame creeps in and tells them their needs don't matter. As we grow up, shame also grows and reinforces what we already believe about whether we are worthy of love. The outcome of shame is that walls go up, and we isolate ourselves, which in turn breeds more shame.

Shame entered the world with sin, in the Garden of Eden. Jesus took our ultimate shame and sin on the cross, separated from His Father, naked, and viewed by much of those around Him as unworthy for the title He bore. Here in our daily lives, we have to fight shame and teach our children to fight shame, because God created us to be at our most healthy through relationships with Him, friends and family, and fellow believers. When we connect with our children, we are fighting shame. When we pursue our children gently when they withdraw from us, we are fighting shame. When we teach them to identify and communicate their feelings, and we respect that, we are fighting shame. When we model vulnerability and connection with others, we are fighting shame.

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

- Have you identified areas that you feel shame about in your own life?
- Do you see shame impacting your children?
- What are some ways you can try to protect your children from, or help them overcome, shame?

Discuss This Week's Homework: 5 minutes

- Do your LIFE Starter Journalling and make time to continue the discussion from your small group breakout time.

Resource: *The Soul of Shame, blogs and podcasts by Dr. Curt Thompson*

SESSION #5

WK. 5 DEVO 1

Read Isaiah 61

Journal about how to cut out “shame” from your leadership style.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today’s Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you’ve read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you’ve learned?

SESSION #5

WK. 5 DEVO 2

Read Romans 10

Trusting in God should mean you will NEVER be shamed

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #5

WK. 5 DEVO 3

Read Romans 8:1-17

Shame does NOT connect with living in God's Spirit.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

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SESSION #5

WK. 5 DEVO 4

Read Isaiah 54

Let's NOT focus on fear and shame to lead!

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

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SESSION 6: DISCIPLINE = DISCIPLESHIP

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework & LIFE Starters: 20 minutes
Session #6 Teaching: Discipline = Discipleship: 15 minutes

When we think of the word "discipline," often what comes to mind are rules, Captain Von Trapp or a military general. But when it comes to our children, our goal should be on discipling them, not teaching them to respond mindlessly to a list of do's and don'ts. Our goal should be to help them examine and recognize their behaviors and emotions, see how sin separates them from God and others, and show them how to reconcile and grow in those relationships.

Discipling our children takes time, preparation and connection. It's much quicker to point out a fault, hand down a consequence or punishment, and move on. But parenting isn't about easy answers or quick resolutions. Before we can discipline our child, we have to evaluate our heart, and what the concern is really about. Are you addressing a moral, Scriptural issue? Or is your response based in some kind of fear or control struggle on your part?

Discipling our children also requires us to be absorbing God's Word ourselves, and have the knowledge or resources to address whatever the issue is. Heart growth requires not only telling our children not to be selfish, but to be giving; not to live in fear, but to trust in the Lord. While we as parents guide, direct and talk with our children about right and wrong, choices and behavior, we also have to remember that God does the ultimate work in their hearts, and that is why it's so important that we constantly point them to God's standards and love for us. Every time we have to address an issue, what we really have is an opportunity to help our children grow. We should be looking at the end goal and see these opportunities as a privilege, not something to be dreaded or avoided.

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

- What is the difference between just disciplining your children and discipling them?
- What does that look like in your mind?
- How can you make sure you are ready to disciple when the opportunity presents itself?

Discuss This Week's Homework: 5 minutes

- Do your LIFE Starter Journaling and make time to continue the discussion from your small group breakout time.

Resource: Watch the IDEAL video

SESSION #6

WK. 6 DEVO 1

Read Matthew 28:16-20

Journal about "making disciples" of your family!

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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SESSION #6

WK. 6 DEVO 2

Read Ephesians 4:11-19

Journal about your family's gifting and how you can lift them up in those giftings.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

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SESSION #6

WK. 6 DEVO 3

Read Matthew 16:21-28

Journal about taking your cross in order to model discipleship to your family.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #6

WK. 6 DEVO 4

Read John 15:1-17

Journal about God as the vine.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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SESSION 7: NEW TOOLS

- **Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework & LIFE Starters: 20 minutes**
- **Session #7 Teaching: New Tools: 15 minutes**

Part of disciplining our children means letting them learn from uncomfortable situations that they make for themselves. You may think of this as punishment, or consequences, but whatever you call it, there is no easy way to do it. Many of us become parents with an ideal in mind for how we will train our children, but that quickly goes out the window and we get frustrated when our children don't respond to consequences as quickly as we'd hoped, or a certain method works for one child but not another. It is important to 1) know your child, 2) check your motivation, 3) have lots of tools in your tool belt. The end goal of every instance of discipline must be restoration of relationships.

First let's address the elephant in the conversation; spanking. While sometimes spanking may be effective with some children who have no reason to fear or mistrust adults, sometimes parents are under the impression that spanking is a biblical mandate; sometimes we think it must be the best and thus only tool we need; and sometimes we just don't know what else to do. Well, good news; there are lots of other tools that work for different children, and there is not anything in scripture that teaches that parents HAVE to spank. For more thoughts on this, you might want to read this article (<https://connectedfamilies.org/spank-or-not-spank/>). For children who have experienced trauma, abuse, neglect or abandonment, spanking should be recognized as very damaging, not an appropriate tool. In fact, for foster or adoptive families, it is strictly forbidden by agencies, and for good reason.

What other tools do we have to teach our children and help them heal at the same time? Here are some options that will help your child learn, reinforce trust in you, and teach them to have safe and healthy relationships.

- Use scripts: especially effective with young children or those with processing struggles, short phrases that carry a strong message do a long way. Examples: "use good words", "no hurting", "gentle hands"
- Playful engagement is a quick way to defuse escalation and teach at the same time. "Whoa, are you a bear? I don't think my girl wants to growl at people, you might scare us into hiding!"
- Re-do: children learn best by practicing good behavior when they are calm, and often react in emotion when upset. If misbehavior occurs, whining or a disrespectful tone, you can say, "Would you like to re-do on that? Let's practice doing it the right way." Role playing situations ahead of time is great too.
- Time-in, or sometimes a time-out: some children benefit from time alone to decompress so they can then discuss the issue and learn. Others have feelings of abandonment, and keeping them with you while they calm down and prepare to repair an offense is a more helpful approach.
- Mommy or Daddy time out; sometime WE are setting the kids off, and everyone needs to take space.
- Natural/Practical consequences; don't intervene when your child's choices are going to lead to discomfort (not danger of course). If your son chooses not to do his chores or homework, let him be the one to let his friends know he can't come over that day. If you daughter breaks someone else's toy... have her replace it with one of her worn or pay for it. Your toddler hit? Give them a way to do something good with their hands. Most situations have a natural or practical consequence that can apply.

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

- What discipline tools do you find yourself using most with your children, and why?
- What was effective or not effective for you as a child?
- What can you do to assess your child's needs before you implement consequences when they have committed a wrong?

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes

- What did you cover in your small group time? What were the biggest take-aways and action items?

Discuss This Week's Homework on next page: 5 minutes

- Do your LIFE Starter Journaling and make time to continue the discussion from your small group breakout time.

Here are some things to consider:

- 1.Is it an effective tool for this child and this situation? If a parenting tool builds a wall between a parent and child rather than opening doors for communication and teaching, it's not an effective tool.
- 2.Are there other consequences that are better tied to the behavior that needs correcting? Natural/practical consequences help the brain of a child utilize the logic part of their brain, making it easier for the lesson and correlation between the issue and the result to take deeper root.
- 3.Self-control and anger. Many of our kids behaviors trigger responses or frustrations in us that aren't really even about our child. When we our buttons are pushed, it's hard to manage our own emotions, making us more susceptible to impulsivity and less able to connect with our child. When we are angry, we are more prone to humiliate or shame our child.
- 4.The Rod of Discipline: Many people have been taught that the rod of discipline in the Bible is a mandate to spank. But in the Bible, the "rod" was a tool a shepherd used to direct his sheep. If we are going to spank, are we directing?
- 5.What is your motive? Are you looking for control; a quick change in behavior; or for your children to have a changed heart open to the love of God.
- 6.Does my child have an unknown history, known trauma or extenuating circumstances, processing or learning delays, or other circumstances that could be impacting their ability to do what I am asking them to do? Make sure you are in tune with your child, you understand their emotional state, motivations, etc.

While spanking gets all the attention as a hot button issue, here are some other ideas to put in your tool belt:

- 1.Pause fun activities until responsibilities (chores, school, etc...) are met.
- 2.Consider time out (a good rule of thumb is 1 minute per year old) or a time in (stay close to the parent until able to discuss the issue).
- 3.Restoration training. If they said an unkind thing, after apologizing, have them tell 3 kind things to that person. If they use their hands to hit, have them use their hands to do something kind to restore.
- 4.Rewind the conversation. Explain how the words or tone they used were hurtful or not helpful. Then practice the conversation again to model the appropriate behavior. Karyn Purvis has a lot of great little scripts that work with younger kids, like "Try that again with respect please", of "Would you like a re-do?"

SESSION #7

WK. 7 DEVO 1

Read Jonah 2

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

F=Focus to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

E = Engage God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

SESSION #7

WK. 7 DEVO 2

Read John 18:15-27

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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SESSION #7

WK. 7 DEVO 3

Read John 21:9-17

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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SESSION #7

WK. 7 DEVO 4

Read Luke 15:17-24

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

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SESSION 8: NOT ALONE

- **Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework & LIFE Starters: 20 minutes**
- **Session #8 Teaching: You're NOT Alone: 10 minutes**

Especially if you tend to be a private person, going through trauma as a family can cause you to become an isolationist of sorts. It's easy to believe that we are the only ones going through the specific situation we face, that only our kids have struggles, that we are the only parents who feel lost or at the end of our ropes. If and when you start hearing those voices in your head, you know it's time to reach out for help. Isolation will cause more frustration, which causes more isolation, and before you know it you are stuck in a loop that is hard to break out of. The Bible shows example after example of people who lived and worked in community, especially in times of difficulty; Jesus and the 12; Job and his friends; Paul and Silas; David and Jonathan. God made us for relationship, with Him and others.

Do you know how to ask for help? It is something a lot of us have a hard time doing, in our independent culture. But you need help and support, not only for your own health and wellbeing, but also for your kids, who need to see that they can ask for and find help too. In her resources for parents, Dr. Karyn Purvis frequently said "Our children were harmed through relationship and they will experience healing through nurturing relationships", and "You cannot lead a child to a place of healing if you do not know the way yourself." Children who see the world, and close relationships, as dangerous, need to experience a wide reach of healthy, nurturing relationships. And that burden cannot fall only on the shoulders of parents; parents need support and healing from their own wounds and struggles in order to help their children.

It can seem difficult to find support and professional resources, especially if you are already feeling buried. Some of the books or videos we've mentioned here are a great place to start- there are also families involved in Woven's Family Advocacy Ministry who have a lot of experience and can relate to what you are going through. But the truth is, not everyone you interact with will be able to relate or will be supportive. It is important to evaluate what people are "safe" to share your struggles with, and not let disappointment in people create a hard shell around your heart.

Some support tools that have proven particularly helpful for families/children from hard places are:

- Equine assisted therapy
- Occupational therapy for sensory processing
- Trauma and attachment therapies
- Support groups (Like those at PBC)
- Books and webinars

Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes

- On a scale of 1 (sufficient support) to 5 (no outside support) how well are you supported through relationships and/or professional resources
- Is it easy for you to seek and find support, or do you struggle with a) reaching out, or b) knowing what you/your family needs.
- This week, what is one thing you can do to connect to support.

Discuss This Week's Homework on next page: 5 minutes

- Do your LIFE Starter Journaling and make time to continue the discussion from your small group breakout time.

Resource: The Connected Child and Created to Connect, videos from the Purvis Institute of Childhood Development

SESSION #8

WK. 8 DEVO 1

Read Proverbs 19

Journal about the best way to keep your children on the best path.

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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SESSION #8

WK. 8 DEVO 2

Read Proverbs 22

Are you (consistently) starting your children off on the right path?

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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SESSION #8

WK. 8 DEVO 3

Read Hebrews 12:4-17

God disciplines His children, but also encourages

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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SESSION #8

WK. 8 DEVO 4

Read Proverbs 10

It's time to choose YOUR way to discipline your children and be on the same page as your spouse!

L=Listen in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal.

I = Investigate the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#).

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SESSION 9: THE END GAME

- **Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework & LIFE Starters: 20 minutes**
- **Session #9 Teaching: The End Game: 10 minutes**

As this study draws to a close, it's important to again remind ourselves of what our end game in parenting is, whatever our parenting journey looks like. Ultimately, our goal is to point our children to God, the Ultimate Father. We have to evaluate and grow in our relationship with Him before we can model that to our children, and equip/prepare ourselves to understand the unique needs of our children. Parenting requires flexibility; while our standards for Godliness are objective and based on what God says, the application of those standards and the expectations around growth are subjective. For example, we can't expect a 12 yr old child with neurodevelopmental side effects of trauma to respond to parental directions like a 12 yr old child with who has not suffered a neurodevelopmental impact.

Many parents struggle with the feeling that their children are a reflection of their parenting. This can cause so much damage in the parent child relationship, relationships between families with different life experiences, and shame in parents and children as well. This is why "God looks at the heart." Directing our children to God and focusing on the heart issues that He addresses in the Bible- the fruit of the Spirit, the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments, grace, etc. can lead to the behavior and spiritual depth we hope to see in our children as they grow into adults who are responsible to God for their choices. How those things play out in our children's lives is impacted greatly by their early life experiences. A child who trusts her parents to love her and protect her can often learn quickly that lying is not a healthy behavior. A child who did not trust their early life caregivers often uses lying as a defense mechanism, and could take years to move beyond that. That's not a reflection of the child's heart condition or the parent's training methods. Just as God has grace for us, we must have it for our children.

Another great quote from Dr. Purvis says, "Don't ask your kids to be anymore perfect than you are as a parent". And this is a great principle that applies to so much of our parenting- the best way to raise healthy, respectful, caring children who know the Lord is to model that for them in our own lives and relationships, and being willing to discuss and apologize for your own shortcomings. It is impossible for us to do everything perfectly- all of our kids will need therapy as adults! But in everything we do, even the things we do wrong, we can make sure that our children know that we love them unconditionally, that they are safe with us, that we are doing what we think is best for them, and that we are trusting God to be the perfect parent where we aren't.

Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes

- What are your three goals or your mission statement for your parenting journey?
- What are some ways you can better "look at the heart" of your children rather than their behavior in the moment?
- Are you able to let go of anxieties about your children's futures and focus on walking in the wisdom of God in your day to day journey?
- What about this study could be improved to have MORE IMPACT?
- Was the LIFE Method of Journaling helpful and did you actually do it? Why or why not?
- Would you refer others for this class? Why or why not?
- Are you ready to participate in the NEXT Life Study?

Be part of this movement and give us your feedback please!

- Write out a testimony about how this class changed your parenting.
- Shoot a short 2-minute testimony video if you feel led.
- Fill out the assessment forms (emailed tomorrow).
- Consider your involvement in the next semester classes (also emailed).

Please take the time to give us feedback, as we want to improve these classes and have the biggest impact for God's Kingdom and generations to come!

