

A top-down view of a wooden table with various art supplies. In the upper left, a grey rock sits next to a green Crayola Ultra Light Washable marker. To its right are several other markers in green, pink, and black. A white plastic container with a blue label and 'AP' logo is in the upper right. In the lower left, a hand is visible, holding a rock. Next to it are several crayons in orange, pink, and white. To the right, a white sheet of paper has a rock with red and blue dots on it, and a small black and white illustration of a fish. The text 'LIFE STUDIES' is overlaid in the center, with 'LIFE' in white, 'STUDIES' in pink and white, and 'Parenting for Life' in white below it. A small 'P' logo is to the right of the subtitle.

LIFE STUDIES

Parenting for Life

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: START WITH WHY!

IT'S OK TO ASK MORE QUESTIONS!

Welcome and Program Overview: 10 minutes

Session #1 Teaching: 10 minutes

Read Proverbs 22:6 Out Loud:

6 Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

Why do WE need to be GREAT parents?

If you share your faith in a loving way with your kids, they will advance God's kingdom and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. They are a gift from God.

Psalm 127:3 Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him.

2. They will bring you joy.

John 16:20-22, Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. Proverbs 23:24-25 The father of a righteous child has great joy; a man who fathers a wise son rejoices in him. May your father and mother rejoice; may she who gave you birth be joyful! Ecclesiastes 3:4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

3. Kids add meaning.

Psalm 127:4-5 Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court.

4. God says, "Be fruitful and multiply."

Genesis 1:28 Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."

5. They will help you grow in responsibility and help decrease your selfishness because you are putting your child before yourself.

Philippians 2:3-4 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

6. We learn more about love.

Ephesians 5:1-2 I Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Jesus Christ loves us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God

7. God is always working in your life to make you into the image of Christ.

Children will help you grow as a Christian. James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. Philippians 1:6 being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

8. Kids make you healthier.

Proverbs 17:22 A cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the bones.

9. You get to share the faith and become a better evangelist. By teaching, you will also learn more.

Philemon 1:6 and I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective for the full knowledge of every good thing that is in us for the sake of Christ.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Proverbs 22:6: Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

As children grow, they are often taught to conform to rules and boundaries, and not to question for fear of displeasing others or being mocked. Without even realizing it, parents often curb their curiosity and critical thinking, in place teaching them conformity and acceptance of what they believe is right. Curious children often gradually lose their inquisitiveness, and courage to question what they do not understand.

Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes**Discuss These Family Engagement Tips:****1. Establishing a Family Q&A Culture**

Without family questions, many parents don't really have any idea whether or not their teaching is ever absorbed. In order to create this vital shift in your family dynamic, it may be necessary to establish a new direction for your home—one that will ultimately benefit both parents and kids. If it's silent when you start this new strategy, don't feel as though you need to be the one to fill it. Instead, get comfortable with silence, and wait for your kids to speak. By giving them time to formulate their thoughts, you put them in a better position to ask future, vital questions. Give them time to brainstorm and work independently too. Do not put them under pressure to speak all the time. First, give them a chance to ponder and reflect silently so they can focus, and come up with creative, original ideas. In short, do not make them speak or question just for the sake of it. All you have to do is create a spark and give them the encouragement they need!

• **Discuss some practical ways to create a new Q&A family culture.**

2. Make it about them—not you!

Never be afraid of not knowing the answer to a question – a parent is not supposed to be all-knowing, not even about the Bible! In fact, if they do ask questions which are out of the box and even new to you, that means you have succeeded in giving them the courage to ask. Good parenting consists of 10% asking kids questions and 90% inspiring kids to ask questions that you can't even answer! Listen to student answers—really listen. They may ask questions of their own, or they may go off on a tangent. That's okay! Listen to everything they have to say before you answer. Give them your full attention when they speak. Even your body language will say a lot about your interest, like how you face them and how kind and genuinely interested your facial expressions are.

• **Discuss some practical ways to inspire your kids to ask better questions.**

3. Praise them MORE!

Appreciation is the best confidence booster you can give a child. Just saying, "That's a great question!" or "Wow, what an interesting question!" will mean the world to your kids and will make them open up more often. Similarly, when they answer a question you asked, appreciate them for what they say even if the answer is not correct. If they are younger kids, then you can even give them stickers or candies.

A **high-five** would be great too! Also, never mock or belittle a child for asking a question. Instead, provide clear, solid answers that will genuinely help them, even if they're difficult. If you snuff out a child's question saying it is trivial or that they should have paid attention earlier or that it is a repeated question, essentially, you are snuffing out their courage to ever ask a question again.

- *Discuss how encouraging you are, or how you can improve in this area.*

4. Give kids time, space and respect.

Be prepared to give more time and effort. In our busy world, we often miss what's MOST important and that is our kids. We get and stay so busy, we teach them that, instead, busyness is MORE important! Everyone needs more time to learn and if given this time, they will ask more questions and come to Biblical conclusions for themselves! Also, make sure your kids feel respected and respect you and one another. Make it a rule that no one can laugh or make fun when family members are speaking. Infuse empathy within them. Make them think about how they would feel if they were in the same situation.

- *Discuss how busy you are and priorities that may need changing to be the best parent.*

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

This Week's Homework:

1. Commit to doing the LIFE Starter's Journalling method individually and discuss daily.

2. Re-read the Scriptures on pages 6-7 and discuss as a couple. Do you really know why God has blessed you with your kids?

3. Re-read page 8 and discuss improvements you need to make as a couple to infuse a Q&A culture in your home.

4. As a couple, read Ephesians 6

The words of Paul in Ephesians 6 remind Christians that our parenting has a great end towards which we must aim. God gave us the task of teaching, correcting, disciplining, loving, and training our children so that they come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and walk in a way which pleases Him.

5. Talk about Ephesians 6:4

How are YOU bringing your kids up in the training and instruction of the Lord?

Are you allowing your children to ask "WHY?" Do YOU even ask "WHY?" As painful as that word can be, we need to encourage it, so they don't conform, while NOT understanding the Gospels. ***Discuss.***

ARE YOU A GOOD ROLE-MODEL?

Read 1 Corinthians 11:1

Modeling means to give shape and form to something or someone. To be a beautiful pattern, you have to pattern your life after Jesus Christ. In patterning for your children, Love is a must in a Christian home. It is non-negotiable. It neutralizes the work of the devil. It cannot be compromised. We need to ask ourselves this question:

Do I want my children to be like me?

According to statisticbrain.com, 26% of kids between ages 8-11, say they don't want to be like their parents. 74% are saying they want to be like parents. 73% of teenagers says their relationship with their parents makes them the most happy. ***The BOTTOM line is that parents, especially Dad's, are the greatest influence on their children.***

Talk about what needs to change in your life to be a GREAT role-model for your kids.

Talk about what YOU want to get out of this program and make some goals and commitments for yourself to your group!

SESSION 1: Weekly Devotional: Day 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, 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...

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SESSION 1: Weekly Devotional: Day 2

Read Psalm 127

Are YOU letting the Lord "Build YOUR House?"

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...

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SESSION 1: Weekly Devotional: Day 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, 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...

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SESSION 1: Weekly Devotional: Day 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, 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...

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SESSION 1: LOVE YOUR SPOUSE

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework: 20 minutes

Session #2 Teaching: Loving Your Spouse: 10 minutes

As married couples, we are called to love our spouse. We can so center our homes on our children that we neglect our marriages, and a neglected marriage will become an unhappy marriage.

Read Ephesians 5:21–33:

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church — 30 for we are members of his body. 31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

NOW PRAY for UNITY before discussing these questions.

This Scripture is intimidating and possibly overwhelming, but it is what we are called to do in our marriage covenant. As a husband, it is intimidating to think of being to your wife what Christ is to the church. Husbands are commanded to love their wives

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

What does it look like for husbands to love their wives as Christ loves the church? Also, how can wives help their husbands obey this command?

As a wife, it is equally intimidating to think of submitting to your husband as you should to the Lord. “Submission” is frowned on in the world’s eyes, but it’s a clear command to wives in Scripture.

What does it look (and not look) like for wives to submit to their husbands as the church does to Christ? Also, how can husbands make it easier to submit to them?

If you have embraced the gospel, then the Holy Spirit lives in you. You are not alone! The Holy Spirit will help you do what God has commanded you to do.

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: 5 minutes

This Week's Homework:

Re-read Ephesians 5:21-33:

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— 30 for we are members of his body. 31 “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. 33 However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

PRAY AGAIN for UNITY before discussing these questions.

This Scripture is intimidating and possibly overwhelming, but it is what we are called to do in our marriage covenant. As a husband, it is intimidating to think of being to your wife what Christ is to the church. Husbands are commanded to love their wives.

Review the questions from last week's class and discuss again:

What does it look like for husbands to love their wives as Christ loves the church? Also, how can wives help their husbands obey this command?

As a wife, it is equally intimidating to think of submitting to your husband as you should to the Lord. “Submission” is frowned on in the world's eyes, but it's a clear command to wives in Scripture

What does it look (and not look) like for wives to submit to their husbands as the church does to Christ? Also, how can husbands make it easier to submit to them?

If you have embraced the gospel, then the Holy Spirit lives in you. You are not alone! The Holy Spirit will help you do what God has commanded you to do.

Discuss together how you can love and respect each other more openly.

Be intentional and make commitments to each other on specific improvement areas to represent Jesus' model for a Godly marriage.

****Read “Tips for Biblical Conflict Resolution” on page 19 before session.***

SESSION 2: Weekly Devotional: Day 1

Read Genesis 2

Focus on Genesis 2:24 and journal about what God says about becoming ONE flesh.

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...

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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 2: Weekly Devotional: Day 2

Read Ecclesiastes 4

Focus on Ecclesiastes 4:12 and journal about what God says about the unity of marriage.

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...

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SESSION 2: Weekly Devotional: Day 3

Re-Read Ephesians 5:25-33

Think about how you can do YOUR part to treat your spouse like God expects. Journal about that.

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...

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SESSION 2: Weekly Devotional: Day 4

Read 1 Corinthians 13

Pray about the fruits of the Spirit and areas that YOU need to improve to show God's love to your spouse.

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...

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SESSION 3: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Read (below) "Tips for Biblical Conflict Resolution" before session.

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework: 20 minutes

Session #3 Teaching: Review Tips for Biblical Conflict Resolution: 10 minutes

Define the problem and stick to the issue. Clearly define the issue and stay on topic during the discussion. Conflict deteriorates when the issue that started the conflict gets lost in angry words, past issues, or hurts tossed into the mix

Pursue purity of heart. "Take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye" (Matt. 7:5 NASB). Before approaching others regarding their faults and shortcomings, prayerfully face up to your own. Confess any way you might have contributed to the problem.

Plan a time for the discussion. Plan a time to meet with the other person when you are both rested and likely to respond in love to the other person's concerns. When you are tired, stressed, and distracted with other responsibilities, things rarely will go well.

Affirm the Relationship. Affirm the relationship before clearly defining the problem.

Listen carefully. Once you share your feelings, listen to the other person's perspective. Lean in; be present.

Forgive. Forgive others as Christ has forgiven you. Make forgiveness concrete with four promises:

- I promise I won't bring this up and use it against you in the future.
- I promise I'm not going to dwell on it in my own heart and mind.
- I'm not going to talk to other people about it.
- I'm not going to let it stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.

Propose a solution. Remember the relationship is more important than the issue. When working toward a solution, consider Philippians 2:4-5: "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." Seek solutions that keep everyone's best interests in mind.

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

- When you review the "tips" above, what area is the HARDEST for you to do? Why?
- Talk about some solutions that YOU think can help your situation.
- Can you really PROMISE to forgive? Discuss why or why not.
- What are you willing to commit to moving forward?

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: 5 minutes

- Discuss how conflict is a GOOD thing. Without some conflict, we are not growing, so talk about how you can embrace it.
- Discuss how you've dealt with conflict in the past and how you want to handle it moving forward.
- Discuss how you can improve conflict resolution with your family.
- Discuss as a family if applicable.

SESSION 3: Weekly Devotional: Day 1

Read Philippians 2:1-8

Resolving conflict requires defeating selfishness.

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...

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SESSION 3: Weekly Devotional: Day 2

Read Romans 12:9-21

Resolving conflict requires pursuing the other person.

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...

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SESSION 3: Weekly Devotional: Day 3

Read Ephesians 4

Resolving conflict requires forgiveness.

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...

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SESSION 3: Weekly Devotional: Day 4

Read 1 Peter 3:8-22

Resolving conflict requires returning a blessing for an insult.

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...

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SESSION 4: RESPECT AUTHORITY

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework: 20 minutes Session Session #4 Teaching: Respect Authority: 10 minutes

So far, we have covered the importance of parents living a life of integrity, starting with a focused, personal relationship with Jesus, and the importance of our marriage being our second priority. The model we live out will dictate how our children live out their faith. As Christian parents, everything we do, even if we think it's in secret, sends a message to our children and to nonbelievers including this one: **Disrespect any of our leaders, visibly, and you teach your children disrespect.**

Instead, you might be thinking, "**Respect is earned!**", but as you study God's Word, you'll see that God doesn't give us a choice! The best reasons to respect authority spring from love —our love for God, for our fellow man, and even for ourselves. Because we love Jehovah above all else, we want to make his heart rejoice.

Read Romans 13:1-5

When you start modeling respect for God, for your spouse, for the authorities over you, it will be much easier to expect that from your children. **You can't demand something you don't give!**

Respect also is dependent on time. If you are constantly rushed, you won't give the needed attention to respecting authority or respecting your family.

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

- Are YOU modeling respect in your home?
- How are some ways you disrespect each other? Other authorities in your life? YOUR OWN parents?
- Discuss some practical changes YOU can make to be the best model of respect.
- Discuss how time (or lack of) plays a part in examples of disrespect in your life.

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: 5 minutes

- Discuss how you can improve "respect" in your home.
- Relook at your calendar and priorities if time is an issue with your lack of respect.
- Discuss how you can better respect your children, in order to model your expectations.
- Make a new "respect" plan together.

SESSION 4: Weekly Devotional: Day 1

Read Romans 13

Journal about respecting authority in your life.

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...

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SESSION 4: Weekly Devotional: Day 2

Read 1 Peter 5:1-11

Journal about being more humble in your approach to leading.

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...

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SESSION 4: Weekly Devotional: Day 3

Read Ephesians 6:1-9

Are you exasperating your spouse and your children?

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...

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SESSION 4: Weekly Devotional: Day 4

Read Titus 3

What areas can you improve in your modeling of Jesus Christ as the head of your family?

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...

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SESSION 5: OBEDIENCE & REPENTANCE

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework: 15 minutes

Discuss how you assessed "*respect*" in your home this week.

Session #5 Teaching: Obedience & Repentance: 15 minutes

Obedience is NOT something that happens on an island, or over night! It is the outcome of everything we've discussed so far and again, it starts with how YOUR model as a parent and how you set your expectations as a family. There is a Biblical standard that God wants us to maintain, both as followers and leaders and that moral standard cannot change, even though we may all arrive at that standard on slightly different paths. As we discuss obedience today, we need to talk about our own moral standard and how we might need to adjust OUR obedience to God in order to expect our family to follow that lead. Also, our lack of obedience leads to a need and understanding of repentance. We ALL need to repent more often and expect the same from our children.

All of this starts with communicating and holding to your expectations in a consistent fashion.

Once we set our standards, we need to stick to them.

- **Stop threatening and repeating. No more "counting to 3!"**
- **Stop bribing.**
- **Stop negotiating with your children and giving too many choices.**
- **Expect FIRST-time obedience. It all starts with better communication!**

Read Colossians 3:21

Start being MORE consistent in YOUR parenting! Slow down, look them in the eye and hold your ground! Make sure they engage you with a verbal response. "Yes, Mommy," or "Yes, Daddy!" Make sure to praise your kids more than reprimanding them!

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

- Are YOU modeling obedience? To God? To your spouse? Do you snap at your spouse or at the kids when asked for attention? Are YOU letting YOUR YES be YES and your NO be NO? Stop saying maybe...Discuss
- Discuss how you give your kids too many choices.
- Will you enforce having your kids respond when you engage them?
- How will YOU talk about obedience AND repentance with your family?

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: 5 minutes

- Start giving your family a 5-minute warning.
- Remove the "gray area" communication. Assess how often you communicate "maybe" instead of saying YES or NO!
- Assess your consistency in both reprimands and reward.
- Do this week's LIFE Starter Journaling about your OWN commitment to repentance

SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional: Day 1

Read Acts 3:19-21 again

Journal about repentance and a “time of refreshing” because of your willingness to repent.

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...

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SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional: Day 2

Read Acts 3:17-26

What does repentance mean to you? What sin do you need to turn from?
Without naming it, you can't have victory over it!

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...

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SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional: Day 3

Read Acts 2:14-40

Review verse 38 and journal about what it means to you.

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SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional: Day 4

Read Luke 13:1-5

Reflect on **confession, repentance and obedience** and spend time in **Listening Prayer** and reviewing your **LIFE Starter** time for the week. **Make notes to share with your group!**

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...

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SESSION 6: DISCIPLINE PATIENTLY & CONSISTENTLY

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework: 15 minutes

Discuss how you assessed “*obedience*” in your home this week

Session #6 Teaching: Discipline Patiently & Consistently: 10 minutes

Proverbs 29:17 says, “Discipline your son and he will give you rest; he will give delight to your heart.”

Consistently teaching, correcting, and disciplining our children can be exhausting work. We can easily give in to the temptation to let things go we should address or to “parent” by simply barking orders, and neither of these is an acceptable option. Instead, we must patiently and consistency discipline our children. This takes time and is definitely not the easy way out, but it will train the hearts of our children and be better for them in the long run. As mentioned last week when we discussed repentance, if you slipped up and lost your temper in a way that was hurtful to your child, *be quick to apologize and seek forgiveness*. Your children don't need a perfect parent, but they do need a parent who will teach them how to restore relationships. Forgive yourself and show yourself grace. And be sure you have forgiven your children if needed – you don't want to become bitter toward them

Learn from your experience so you'll do better next time. Through your spiritual growth, work at building awareness of the feelings and physical signs that tell you you're growing angry, and plan a calming strategy to use next time.

Share about how you can adjust your schedule to be less stressed.

Small Group Discussion: 20 minutes

- Discuss how patient you are with your spouse and children. Remember, the modeling necessary starts with how you treat your spouse!
- Discuss what you are doing NOW to teach your kids consistently. What can you do to improve?
- Discuss some practical ways YOU can take the primary responsibility to teach your children the Bible.

Small Group Wrap-Up: 5 minutes

What did you cover in your small group time?

What were the biggest take-aways and action items?

Discuss This Week's Homework: 5 minutes

- Are YOU modeling a Biblical worldview? Discuss how your worldview and the biblical worldview line up in your home with your spouse.
- Review the tips on the next page and discuss what new strategies can be implemented.
- Focus on the LIFE Journaling Method and it will give you more insights on how to be more patient. Review these practical tips on how to maintain more patience with your family.

DISCIPLINE PATIENTLY & CONSISTENTLY

1. **Speak slowly and softly.** When you feel your anger rising, slow your speech way down and talk quietly. This will help you resist the urge to shout. Don't lecture – it will make you more upset. Simply say to your child, I'm feeling really upset/angry/frustrated right now. I need a few moments to calm down before I deal with this situation. This lets your child know that there's going to be a "pause" in the proceedings. Naming your emotions in front of your child is important too. In effect, you're sending your child the message, Watch and learn – this is how to deal with anger.
2. **Take 10 deep breaths.** Rehearse a verse of Scripture like James 1:5 or Romans 12:2. Then pray, asking the Holy Spirit to help you put self-oriented thoughts aside and respond in a way that lovingly meets your child's needs and nurtures their emotional and spiritual growth.
3. **Remove yourself from the situation if needed** (provided your children will be safe in your absence). Keep a stash of calming Scripture memory verses in the bathroom (or another calm-down retreat, or in your purse or wallet) and pray through them until you feel more under control.
4. **Don't expect too much from your children!** Remind yourself that you are the parent, and responsible before God to show your child a better way.
5. **Dig for the truth.** Anger is a secondary emotion. When you feel yourself getting upset, listen carefully to your thoughts to reveal the primary emotion underlying your reaction. Is it fear? Resentment? Hurt? Grief? Disappointment? Stress? For example, you might be thinking, If my kids don't leave me alone, I'll never meet my deadline. Your children didn't set your work deadline, so be honest about who really owns that problem.
6. **Lighten up and channel your inner comic.** Learn to laugh with your kids first, before you talk about how they might do better next time.
7. **Call an Ignite Purpose friend for two minutes.** A brief chat with another parent in this program will help you put the situation in perspective.
8. **Count your blessings.** Rehearse in your mind all the things you love about your child/children. This moment of frustration will soon pass.
9. **Ask your kids to help!** Once you've told your kids, I'm feeling very frustrated right now, ask them, What do you think I should do? Their cute answers may just melt your heart. At the very least, you've got them actively engaged in thinking about good ways to manage their own anger.

SESSION 6: Weekly Devotional: Day 1

Read Galatians 6:1-10

Journal about not getting weary doing good, especially for your family!

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...

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SESSION 6: Weekly Devotional: Day 2

Read James 5:7-20

Learn to be patient in suffering.

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...

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SESSION 6: Weekly Devotional: Day 3

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-13

Love is patient and kind and is the most attractive trait of a purpose driven parent.

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...

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SESSION 6: Weekly Devotional: Day 4

Read Ephesians 4

You have been called and gifted to be a GREAT parent to your children. Are YOU ready to take full responsibility for the UNITY in your house?

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...

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SESSION 7: OK, IT'S TIME TO PUNISH

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework: 15 minutes

Discuss being "*patient and consistent*" in your parenting moving ahead.

Session #7 Teaching: Punishment vs. Correction: 15 minutes

After What comes to your mind when you hear the words "correcting" and "punishing"? According to Mirriam Webster:

- Punishing = "to impose a penalty on for a fault, offense, or violation"
- Correcting = "to make or set right"

Our mindset and motivation when guiding our children makes a big difference in how they receive it, and what foundation we building in their hearts. Having a Gospel focus lends to a perspective that helps us lead our children in righting their wrongs.

Ask yourself this question: what is the goal for your children? Do you want to correct or do you want to punish?

Simply seeking to punish doesn't always teach what we hope it will. Correction could include something you might call punishment but it has a different end goal in mind.

Think about this, if we are to have a Gospel mindset, what is the goal of the Gospel? It is to repair relationship and then grow us through sanctification into Christ-likeness. Jesus took our punishment to bring correction to the wrongs! As adults, our sin usually looks different then our children's (though I have seen adults throw a tantrum!), but the heart issues are often the same. Correcting focuses on setting right the heart, rather than punishing for a behavior. But we can only do that for our kids if we are also constantly trying to set our own hearts right, and sharing that journey with them. Talking with your kids about your own struggles, especially when correcting them, gives them hope and shows them humility, creating a relationship where they can see why correction is necessary.

"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates." —Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (NIV)

Of course, all choices have consequences of some kind. Good choices bring benefits... poor choices bring negative consequences. As a parent, it can be tempting to use a quick punishment and move on rather than to allow a natural consequence that might impact the entire day and the rest of the family- but which one is more likely to promote learning, work at the heart level and help you build your relationship with your child?

Consequences that will get to your child's heart are consequences that are logical or practical; not extreme or meaningless; focused on the behavior and not the child; and go below the surface to evaluate the heart issue, the child's needs and abilities, our own triggers and motivation; and focus on repairing wrongs, not shaming or humiliating your child."

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matt. 19:14 NIV

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

- How were you disciplined or punished, and how does it effect your correction of your children?
- Do you tend to approach wrong-doing with a punishment or a correction perspective?

- Do you and your spouse have a plan for correcting, are you on the same page?
- Do you find it hard or easy to be open with your children about your own heart issues and behaviors?
- What are some examples of natural consequences that you have used as a tool, or allowed your children to experience?

For homework, we are going to ask you as couples to talk about the hot button issue: Spanking. One of the most debated parenting tools is spanking. As with all elements of parenting, it is critical that you look at your own heart and the Fruit of the Spirit in its application. One of my favorite parenting quotes is "God instructs parents not to exasperate their children, not the other ways around."

Small Group Wrap-Up: 5 minutes

What did you cover in your small group time?

What were the biggest take-aways and action items?

Discuss This Week's Homework: 5 minutes

- Make sure you and your spouse are on the same page for your family's correction/punishment process. Review the following page and discuss.
- Focus on the LIFE Journaling Method and it will give you more insights on how to better coach your children.

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, its 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, its 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 toolbox:

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", or "Would you like a re-do?"

SESSION 7: Weekly Devotional: Day 1

Read Proverbs 19

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

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...

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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: Weekly Devotional: Day 2

Read Proverbs 22

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

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SESSION 7: Weekly Devotional: Day 3

Read Hebrews 12:4-17

God disciplines His children, but also encourages.

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SESSION 7: Weekly Devotional: Day 4

Read Proverbs 10

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

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SESSION 8: SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP – BIBLE STUDY PLANNING

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework: 15 minutes

Are you in UNITY on punishment?

Session #8 Teaching: Spiritual Leadership: 15 minutes

Dads, it's time to be THE spiritual leader of YOUR home! Your time of family Bible study is a mixture of humility, vulnerability and self-deprecating humor, with a dash of storytelling. Don't think of yourself as Moses coming down the mountain with stone tablets to give some religion to his unruly children. You are not a lecturer or a judge wielding a Study Bible as your gavel. Think of yourself as a trusted spiritual guide on a journey with your family. The Bible is your GPS, showing you the route to take and the hazards to avoid along the way. **Remember, you don't have to have all the answers!**

WHY DO WE NEED IT?

- Create a **fun and non-preachy way** to teach children the Bible.
- Create a weekly vehicle to **pass on most important beliefs**, values and hard-earned lessons, often in humorous and vulnerable ways.
- Create an **intimate window** into the highs and lows of your children's lives.
- Create a **shared experience of trust** that will serve as the foundation for developing a uniquely close friendship with your kids as they become adults.
- Create a systematic way to pray for your family and track the results, **building God's influence in your home and the faith of your family.**

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

- Review the info on the next page and commit to the plan.
- Discuss what you think about starting your OWN weekly family Bible study. Will YOU do it?
- Discuss your concerns and obstacles around doing this. What will help make this a reality?

Small Group Wrap-Up: 5 minutes

What did you cover in your small group time?

What were the biggest take-aways and action items?

Discuss This Week's Homework: 5 minutes

- Make a commitment to each other to do a season (at least 8 weeks) of these personal family Bible studies. Discuss HOW to make these a reality for your home!
- Consider starting this week!
- Focus on the LIFE Journaling Method and it will give you more insights on how YOU are equipped to use the Bible as the guide for your family.

YOUR VERY OWN WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Here is a **90-minute formula** and format for a winning, weekly Bible study with YOUR family that will influence generations to come:

(DAD & MOM) PREPARE (30 minutes)

Pray and think about an area of interest from something that came up this week. Make the topic relevant to you and your children. Did YOU have a learning moment? Was there an event that the family experienced this week that is worth talking and teaching around? Review Scripture verses by using Free Bible Study Guide website and jot down 3-5 questions that will engage your children and order some PIZZA!

EAT & CHAT (20 minutes)

Order pizza, or do something different to make this time the most special time of the week! Talk about sports, school, movies, whatever and considered this period an "ice breaker."

SHARE (10 minutes)

Share about what you came up with during your preparation time. How do YOU personally relate to the topic? This is the time for YOU to be vulnerable to set the stage for both the Scripture review and the questions you will engage your family with.

LEARN (10 minutes)

Now, it is time to take your topic and allow everyone to discover biblical principles on those practical themes. You don't need to OVER-TEACH at this time, just make it light and fun for everyone.

DICUSS (10 minutes)

Now, it's time to discuss what you learned from the Bible and ask the questions of your family that you came up with during your prep time. You may get a lot of, "I don't know" answers, but you need to keep asking slightly different (open ended) questions that will make everyone think for themselves. This is not easy, as most men don't know how to go past the first phase of questioning, but it's a great time to grow and learn how to engage people in ALL relationships, as you make them think about the subject matter in a personal way.

SHARE (10 minutes)

End the study time with a more personal time of questions to end on a positive note:

- What was the "high" of your week?
- What was the "low" of your week?
- How can I pray for you?

SESSION 8: Weekly Devotional: Day 1

Read 2 Timothy 3:10-17

Are YOU equipped with God's Word to teach your children God's Truth?

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SESSION 8: Weekly Devotional: Day 2

Read Joshua 1

Like Joshua, be strong and courageous as you step up your leadership at home.

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SESSION 8: Weekly Devotional: Day 3

Read Psalm 119:1-8

Be blessed as you take on this new adventure for Christ and your family.

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SESSION 8: Weekly Devotional: Day 4

Read Proverbs 3

Don't trust in your own understanding, make sure to trust God in your new parenting adventure!

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SESSION 9: WRAP-UP/COMMENTS

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework: 15 minutes

Did you start a family Bible study time? Discuss.

Session #9 Reflection/Feedback: 15 minutes

Read and remember this verse as you move forward.

"37 All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one."

-Matthew 5:37 (NIV)

Reflect back on this program and talk about how your perspective is different:

- What is MORE important to now?
- How have your beliefs shifted?
- Is your family MORE focused on Jesus? Why or why not?
- How will you interact with your family differently?
- How will you interact with God differently?
- What are the radical changes you need and how will you execute these changes?

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

With what you've learned, HOW will you do the following as you move forward?

- Set yourself up for success, not failure.
- Define and measure success regularly.
- Commit to accountability.
- Adjust as needed and redefine your goals and expectations often

Small Group Wrap-Up: How can this study be improved?: 15 minutes

- What are the top THREE takeaways from this study?
- What about this study could be improved to have MORE IMPACT?
- Was the LIFE Method of Journalling 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 Ignite Purpose program?

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!

