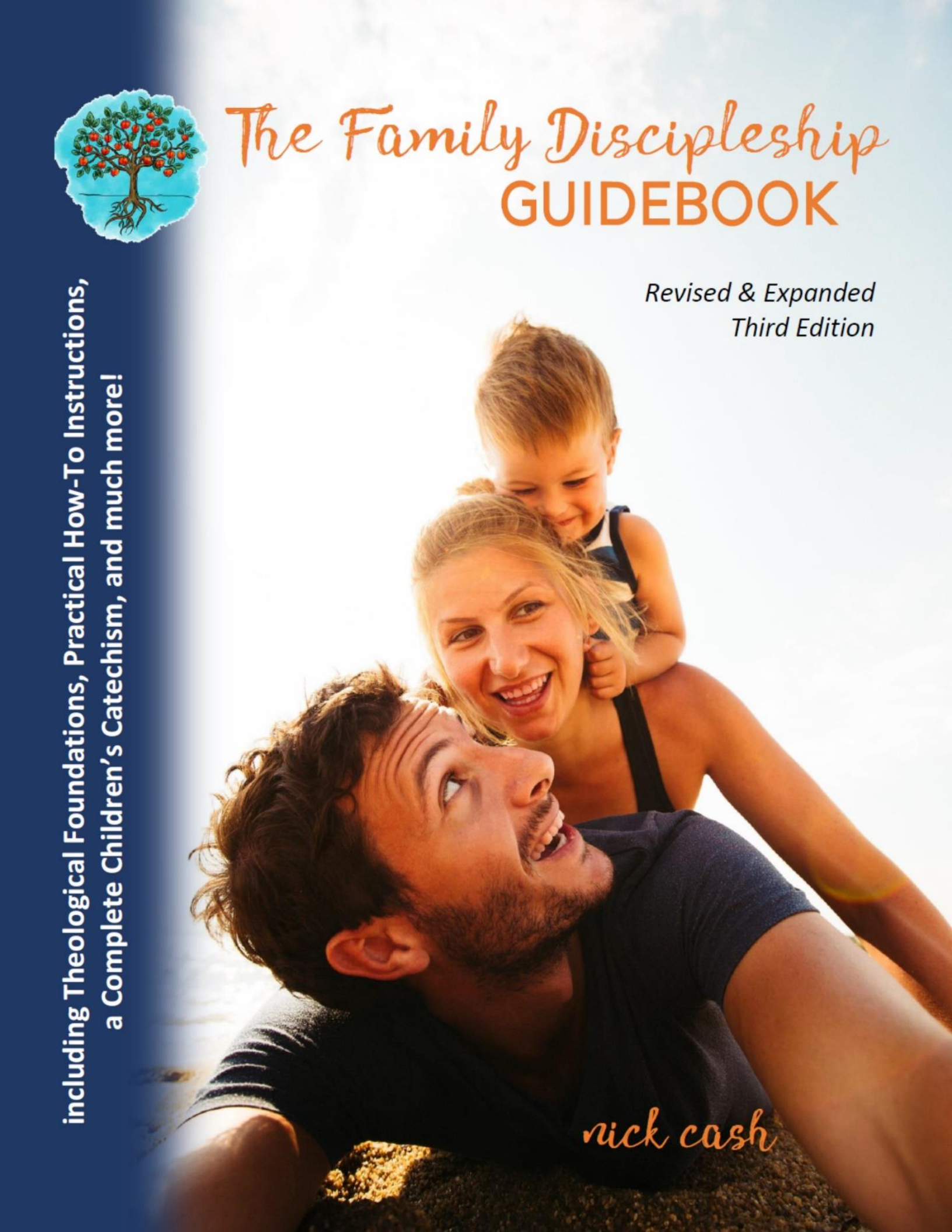
The Family Discipleship GUIDEBOOK

Revised & Expanded
Third Edition

including Theological Foundations, Practical How-To Instructions, a Complete Children's Catechism, and much more!



nick cash

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Discipleship – the process of learning to walk every moment with (and for) Jesus – is a personal passion of mine. I am a collector of resources and strategies for walking successfully with God, and I want to share my collection with you! Just remember: it's not the strategy in the end that results in growth. It is the life of faithful obedience to God that bears the most consistent fruit.

LikeTreesPlanted.com is a website dedicated to sharing tools to help you follow faithfully in the steps of the Savior. I am not a super-Christian, but I am convinced that discipleship is the God-given ability of EVERY believer! Ordinary people like you and me CAN walk with God successfully on a daily basis! I want to help you do just that.

—Nick

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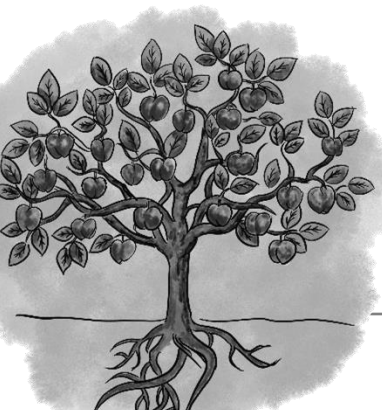

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Introduction

In my 20s, I had a vague sense of responsibility regarding the spiritual leadership of my home. I had a general desire to "bring up my children in the Lord," but really no idea of how to do it. Dianna and I would pray together – sometimes. We would read the Bible together – sporadically. We were both devoted followers of Jesus. We were both trained disciple-makers working in full-time youth ministry. We just didn't have a clue how to conduct family discipleship at a practical level with each other and our own small children.

Then, one day about 10 years into our marriage, I stumbled upon a mentor in family discipleship, and the course of our parenting and disciple-making at home transformed forever.

The pages that follow are the results of the past 21 years of practice, trial-and-error, starts-and-stops, and starting back over again. Throughout those years, we newlyweds have grown into middle age. Our children have grown into teenagers, the oldest of whom are now transitioning into young adulthood. We have added additional children to our home through adoption and foster care. And we have experienced the continuous grace and kind love of God all the way.

Throughout those years, we have fumbled and stumbled our way through trying to provide meaningful spiritual leadership for our home. We have adapted our approach to the changing ages of our children and the changing seasons of our family's life together. It has not been perfect, but we have tried to remain intentional and consistent in practicing some form of family discipleship together throughout those years.

The Lord has been gracious to us. Our kids have been patient with us. And, to date, I'm grateful and happy with the spiritual state of our home and our family's spiritual life together – albeit messy and imperfect. Two steps forward and one step back is still forward progress – and practice makes progress! Small regular improvements add up to massive increases over time.

I printed the first edition of a little *Family Devotions Guide Book* in 2014 as a Christmas gift for the 46 families and married couples that lived and served with us onboard the *M/v Africa Mercy*, during our time of volunteering with Mercy Ships. Our own family's approach to discipleship in our home grew and matured in the years that followed, and I printed an updated second edition in 2018 to share with the families in our church back home. Over the past five years, we have given away (or sold at cost) 2000 copies of that edition.

Since 2018, our family has continued to grow: in maturity, in practice, in the ages of our older children, and in the number of children in our home... I have also continued to learn more from other practitioners of family discipleship over the past several years and attempted to integrate new practices into our family's spiritual life as our children and home have grown.

All of these realities (combined with the fact that we have completely run out of copies from the last printing!) led me to expand and update the previous edition. This new resource is presented with additional teaching elements, additional prayers and catechism questions, and several parenting tools that we have developed throughout the years since the printing of the previous editions.

May God's Presence, purposes, power, provision, and peace abound in your home, lives, marriage, and parenting! May He bless and multiply even our weakest attempts to provide spiritual leadership for our homes. May He strengthen our marriages every day, and may He empower us to disciple our children into the Kingdom of God. And may they grow up knowing Him, loving Him, and living their lives for His glory. All glory to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit! Amen.

—Nick

Guiding Scriptures & Principles

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 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." –Deuteronomy 6:4-9

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
–Proverbs 22:6

"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." –Ephesians 6:4

"Let your roots grow down into Christ and draw up nourishment from Him. See that you go on growing in the Lord, and become strong and vigorous in the Truth." –Colossians 2:7

"Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children." –Deuteronomy 4:9

"Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." –Joshua 24:15

"We will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which He commanded our ancestors to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget His deeds but would keep His commands."
–Psalm 78:4-7

"Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth." –Deuteronomy 11:18-21

"If you want apples, the best time to plant an orchard was 20 years ago. The next best time is now." –Dr. Matt Friedeman

"Two steps forward and one step back is still forward progress. Practice makes progress! Small regular improvements add up to massive increases over time." –Unknown

"Do the best you can until you know better. Then, when you know better, do better."
–Maya Angelou

"Discipleship is a long obedience in the same direction." –Eugene Peterson

"As disciples, our duty is faithfulness, not perfection." –Mike Erre

"I can accept failure, but I cannot accept not trying." –Michael Jordan

"When one is simply obeying God, a little effort goes a long way." –Thomas Merton

"Discipleship is not about behavior modification; it is about heart transformation. The job of a dad, then, is to disciple his children's hearts toward loving God and serving people."
–Patrick Morley

"A disciple is someone who is learning by practice to do the things Jesus said. A disciple is one who is learning how to live their life like Jesus would if their life was His to live. How would Jesus do your job if He had your job to do? How would He love your spouse if He was married to them? How would He interact with your neighbors if He lived in your house? Discipleship is the process of learning to live your life like He would." –Dallas Willard

"Many parents do not focus on defining a positive vision for their family in a way that everyone can understand. As a result, kids learn more about what NOT to do than how to do the right thing for the right reasons. A great source of frustration in families is the "Bring Me a Rock" Syndrome: the parent gives a non-specific instruction, fails to test the child for understanding, then becomes annoyed with the results that don't meet their expectations. Implementation can only be effective if the important work of clear, repetitive vision-setting is done first." –Ken Blanchard

"Parents of teenagers: authenticity trumps coolness every single time. Be real with your kids. They don't need you to be their buddy, they need you to lead them by example."
–Craig Groeschel

"You'll never be a perfect parent, but you can be a praying parent." –Mark Batterson

"Your greatest contribution to society may not be something you do, but someone you raise."
–Andy Stanley

Acknowledgements

Enormous thanks and acknowledgement go to Rev. Dr. Matt Friedeman – a devoted Christian man, husband, and father of six children, all of whom are now adults who passionately follow Jesus. Dr. Friedeman was my family discipleship mentor throughout my 30s when my older three children were small, teaching me the essentials of Godly family leadership and demonstrating for me and my fellow seminarians how to lead meaningful family devotions. Dr. Friedeman would often invite groups of students to his home to join him, his wife Mary, and their six children (who were at that time teenagers and young adults) for meals and family devotions around their dinner table. Much of the content for this book I learned directly from Dr. Friedeman's teachings, writings, and example throughout my years of seminary and doctoral education. I thank God for Dr. Friedeman and his family's example, and I credit them with much of what appears in this book. Dr. Friedeman has graciously granted permission for me to revise and reuse portions of his earlier work *Hidden in the Heart: A Catechism for Children* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing, 2013) here in this updated volume on family discipleship.

I want to thank and acknowledge my wife and best friend, Dianna Cash, who is the most Christ-like person I know, and the person closest to Jesus in personal relationship that I have ever known. Dianna quietly and fruitfully disciples countless people through her intentional love, prayers, communication, note-writing, hospitality, and transparent life example. She has graciously followed my stumbling attempts to lead our family throughout the years, and has brought much-needed insight and practical maturity to the actual practice of our family's discipleship! While I am called to be the spiritual leader of our home, I praise Dianna for being the constant presence, embodiment, and implementer of leading our children in the devoted and consistent pursuit of Jesus in our household.

To Eli, Caroline, Emma, and Zoe – you, my children, are who all of this is for! Well, it's really all for Jesus(!), but you are the disciples that God has placed within our family to raise up in the ways of the Lord. I delight in each of you! I absolutely cherish you. My heart sings and my soul soars when I think of you! I treasure each of you more than I could ever fully convey. I love you – and I like you! And I look forward to learning from you and rejoicing with you and your relationships with Jesus as my fellow siblings within the eternal family God.

To God, the Author and Creator of my life, my marriage, my home, my children, my family. Who loves us with all His heart, soul, mind, and strength. To His eternal Son, Jesus, who loved us so much to become one of us, to die for us, and to emerge from the grave victorious over sin, death, the grave, and hell! And to His Spirit, who lives within us, and suffers our limitations and hard-heartedness, and continuously offers spiritual power, gifts, and fruit to one so slow to learn and grow as me. I thank you, Lord, for all that You are, and for all that You have done for me and my family. All glory and honor and praise and thanks to You, forevermore! Amen.

PART ONE:
Foundations for Family Discipleship

"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."
–Deuteronomy 6:6-9

Some of the best moments we share with our loved ones are spent around the dinner table. This special daily time of physical and social nourishment together is the perfect place to integrate spiritual nourishment as well – through prayer, reading and discussing God's Word together, and propelling each other forward as fellow followers of Jesus!

For those of you with doubts, I promise you: you can do this. No matter what your fears may be, no matter how unprepared or unsure of yourself you may feel – YOU CAN DO THIS!

God's primary plan for the discipleship of children is parents. And the earlier you can start, the better.

For married couples without children: you do not become a family once you have a child. The two of you are already a family! You can take responsibility now for the spiritual vitality of your marriage by praying together, by reading and memorizing Scripture together, by sharing regular stories of God's grace and faithfulness with each other. Your marriage will experience a depth and strength that you have never known before!

Also, if you begin a thriving devotional habit now as a married couple, then any children that God may bring into your family in the future will enter into a spiritually rich and thriving environment. They will get to grow up in the discipling context that already exists in your home, thanks to the groundwork you laid as newlyweds!

There are many ways to bring a devotional rhythm to our lives. What is presented in this resource is meant to be suggestions and guiding principles to help you discover a rhythm that will work for your household. Maybe you are already doing something together with God as a family on a

regular basis, and that is awesome! Just take from this book anything you feel might make what you are already doing stronger or better. If you are not yet having any kind of family devotional time in your home, I invite you to let this book help give you a start.

I suggest mealtimes because the dinner table is the altar of the home. Throughout history, as Christians have endured times of transition, lack, or persecution, the home has served as the primary place of spiritual formation and worship. In many locations around the world, the people of God have no other place to gather than inside their own homes. The table, then, becomes the epicenter for the pursuit and worship of God within the home, just as the altar is in the sanctuary.

I Know What I'm Supposed to Do – But I Don't Know How!

"I know I'm supposed to be the spiritual leader of my home... I know I'm supposed to bring up my kids in the Lord... But how? I know what I'm supposed to do – but I don't know how to do it!"

This was the lament of my younger years of marriage and parenting: responsibility without training. I had no "how-to" manual for family leadership and lacked the foresight to seek out mentors. I was stuck.

I would pray with my wife every so often. I would read a Bible story to my kids randomly – maybe a couple times a month. But there was no strategy. No vision. No schedule. No proactivity. No intentionality. Just a vague sense of responsibility that was usually accompanied by a crippling sense of failure.

How do you feel with regard to the spiritual leadership of your home? What words would you use to describe it? My words in the past have been: *lost, ill-equipped, haphazard, reactive, sporadic, failure*. Certainly that cannot be God's intention for Christian parenting, can it? For slow days and fast years to move past without any sense of purpose or direction or training or intention for the spiritual development of our homes? To try to "do a good job" as Christian parents and "just hope for the best" by the time our kids reach young adulthood?

There must be a more purposeful way. And it has to be accessible to every Christian parent to be able do it. If only a few could do it, then there could not be a universal call of God upon all Christian parenthood. But there is! Every Christian parent can disciple their household into the Kingdom of God. You don't need a seminary degree or a special certification from your church. God chose you. God chose you to be your kids' parent, and He will equip you for the role if you will seek His guidance and practice with intentionality the principles of purposeful family discipleship found in the Bible.

I was praying one night when my older kids were small, mad at myself following a particularly poor evening of parenting, when I said this to God: *"God, I wish these kids had a better dad."* Now, I don't hear God's audible voice, but He does speak to my heart and mind – giving me thoughts and feelings that I know aren't from me or someone else. Immediately after I prayed, *"God, I wish these kids had a better dad,"* I received God's response, clearly in my spirit. He said, *"They don't have 'a better dad'; they have YOU. I chose you to raise these kids; you are the right man for the job! You be the better dad you want your kids to have."*

The First Person You Have to Lead is Yourself

My first foundational principle for family discipleship is this: it is impossible to pour water out of an empty pitcher. First, fill up the pitcher; then you can pour it out into the cups of the thirsty. Likewise, it will be extremely difficult to lead meaningful family devotions when we ourselves are not engaged in personal devotions. The first person you have to lead is yourself. Start simple, and cultivate a consistent daily personal relationship with Jesus through prayer and Bible study.

And – don't hide it from your kids. Of course our private devotional lives are not for show. I'm not advocating for performance-spirituality. But as parents, our personal relationships with Jesus should be visible to the members of our own household. I encourage my kids to exercise; so, they need to see me exercise. I warn my kids about being addicted to their devices; so, they need to see me setting mine down to pursue other interests!

In the same way, let your kids see you reading your Bible and journaling your takeaways. Let them walk in on you praying with your spouse. Let them catch you reviewing your Bible memory verses. For you, these habits are building a foundation on which you can construct a consistent practice of family devotions. For them, it lets them see what it means to pursue Jesus as an adult!

When our kids get to observe us practicing personal prayer and Bible study, it builds a narrative of consistency in our kids' minds toward us. Kids are smart. They have a remarkable ability to sniff out inconsistency. (Ever heard the phrase, *"that's not fair!"* at your house?!) Fairness – or, equally-applied expectations – is something that kids innately demand from an early age. And they're not wrong. It is difficult for a young mind to reconcile being required to do something that they don't see their own parents doing.

The opposite is also true – and extraordinarily powerful. It's not such a mental leap for them to be asked to take out the trash when they regularly see us doing it... To apologize for doing wrong when they've heard us do it... To forgive others when they've seen us do it... We build credibility towards introducing the concept of family devotions when our kids already know that we have established a consistent habit of personal devotional time alone with God ourselves.

Fun is Sacred!

Young Life founder Jim Rayburn said, *"We believe it is sinful to bore kids with the gospel. Christ is the strongest, grandest, most attractive personality to ever grace the earth. But a careless messenger with the wrong method can reduce all this magnificence to the level of boredom… It is a crime to bore anyone with the gospel."* Make devotion times as fun and engaging for your family as you can. This isn't about entertaining; it's about engagement.

When our kids were younger, we wanted to teach them some of the ancient prayers and creeds of the Christian faith. At first, we simply had them repeat after us. Then as they learned to read, we let them take turns reading different lines from the prayers and creeds. As they learned them by heart, we would have fun saying the prayers around our table "line by line" or even "word by word!"

When we would read a passage of Scripture, we would let them make a sound whenever they heard a key word or name – this helped them to listen and engage. With older kids, we simply ask *"what do you think?"* questions mid-passage to help them follow along and imagine themselves as participants in the Biblical events.

Family devotions are not about completing a task or fulfilling some legalistic spiritual requirement. They are about nurturing deep relationships with God and each other. Their purpose is to help us abide in God and in His love (John 15:1-17) as a family, so that His life can flow into us, fill us up, and flow out freely from us.

Establish a Habit

Consistency goes a long way. Maintaining consistency in your practice of family discipleship is as vital to your spiritual health as diet and exercise are to your physical health. Here are a couple of practical tips on how to maintain that consistency.

To start, pick a time and place for family devotions and stick to it until it becomes a habit. Once it is set as a habit, when your schedule changes, or you are on vacation, or it's a holiday, or maybe you just need a change in your routine – then you'll find a different time and place to do it, because it's already become a part of your everyday activities. Whatever you do, try your best to protect this precious time for your family!

Next, remove as many distractions as possible. Put your phones away. Turn off the TV. Our minds can be distracting enough without the help of outside influences.

Choose a place, and let that be your family's special devotional location together. You can keep your family Bible, prayer journal, and discipleship resources there for easy access. This could be an end-table in your living room, or a bookcase near your dining room table. Soon, your family will naturally begin to associate that physical place as your special "holy ground" together with God.

Finally, set an appointment and keep it, just like you would with a doctor or teacher. Have an actual time, and when something else comes up, socially or mentally, say, *"oh no, I'm sorry, I can't, I have an appointment at that time."* If you do this several times a week until it becomes a habit, your kids will come to expect it, and it will be far easier to keep!

Where Do I Begin?

For our family, it started with dinner. 20 minutes around the dinner table, while we ate our food. It was clumsy at first, but we eventually developed a rhythm. We learned with our kids. We as parents learned how to disciple our children, while our children learned from us how to be discipled! We were all learners at the same time together. We were all developing new skills, working on weak muscles with slow progress – together. By God's grace, we started somewhere, found a rhythm, and grew together by small degrees. The journey of a thousand miles starts with one small step.

This is my second foundational principle for family discipleship: start somewhere. Trying something and stumbling your way through is better than not trying anything at all. Give yourself permission to fail. Take the pressure off yourself and your family that every attempt has to be a phenomenal success! If you try something and it fails – don't worry! Figure out what could've gone better, adjust, and try again. We did this 100 times through the years, and our family devotional habits became a little more effective with each new adjustment. Two steps forward and one step back is still forward progress. And over time, small gains make a big difference.

Our kids are older now, and their lives are more scattered in the evenings. We have two that drive and have part-time jobs to pay for their car insurance and gas. Our 18-year-old volunteers in the evenings. Our 16-year-old plays soccer. Our 13-year-old has dance three nights a week. It is a rarity these days that we are all seated around the dinner table together in the evening.

We have practiced family devotions together at the dinner table for more than 10 years! But that looks different for us now. Recently I was complaining to God that our time together as a family seems to have vanished – that I keep waiting for opportunities for our family to share meaningful conversation and connection together. And in His kind but clear way, I heard Him say to me (silently, in my spirit), *"What are you waiting for?"*

Proactivity vs. Reactivity

"What are you waiting for?" That simple question from the Lord meant this for me: if I just sit and wait for opportunities for family discipleship to present themselves, it may never happen. I need to be proactive and look for opportunities ahead of time when I can lead my family together to God. And that's my third foundational principle for family discipleship: be proactive instead of reactive.

We've recently started a new practice together: on Sunday nights, after everyone is home from church and social activities, but before anyone goes to bed, we have a short family meeting. Everyone brings their schedules, and we talk through the week to come together: who's going where, what practices have been moved, what special events have been planned, etc. This helps us keep up with what everyone is up to throughout the week, and helps us avoid any misunderstandings about commitments, transportation, and schedule changes.

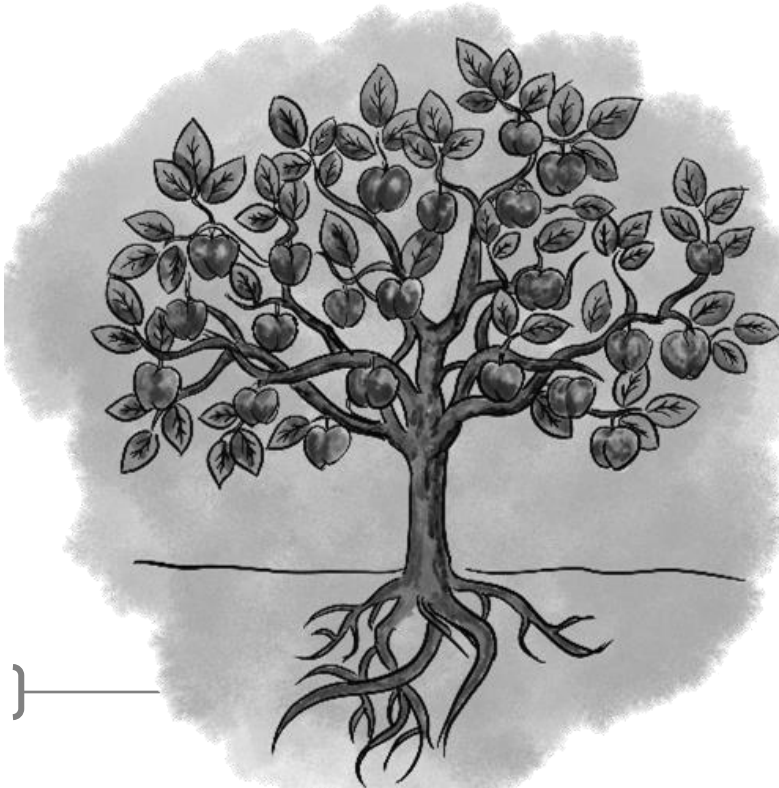
But I have another purpose in this weekly schedule review as a family. I am looking for – I am hunting for – two or three precious moments in the week to come where we will all be in the house together at the same time. Between college courses, work shifts, soccer practices, youth group, and dance classes, when this coming week will all six of us be inside the house together at the same time? Just this past Sunday night, we identified three moments in the upcoming week: Wednesday night from 9-10pm, Friday afternoon from 4-6pm, and Sunday afternoon from 2-4pm.

So we scheduled those times! We all reserved those times in our separate calendars and on our master family calendar to be our special family times for the week to come. And once we do that, we asked each member of the family to guard those times as sacred and precious to our family. This leads me to my last foundational principle for family discipleship…

Intentionality with Flexibility

When it comes to family discipleship, doing something is better than doing nothing. Be intentional and make a plan! If you wait for the stars to align to have a family devotion, it's just never gonna happen. Take action to create the moments, environments, and opportunities where family discipleship can occur.

The bulk of this book is about helping you to develop a plan for your family. Develop a plan – and then attempt your plan! That's the "intentionality" part of this foundational principle. The "flexibility" part comes when you accept the reality that you will almost certainly have change or adjust your plan – because of a sickness, an out-of-town trip, an extended family event – a thousand things. But, it is good to at least have a default plan in place to deviate from, to modify as needed, and to improve.



PART TWO:
Answering Common Objections

There are four main categories of objections I hear whenever the topic of family discipleship comes up, and they are all valid. These are legitimate hurdles, but they are not insurmountable. Let me help you overcome these hurdles today…

OBJECTION CATEGORY #1:
"I'm Unable"

"I can't do this... I don't know what I'm doing... I'm not equipped to disciple my family... I'm not a Bible teacher... I'm not even good at Bible study or prayer myself! How can I teach my kids how to do these things?..."

Here's the beauty of the journey of Christian faith: we are all learners. We are all following Jesus together! You don't have to be an expert. In fact, it's kind-of expected that you'll be a fellow discoverer along with those you are leading.

Become a fellow learner along with your kids! Be honest with them about what you don't know. Let your kids see you learning and wrestling with spiritual truths along with them. And let the Holy Spirit be your teacher. Listen to how Jesus described the Holy Spirit of God in the Book of John:

> *"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My Name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you."* –John 14:26

> *"But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness about Me."* –John 15:26

> *"When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth, for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come."* –John 16:13

You don't have to be a Bible teacher. You simply have to be a humble learner willing to lead others in co-learning from God together. A humble learner together with the rest of your family, who is willing to lead your family in daily asking God's Spirit to be "the Spirit of truth" who "will guide you into all truth."

And by the way, kids learn better from discovery than instruction anyway! So by leading your family to make discoveries about God in His Word together, you are actually teaching them in a far more effective way than if you had planned out a "lesson" ahead of time and just taught them all the points they needed to know. Active learning through discovery sticks with us. Passive learning through lecture goes in one ear and out the other. Active learning creates ownership among all the learners. In a lecture format, the only person who owns the lesson is the lecturer.

OBJECTION CATEGORY #2:
"I'm Disqualified"

"Who am I to be the spiritual leader of my house? I've got my own issues… my own unresolved problems, weaknesses, hangups… I'm ashamed of my own life before God… I feel like I'm disqualified to lead or instruct the spiritual lives of others…"

This is a particularly difficult obstacle to overcome. This objection can absolutely wreck any sense of hope or confidence for providing spiritual leadership in our homes. Many – MANY people feel so crippled by the guilt and shame in their own lives that they feel disqualified from having any kind of spiritual leadership in anyone else's life. It's really a very clever strategy by the enemy of our souls to keep us down... To render us ineffective... To neutralize any possibility for family discipleship before it can even start... To use our past (or present) issues against us to keep us from leading others to God…

But there is good news: Jesus' life, death, and resurrection wasn't just about saving us from hell, although I am so thankful He did! It wasn't even just about forgiving us for our sins, although that is a wonderful gift of grace! Jesus won the ultimate and eternal victory over sin – and its power over our lives. Not only does Jesus deliver those who believe in Him from the cost of their sin (spiritual death and eternal separation from God), He also delivers us from the *power* of sin to control our lives.

Are you familiar with Judo? Judo is a martial art that utilizes weight, momentum, and leverage to defeat one's opponent. There isn't much striking or kicking in Judo. Instead, you leverage the

weight and momentum of your opponent against them to thwart their attack. Let's practice a little spiritual Judo here together:

The weight of sin, the guilt of past mistakes, the shame over current issues in your life – these powerful things threaten to immobilize your leadership in your home. *"Who do you think you are?! How can you lead others!? You're a fraud."* I've fought all these thoughts at various times throughout my life. But they do not get the final word. Let's leverage the weight of these attacks against themselves!

Check out 2 Corinthians 1:3-4: *"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the same comfort we ourselves received from God."*

No one – listen: NO ONE is more qualified to lead others into the grace of God regarding the issues you have than you! Jesus is wanting and waiting to set you free – it's why He came! He chose to live and die for you and for me, so that we could walk in freedom. Not only freedom from our actual sins themselves, but also freedom from the crippling power of sin, guilt, and shame to dominate and overthrow our lives and our Kingdom effectiveness.

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death." –Romans 8:1

If you believe in Jesus as Savior, and if you desire to follow Him as Lord, then you are a beloved child of God! You are forgiven of sin, and freed from sin's domination over your life, identity, choices, and behaviors. God's Spirit has come to make your life His home (John 14:23; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Ephesians 3:16-17). And He will lead you into all truth as you submit yourself to Him.

And because of all of this – because of the amazing grace of Jesus, the extravagant love of God, the Spirit's indwelling power, and your submission of your life to Him – no one – NO ONE is more qualified to guide others into a life of freedom and wholeness in Jesus than you!

OBJECTION CATEGORY #3:

"They're Not Interested"

This is a wide category, but there are common elements which share a common solution. Objections in this category usually touch on one of these themes: *"Anytime I try to lead anything spiritual at home, my kids become bored, disinterested, or even mocking of the process… I'm a step-parent, and my spouse's kids don't listen to me or respect me… My kids won't listen or engage in what I'm trying to lead… My spouse isn't a Christian and doesn't participate in prayer or Bible study with me…"*

Again, these are all valid, legitimate objections. These truly are significant hurdles for family discipleship. But they can be overcome. There is a solution, and there is fruit to be found on the other side through perseverance, consistency, and prayer.

If your family or your kids just kind-of checkout whenever you attempt to lead them spiritually, I would encourage you to take a step back, and do this:

First, pray. Ask God to give you the right words to say (Matthew 10:19-20).

Second, tell your family all the time how much you love them, and that you want God's very best for them. Then tell them that their spiritual health is worth fighting for.

They expect you to tell them to brush their teeth, to wash their hair, to clean their room, to do their homework – but why? It's not just "because I said so." It's because you want them to have strong teeth… healthy hair… good care for their possessions… and a good education. If strong teeth and a good education are important, then a solid spiritual foundation for life is even more so!

Third, constantly recast the vision for family discipleship. Help your family keep at the forefront of their minds clear, simple, and memorable answers to these questions: *"Why are we doing this? What's the point? What's the purpose? Why does this matter?"* Help them to personally own the "why?" of their own spiritual formation.

We are constantly restating the purpose of family discipleship in our house. Not to be naggy or pedantic, but to be visionary and inspirational. If we will engage in these few precious moments together, our understanding of God will deepen, our relationships with each other will improve, our sense of personal and family purpose will become more clear, our communication will increase…

Take some time now to answer those questions for yourself. Why do you want your family to share in devotions together? What's the point for you? Why does it matter to you? If you can regularly and winsomely convey your heart for your family's spiritual and relational well-being, then you will start to see increased interest, engagement, and participation among your family members during family devotion times.

OBJECTION CATEGORY #4:

"It's Too Late"

"My kids are teenagers… We've missed our opportunity… If only we could've started this when our kids were younger… They won't go for this kind of change… It's too late for us now… We're empty-nesters… Our kids are all grown up and out of the house…"

My discipleship professor in seminary, Dr. Matt Friedeman, taught us a vital lesson regarding family discipleship: *"If you want an apple orchard, the best time to plant was 20 years ago; the second best time is now."* Even if you feel you are getting a late start in trying to introduce a family devotional habit, it truly is better late than never.

If your kids are teenagers and you start leading them in devotions now, it will initially come as a shock to them. But that's just because you're changing a status quo that needs to be changed! This is good change, and it may take some getting used to. At first, you'll be disrupting the current rhythms of your home to bring something intentionally different and better. But with consistency, your family will grow into new habits and rhythms together.

We can't go back and make up the missed opportunities of the past. But we can ensure that the opportunities of the present and future are handled with prayerfulness, intentionality, and purpose! And aren't our emotions funny? They have the ability to convince us of completely illogical things. Just because we didn't start off doing something the very best way possible from the beginning doesn't mean we can't institute a better way mid-stream! So what if you didn't have family devotions when your kids were small? Just because they are older now doesn't mean you can't start now.

Imagine you found someone cutting up a dead tree with a hand saw, and you said, *"Hey, I have a chainsaw you can borrow if you want."* And they said, *"well, I didn't start off with the chainsaw from the beginning, and I'm already half-way through now, so, it's too late to change…"* No it's not! Finish the job using a better method.

Or imagine your child never learned to read. Then one day when they were 16, you discovered a way to teach them to read – only, it meant you and they would have to change some habits and work through some awkwardness to learn and grow together... Of course you would try to teach them to read!

You can change mid-stream. You can start something now that you wish you'd started years ago. Yes, it will probably be hard. But you can do hard things with God's help! Yes, it will take some getting used to for your family. Yes, it will take trial-and-error to see what will work. Yes, it will take admitting that you don't have it all figured out (that's a daily admission for me!). Yes, it will take re-explaining why this matters more times than you'll care to count.

And you know what? It will all be worth it! 3 John 4 says, *"I have no greater joy than to hear my children are walking in the truth."* If you had just a chance of achieving that great joy – the great joy of hearing that your adult children were walking in the truth – even if it meant getting a late start – it would all be worth it!

And for you empty-nesters, the two of you are still a family. Don't forget that. You don't cease to be a family when your kids leave home. You and your spouse are now a family of two. And the practice of discipleship with your life partner and soulmate can be some of the sweetest of all!

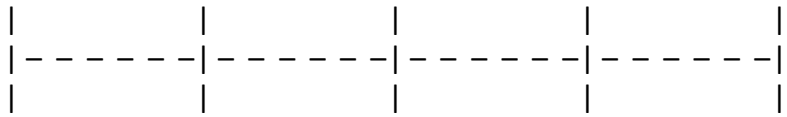
And – empty-nesters, can I expand your vision a bit? What if your kids came home from college during breaks to find that their Mom and Dad had started doing a daily devotion together over breakfast, or coffee, or dinner? What if they, as young adults, witness you taking your spiritual formation seriously now as older adults? Imagine what a tremendous impact that would have on them!

And think of your grandkids. Maybe you missed your opportunity to lead your own children in family devotions when they were young. Now they are grown and establishing families of their own. What if you started a devotional habit now with your grandkids whenever they come over to your house? That's what my grandparents did. In fact, that's why and how I became a Christian as a child. What if reading the Bible and praying with Grandma and Grandpa was the norm for your grandchildren? I was discipled into the Kingdom of God by the example and instruction of my Grandmommie and Poppa throughout my childhood years.

I'm telling you – whether you are 25, 50, or 75 – it is better to start late than to never start at all!

PART THREE:
The Family Devotional Continuum

Coversational /Informal — **Instructional /Formal**



Here we have a "Family Devotional Continuum," from Instructional/Formal on one side to Conversational/Informal on the other. No single point along the continuum is superior to any other. Both sides of this continuum are equally valuable. Both sides can produce devoted followers of Jesus. Both sides require intentional planning and leadership. Both sides offer effective means for guiding one's family into a thriving life of spiritual formation.

Which Approach is Right for Us?

Different families have different personalities that will naturally gravitate more towards one side or the other. Families that are generally more quiet and introverted may benefit from a more structured and formal approach to family devotions. Families that are more naturally talkative may benefit from a more conversational approach.

Families will also go through different seasons of life together where one approach will naturally serve the family better than the other. When our kids were younger, we leaned more towards the instructional side of the continuum. There was more structure, and more formal leadership from us as parents during our family devotions when our kids were young. As they have gotten older, though, we have adjusted our approach to be more conversational during our family devotion times.

Do not mistake, however, an informal approach as a lack of intentionality! Our conversations are still guided, they still have purpose and direction. Our kids just have much more ownership and participation in the conversation now than when they were little. Participation was high when they were little, but it was a far more structured, call-and-response type of participation. Now that our kids are teenagers, they participate with us in a more dialogical manner than before.

That said, we still have a preschooler who needs more guidance in family devotions than our teenagers. So we blend the styles and adjust our approach based on who is at the table each meal.

Likewise, you may find yourself sliding back-and-forth along this scale, based on the ages, seasons, and needs of your family. Even still, you may take the suggestions of this book and customize your own rhythm that best suits your specific household! I encourage you to experiment with different approaches until you find the method that works best for your family.

Instructional/Formal Family Devotions

When our kiddos were younger, we established a standard structure for family devotions that included lots of repeat-after-me's and call-and-response types of interaction. We did this at mealtimes while we ate. We kept things fluid and flexible, but we also had a template to follow. This was our rhythm:

1st – Sing a Hymn or Worship Song
2nd – Recite a Prayer, Creed, or Scripture
3rd – Old Testament Reading & Discussion
4th – Catechism Review
5th – New Testament Reading & Discussion
6th – Family Prayer Journal

For us, this structure was not rigid. The flow of our family devotional time was less like a formal church service and more like a small group of loved ones who were simply enjoying a meaningful, Christ-centered conversation together, guided by God's Word and a simple devotional order. It was very rare that we would make it through all six of these steps in a single meal. Often, we would only complete two or three of the elements above, and we still considered that to be a successful family devotion!

We placed no priority on "getting through" with our devotion each day. Our goal was not to finish; our goal was to grow as followers of Jesus together, and any number of these elements could help us do that. For instance, if the Prayer or Creed we recited brought up a question, we would discuss it. If the Old Testament reading got us into a conversation about something valuable, we would go with it. If someone shared something that happened in their day, we would listen, discuss it, and search for God in it together!

Devotional structures like these exist to serve us, not us to serve them. Let this be a guide to you, not a dictator. Let your devotional time be full of life and spontaneity! And when you stall out a

bit, just refer back to the devotional order above and let the next step in the flow get you going again.

In our home, a different member of the household would get to lead our devotional time each day, following the basic outline above. That day's devotion leader got to choose the song we would sing and which Prayer, Creed, or Scripture we would recite together. That person also got to read the Old and New Testament passages for the day and lead us in our Catechism Review. Finally, that person got to lead our prayer time and write in our Family Prayer Journal. Each member of our family had their day to lead each week, which helped keep them engaged and gave them ownership in our family devotional habit.

1st – Sing a Hymn or Worship Song

We don't usually say a blessing to begin our meal, but instead, we give thanks to God with a short song. Our devotion leader for the day gets to choose a favorite hymn or worship song for us all to sing together to begin. Most days, we just sing *a cappella*. Other times, we may sing along with a song from our phone or computer. Occasionally, we may even have someone play the guitar or another instrument. Sometimes we have to remind the day's leader to pick a well-known song, or else they may be singing a solo!

Sometimes people are surprised to learn that we do not say a traditional blessing to start our meal. It's not that we don't pray. And we certainly do thank God for our food! It's just that we prefer to see our entire mealtime as being spent in God's Presence together, celebrating His goodness, provision, Word, encouragement, and gifts with each other. Prayer and thanksgiving are certainly major parts of that – they just happen all throughout the flow of our mealtime devotion together, rather than at just the beginning. Again, this is just "a" way – the rhythm we found that worked best for us. Rather than copying our way exactly, I encourage you to modify this in whatever way best fits your household, traditions, and preferences.

Check out pages 44-45 in the "Family Discipleship Resources" section of this book to find a list of simple songs you could choose from to sing at the start of your family devotional time.

2nd – Recite a Prayer, Creed, or Scripture

After singing a short hymn or song of worship, we start every family devotion by reciting one foundational Prayer or Creed from Christian history or one foundational passage of Scripture together. We have specifically chosen several Prayers, Creeds, and Scripture passages that we want to memorize as a solid basis for our faith in God and as a ready confidence-builder for our followership of Jesus.

Over time, and through regular repetition, it is our desire that these Prayers, Creeds, and Scriptures would be written in our minds and on our hearts as a family. They are as instructional as they are worshipful. Together, they can help form a foundation for a Biblically-strong faith in Jesus that is spiritually rich, deep, and alive.

In our family, the devotion leader for the day gets to choose which Prayer, Creed, and Scripture we will recite. They also get to choose how we will recite it together: all together in unison, or one person at a time by paragraph, or one line at a time per person – and occasionally, one *word* per person at a time! (That last method takes practice, but can make it really fun!)

I have provided copies of all of the Prayers, Creeds, and Scriptures that our family uses during our devotional times on pages 46-83 in the "Family Discipleship Resources" section of this book. Feel free to use these as a starting point, and add others that you may love from your own favorite devotional resources such as *The Book of Common Prayer*, *Every Moment Holy*, or *Jesus Calling*.

3rd – Old Testament Reading & Discussion

If there's time, we like to read a portion of Scripture from both the Old and New Testaments each day. Our goal is not to read through huge amounts of Scripture, but to encounter God within the Scriptures we read together as a family. Some days, we may only read a few verses; other days we may read a whole chapter.

We tend to read by "stories" or "headings" within our Bible. Generally there are two-to-three headings within each chapter, which means it may take us two-to-three days to complete a single chapter. (Which means we progress through the Bible quite slowly at our house!)

We talk about what we are reading as we go, asking whatever observational questions seem to naturally arise out of the reading. In our family, the devotion leader for the day gets to choose

whether they will read the Bible passage themselves, or if they want either Mom or Dad to read it to the family instead.

Again, the goal is not to "get done" with the reading. The goal is to help your family interact with God and grow with each other. Get comfortable with not finishing! And get comfortable with interruptions. An important aspect of vibrant family Bible-reading is the willingness to be interrupted by questions, thoughts, and ideas that your spouse or children may think of as you read. It's not nearly as important to "get through" the story as it is to digest it, enjoy it, and find God in it together.

That may mean finishing today's reading on the next day, and that is fine! There's no rush. Savor God's Word together, taking time to digest it through questions, observations, and discussions that may arise out of it along the way.

4th – Catechism Review

After reading through and discussing a passage from the Old Testament together, we then take a few moments to remember and affirm some core truths about God, His character, His creation, and His plan for humanity. We do this using a series of simple questions and answers known as a catechism.

Christians have been reciting catechisms of their faith together for centuries as a way to remember and make secure in their hearts and minds the central Biblical teachings about God, the Bible, theology, humanity, and living as a follower of Jesus.

We generally review five-to-ten questions together each day. It only takes a couple minutes of our family devotional time. We recite each question and answer it together two or three times, with the goal of eventually memorizing them all through repetition. In our family, the devotion leader for the day gets to choose which section we will review, and they also get to "teach" us through them – leading us in reciting the questions and answers together.

I have provided "A Basic Christian Catechism for Family Discipleship" on pages 84-101 of this book, in the "Family Discipleship Resources" section.

5th – New Testament Reading & Discussion

As with the Old Testament reading described before, we also try to read a portion of Scripture from the New Testament together each day. This is usually just a section of verses under a single "heading" within our Bible, or a single story, if it is a narrative portion of Scripture (like in the Gospels or Acts).

We read slowly, reading for immersion and comprehension. We welcome relevant interruptions to the reading as different family members may have an observation to make, a question to ask, or a discussion to start related to the reading. Some of our most meaningful conversations have stemmed from one of these "interruptions."

Over time, we will read through all of the Books of the Bible in order – reading a story or section from both the Old and New Testaments each day. It may take us years, but eventually we will finish both the Testaments and start them all over again from the beginning!

6th – Family Prayer Journal

The final aspect of our family mealtime devotion is praying together. To assist us with this, we keep an ongoing Family Prayer Journal. We divide each new page of this journal into two columns by drawing a line down the center of the page. The left side is for writing down our prayer requests; the right side is for recording the answers or resolutions to those prayers as they come.

We conclude our devotion each day by asking, *"What people or situations in our lives and in the world is God leading us to pray for today?"* Our family's devotion leader for the day then writes the day's date in the journal and records the top three or four things we are praying for that day on the left-hand side of the page.

We regularly review our past prayer requests together, and when one of them is resolved or answered, we record the date and the way in which God provided the answer or solution. As the months and years have passed, this journal has provided our family with a recorded history of God's faithfulness, both to us personally and in the world at large! We have seen His grace at work, answering specific prayers in unique ways, and we have written down the dates and ways that He has answered!

Conversational/Informal Family Devotions

We practiced the devotional rhythm I have described above for years. It was tremendously helpful when our kids were younger and had less to contribute to devotional discussion. This guide helped us to teach our children about spiritual truths in simple, interactive ways, and it helped them lay a foundation for spiritual understanding as they matured in their faith.

Now that our children are older, we find that we are following this formal devotional template less and less. Part of that is functional. As our teenagers drive, work after school, volunteer, and attend youth group and sports practices, our presence at home all together around the dinner table has decreased significantly. But there is a developmental reason for this shift as well.

When we are young, we learn building blocks to education that we hardly even think about as we grow. We learn the mechanics of walking or riding a bike; eventually muscle memory kicks in and we don't even think about it anymore. We just do it! We learn the basics of simple math functions and memorize our times-tables; as adults, our brains conduct complex math equations all the time without having to think about the basics. Even as you read this book, you are not thinking about the individual sounds each letter makes like you did as a child. Thanks to the foundation of reading principles instilled in you, your mind has matured to where it can recognize and comprehend entire words and phrases in milliseconds!

Our spirits are the same. We take time as young Christians to learn and master the basic building blocks of our faith: Bible reading, memorization, and Biblical understanding; how to pray, both talking and listening to God; how to interpret the world and our lives in light of the unchanging truths of God's Word and character; etc. With these foundations laid, we are ready to have ever-deepening discussions about faith and truth that are more freeform and conversational than our previous ways of learning.

How do we do that, practically-speaking? Well, we still read and discuss passages of Scripture, as before. Only now, it comes from the passages we're reading in our own personal devotions that we bring to discuss together, or from a Bible study our kids attended, or a sermon podcast my wife listened to, etc. Often our spiritual discussions around the table will arise from a dilemma one of our kids brings up, based on a decision they are trying to make, or an issue one of their friends is facing, or a challenging question that one of their teachers asked them.

We still review our catechism questions, but less often than when our kids were younger. We also discuss the answers to our catechism questions more deeply now than when they were younger. As Dr. Friedeman wrote in his catechism book, *Hidden in the Heart*, the answers in the catechism are not intended to be comprehensive. Instead, *"they offer a succinct explanation and a good beginning for further understanding."* Our family catechism is included on pages 84-101 in the "Family Discipleship Resources" section of this book. As you will see, I have included

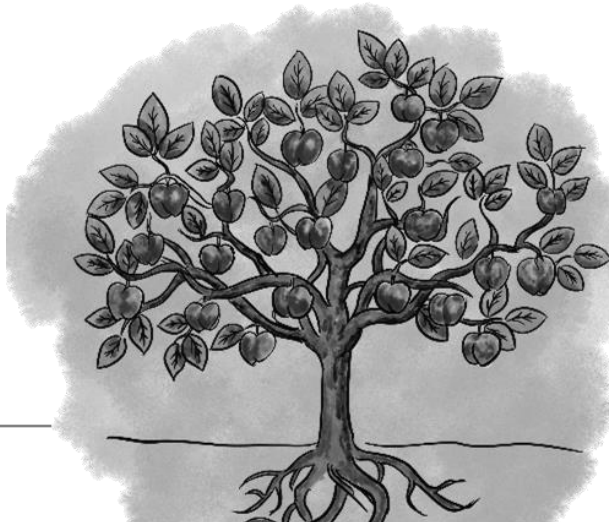
Biblical references for the answers to most of the questions within the catechism. This creates excellent opportunities for you to dig deeper beyond the succinct answers provided for each question.

We still pray together, but it is often a quick pause in the middle of our discussions to ask for the Lord's help, or to pray for a friend or family member facing a hardship. We still recite creeds and prayers together, sometimes the classic ones contained in this book, and sometimes from another resource such as *Every Moment Holy*.

The main basis for our family devotions today is the practice of having meaningful, Christ-centered conversations together over dinner, rooted in God's Word, and submitted to God in prayer.

Parts Four and Five of this book move into some practical exercises and resources that you can use for developing your own household's approach to Family Discipleship. Before we go there, I want to offer a final word of blessing and encouragement for you:

May God's Presence, purposes, power, provision, and peace abound in your home, marriage, and parenting! May God's Spirit guide and empower you as you accept His call to become the spiritual head of your household. May His grace surround and support you as you shepherd your children's souls. May your mealtimes become regular moments of both physical and spiritual nourishment for every person who gathers at your table. May your marriage be a refuge and a home of deep belonging for both you and your spouse. May your kids grow up in the Lord's love, seeing themselves as He sees them, knowing Him personally and deeply, loving Him with all their hearts, and living their lives for His glory!
In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,
Amen.



PART FOUR:
Anchor Points for Family Discipleship

There are four foundational tools that serve as anchor points for our family. These are things the Lord gave us through the years to keep us anchored in His calling upon our family's identity, life, pursuits, and decision-making. Whenever we need a pause from the constant busyness of life, the unending stress of responsibilities, and the sudden crises of the moment – whenever we find ourselves reeling from bad news, unexpected expenses, an issue in one of our lives, or the realization that something is not going to be as we thought – whenever we just need to huddle together and hit the reset button together as a family – we come back to these four anchor points.

If we ever start to forget who we are, who God made us to be, what our purpose is as a family… When we start to lose sight of where our focus needs to be in this season of life… If we find ourselves feeling stuck, or distracted, or languishing from what our most important aims are as children of God, as a married couple, as God's appointed parents for our children… We come back to these anchor points.

These are like the source documents of our family. These are the primary artifacts that remind us who we are and why. By God's grace, we were introduced to these concepts through a variety of mentors and resources over the years. We received them, talked and prayed them through, adapted them for our family, and established them as foundation holds for ourselves and our kids.

We present them here to you in hopes that they will inspire you to create your own family anchor points. So that when the way for your family seems dark, discouraged, confused, or unclear, you can return to the core of who God has made you to be, restore clarity and focus together as a family, and move forward with renewed purpose and determination.

Family Shield/Crest

In 2006, my church offered a Men's Bible Study on the topic of Fatherhood. Our first child was about 18 months old at the time, and our second had just been born. I was eager for help! I wanted tools, instruction, and mentoring on how to be a Godly Dad for my children.

Our pastor selected *Raising a Modern-Day Knight* by Robert Lewis for the Men's Bible Study. In it, there were exercises to do with your son each week as a Dad. Unfortunately, my 18-month-old son was not quite old enough to do most of the activities assigned in the book, so instead, I would discuss them each week with my wife on our date night.

The father-son activity assigned in the fourth week of the study was to create a family crest for your household, similar to those you might think of from the Middle Ages: a shield that would have emblems and images representing the most significant aspects of our family's unique identity. I shared the idea with Dianna, and we began to think and pray and brainstorm together.

I searched our family names to see if I could find any historical shields or crests related to our names that might serve as a starting point for our design, but I couldn't find anything…

At the same time, the ministry we were a part of was in the midst of a major transition. Our Board of Directors hired a consultant to help us through the process of redefining our identity as a ministry: what was our purpose on the other side of this transition? What was our mission? And what were our core values that would keep us aligned to that mission throughout the change?

Dianna and I wanted to ask the same questions of God with regard to our family: what's our purpose, Lord? Why did you make us? What are the core values of our household? What are the characteristics that You have distinctly called us to embody as a family?

As a young married couple with two young children, Dianna and I held these questions out before the Lord regularly. We prayed and shared our thoughts with each other; we journaled the significant insights we had along the way. About two years later, we began to doodle ideas for a family crest for our household. We shared our doodles and the meanings behind our thoughts with our dear friend from college, Beth Kandler Edfeldt, a talented painter. She honed our doodles into a final design and painted it for us on a large canvas for our house in June 2009.

Here is the explanation of the design we created for our family's shield. There are four quadrants on the shield, each one representing a unique aspect of our God-given identity as a family:

Upper-left Quadrant: Our Relationship with God – We are clay in the Potter's hands in a continual process of creation, transformation, and perfection. He is lovingly, patiently, graciously, and constantly molding us and shaping us in His glory.

Upper-right Quadrant: Our Relationship with Humanity / Our Role in the Kingdom of God – From the time Dianna and I were engaged to be married, we sensed that God was bringing us together to be a help and a service to others. This idea even informed our vows at our wedding. In the early years of our marriage, the Lord confirmed this as our primary calling and role in His kingdom: of reaching out our hands and our home in helpful service to others.

Lower-left Quadrant: Our Earthly Homeland & Genealogy – The tree represents the homeland of our ancestors – a large, old hardwood native to the Southeastern United States, specifically, Georgia. The visible, intricate root system represents our familial and genealogical roots, as well as our interconnectivity with the whole human family.

Lower-right Quadrant: Our Heavenly Homeland & Genealogy – The perspective shot of the road leading ever-on into the distance is a picture of our eternal, never-ending lives as citizens of God's Kingdom. All of the brightly shining stars in the eternal heavens represent our interconnectivity with the whole heavenly family, as well as with all of God's people who have gone before us and will come with and after us.

Family Values & Motto to Live By

Family Values: It took Dianna and me about six months to finalize our list of Family Values together. We started with about 30! (We wanted our kids to exhibit ALL the virtues, right?!) But then we wanted to narrow down our list to values that were both descriptive of our household and were also things that we wanted to pursue as a family.

This was a regular topic of discussion for us at our weekly date night. Some words on our list were related or synonymous, so we combined those. Others were either descriptive of us, or were something we wanted to pursue, but not both…

In the end, we landed on these seven: *Integrity, Simplicity, Excellence, Considerate, Temperate, Resourceful, and Gracious.*

Family Motto: While discussing and narrowing down our list of values, we also wanted to adopt a family motto to live by – a short, simple, memorable phrase that would recall us back to our God-given purpose as a family. We danced all around phrases such as "Trust and Obey" and "Obey in Faith."

Our friend Sam Collins was a Classics major at the time and fluent in Latin. We asked him to help us find a phrasing in Latin that would capture our intention for this motto. Sam recommended the phrase *"Obsequium Fidei"* as a Latin way to express the idea of "Trust and Obey" or "Obey in Faith." The literal translation of *Obsequium Fidei* is "The Obedience that Results from Faith."

Seasonal Focus with Practical Ways to Measure Progress

A newer exercise that we have just been introduced to builds off of the Family Crest, Values, and Motto. While these things form the unchanging identity of our family, we do go through different seasons that call for different things to focus on as a family.

For about eight years, while our oldest three children were newborns, toddlers, and preschoolers, it seemed like our entire world was a swirl of diapers and nap times and car seats and sippy cups. Then one day, when my (then) youngest child was about 3½ years old, it dawned on me that I hadn't changed a diaper in about six months! I had changed multiple diapers daily for eight years – it was a defining feature of almost a decade of my life! And then, all of a sudden, one day, it simply wasn't.

Then life moved into being a family of three elementary-aged children: dance classes and soccer practice and homework and learning basic skills around the house.

Eventually, our oldest became a teenager, followed soon thereafter by his next two sisters. Life now seemed to occur most often for us in the car, as my wife and I became professional chauffeurs! No complaints, though – truly – all that time spent in the car with our kids, taking them to/from youth group and Bible studies and dance classes and soccer practice and the climbing gym – those were precious times for connection and supporting their interests and their development as people and as young followers of Jesus!

Then we hit the reset button when we welcomed a new infant into our lives in our late 30s!

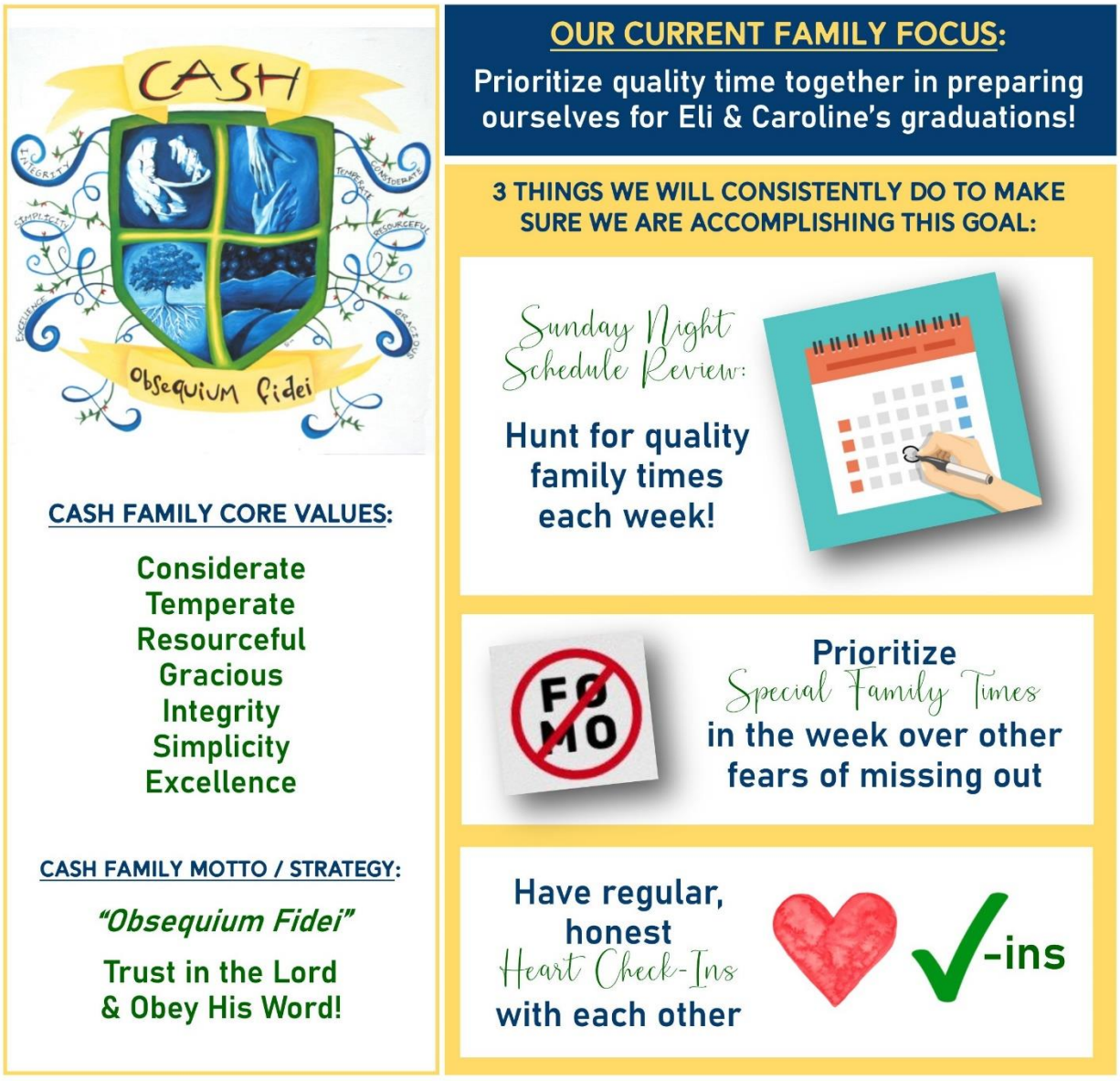
At the time of this writing, our oldest is about to graduate high school, and another will do the same next year.

Each of these seasons of our family's life has called for different emphases – all built on the established foundation of our Family Crest, Values, and Motto. Those things remain unchanged, and they inform and direct us through the constant change of family life. Each new season calls for a different focus: for instance, right now, we are all preparing for our oldest two children to graduate and move into their first independent phases of life. This presents not only a massive change for them, but also for us parents and for their younger siblings remaining at home. While we have the necessity of preparing for the practical realities of their departure from our home and daily life, we also want to pay attention to the state of all of our hearts together regarding the emotional implications of sending our beloved family members forward beyond our home.

Thus, we have adopted a short-term seasonal focus for our family for this year around that very idea: what do we need to be doing – speaking practically, emotionally, spiritually, and socially together as a family – to be preparing ourselves for our oldest two children's high school

graduations and moves beyond our home? This seasonal focus, of course, like all others, rests on the unchanging values and motto of our family.

This seasonal focus is helping us all prepare ourselves practically and emotionally for their graduations and moves, and it is also helping us to savor the days we have together between now and then! We have created a list of things we want to do together as a family before our oldest children graduate and move, and now we are intentionally pursuing those things together as a family!



This chart hangs on our fridge door, and we review it together most Sunday nights as part of our weekly family Heart Check-In!

"Age 18 List" for Your Kids

based on the fantastic instructions found in
Dr. Matt Freideman's *Discipleship in the Home*

"Begin with the end in mind."
–Stephen Covey, *Seven Habits of Highly-Effective People*

"You can't make a disciple if you haven't clarified what one looks like."
–Dr. Matt Friedeman, husband, father of six, and Professor of
Discipleship at Wesley Biblical Seminary in Jackson, MS

In seminary, I was challenged by one of my professors to define exactly what is meant by "a disciple". He challenged our class to write down in vivid detail what we think the life of a disciple "looks like", and then to begin thinking through the implications that description would have on how we would parent our children.

Prior to receiving this pointed challenge, I would've said with an honest heart that Dianna and I have been investing in our children's spiritual growth and doing our best (though far from perfectly!) to model Christ-likeness in our home.

Had you asked me to describe my "goal" in parenting our kids in this way, I would've fumbled through a nebulous, unclear, disjointed picture of their future…

Hmm... Well… I… uh… I want them to be… confident in who God has made them to be… and… uhm… emotionally stable and… compassionate and courteous… uhhh… (looks down) let's see now… uh, wise and discerning in their decisions… and – oh! – smart with their money – yeah, financially smart… and uh… they'd love God and… uhm live for Him……(shrugs?)

I had never thought about actually putting a detailed, written plan in place for my kids' personal and spiritual development! I came home from that course with pages of notes, scribbles of lists, and a super-excited heart! I shared all that I had been challenged by with Dianna, and her face lit up: "this is all the kind of stuff I've wanted us to do for our kids, but never really felt like we knew how to make happen!"

We went straight to work. The list we produced was rough and brand-new, and we were sure it would evolve with implementation. We were also sure we won't get it right all the time, and we'd probably realize things we forgot to include as we go. But as Dr. Friedeman said, "The best time to plant an apple orchard is 20 years ago; the next best time is now."

For Dianna and me, our number one responsibility and charge as parents was to disciple our children; setting forth a written action plan for doing so had us SO excited! I offer it here for any parent looking to do the same – not as a formula, but as a template. Each family, each household – indeed each child – is unique. You can take this and tailor your own "Age 18 List" for your kids around your family's core values.

You may disagree with some of the things on our list; you may see obvious things missing. Ours isn't the master edition – it's just what we've come up with to help us in parenting our kids with a more vivid and clear end-goal in mind.

In parenting, we too often shoot the arrow… then go draw a target around the point where it landed. By declaring now – in writing – the specific targets that we are shooting for, we will greatly increase our chances of getting our kids where we truly hope for them to be at age 18!

There are no guarantees, of course, that having a discipleship plan for our children will result in amazing, Godly kids… but just "praying and hoping for the best" is certainly not a successful parenting strategy! One thing is for sure: our kids are not going to mature into the young adults we hope they will become by sheer accident!

*A Quick Note of Encouragement / Disclaimer: don't be intimidated by this process. Dianna & I produced this list in two 3-hour sittings – just talking, brainstorming, and praying together. We had the help of just one little book, Dr. Matt Friedeman's Discipleship in the Home. YOU CAN DO THIS! You'll be SO glad that you did! And your kids will be, too …someday :-)

We've broken our list down by Life Categories, our hopes for our kids in each category (by age 18), and the implications that each of those hopes has on how we will need to parent them between now and then.

LIFE CATEGORY: *Relationship with God*

Hopes for our Kids, by Age 18:

- has a Biblically-sound faith that is real and that is their own
- deeply in love with Jesus and filled with His Spirit
- consistently spends time alone with God
- knows God's voice – able to listen to and respond to Him – knows God's Word

Parenting Implications:

- everyday, we will: worship God, read the Bible, pray Biblical prayers, and memorize &/or recite Biblical passages & prayers – together, as a family
- teach our children a simple catechism of Bible-based theological literacy by age 10
- model personal devotional habits ourselves, in our home
- proactively teach them regular devotional habits; help them schedule time for this consistently
- openly & regularly talk about God, faith, what we are learning & hearing, and how we are being challenged & growing

LIFE CATEGORY: *Emotional Health*

Hopes for our Kids, by Age 18:

- emotionally healthy, strong, open, and resilient
- secure in who they are – humbly confident
- positive, not complainers

Parenting Implications:

- model healthy, Biblical conflict-resolution before them in our marriage & in other life situations
- teach them their identity in Christ and constantly reinforce it with our words & actions towards them
- zero tolerance for whining or complaining; teach them how to voice their opinions in a positive, constructive manner

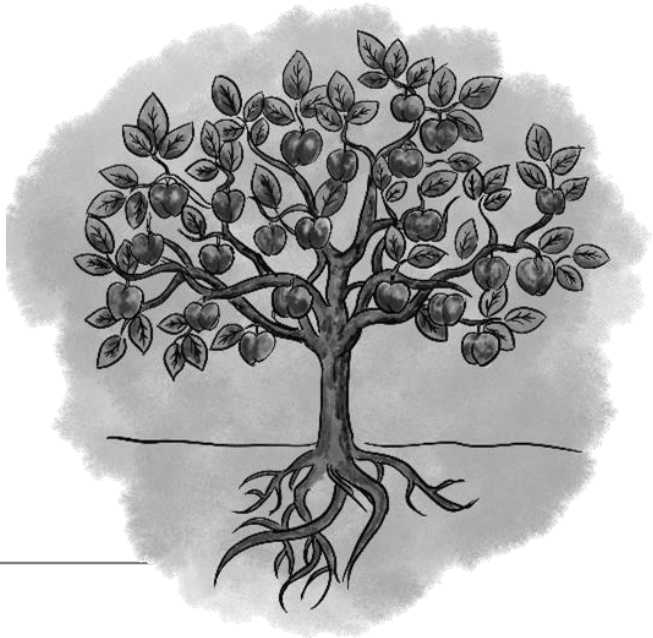
LIFE CATEGORY: *Relationships with People*

Hopes for our Kids, by Age 18:

- supportive, lifelong friendships with their siblings
- common courtesy is second nature; strong sense of proper etiquette
- cultivate a life of gratitude toward God, family, teachers / leaders, & service providers (cashiers, waiters, postman, janitors, garbage men, etc.)
- enjoys interaction with all age levels
- loyal, healthy, mutually-beneficial friendships
- truthful, honest, able to speak the truth in love
- able to handle peer pressure with maturity & integrity
- a heart of active compassion toward the powerless

Parenting Implications:

- help kids proactively solve conflicts together
- teach courtesy and demand it in all situations
- Nick teach & demonstrate gentlemanly etiquette to show Eli what to do and to show Caroline & Emma what to expect; Dianna teach & demonstrate lady-like etiquette to C&E
- model a life of gratitude for them by thanking everyone for everything, all the time!
- provide regular interactions with people of all ages – actively teach them how to speak with and relate to people of all ages
- interactions with peers are closely monitored and are openly & regularly discussed & evaluated
- actively engaged in a ministry to the powerless as a family



LIFE CATEGORY: Decision-Making/Problem-Solving

Hopes for our Kids, by Age 18:

- trained in learning & researching, reading & writing
- able to find & evaluate all options before making a decision
- able to engage problems & conflicts creatively, courageously, and positively
- able to see a choice's logical conclusion before making it – planning ahead

Parenting Implications:

- model regular reading, writing, & lifelong learning in our own lives
- help our kids navigate large & small decisions by facilitating their research & evaluation of all available options
- encourage creative & unconventional solutions to problems
- engage them in conflict-resolution & problem-solving with patience, positivity, honesty, & courage

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LIFE CATEGORY: Purity

Hopes for our Kids, by Age 18:

- modest in dress, speech, attitudes, behavior, lifestyle, etc. (but also have a personal "style" that is their own!)
- free from the emotional scarring that often comes from years of unhealthy dating
- a clear picture in mind of what a Godly, lifelong spouse looks like
- sexually pure at the point of marriage

Parenting Implications:

- model modesty and teach them appropriate dress, speech, behavior, etc. from an early age
- encourage personal uniqueness & creativity in "stylish modesty"(!)
- model for them what a Godly, peaceful, secure, lifelong marriage looks like
- teach them healthy Biblical sexuality from an early age
- give each child some kind of special purity marker at age 12
- discourage recreational dating; teach & encourage courtship

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LIFE CATEGORY: *Physical Health*

Hopes for our Kids, by Age 18:

- physically fit, healthy, strong, and flexible
- not slothful, but also not fitness psychos
- athletic, but life not consumed by sports
- strong sense of personal hygiene

Parenting Implications:

- provide a healthy diet for them, and model healthy eating habits before them
- model a healthy habit of regular exercise for them
- make them spend more time playing outside than inside
- provide regular opportunities for recreational sports, but cautiously limit over-zealous and life-consuming athletics, teams, leagues, and competitions
- teach & demonstrate proper personal hygiene habits for hands, body, hair, and teeth

LIFE CATEGORY: *Work Ethic*

Hopes for our Kids, by Age 18:

- industrious, strong work ethic
- strong sense of personal responsibility

Parenting Implications:

- model hard work & personal responsibility for them at home & at work
- start a household chore chart for them by age 4
- help them get a part-time job or start a small personal business by age 15
- gradually help them take over their own finances by age 18

LIFE CATEGORY: *Basic Life Skills*

Hopes for our Kids, by Age 18:

- able to do their own laundry, cook their own meals, clean & organize their own living spaces
- able to maintain their own vehicle
- knowledge of basic home maintenance skills (simple plumbing, electrical, carpentry, painting, etc.)
- fluent in at least one other language
- proficient in at least one musical instrument
- not addicted to media, things with screens, electronic gadgets, and technology
- excellent time managers, including healthy cycles of nightly sleep & weekly rest

Parenting Implications:

- engage them in the processes of laundry, cooking, & cleaning from age 2 on!
- engage them in home maintenance projects using a "teach-as-we-go" method with regards to basic plumbing, electrical, carpentry, painting, etc.
- limit their exposure to "screen time" – teach them how to use technology & media for their purposes as helpful tools, not as things that rule and dominate our lives, time, & energy
- don't be on the computer or watching TV all the time, ourselves
- foreign language training: provide the opportunities for this and create space in our family schedule for it
- musical instrument training: provide the opportunities for this and create space in our family schedule for it
- teach them basic vehicle maintenance and how to drive a manual transmission vehicle by age 16
- model & teach healthy cycles of nightly sleep & weekly rest

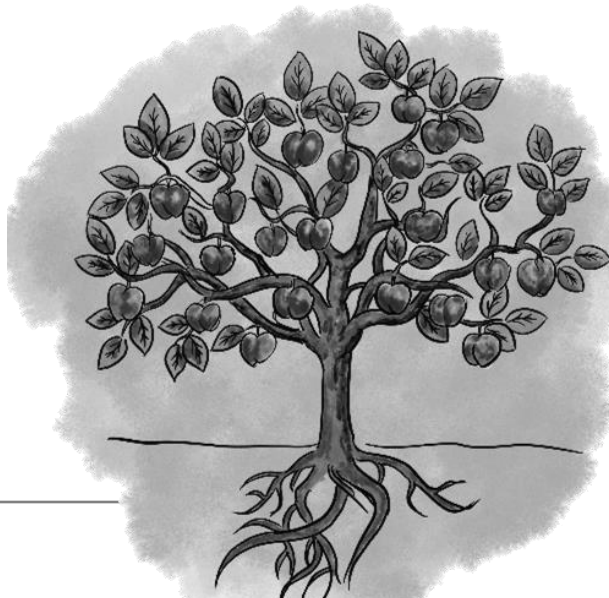
LIFE CATEGORY: *Personal Finance*

Hopes for our Kids, by Age 18:

- able to fully manage their own personal finances by age 18
- monthly habit of generosity & giving
- monthly habit of saving & planning ahead
- be wise consumers – know how to shop smart
- healthy/cautious understanding of debt and credit cards

Parenting Implications:

- model wise spending, saving, and debt-avoiding habits in our family
- live beneath our means as a family
- use credit cards wisely
- model a life of generous giving before them
- integrate pay into their chore charts at age 4
- involve kids in decisions regarding our family's Kingdom giving
- open a joint checking account with each of them by age 16
- help them complete a Bible-based personal finance course by age 18
- begin teaching them about insurance, investing, and estate-planning(wills) by age 18



PART FIVE:
Family Discipleship Resources

Songs & Hymns for Family Devotions

Any short praise song or worship chorus will do for this portion of your family devotional time. Below is just a sampling of songs to choose from, or to help you brainstorm some songs that you know and love. Rather than providing all the lyrics here, I will provide the first line of each song, in case you want to look up a video or audio version online to help your family sing-a-long:

- **Amazing Grace –** *"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me…"*
- **Awesome God –** *"Our God is an awesome God, He reigns from heaven above…"*
- **Because He Lives –** *"Because He lives, I can face tomorrow…"*
- **Father, I Adore You –** *"Father, I adore You, and I lay my life before You…"*
- **Glorify Thy Name –** *"Father, we love You, we worship and adore You…"*
- **God is So Good –** *"God is so good, God is so good, God is so good, He's so good to me…"*
- **Goodness of God –** *"All my life, You have been faithful…"*
- **Hallelu / Praise Ye the Lord –** *"Hallelu- Hallelu- Hallelu- Hallelujah! Praise ye the Lord!"*
- **How Great Thou Art –** *"Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee, how great Thou art…"*
- **How Great Is Our God –** *"How great is our God, sing with me…"*
- **How He Loves You and Me –** *"O how He loves you and me, He gave His life, what more could He give…"*
- **How I Love Jesus –** *"O how I love Jesus, because He first loved me…"*
- **I am a C –** *"I am a C. I am a C-H. I am a C-H-R-I-S-T-I-A-N…"*
- **I Have Decided to Follow Jesus –** *"I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back…"*
- **I Love You, Lord –** *"I love You, Lord, and I lift my voice…"*
- **I Need Thee –** *"I need Thee, oh, I need Thee, every hour I need Thee…"*
- **In My Life, Lord –** *"In my life, Lord, be glorified, be glorified…"*
- **I've Got Joy –** *"I've got joy down in my heart, deep deep down in my heart (spell it!)…"*
- **I've Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy –** *"I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart (where?!)…"*
- **I Worship You, Almighty God –** *"I worship You, Almighty God, there is none like You…"*
- **Jesus Loves Me –** *"Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so…"*

- **Jesus Loves the Little Children –** *"Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world…"*
- **Lord, I Lift Your Name on High –** *"Lord, I lift Your Name on high. Lord, I love to sing Your praises…"*
- **Lord, You Are –** *"Lord, You are more precious than silver…"*
- **O Come Let Us Adore Him –** *"O come let us adore Him (3x), Christ the Lord!"*
- **Open Our Eyes, Lord –** *"Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus…"*
- **Sanctuary –** *"Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true…"*
- **Seek Ye First –** *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness…"*
- **Step by Step –** *"O God, You are my God, and I will ever praise You…"*
- **The B-I-B-L-E –** *"The B-I-B-L-E, yes that's the book for me…"*
- **The Doxology –** *"Praise God from Whom all blessings flow…"*
- **This is the Day –** *"This is the day that the Lord has made, I will rejoice…"*
- **This Little Light of Mine –** *"This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine…"*
- **Worthy, You Are Worthy –** *"Worthy, You are worthy, King of kings, Lord of lords…"*
- **You Are Awesome in This Place –** *"You are awesome in this place, mighty God…"*

We also love to sing the Scripture songs produced by **Seeds Family Worship**! This is a group that sets verses of Scripture word-for-word to music, and they are excellent: quality musicianship, catchy melodies, talented singers – and best of all, it's not cheesy or lame!

Seeds Family Worship has a library of 187 songs and 274 videos that make memorizing the Bible easy and fun! Their songs are written for kids but are made to be enjoyed by the whole family.

Check them out online at SeedsFamilyWorship.com, and stream their songs and videos using your favorite music streaming service.

Each is presented here in large print on individual pages to aid your family in seeing and reciting them together around your dinner table.

The Lord's Prayer

from Matthew 6:9-13

Our Father, Who is in heaven,
Holy is Your Name.
Your kingdom come, Your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
Lead us away from temptation,
and deliver us from evil.

For Yours is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory
forever and ever! Amen.

The Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace:
Where there is hatred, let me sow love.
Where there is injury, let me sow forgiveness.
Where there is discord, let me sow harmony.
Where there is error, let me sow truth.
Where there is doubt, let me sow faith.
Where there is despair, let me sow hope.
Where there is darkness, let me sow light.
Where there is sadness, let me sow joy.

Lord, grant that I may not so much seek
to be comforted, as to comfort;
to be understood, as to understand;
and to be loved, as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;
it is in forgetting self that we find;
it is in forgiving that we are forgiven;
and it is in dying that we are awakened
to eternal life. Amen.

The Heart Prayer of Thomas à Kempis

Give us, O Lord, steadfast hearts,
that cannot be dragged down by false loves.
Give us courageous hearts that
cannot be worn down by hardships.
Give us righteous hearts
that cannot be sidetracked by
unholy or unworthy goals.

Give to us also, O Lord our God,
understanding to know You,
diligence to seek You,
wisdom to recognize You,
and a faithfulness that will bring us
to see You face to face;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Shield Prayer of St. Patrick

Christ shield me this day:
Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every person
    who thinks of me,
Christ in everything I do,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every word I say,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

The Covenant Prayer of John Wesley

I am no longer my own, but Yours.
Put me to what You will,
rank me with whom You will;
put me to doing, put me to suffering;
let me be employed for You, or laid aside for you,
exalted for You, or brought low for You;
let me be full, let me be empty,
let me have all things, let me have nothing:
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
    to Your pleasure and disposal.

And now, O glorious and blessed God –
    Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
You are mine, and I am Yours. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven.
Amen.

The Prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas

Grant me, O Lord my God,
a mind to know You,
a heart to seek You,
wisdom to find You,
conduct pleasing to You,
faithful perseverance in
waiting for You,
and a hope of finally embracing You.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Rwandan Martyr's Confession

I am part of the fellowship of the unashamed. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made: I am a disciple of Jesus. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still.

My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I am finished and done with low living, sight walking, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed vision, worldly talking, cheap giving, and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized, applauded, or rewarded. I live by faith, lean on His Presence, walk by patience, am uplifted by prayer, and labor by Holy Spirit power.

My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow. My way is rough; my companions few; my Guide reliable; my mission clear.

I will not be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, diluted, or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversity, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.

I won't give up, shut up, or let up until I have stayed up, stored up, and prayed up for the cause of Christ.

I must go till He comes, give till I drop, preach till all know, and work till He stops. And when He comes to claim His own, He will have no trouble recognizing me: my banner will be clear.

Do It Anyway by Mother Teresa

People are often unreasonable, irrational, and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies. Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere, people may deceive you. Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight. Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today will often be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough. Give your best anyway.

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God. It was never just between you and them anyway.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth;
and in Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, our Lord,

Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into the place of the dead;
on the third day He rose again from the grave;
He ascended into Heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty;
from there, He will return to judge
the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy worldwide Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth,
and of all things visible and invisible.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages,
God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God,
begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father;
through Him, all things were made.

For us and for our salvation, He came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit,
and through the Virgin Mary became truly human.
For our sake, He was crucified under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.
We confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

Put on Christ: A Prayer

Father, give me the eyes of Christ.
Let me see things as He sees them.
Give me His vision.
May I see people and situations through His eyes.

Father, form in me the mind of Christ.
Let me think about things as Jesus does.
Baptize my mind, and renew my thinking.
May I be saturated and permeated through with Truth.

Father, grow in me the heart of Christ.
Let me feel about things the way Christ's heart does:
His compassion, His heartbreak, His joy in me.
May the intentions of Christ's heart become
the intentions of mine.

Father, give me the hands and mouth of Christ.
As I feel with Christ's heart about the things I see with
Christ's eyes and think about with Christ's mind,
May my hands and mouth respond with Christ's actions
and words.

In Name & Spirit of Jesus, Amen.

Clement Kids' Creed

from Clement Arts, an adoption & foster support ministry in Columbus, GA

Because God made me:
I am valuable.
I am beautiful.
Because He made me a maker,
I can bring value.
I can add beauty.

Sisters' Daily Affirmations

created by Caroline Cash to share daily with her little sister Zoe

Let's say our things:
I am loved. *I am loved.*
I am kind. *I am kind.*
I am smart. *I am smart.*
I am strong. *I am strong.*
I am capable. *I am capable.*
I am a daughter of the King!

Father-Child Daily Affirmations

adapted from the "#Dadication" video produced by the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

The Dad Says:	**– The Child Responds:**
I'm a	– leader,
not a	– follower.
Show it to me *(flexes)*	– I'm strong,
(points to head)	– I'm smart,
(points up)	– I'm God's,
(3 high fives)	– and I like it like that.
And I'll never stop	– serving others.

(Repeat the above, and then say…)

It's okay to be	– kind.
It's okay to be	– different.
It's okay to be	– good.
It's okay to be	– faithful.
It's okay to be	– truthful.
Because in Jesus,	– I am humbly confident.

Make today	– awesome
for yourself and	– for somebody else.
And don't	– follow the crowd.

You're not a speck of dust *(hug!)* – I'm a product of grace.

The Fatherhood Creed of The Guild

from Jeeah's Hope, an adoption & foster support ministry in Pine Mountain, GA

I am the priest of my home.
My wife is my heart and partner.
My children are my disciples and legacy.

I will love my wife as Christ loves the Church.
I will anchor my family in Jesus,
leading with my words, time, and example.

I embrace the brotherhood of fathers
learning to love and lead their families well.
I welcome the counsel, encouragement,
and prayers of The Guild.

I commit myself, my home, my marriage, and
my parenting to the glory of God, who Fathers
both me and my children in perfect love.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.
Love the Lord your God with all your heart and
with all your soul and with all your strength.

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.

Psalm 23

1 The Lord is my shepherd,
I shall not be in want.
2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
He leads me beside quiet waters,
3 He restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of righteousness
for His Name's sake.
4 Even though I walk through the
valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.
5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil; my cup
overflows.
6 Surely goodness and mercy will
follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

Psalm 24

1 The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;
2 for He founded it on the seas
and established it on the waters.
3 Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?
Who may stand in His holy place?
4 He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to an idol
or swear by what is false.
5 He will receive blessing from the Lord and
vindication from God his Savior.
6 Such is the generation of those who seek Him,
who seek Your face, O God of Jacob.
7 Lift up your heads, O you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
8 Who is this King of glory?
The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.
9 Lift up your heads, O you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
10 Who is He, this King of glory?
The Lord Almighty – He is the King of glory.

Psalm 51:10-12

Create in me a clean heart, oh God,
and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Your Presence,
and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Your salvation,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Matthew 11:27-30

Jesus now spoke tenderly to the people:
"Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to Me. Get away with Me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with Me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with Me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

Psalm 103:1-6

1 Praise the Lord, O my soul;
let all that is within me praise His holy Name!
2 Praise the Lord, O my soul,
and forget not all His benefits –
3 He forgives all your sins,
and heals all your diseases.
4 He redeems your life from the pit,
and crowns you with love and compassion.
5 He satisfies your desires with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
6 The Lord works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.

Psalm 103:8-13

8 The Lord is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness.
9 He will not always accuse,
nor will He harbor His anger forever;
10 He does not treat us as our sins deserve,
or repay us according to our iniquities.
11 For as high as the heavens are above the
earth, so great is His love for those who
reverently adore Him;
12 as far as the east is from the west,
so far has He removed our transgressions
from us.
13 As a father has compassion on his children,
so the Lord has compassion on those who
reverently adore Him.

from Psalm 119

9 How can a young person keep their way pure?
By living according to Your Word.
10 I seek You with all my heart;
do not let me stray from Your commands.
11 I have hidden Your Word in my heart
that I might not sin against You.

18 Open my eyes that I may see
the wonderful things contained in Your Word.

29 Barricade the road that goes Nowhere;
grace me with Your clear revelation.
30 I choose the true road to Somewhere;
I post Your road signs at every curve and corner.
31 I grasp and cling to whatever You tell me;
God, You will never let me down!

from Psalm 139

7 Where can I go from Your Spirit?
Where can I flee from Your Presence?
8 If I go up to the heavens, You are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, You are there.
9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
10 even there Your hand will guide me.
Your right hand will hold me fast.

17 How precious to me are Your thoughts, oh God.
How vast is the sum of them!
18 Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of sand!

23 Search me, oh God, and know my heart.
Test me and know my anxious thoughts.
24 See if there be any wicked way within me,
and lead me into the everlasting way.

Proverbs 3:3-7

Let love and faithfulness never leave you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.
Then you will win favor and a good name
in the sight of God and man.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways acknowledge Him,
and He will make your paths straight.
Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the Lord and shun evil.

Jeremiah 17:5-8

This is what the Lord says:
“Cursed is the one who trusts in man,
who draws strength from mere flesh,
whose heart turns away from the Lord.
That person will be like a bush in the wastelands;
they will not see prosperity when it comes.
They will dwell in the parched places of the desert,
in a salt land where no one lives.

But blessed are those who trust in the Lord,
whose confidence is in Him.
They will be like trees planted by the water,
that send out their roots by the stream.
They do not fear when heat comes;
their leaves are always green.
They have no worries in a year of drought,
and they never fail to bear fruit in season.”

Matthew 5:1-10

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to Him, and He began to teach them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and
thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted
because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Mark 12:28-30

One of the teachers of the law came and asked Jesus, “which is the most important commandment?”

“The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ *[Deut. 6:4-5]*

The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ *[Lev. 19:18]* There is no commandment greater than these.”

From Romans 8

31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?
33 No one! Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

35 Who, then, can separate us from the love of Christ? Can trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?
37-39 No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life,
neither angels nor demons,
neither the present nor the future,
nor any powers, neither height nor depth,
nor anything else in all creation
will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

From Romans 12

1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

9-15 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.

18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Jeremiah 29:11-14

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call on Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find Me when you seek Me with all your heart. And I will be found by you," declares the Lord.

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2 Corinthians 10:3-5

Though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, our weapons have divine power to demolish strongholds and to counter deceptive arguments. We bring down every high pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ Jesus.

1 Corinthians 13

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor, and give over my body to suffering for the Gospel, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices with the truth. Love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, that which is incomplete will pass away. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became mature, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Ephesians 3:16-21

I pray that out of His glorious riches,
the Father may strengthen you with power
through His Spirit in your inner being,
so that Christ may dwell in your hearts
through faith.

And I pray that you, being rooted and established in
love, may have power, together with all the saints,
to grasp how wide and long and high and deep
is the love of Christ, and to know this love
that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled
to the measure of all the fullness of God!

Now unto Him who is able to do
immeasurably more than all we could ask or
imagine – according to His power that is at work
within us – to Him be glory in the Church and
in Christ Jesus throughout all generations,
forever and ever!
Amen.

Philippians 2:3-11

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility, consider others better than yourselves. And you should not only look out for your own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking on the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!

So God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the Name that is above every other name, that at the Name of Jesus, every knee should bow – in heaven, on earth, and under the earth – and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 3:7-14

But whatever was to my profit, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for Whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ – the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

My dear brothers and sisters, I do not yet consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:4-8

Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say rejoice! Let your Christlikeness be evident to all, for the Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

And finally, whatever is true, whatever is noble,
whatever is right, whatever is pure,
whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable –
if anything is excellent or praiseworthy –
think about such things.

Colossians 1:15-23

Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created. He is supreme over all creation. Through Him, God created everything in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created through Him and for Him. He existed before anything else, and He holds all creation together.

Christ is the head of the Church, which is His Body. He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead. In everything, He has the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Christ, and to reconcile all things to Himself through Christ. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood, shed on the cross. This includes us, who were once alienated from God. We were God's enemies, separated from Him by our evil thoughts and actions.

But now, He has reconciled us to Himself through Christ's physical death, and has brought us into His own Presence, holy in His sight, as we stand before Him without blemish and free from accusation. But we must continue to believe this truth and walk firmly in it. And to not drift away from the assurance we received from the Gospel!

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Be joyful always. Pray without ceasing.
Give thanks in all circumstances,
for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
And do not quench the Spirit's flames.
Do not treat prophesies with contempt.
Test everything. Hold on to what is good,
and avoid every kind of evil.
And may God Himself, the God of peace,
sanctify you through and through.
May your entire spirit, soul, and body
be kept blameless at the coming of
our Lord Jesus Christ.
The One who has called you is Faithful,
and He will do it!

James 5:13-16

Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray.
Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise!
Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. For the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

1 John 4:15-18

If anyone believes that Jesus is the Son of God,
God lives in them and they in God. And so we know
and rely on the love God has for us. God is love.
Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.
This is how love is made complete among us, so
that we will have no fear on the day of judgment.
There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out
fear, because fear has to do with punishment.
The one who fears has not yet been made perfect in
love. We love because He first loved us.

A BASIC CHRISTIAN CATECHISM
for Family Discipleship

SECTION 1: God the Trinity

1– How many Gods are there? There is only one God.
(Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Samuel 7:22; 1 Corinthians 8:6)

2– How many Persons are there in the one God? Three: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
(Genesis 1:1,26; Matthew 3:16-17; Luke 1:35; John 1:1; 10:30; 14:16-17; 2 Corinthians 13:14)

3– What word best describes God? Holy-Love. *(Leviticus 19:2; Isaiah 6:3; 1 John 4:8)*

4– How old is God? God is eternal. He always was; He always will be.
(Genesis 21:33; Psalm 90:2; Isaiah 40:28; 57:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Revelation 1:8)

5– Where is God? God is everywhere He wants to be.
(Psalm 139:7-10; Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 23:23-24)

6– What can God do? God can do anything He wants to do.
(Psalm 33:9; Isaiah 44:24; Matthew 19:26)

7– What does God know? God knows everything He wants to know.
(Psalm 139:1-4,17-18; 147:4-5; Hebrews 8:12; 1 John 3:20)

8– Is anything more powerful than God? No!
(Job 42:1-2; Psalm 113:4-6; Isaiah 14:27; 43:13; Daniel 4:35)

9– What did God create? Everything.
(Genesis 1:1-2:3; Nehemiah 9:6; Job 38-41; John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Revelation 4:11)

10– Why did God create you? So He could love me and enjoy me.
(Zephaniah 3:17; John 3:16; 15:9-13; Romans 8; Ephesians 3:17-19; 1 John 3:1)

11– What is God's will for your life? To know Him, love Him, and live abundantly in His love.
(Psalm 16:5-11; Jeremiah 29:11-14; Mark 12:30; John 17:3; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 1 John 5:20; Revelation 21:3)

SECTION 2: Jesus, the Son of God

12– Who is Jesus? Jesus is God, who became man, our Savior.
(Isaiah 9:6; Matthew 1:20-23; Luke 2:10-14; John 1:1-4; 3:16-17; 10:30)

13– What is the Savior? The only One who can save us from our sin.
(John 3:36; 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1 John 5:11-12)

14– Is Jesus God or man? Jesus is both perfect God and perfect man.
(John 1:14; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22; 1 John 1:1-3; 3:5)

15– What was special about the birth of Jesus? He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. *(Matthew 1:20-25; Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-7)*

16– What did Jesus do during His life on earth? He taught His disciples, cared for the poor, and died on a cross to atone for our sins. *(Matthew 5-7; 9:35-36; Luke 4:16-21; Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 2:2)*

17– What does it mean to atone for our sins? Jesus took the punishment we deserved by dying on the cross so we could have relationship with God. *(Romans 3:21-25; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21; 1 Peter 3:18)*

18– What happened after Jesus died? He was buried, descended into the grave, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. *(Matthew 27:57-61; 28:1-7; Mark 15:42-16:7; Luke 23:50-24:7,46; John 19:38-20:9)*

SECTION 3: The Holy Spirit of God

19– Who is the Holy Spirit? He is the third person of God the Trinity.
(Genesis 1:1-2; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 3:17; 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2)

20– When did the Holy Spirit come as Jesus promised? At the Jewish festival of Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus. *(Acts 2)*

21– What does Pentecost mean to Christians? It is the birthday of the Church, when the Holy Spirit filled the believers of Jesus. *(Acts 2)*

22– What does the Holy Spirit do today? He makes people holy-love like Jesus.
(Psalm 51:10-12; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Jude 24)

23– How does the Holy Spirit make people holy-love like Jesus? He convicts and cleanses people of sin, teaches and guides, gives us spiritual power and spiritual gifts, and produces the fruit of the Spirit in us. *(John 14:16-17,26; 16:7-15; Acts 1:8; 1 Corinthians 12; Galatians 5:16-25)*

24– What is a spiritual gift? An ability given to us by the Holy Spirit to help us fulfill the Great Commission. *(Acts 13:1-5; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11; Ephesians 4:11-16)*

25– What is the Great Commission? "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." *(Matt 28:19-20)*

26– What is the fruit of the Spirit? "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." *(Galatians 5:22-23)*

27– What is the witness of the Spirit? An inner assurance that our faith is pleasing to God, and that God has adopted us into His forever family as co-heirs with Christ.
(Psalm 147:11; Romans 5:5; 8:9-17; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 5:1-5; Galatians 3:26-4:7; Ephesians 3:12; Hebrews 11:6)

SECTION 4: The Bible, the Word of God

28– Where do we learn how to love and obey God? In the Bible.

29– What is the Bible? 66 God-inspired Books that teach us about God and how we can be holy-love as He is holy-love.

30– Who wrote the Bible? Across 1600 years, more than 40 people who were guided and inspired by God.

31– Name the 5 Books in the Bible that are called the Law. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

32– What is the message of the Law? God is holy-love, and He wants us to be like Him.

33– Name the Old Testament historical Books. Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther.

34– What is the message of these historical Books? Good things come when we follow God with our whole heart; bad things come when we do not.

35– Name the Books of poetry in the Old Testament. Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon.

36– What is the message of these Books of poetry? We are blessed when we seek God in all circumstances.

37– Name the Books of the major prophets in the Old Testament. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel.

38– Name the Books of the minor prophets in the Old Testament. Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

39– Why are these called minor prophets? These Books are shorter than the major prophets.

40– What is the message of the prophets? Return to the law and love of God.

41– Name the Gospels in the New Testament. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.

42– What is the message of the Gospels? Jesus came, lived, died, was resurrected, and ascended into heaven for us.

43– Name the Book that tells the early history of the Church after the ascension of Jesus. Acts.

44– What is the message of Acts? The Holy Spirit came to the Church, and God's Word spread.

45– Name the Letters of Paul. Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon.

46– What is the message of Paul's Letters? Live in God's grace and righteousness.

47– Name the General Letters. Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1 2 & 3 John, Jude.

48– What is the message of the General Letters? How to live in the world as God's people.

49– Name the final Book of the Bible. Revelation.

50– What is the message of Revelation? Jesus is the King of kings and the Lord of lords and is returning soon for His victorious Church.

51– Name all 66 Books of the Bible. (Recite the Books of the Bible in sequence from Genesis to Revelation.)

52– What is the message of these 66 God-inspired Books? They teach us about God and His great rescue plan for the world He loves.

SECTION 5: Humanity, Sin, & Salvation

53– What are men and women? Persons who can know and love God.
(Genesis 1:27; 3:8-11; Deuteronomy 6:5; Proverbs 8:17; John 17:3; 2 Peter 3:18)

54– Who were the first people? Adam and Eve. *(Genesis 2)*

55– What makes people different from the rest of creation? People have souls and are made in the image of God. *(Genesis 1:27; Deuteronomy 4:29; Psalm 62:1; Matthew 16:26)*

56– Why did God create people? To live in loving relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. *(Genesis 1:26; Jeremiah 31:3; 1 John 4:7-16; 2 Corinthians 13:14)*

57– What is God's will for humanity? To know Him, love Him, and live abundantly in His love.
(Psalm 16:5-11; Jeremiah 29:11-14; Mark 12:30; John 17:3; Ephesians 2:10; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 1 John 5:20; Revelation 21:3)

58– What is sin? Disobedience to the law of God.
(Genesis 3:6-11; Deuteronomy 5:32-33; Psalm 78:10; Daniel 9:10-11)

59– What is the law of God? To love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love others as yourselves. *(Mark 12:30-31)*

60– What does sin do? It harms our loving relationship with God, others, ourselves, and creation. *(Genesis 3; Isaiah 59:2; Mark 7:20-23; Romans 8:19-22; Galatians 5:13-15; James 3:16; 4:1-2)*

61– What sin did Adam and Eve commit? They ate fruit God told them not to eat and broke relationship with God. *(Genesis 3)*

62– How have we been affected by their sin? Adam and Eve passed on sin to all humanity; we are all born sinners. *(Psalm 14:2-3; Romans 3:9-20; 5:12; Ephesians 2:1-3)*

63– What do sinners deserve? God's wrath, punishment, and death. *(Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4; John 3:36; Romans 1:18; 5:12; 6:23; Ephesians 5:6; Colossians 3:5-7; James 1:13-15)*

64– Can we live in God's holy Presence as sinners? No, we must be saved. *(Isaiah 6:1-8; 59:1-2; 64:6; Romans 3:9-26; 5:9-11; Ephesians 2:12-13)*

65– If we are not saved, what will happen to us after death? We will be sent away from God's holy Presence forever. *(Psalm 9:15-17; Matthew 13:47-50; 25:31-33,41,46; Luke 16:19-26; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9; Revelation 20:11-15)*

66– What happens to people who are saved when they die? They go to be in God's holy Presence forever. *(Matthew 25:31-34; John 5:24; 11:25; 14:2-3; 1 Corinthians 15; 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:5; Colossians 3:1-4; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)*

67– What is salvation? Being forgiven and cleansed of sin, restored to loving relationship with God, and becoming holy-love like Jesus. *(Jeremiah 33:8; Ezekiel 37:23; 1 Corinthians 6:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7; 5:23; Titus 2:11-14; 3:3-7; Hebrews 10:1-17; 1 John 1:7,9)*

68– Who can be saved? Everyone! *(Isaiah 45:22; John 3:16; 6:40; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 2:2)*

69– What is necessary for salvation? It is by grace that we are saved through faith in Christ Jesus. *(Ephesians 2:8)*

70– Is there any other way to be saved? No. "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given to men under heaven by which we may be saved." *(Acts 4:12)*

71– What must I do to be saved? I must repent of my sin and put my faith in Jesus Christ as my Savior. *(Acts 2:38)*

SECTION 6: The Christian Life

72– What does it mean to repent of sin? To be sorry for sin and to forsake it. Repentance is turning away from sin and toward God.

73– What does it mean to put my faith in Jesus? To trust in Christ alone for salvation.

74– What happens when we are saved? Our guilt from sin is forgiven, the power of sin over our lives is broken, and the Holy Spirit makes His home in us. *(John 14:23; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:15-23)*

75– What are the stages of the salvation process? Repentance, new birth, justification, sanctification, and glorification. *(Matthew 4:17; John 3:3-8; Romans 3:23-24; 5:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:17-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; I John 3:1-2)*

76– What does it mean to be born again? To repent of sin, believe in Jesus, and be filled with His Spirit. *(John 3:3-8; Acts 2:38; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 Peter 1:3)*

77– What is justification? God forgiving sinners and accepting them as righteous through Christ. *(Acts 13:38-39; Romans 3:23-24; 5:1; Galatians 2:12)*

78– What is sanctification? The process of being made whole and holy like Jesus by God's Spirit. *(John 17:17-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 1:13-23)*

79– What is glorification? The final stage of salvation, where we will be perfected like Jesus and remain in the Presence of God forever! *(Matthew 13:43; Mark 9:2-7; John 14:1-3; Romans 8:18,30; 1 Corinthians 15:51-58; 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:16-18; 5:1-5; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:17-18; 1 Peter 1:3-5; 5:10-11; 1 John 3:2)*

80– What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit? To constantly surrender every part of my life to His Lordship. *(Romans 8:1-14; Galatians 5:16-25; Ephesians 5:18)*

81– What is the primary evidence of being Spirit-filled? Holy-love for God, others, and self. *(Mark 12:30-31; 1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 5:22)*

82– What is prayer? Talking to and listening to God.

83– When can we pray? All the time!
(Luke 18:1; Romans 12:12; Ephesians 6:18; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18)

84– What can we pray about? Anything and everything.
(Ephesians 5:20; 6:18; Philippians 4:6; 1 Peter 5:7)

85– What if I don't know what to pray about? Just think your thoughts to God, describe your feelings to God, and ask for His help.

86– What trustworthy record of God's words do we have? The Christian Bible.
(Romans 15:4; 2 Corinthians 3:16; 1 Peter 1:24-25)

87– What is the best way to get to know God's voice? By meditating on His Word.
(Psalm 1:2; 119:97-105; John 10:2-5,14-16; Hebrews 4:12)

88– Will God ever say anything that is contrary to His Word? No.
(Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Hebrews 6:17-19; 13:8)

89– What is the highest calling of a Christian? To faithfully love God and others, wherever we are. *(Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 12:30-31; John 13:34-35; Colossians 3:17; 1 Peter 2:9; 4:8; 1 John 3:11)*

SECTION 7: God's Commands

118– How do we show our love for God? By obeying His commands.
(John 14:15,21,23; 1 John 2:5; 2 John 1:6)

119– What is a commandment of God? A picture of who God is and a promise of what we can become.

120– What are the Ten Commandments? Commandments given to God's people at Mt. Sinai in Exodus 20.

121– What does the 1st commandment mean, "You shall have no other gods before Me?"
Always keep God as the first priority in your life.

122– What does the 2nd commandment mean, "You shall not make for yourself an idol?"
It is wrong to worship anything but God.

123– What does the 3rd commandment mean, "You shall not misuse the Name of the Lord your God?" Treat the mention of God with great respect.

124– What does the 4th commandment mean, "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it Holy?" Set aside one day each week to rest from work and to worship God with other Christians.

125– What do these first four commandments teach? How to love and honor God.

126– What does the 5th commandment mean, "Honor your father and mother?"
Love and respect your parents.

127– What does the 6th commandment mean, "You shall not murder?"
Do not unlawfully kill anyone.

128– What does the 7th commandment mean, "You shall not commit adultery?"
Sex is for a married husband and wife only.

129– What does the 8th commandment mean, "You shall not steal?"
We should not take things that do not belong to us.

130– What does the 9th commandment mean, "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor?" We should always tell the truth.

131– What does the 10th commandment mean, "You shall not covet?"
We should be content with the things God has given us.

132– What do these last six commandments teach? How to love and honor others.

133– What is the sum of all Ten Commandments? To love God with all your heart, and to love your neighbor as yourself. *(Mark 12:30-31)*

134– Who did Jesus use to explain who our neighbor is?
Our enemies, in Matthew 5 and Luke 10.

135– Why are these commandments important to us?
They teach us what God is like and describe the life of holy-love that God wants for us.

SECTION 8: The Lord's Prayer

136– Who first prayed the Lord's Prayer?
Jesus, when He taught His disciples how to pray in Matthew 6.

137– What are the words of the Lord's Prayer?
Our Father, Who is in heaven, Holy is Your Name. Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. Lead us away from temptation, and deliver us from evil. For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever! Amen.

138– Why did Jesus teach us to address God as Father?
The relationship that God chose to share with humanity is that of Father and children.

139– What does it mean, "Holy is Your Name?" We honor and love our holy God.

140– What does it mean, "Your kingdom come?" Father God is King, and we want everyone in the whole world to be a child in His Kingdom.

141– What does it mean, "Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven?"
We want everything God wants.

142– What does it mean, "Give us this day our daily bread?"
We trust in God and ask Him to supply all our needs.

143– What does it mean, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors?"
We ask God to forgive us like we forgive other people.

144– What does it mean, "Lead us away from temptation and deliver us from evil?"
We ask God to protect us from all sin.

SECTION 9: The Beatitudes

145– What are the beatitudes? Jesus' teaching about holy character in Matthew 5.

146– What are the words of the beatitudes?
Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.
Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.
Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

147– What does it mean to be poor in spirit? To admit you have sinned and need God's help.

148– What does it mean to mourn? To be sad about the things that make God sad.

149– What does it mean to be meek? To give God control of your life.

150– What does it mean to hunger and thirst for righteousness?
To truly desire God's standards for your life.

151– What does it mean to be merciful? To have compassion for all people.

152– What does it mean to be pure in heart? To love God with all your heart.

153– What does it mean to be a peacemaker?
To help people be friends with God and each other.

154– What does it mean to be persecuted for the sake of righteousness?
To gladly suffer for the kingdom of God.

SECTION 10: Evil, Pain, & Suffering

90– If God is good, why do bad things happen? God is very good, but sin is very bad. Bad things are the result of sin in the world. *(Genesis 3:11-24; 4:7; Psalm 119:68; 136:1; 145:7-9; Galatians 5:19-21; Colossians 3:5-6; James 1:13-15)*

91– Where is God when bad things happen? He is right there with us, grieving with us, offering us comfort and strength. *(Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:9; Psalm 23:4; Isaiah 41:10; 43:1-3; Daniel 3; Zephaniah 3:17; Matthew 28:20; John 11:33-36; 14:16-17; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 12:9-10)*

92– What should I do when I doubt? Our doubts are safe with God. Take them to Him, be honest, and ask for His help. *(Joshua 21:45; Mark 9:24; Luke 1:45; 17:5; John 20:24-29)*

93– Where does evil come from? Evil comes when humanity chooses sin and self over God and others. *(Genesis 3; Judges 2:19; 2 Chronicles 29:6; Psalm 73:7; Mark 7:21-22; Romans 2:8; 7:7-24; James 1:13-14; 3:16; 4:1-2; 1 John 2:16)*

94– What should I do when tragedy strikes? Trust in God, share every thought and feeling with Him, and seek help from the Body of Christ. *(Psalm 23:4; 62:8; Lamentations 2:19; Romans 8:35-39; 12:13; Galatians 6:2,10; Philippians 4:6-7)*

95– What else does God want me to know about evil, pain, and suffering?

"What was intended for harm, God can use for good." –Genesis 50:20

"God works all things together for the good of those who love Him." –Romans 8:28

"God comforts us in all our troubles so that we may comfort others in any trouble with the same comfort we ourselves have received from God." –2 Corinthians 1:3-4

"Our present sufferings do not compare with the glory to come!" –Romans 8:18

96– Who is Satan? The enemy of God and of our souls.
(Genesis 3:1-6; John 10:10; 1 Peter 5:8; 1 John 3:8; Revelation 12:9-10)

97– How does the Bible describe Satan? Deceiver, Tempter, Accuser, Murderer, Devourer.
(Genesis 3:1-6; Zechariah 3:1; John 8:44; 10:10; 1 Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:9-10)

Scripture references for #98-102 below: Genesis 3:14-15; Job 1-2; Isaiah 14:12-15; Matthew 8:31; Luke 4:31-41; James 2:19; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 1 John 4:4; Revelation 20:1-3,7-10

98– Is Satan all-powerful, like God? No. His power is limited.

99– Can Satan create anything, like God? No. But he will try to use anything.

100– Does Satan know everything, like God? No. But he is very clever.

101– Can Satan read your mind? No. But he understands how people think.

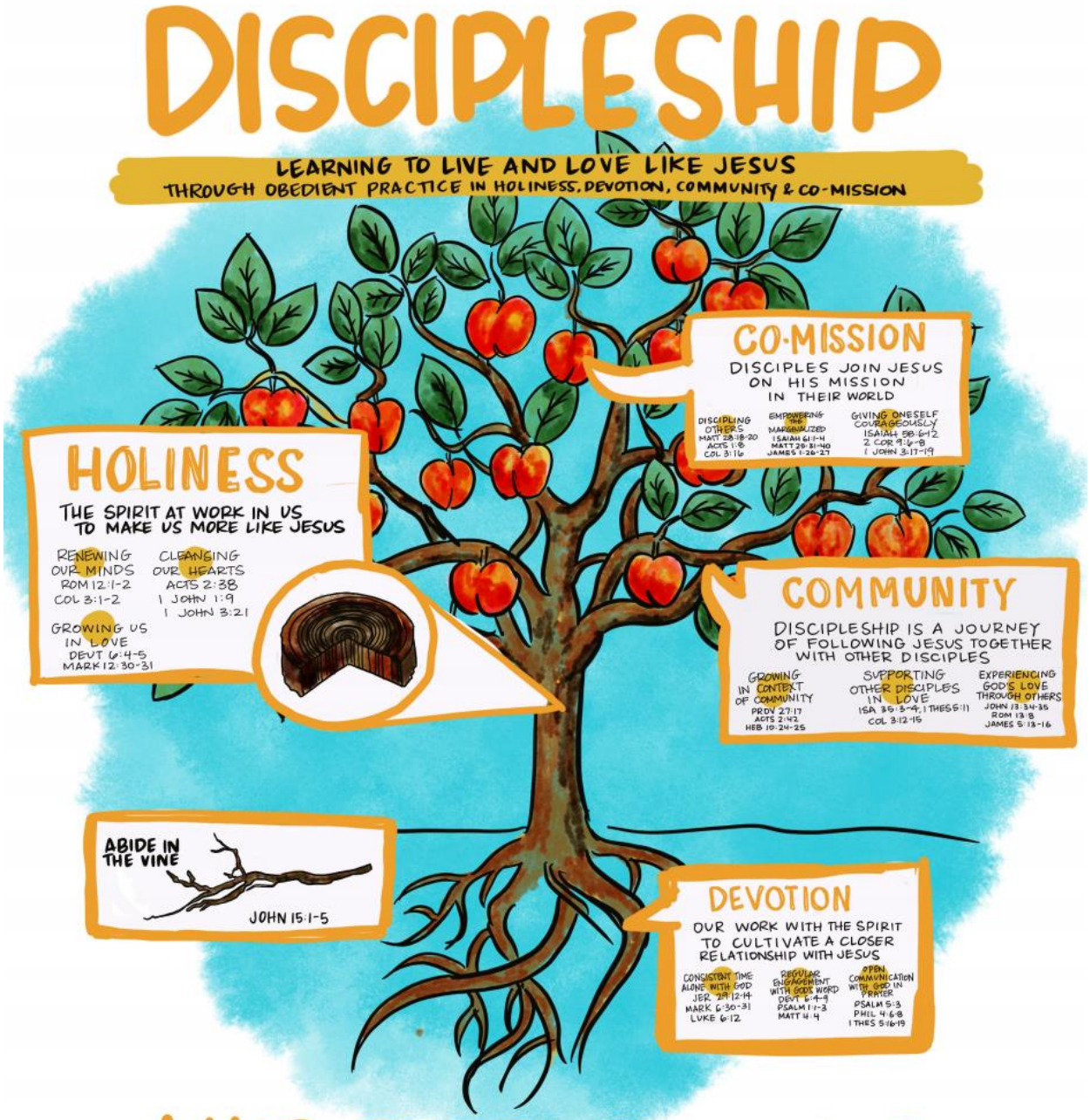
102– Is Satan everywhere at once, like God? No. But his demons are widespread.

103– What do temptation, sin, and Satan do? They steal, kill, and destroy life.
(John 10:10; Romans 6:23; James 1:14-15)

104– How can I protect myself from Satan? Memorize God's Word, and put on the full armor of God. *(Matthew 4:1-11; Ephesians 6:10-18; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8-9)*

105– Is it wrong to be tempted? It is no sin to be tempted. Sin comes when we dwell or act on the temptation. *(Matthew 4:1-11; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Hebrews 4:15)*

106– What should I do when I'm tempted? Flee from the source of the temptation, speak Scripture, ask God for help, and call a trusted Christian friend for prayer.
(Genesis 39:6-12; Matthew 4:1-11; 6:13; Isaiah 53:4-6; 1 Corinthians 6:18; Ephesians 3:12; 2 Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 2:18; 3:13; 4:16; James 4:7; 5:13-16; 1 Peter 5:8-9)


DISCIPLESHIP
LEARNING TO LIVE AND LOVE LIKE JESUS
THROUGH OBEDIENT PRACTICE IN HOLINESS, DEVOTION, COMMUNITY & CO-MISSION
CO-MISSION
DISCIPLES JOIN JESUS ON HIS MISSION IN THEIR WORLD
DISCIPLING OTHERS
MATT 28:18-20
ACTS 1:8
COL 3:16
EMPOWERING THE MARGINALIZED
ISAIAH 61:1-4
MATT 25:31-40
JAMES 1:26-27
GIVING ONESELF COURAGEOUSLY
ISAIAH 58:6-12
2 COR 9:6-8
1 JOHN 3:17-19
HOLINESS
THE SPIRIT AT WORK IN US TO MAKE US MORE LIKE JESUS
RENEWING OUR MINDS
ROM 12:1-2
COL 3:1-2
CLEANSING OUR HEARTS
ACTS 2:38
1 JOHN 1:9
1 JOHN 3:21
GROWING US IN LOVE
DEUT 6:4-5
MARK 12:30-31
COMMUNITY
DISCIPLESHIP IS A JOURNEY OF FOLLOWING JESUS TOGETHER WITH OTHER DISCIPLES
GROWING IN CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY
PROV 27:17
ACTS 2:42
HEB 10:24-25
SUPPORTING OTHER DISCIPLES IN LOVE
ISA 35:3-4, 1 THESS 5:11
COL 3:12-16
EXPERIENCING GOD'S LOVE THROUGH OTHERS
JOHN 13:34-35
ROM 13:8
JAMES 5:13-16
ABIDE IN THE VINE
JOHN 15:1-5
DEVOTION
OUR WORK WITH THE SPIRIT TO CULTIVATE A CLOSER RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS
CONSISTENT TIME ALONE WITH GOD
JER 29:12-14
MARK 6:30-31
LUKE 6:12
REGULAR ENGAGEMENT WITH GOD'S WORD
DEUT 6:4-9
PSALM 1:1-3
MATT 4:4
OPEN COMMUNICATION WITH GOD IN PRAYER
PSALM 5:3
PHIL 4:6-8
1 THES 5:16-19
LIKE TREES PLANTED
JEREMIAH 17:7-8 • PSALM 1:1-3 • ISAIAH 61:3
"TRUSTING IN THE LORD"
"DELIGHTING IN HIS WORD"
"A PLANTING FOR HIS GLORY"

SECTION 11: Christian Discipleship

The "DISCIPLESHIP" infographic located on the previous page illustrates this section of the catechism.

107– What is Christian discipleship? Learning to live and love like Jesus through obedient practice in holiness, devotion, community, and co-mission.

108– What is meant by "holiness?" God's Spirit at work in us to make us more like Jesus.

109– How can we grow in holiness? By cooperating with God's Spirit to renew our minds, cleanse our hearts, and grow in love. *(Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Mark 12:30-31; Acts 2:38; Romans 12:1-2; Colossians 3:1-2; 1 John 1:9; 3:21)*

110– What is meant by "devotion?" Our work with God's Spirit to cultivate a closer relationship with Jesus.

111– How can we grow in devotion? Spend consistent time alone with God by engaging in God's Word and keeping open communication with God in prayer. *(Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Psalm 1:1-3; 5:3; Jeremiah 29:12-14; Matthew 4:4; Mark 6:30-31; Luke 6:12; Philippians 4:6-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19)*

112– What is meant by "community?" Discipleship is not to be done alone; it is a journey of following Jesus together with other disciples.

113– How can we grow in the context of community? By spending regular time with other Christian disciples, supporting them in love, and experiencing God's love through them. *(Proverbs 27:17; Isaiah 35:3-4; John 13:34-35; Acts 2:42; Romans 13:8; Colossians 3:12-15; 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24-25; James 5:13-16)*

114– What is meant by "co-mission?" Disciples join Jesus on His mission in their world.

115– How can we grow in co-mission? By disciping others, empowering the marginalized, and giving oneself courageously. *(Isaiah 58:6-12; 61:1-4; Matthew 25:31-40; 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8; Colossians 3:16; James 1:26-27; 1 John 3:17-19)*

116– What does it mean to "obediently practice" these things? Success for the Christian is obedience to God. Practice makes progress, and God favors humble obedience. *(Genesis 6:22; 7:5; 17:9; Exodus 40:16; 1 Samuel 15:22; Micah 6:8; Hebrews 11:8; James 4:6; 2 John 6)*

117– How can I do all these things? Only by abiding in Jesus. *(John 15:1-5)*

SECTION 12: Money & Stewardship

Did you know there are 2,350 verses in the Bible that talk about money and possessions? Jesus Himself discussed this topic more than almost any other (second only to the Kingdom of God!). Why did Jesus speak on money so frequently? Because He knows possessions can have a stronger grip on our souls than anything else. Money is deeply spiritual, and our attitudes regarding it have massive spiritual implications in our lives. That is why we include a section on stewardship in this spiritual catechism.

155– What is the first thing we should do whenever we receive money? GIVE – at least 10% – to God's Kingdom work around the world. *(Genesis 28:22; Leviticus 27:30-34; Deuteronomy 14:22; Nehemiah 10:35-37; 2 Corinthians 9:6-7)*

156– What is the second thing we should do? SAVE – at least 10% – for future needs and plans. *(Genesis 41:34-36; Proverbs 6:6-8; 13:16; 21:20)*

157– What should we do with the rest? STEWARD it faithfully for God.
(Psalm 112:5; Proverbs 3:9-10; 27:23; 28:20; Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 16:10-11; 1 Peter 4:10)

158– How much of my money belongs to God? All of it – 100%.
(Deuteronomy 10:14; 1 Chronicles 29:11; Job 41:11; Psalm 24:1; 89:11; 1 Corinthians 10:26)

159– What is stewardship? Faithfully managing something that belongs to Someone else.

160– What is debt? Money that was loaned to you, which you must pay back with interest.

161– What is interest? The extra cost of the loaned money.

162– Where does debt come from?
Buying things you cannot afford. Usually, if it's worth buying, it's worth waiting for.

163– What is the consequence of debt?
"The borrower is servant to the lender." –Proverbs 22:7

164– Should I ever go into debt? Rarely, if ever. Debt should only be used if the value of the thing you are buying will exceed the total cost of the loan AND the interest it takes to buy it.

165– What is credit? Deferred payment, or, temporary debt.

166– Should I ever use credit?

Very cautiously – only if you have the money to pay it off in full each month.

167– What is depreciation? The reality that most things lose their value over time.

168– Is wealth bad? Is money evil? No, these are tools that can glorify God and further His Kingdom. But beware: "the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil." –1 Timothy 6:10

169– What else does God want me to know about money?

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." –Matthew 6:21

"Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content with what you have." –Hebrews 13:5

"No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve both God and money." –Matthew 6:24

"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much." –Luke 16:10

"To whom much is given, much is required." –Luke 12:48

His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!" –Matthew 25:21

SECTION 13: Human Sexuality & the Sanctity of Life

God has placed the responsibility upon us as parents to teach our kids the truth about human sexuality and the sacredness of human life. We don't want to leave their sexual education up to their peers, the secular government, the school system, or the world's media!

We recommend introducing the topics of human sexuality and the sanctity of life to your children at an early age – doing so, of course, in ways that are age-appropriate, truthful, and God-honoring. What follows is a basis for having discussions with our kids about these topics.

These questions are intentionally simple. The short answers provided are meant to be basic. They are there to serve as a starting point for deeper conversations between parents and their children as they grow and mature. Our hope is that these questions will give our kids a Biblical

foundation for appreciating how God made our bodies and a solid standard against which to scrutinize the misinformation of their peers, the skewed messages of media, and the deceptions of the world.

As our children grow and mature, we believe this foundation will invite deeper conversations, where we (as parents) can feel more comfortable being open and direct about these subjects, and they (as kids) can develop an ever-increasing appreciation and respect for their bodies and the precious gifts that God has given us!

Scripture references for #170-171 below: Genesis 1:27,31; 2:18-24; 5:1-2; Deuteronomy 22:5; Psalm 139:13-15; Matthew 19:4; Mark 10:6.

170– How did God design people? God designed people to be either male or female. Males and females are different, and those differences are special and good!

171– How are males and females different? The differences God designed between males and females are present in every aspect of our bodies: from head to toe, both outside and inside, at both the visible and the microscopic levels.

172– What if someone thinks, feels, or says they are something they are not? Treat them with love and kindness, as a fellow creation of God. And know that it is neither loving nor kind to affirm thoughts, feelings, or words that contradict reality.

173– Can people change God's good design? Altering our bodies or the labels we give ourselves does not fundamentally change our comprehensive design as either male or female.

174– What is sex? A physical and spiritual act of intimacy where two people become one flesh. *(Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6; Mark 10:7-8; 1 Corinthians 6:15-16; Ephesians 5:31)*

175– Who is sex for? A married husband and wife. *(Genesis 2:24; Exodus 20:14; Leviticus 18:1-30; 20:10-24; Matthew 19:4-6; Mark 10:6-9; 1 Corinthians 7:2; Hebrews 13:4)*

176– What is sex for? Expressing married love, enjoying each other, creating new life, and glorifying God. *(Genesis 1:27-28; Song of Solomon; Hebrews 13:4)*

177– When sex creates new life, what does God want? For people to cherish and protect that life as precious and sacred. *(Genesis 9:6; 22:10-11; Exodus 1:15-17; 20:13; Leviticus 18:21; Deuteronomy 5:17; 12:31; 18:9-12; 2 Chronicles 28:1-3; Psalm 8:2-5; 106:36-39; 127:3-5; 139:13-16; Isaiah 49:1; 57:5; Jeremiah 1:4-5; 19:5; Ezekiel 16:20-21; Amos 1:13; Matthew 18:1-6; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 1:39-44)*

Additional Scriptures for understanding God's standards for sexual holiness: Genesis 19:4-7; Judges 19:22-23; 1 Kings 14:22-24; Job 31:1; Matthew 5:27-30; Mark 10:10-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 5:9-11; 6:9-20; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 5:3-7; Colossians 3:5-10; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; 1 Peter 4:3-4; Jude 1:7; Revelation 21:8; 22:15.

178– Who created sex? God, who loves me and wants the best for me.

179– What do your parents know about sex? Truthful information.

180– What do your peers know about sex? Unreliable information.

181– What does the world's media teach about sex? Deceptive and manipulative information.

182– What does the Bible teach about sex?

The truth about God's precious gift, and how it is best enjoyed.

SECTION 14: Our Family!

This final section of the catechism is an opportunity to determine together what is God's will and purpose specifically for your family. We used multiple resources and developed our family's core values and motto over several months of praying, thinking, and honing our ideas together (see pages 30-33 for more info about this process!).

Our primary resource was Robert Lewis' *Raising a Modern-Day Knight*, which describes creating a coat-of-arms for your family, including symbols and words that would represent what your family stands for.

Use the questions that follow to cultivate your own unique language for describing why God has brought your family together for His glory!

183– What does it mean to be a(n) _____?

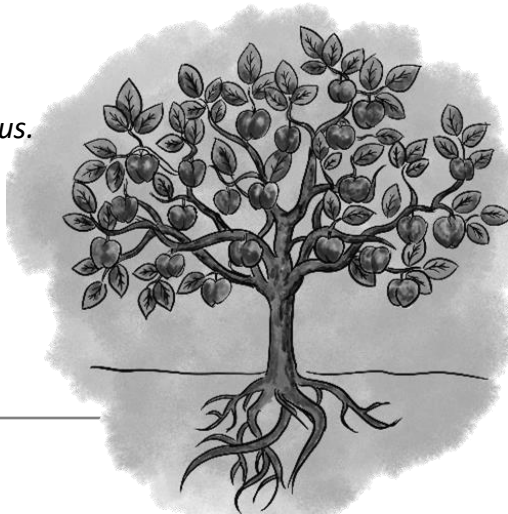
(your family name)

What are our family's core values?
What is our family motto?

For illustrative purposes, here is how our family responds to these questions, based on our particular family values and motto:

What does it mean to be a Cash?

- *A Cash is considerate, temperate, resourceful, and gracious.*
- *Cashes live with integrity, simplicity, and excellence.*
- *Cashes trust in the Lord and obey His Word.*



HEAR O ISRAEL

THE LORD OUR GOD, THE LORD IS ONE

LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD

with all your heart and
with all your soul and
with all your strength

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 rodd,

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 SIX FOUR THROUGH NINE

The Family Discipleship GUIDEBOOK

"I know I'm supposed to be the spiritual leader of my home – but I don't know how to do it!" **This was the lament of my younger years of marriage and parenting: responsibility without training. I had no "how-to" manual for family leadership and lacked the foresight to seek out mentors. I was stuck.**

Every Christian parent can disciple their household into the Kingdom of God. You don't need a seminary degree or a special certification from your church. God chose you. God chose you to be your kids' parent, and He will equip you for the role if you will seek His guidance and practice with intentionality the principles of purposeful family discipleship found in the Bible.

This revised and expanded Third Edition of The Family Discipleship Guidebook includes over 60 pages of additional content, instruction, explanation, and encouragement for leading your household's spiritual development:

- ***Theological Foundations***
- ***Practical How-To Instructions***
- ***a Complete Children's Catechism***
- ***and much, much more!***

This new lay-flat edition allows for greater ease-of-use around the dinner table with your family. It also includes large-print pages of the Prayers, Creeds, and Scriptures of the Christian faith that your family can see and recite together across the table.

Rev. Dr. Nick Cash is a husband, father, pastor, chaplain, and non-profit ministry director from Columbus, Georgia in the USA. Nick creates and shares free resources for personal, family, and group discipleship at LikeTreesPlanted.com.