

# THE DISCIPLE-MAKING PARENT

Small Group Book Study  
Leader's Guide



**Chap Bettis**



## INTRODUCTION TO THE LEADER'S GUIDE

Thank you for choosing to study *The Disciple-Making Parent*. I think you will find that it challenges common assumptions about parenting in the church of Jesus Christ.

The material has grown out of a number of sources. First, as a senior pastor I was privileged to study the Word of God for twenty-five years. I believe this study gives *The Disciple-Making Parent* a theological depth that is not found in other resources on this subject. In addition, I grew up in a Christian home and had a rocky transition from a child's faith to an adult faith. This resource includes lessons from those years. God also blessed me with four children who are now adults. *The Disciple-Making Parent* includes lessons Sharon and I learned while raising them to adulthood. Finally, the Lord brought other godly parents into our church. I was able to learn many lessons from them as they lived out the same principles in a different way.

### THOUGHTS ON THE CLASS/SMALL GROUP

I am excited that you are seeking to help others with this material. Our ministry wants to equip you to bless your family and to help others. All of us are to be disciples who make disciples. One of the saddest things I hear as I speak is, "I wish I had heard this material 30 years ago." You have a number of people in your circles of influence that you can help. As a small group leader you are a vessel of God's grace to the people around you.

As you lead the study please keep one very important idea in mind. We want to oppose the lie that if we do everything "right" then our children will follow the Lord. Conversely, parents whose children are not following the Lord often feel shame that they did something wrong. We want to fight both thoughts! Salvation of our children is by grace alone! Our child's salvation is not a parental works program. So make sure we are presenting salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, through Christ alone. Having said this, God's Word does give us instructions to faithfully carry out.

Having a team to help you will multiply your effort. For a small group of five couples you might want to have a leadership team that includes another couple. For a larger class, add one or two couples more to your leadership



team. Present yourselves as fellow learners. Make sure you are putting these principles and activities into practice in your family. Then you will be able to share out of the overflow of your life.

### SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE

That brings us to the subject of how God influences others through us. Your spiritual authority and influence is a function of how old your children are, how long you have been with the church, and how respected you are by the people you are leading. Keep this in mind as you lead. Unless your children are grown, it is much better to present yourself as a fellow-learner and facilitator. Resist the fleshly impulse to set yourself up as the expert. If possible, seek to hear from the older couples God has given your church. One class objective is to build relationships within the body of Christ. Too many young parents look to Google for answers to their questions when they should be googling the members of their church.

### SCHEDULING

Since many small groups meet for 6-8 weeks, I have accepted the challenge to boil the material down to 8 weeks. As a result we spend most of our time on the first and second sections of *The Disciple-Making Parent*. The first part lays the biblical foundation for parenting as disciple-making. The second section looks at material that applies to parents of children of any age. As a result we are only able to spend one week on issues that more specifically relate to parents of tween or teens. If the material is well-received then you might consider having a follow-up class while covering Chapter 3 and Part 3 more in depth to specifically focus on issues unique to preteens and teens.

### THOUGHTS ON THE READING THE MATERIAL

In today's fast-paced, Internet and smart phone focused world, reading has fallen upon hard times. Many individuals, mostly men, may look at the paperback and think to themselves, "I am not reading all of that." As a leader you need to be aware of this objection and speak to it.

There are two strategies to handle this objection. First, acknowledge what some may be thinking. Then one strategy is to point to word "Guidebook" on the front cover

and say something like, "You don't feel the need to read every page of a travel guidebook to Disneyworld. Instead, you read what interests you and skim the rest."

A second strategy is to have them download the audiobook by sending their email to [audiobook@theapollosproject.com](mailto:audiobook@theapollosproject.com). Or they can order the audiobook through Audible or [Christianaudio.com](http://Christianaudio.com) for a nominal amount. Each chapter only takes about 15 minutes to listen to. The average commute is twenty-five minutes so your class members do have time to listen to it if the motivation is there.

It is vitally important to go after the hearts of the men. Fathers and mothers need to learn together. Fathers are the heads of the households. Too often they abdicate all the important decisions because their wives know more than they do. As this disparity increases, wives become more resistant to hearing their husband's input and the men in turn offer less input. Families end up in a dysfunctional reversal. Do all you can to engage the men.

### THOUGHTS ON THE CLASS STRUCTURE

The best learning involves student participation and application. The challenge for the teacher is always how best to give the maximum information while achieving the maximum transformation. The format you choose will depend on your gifting, your students, and the time you have been given.

There are different class formats that could work well. Each have their strengths and weaknesses. One format would be to ask the participants to read/listen to the material during the week. During the class/small group time you can go through the material question-by-question seeking to have a discussion.

Another church has used a different structure to teach chapter-by-chapter through the whole book. While a children's program was going on somewhere else, one teacher summarized the chapter for about ½ the time. Then the parents broke into small groups to discuss application in their lives and have prayer for each other.

### THOUGHTS ON ASSIGNMENTS

The most life change will happen outside of meeting time. I am a big believer in tying in the devotional time with what is being studied as a group. Most church



members do not know where to read during the week and are not reading during the week.

Each lesson includes suggested verses to guide devotions during that week. Another tool you can use is encouraging parents to use the self-reflection questions during the week. Finally, while this study does not specifically cover prayer this is a great activity to emphasize on a weekly basis. As John Owen has said, “He who prays as he ought will endeavor to live as he prays.” As a class facilitator one class goal is that parents realize their need to pray and start praying. One tool would be to have 7 different parents report on some aspect of prayer in each of Classes 2-8.

Finally, *The Disciple-Making Parent* emphasizes principles being careful not to give the reader “7 Steps to Passing the Gospel to Your Children.” But parents do need help in moving from principles to specific applications. It is better to do something than not doing anything because there are too many options. As a result I make some specific applications in each lesson. It is a great encouragement when a class is doing these together even while realizing these are not the secrets that guarantee success.

## OTHER SUBTLE GOALS

As a teacher, you have other goals in mind. I would also have some of these hopes:

- To connect young parents to older parents.
- To connect with other parents so as to stand against the pressures of the world against kingdom families.
- To create a spirit of like-mindedness among the parents without a spirit of judgmentalism.
- To have them receive regular input via email from The Apollos Project.
- To have them clearly understand and articulate the gospel.
- To have mom and dad receive the same teaching and therefore strengthen the marriage.
- To teach all sorts of biblical principles that apply to church life as well as family life.
- To encourage the prayer life of couples.

- To strengthen the parents in the church as Christians and church life.
- To emphasize the importance of the local church. To emphasize the sufficiency of Scripture for family life.

## SEVERAL PROPOSED SCHEDULES

### Nine Month

As mentioned before, I know of whole churches who have taken their families through the material one chapter a week. *The Disciple-Making Parent* formed the basis of equipping the parents of youth one night of the week and parents of younger children on another night. While some were ministering to the children, a teacher summarized the material to the larger group of parents. This was followed by small group breakout to discuss the material and apply it. Another church studied it one chapter at a time for the school year in Sunday School time.

### Eight Week

More common will be a shorter schedule. The following leader’s guide suggests this eight-week schedule.

Week 1 – Introduction

Week 2 – Foundational Issues  
Chapters 1, 2, and 3.

Week 3 – The Power of Example  
Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Week 4 – The Power of the Gospel  
Chapters 7, 8, and 9.

Week 5 – The Power of the Heart  
Chapters 10, 11, 12, and 13.

Week 6 – The Power of the Word  
Chapters 14, 15, 16, and 17.

Week 7 – The Power of Purpose  
Chapters 18 and 19.

Week 8 – Becoming Convinced  
A quick survey of Chapters 22, 23,  
24, 25, 26, 27 and 28.

### Two Seven or Eight Week Units

You might also consider two straight study units. While the first unit could be much of the material covered



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above, the second would be taking the chapters from Part 3 – Becoming Convinced and walking through them more slowly through this part that is uniquely aimed at parents of teens.

This format is also powerful because you can introduce habits in the first class eight weeks that you can follow up with.

Assuming they already have the books and you did not do Week 8 in the previous study then the following schedule might be helpful for your second seven or eight weeks.

Week 1 – The Power of Prayer  
Chapters 20 and 21.

Week 2 – The Power of Apologetics  
Chapters 22 and 23.

Week 3 – The Power of Friends  
Chapters 24 and 25.

Week 4 – The Power of Seeking God  
Chapters 26 and 27.

Week 5 – More conversation about Media  
and Electronics.

Week 6 – Conversation about sexuality and gender.

Week 7 – Roundup.

## HELPS TO YOU

Please feel free to connect with me at [chap@chapbettis.com](mailto:chap@chapbettis.com). I want to do all I can to make you successful. In addition, check out [www.thedisciplemakingparent.com](http://www.thedisciplemakingparent.com) for instructions on bulk orders.



## CLASS I: INTRODUCTION

### CLASS OBJECTIVES

With the class we are hoping to break the ice and create community. In addition, we want to hear specific stories that will teach other parents. An adult convert has a different experience than one who grew up in a Christian home. For the latter there is often a time of learning and a time of convincing. These stories will be good for all to hear so as to equip them to disciple their children.

If you only want to meet for seven weeks this class could be combined with the next meeting.

### SUGGESTED FORMAT

#### Welcome

(Welcome each person there. Tell them why you are excited to be thinking about this subject. Also tell them why you and the leadership of the church chose this book and this topic.)

Have them introduce themselves. An introduction might include their names and ages of children.)

#### Influence and Philosophies

We all have parenting philosophies that have influenced us. We may be aware of them or not. We may be intentional or random in where we have picked them up.

What are some influences that have affected you? How have your parents, your past, Christian books, and non-Christian books influenced you?

How has our culture influenced us? How would many American parents finish the statement: "Good parents ..."?



## Spiritual History

Let me ask you a little bit about your spiritual history. How many of you grew up in a family that went to a gospel-preaching church? Tell us about your spiritual history. Did you receive Christ at a young age? Was there a time of doubt or wandering later after which you would say your faith became your own? What were positive influences? For the rest of us, listen for what life was like as a child growing up in the church. Some day our children will be grown up like this.

## Prodigals

On a related note, do you know some who grew up going to church who have walked away from the faith? Realizing we cannot know the heart, what would you guess were some of the reasons? Have they ever communicated this to others? Again, are there any lessons to learn here.

## Books and Audiobooks

(Distribute the books. Address the reading objection head on.)

I know some of you are looking at this and thinking, “There is no way I am going to read this.” We are not asking you to do that. But we are asking you to make an effort to take in as much material as you can. Each chapter only takes about 20 minutes to read. And the great news is that with the purchase of the book, you also get access to an audiobook that you can download. You can sign up now. Get our your phones and shoot an email to [audiobook@theapollosproject.com](mailto:audiobook@theapollosproject.com) with the subject line [church name] free audiobook offer. In addition, you can purchase it on Audible or [Christianaudio.com](http://Christianaudio.com) for a reasonable amount.

## Weaving Prayer Throughout the Lessons

[Optional: We are going to have one person report on parts of Chapter 20 – Praying for Your Children and Chapter 21 – Praying with Your Children. Can I get several volunteers to include a four or five sentence report on part of the chapter at the beginning of each class?]

## WEEK 1 ASSIGNMENT

1. Read or listen to Chapter 1 – Disciple-Making, the Gospel, and Parenting, Chapter 2 – God’s Most Effective Shepherd—You!, and Chapter 3 – Surveying the Changes and Challenges



2. Complete the reflection questions for these chapters.
3. Meditate on these verses for devotions and how they apply to family life: Matthew 28:18-20, Genesis 1:26-28, Malachi 2:15, 3 John 4
4. Read 2 Timothy 3:14-15. What can you learn about Timothy's walk and the factors that influenced it? Read 2 Timothy 1:5. What does Paul say about Timothy's mother and grandmother? How does this encourage you?





## CLASS 2: FOUNDATIONS

### CLASS OBJECTIVES

In this meeting we want to make sure that parents understand what the Great Commission is and how it changes our view of parenting. In addition, we also want them to see their own role in God's design to pass the gospel to their children. Parents will also understand the typical process that second generation Christians go through. Finally, we want parents to be aware of factors that affect their child's walk.

### SUGGESTED FORMAT

#### Prayer

Opening Prayer. (If you are having someone report on the prayer chapter, this might be a good time for a few sentence summary of a chapter section. And then include that prayer suggestion in your opening prayer.)

#### Chapter 1 Disciple-Making, the Gospel, and Parenting

##### Eternal Souls

Lots of parenting advice is essentially behavioristic – dealing with behavior and success in the world. But Christian parenting should think differently. Had you thought about your children as eternal souls entrusted to your care? How should thinking about children this way change your parenting? How should it change your parenting decisions?

##### The Great Commission

Read Matthew 28:18-20. This is has been called The Great Commission and it is the church's marching orders. What are the four verbs? What are we commanded to do? The main command is to make disciples and the other verbs support that main verb.



What is a disciple? (p. 7). How does one become a disciple? How did Jesus make disciples? (p. 6, 8). This verb is the marching orders of the church and why we reach out across the ocean and in our town. But in the Great Commission we have a call to make disciples in our own family.

The author argues that this is the North Star of our parenting. Do you agree? How does that help you navigate the many decisions you have to make as a parent?

[Optional: How is The Great Commission a restatement of the dominion mandate given to Adam and Eve?]

[Optional: How did Jesus develop his disciples? How does that parallel with us as parents?]

### **Dangers**

What is the danger that young people growing up in a Christian home face? (p. 9). Did you know that before? How does knowing this affect your parenting?

### **Chapter 2 – God’s Most Effective Shepherd – You!**

Who is God’s most effective shepherd/pastor/spiritual influencer? Do you agree? Does that surprise you? What inadequacies do you feel?

The author quotes from Scripture, historical figures, and scientific research making this case. Which stood out to you and why?

Do you identify with any of these statements that parents often make? What would you add?

### **Parenting Myths**

What are the three myths the author refers to? Do you think parents tend to believe that if they do everything right, the children will turn out well? How is the truth a partial relief for parents of prodigals? What is our duty?

What is myth 2? Is this a temptation for you? How? Where does our identity come from?

What is myth 3? Is this a temptation for you? Or are you tempted to passively let the church do all the work?

### **The Power of Church**

The author makes the statement that “The best think you can do for your





child's soul is to become involved in a gospel-preaching, gospel-living church community" Do you agree? What fights against involvement in our day?

### **Chapter 3 - Surveying the Changes and Challenges**

Read 2 Timothy 3:14-15. Timothy grew up in a home where his mom and grandmother were believers [Optional - See 2 Timothy 1:5]. What seem to be the two stages in his faith and by extension the faith of those growing up in a Christian home?

[If not covered in Class 1: How many of you grew up in a Bible-believing home and heard the true gospel? How many would say you professed to follow Christ at a young age? How many had a second time where your faith became your own? When? What preceded it?]

[Optional: What do you think of the adult-in-training concept?]

### **Possible Reasons for Walking Away**

Which one of the reasons young people gave as walking away do you find most surprising? Why? If you grew up in a Christian home can you relate to those?

What do you think of the idea of that parenting mature you as in individual? How have you seen that?

The last section gives an overview of the rest of The Disciple-Making Parent. Which of the factors strike you or surprise you?

## **WEEK 2 ASSIGNMENT**

1. Read or listen to Chapter 4 – Watching Your Life Closely, Chapter 5 – Loving Your Spouse and Liking Your Children, and Chapter 6 – Connecting Your Children to Others
2. Complete the reflection questions for these chapters.
3. Meditate on these verse for devotions: 1 Timothy 4:16, John 13:34-35, Philippians 1:8, Philippians 3:17.
4. For discussion with your spouse: How are the activities we have chosen for our children helping or hurting their discipleship? What new choices should we make by faith?
5. For the single parent: How does Timothy's background encourage you?
6. Start praying like was suggested in the class.
7. Sign up for The Disciple-Making Parent newsletter at [www.theapollosproject.com](http://www.theapollosproject.com).



## CLASS 3: THE POWER OF EXAMPLE

### CLASS OBJECTIVES

We learn primarily by example. Our children are watching our example closely. When they are young they are imitation machines. When they are older they are evaluating us and other Christians. In this class we want to drill home the need to live out the gospel at home.

### SUGGESTED FORMAT

#### Prayer

Opening Prayer. (If you are having someone report on the prayer chapter, this might be a good time for a few sentence summary of a chapter section. And then include that prayer suggestion in your opening prayer.)

#### Chapter 4 – Watching Your Life Closely

2 Timothy 3:14-15 Timothy was influenced to follow the Lord “because you know those from whom you learned it.” Look to see how Paul described the faith of his mother and grandmother (2 Tim 1:5). Lots of verses speak to the example of the discipler on the one being disciplined.

[Optional: Let’s look at one more verse. 1 Timothy 4:16. Though Paul wrote this to Timothy as a ministered to the churches, it also applies to parents who spiritual leaders of their children. What are the exhortations in this verse? What is the encouragement? What is meant by “save your hearers (your children)?”]

The author says our children are absorbing our example and evaluating our example. Do you agree with that? How have you seen it played out when you were a child? With your children now? Do you say things your parents said to you or react in similar ways?

Do you agree with the quotation by J. C. Ryle on pages 40?



## **Sin in the Home**

Teens often talk about hypocrisy in the church and home as one reason they walk away. How does the author define hypocrisy? (p. 42) Which of the list of Pharisaical tendencies resonated with you?

Here is a reflection question you don't have to answer out loud but you can think about. Is there any besetting secret sin in the home that your children know about that is destroying your witness to them: like anger, excessive drinking, excessive marital fighting? Are you willing to seek out confidential help from a pastor? Here is another reflection question that you don't have to answer out loud but also for you to think about. If you are the spouse, are you willing to go to a pastor without your spouse's permission for the sake of your children?

## **Sharing Your Living Faith**

What does the author suggest is true of positive living faith? (p. 43-44). Are there some real interventions in your life of the Lord that you could tell your children about? What are they? (p. 44-45).

What do you think about that quote, "I wanted my children to know that I lived for something greater than them"? (p.44) Do you agree or disagree? How do we do this practically?

## **Chapter 5 – Loving Your Spouse and Liking Your Children**

Read John 13:34-35. This was Jesus' command on his final night. What is the commandment? What is the promise? How does this apply to our homes? How does a loving home show off Jesus to the world? What makes loving your spouse and children so difficult?

## **Affection**

Have you thought about the affection of Jesus (Phil 1:8) and the Father (Zeph 3:17)? Do your children feel your affection? To use the author's phrase, do they know you like them? What are specific ways you can show the affection of Christ to your children?

What help does the author offer for those who live in a difficult situation (p. 50-51)? What can we deduce about Timothy's home life? How does the fact that Timothy grew up in a very imperfect home yet followed the Lord encourage you?

## **Anger and the Acid Cup**

One of the problems in many homes is angry responses and not taking





responsibility for those responses. What is the parable of the acid cup? (p. 51). How does it help we realize that we don't have to sin and should apologize when acid does spill out. [Optional: This is a great point to physically illustrate with a cup of water.]

### **Chapter 6 – Connecting Your Children with Others**

Read Philippians 3:17. How does this verse apply to living out the gospel in the home?

The author says, “Disciple-making parents actively connect their children to other godly examples.” Do you agree or disagree with that statement?

What are some ways in the normal routine of life we can encourage our children to connect with other godly adults? What are some church structures that can encourage this? Are their family activities or values that can encourage this? What role could hospitality play?

### **Walking Through Problems**

Do you think your children are aware of church problems? Do you realize they overhear how you talk about the church at home? How does the author suggest that we talk about church hypocrisy? (p.59).

## **WEEK 4 ASSIGNMENT**

Next week we will be talking about The Power of the Gospel.

1. Read or listen to Chapter 7 – Preparing Your Children for the Gospel, Chapter 8 – Speaking the Gospel to Your Children for Their Conversion and Chapter 9 – Teaching Your Children about the Flesh and the Spirit
2. Complete the reflection questions for these chapters.
3. Meditate on these verse for devotions: 2 Tim 3:15, Hebrews 12:9-10, Ephesians 2:1-3.
4. Pray as suggested in class.
5. For discussion with your spouse: Is the atmosphere of our home helping or hurting our witness to our children? What could we do about it?
6. Sign up for The Disciple-Making Parent newsletter at [www.theapollosproject.com](http://www.theapollosproject.com).



## CLASS 4: THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

### CLASS OBJECTIVES

In this class we finally have a chance to zero in on the gospel. One of the objectives of our class is to restate the gospel making sure that every parent understand it and can articulate it. In addition we want parents to realize how exercising their authority is preparing their children to live under God's authority. Finally, as we seek to live in the power of the gospel parents will understand our own battle with sin and therefore the same struggle their children have.

### SUGGESTED FORMAT

#### Prayer

Opening Prayer. (If you are having someone report on the prayer chapter, this might be a good time for a few sentence summary of a chapter section. And then include that prayer suggestion in your opening prayer.)

#### Chapter 7 – Preparing Your Children for the Gospel

This is not a book on the specifics of discipline but the purpose of this chapter is to help us understand disciplining as imitating God and actually preparing our children to receive the gospel.

Read Hebrews 12:9-10. What can you learn about discipline from this passage?

#### Teaching Our Children to Obey

Where does a parent's authority come from? (p.65). If children are commanded to obey us (Eph 6:1), then what does that mean about direct disobedience to us? [It is sin.] What do you think about the J. C. Ryle quotation on page 65? Do you agree or disagree? What do you think about the figure on page 66? Had you ever thought about disciplining like this?



### **Friends?**

Our culture wants parents to be friends with their children. The author suggests that we can misrepresent God by too little or too much correction. Do you agree? Where do you think the temptation is for most modern parents? Where is your temptation?

How does discipline prepare our children for the gospel? (p. 69).

Has this chapter changed how you think of parental authority, correction, and discipline? How?

### **Chapter 8 – Speaking the Gospel to Your Children for Their Conversion**

All of us, our children included, need salvation.

Biblically speaking, what child is this that God has given to you? (p.73).

### **Conversion**

The author says, “What my child needs is a conversion.” (p. 74). What is a conversion? In John 3, Jesus told Nicodemus, a religious leader that he needed a new spiritual birth or to be “born again” That new spiritual birth only comes to our children by the Spirit and the Word.

What warning does D. A. Carson give us about assuming the gospel? (p.76). How do individuals and churches assume the gospel? How do we fight not losing it?

### **The Gospel**

What is the gospel put in a way that a child can understand? Let’s tell it to others. (This is a perfect time to break the class or small group into sub-groups for a test of reciting parts of the gospel. Even now we can assume that people can articulate the gospel when they actually cannot.)

What does the figure on page 78 illustrate? Had you understood all those benefits of the gospel?

One popular idea is that all our young children have to do is “ask Jesus into their heart.” Parents then naturally assume their children are all set. How do the ideas in this section about ongoing repentance (p.79) and the idea of becoming convinced in Chapter 3 fight this?

### **Patient Alertness**

What do you think about the sections on patient alertness, (p.80) and





rejoicing and watchful (p. 80)? How do these challenge the idea of just trying to get a small child to “ask Jesus into his heart?” What might be some dangers of rushing a child who is not sensing the conviction of the Holy Spirit?

[Optional: For parents with older children, Chapter 27 Seeking God, Not Checking a Box provides some help in thinking about calling their children to seek God. See especially p. 264-267.]

## **Chapter 9 – Teaching Your Children about The Flesh and the Spirit**

[This chapter is aimed at older children. It complements Chapter 27 well. If you want to spend more time on the gospel for younger parents then feel free to spend less time on this chapter.]

Read Galatians 5:16-24, especially verses 16-17. What is the flesh? (p.85-86).

Look over the list of what will be true if I understand the power of indwelling sin. (p. 86-87). Which ones of those are most striking? Which do you think are common in Christian parents today? Are there ones that describe you?

How can walking in the Spirit help defeat sin and make the Christian life more real to our young people? For us as parents?

Read the section on Pleasing God. (p.89-90) What do you think of this dynamic walk with the Lord in which we seek to please him? If we truly understand this biblical idea, how will it affect our Christian living as adults? What will we pass on to our children?

The author ends by saying, “We must be careful to present the real Christian life to our children. It is a life of fighting internal heart battles. It is a life of battling sin. It includes deserts and valleys. And rather than meaning our faith isn’t working it means it is. God trains some of his best soldiers in the wilderness.” How do these words encourage you? How can you pass these thoughts on to your children?

[What does the author say about grace? (p.91) How does this understanding contrast with some teaching on parenting with grace that seems to result in disobedience?]

## **WEEK 5 ASSIGNMENT**

Next week we will be talking about The Power of the Heart

1. Read or listen to Chapter 7 – Preparing Your Children for the Gospel, Chapter 8 – Speaking the Gospel to Your Children for Their Conver-



sion and Chapter 9 – Teaching Your Children about the Flesh and the Spirit

2. Complete the reflection questions for these chapters.
3. Meditate on these verse for devotions: 2 Timothy 3:15, Hebrews 12:9-10, Ephesians 2:1-3.
4. Ask your children, “In your own words what is the gospel?”
5. Sign up for The Disciple-Making Parent newsletter at [www.theapollosproject.com](http://www.theapollosproject.com).





## CLASS 5: THE POWER OF THE HEART

### CLASS OBJECTIVES

This class gives a chance to emphasize love, heart connections, good communication, and family joy. If there is good communication in a family then parents can walk their children through many ups and downs. A teacher's goal should be to call attention to this area of importance as contrasted with the world's emphasis on activities. In addition, this is a chance to talk about communication. There are people in your class who need to think about improving how they speak and listen. Lastly, the class will also give you a chance to emphasize the need to appropriately ask forgiveness.

### SUGGESTED FORMAT

#### Prayer

Opening Prayer. (If you are having someone report on the prayer chapter, this might be a good time for a few sentence summary of a chapter section. And then include that prayer suggestion in your opening prayer.)

#### Chapter 10 – Making Heart Connection a Priority

How does the Bible speak about the heart? (p. 95). How does sin disconnect the heart?

The author says, "We are poor communicators and are not even aware of it...We over talk, interrupt, nitpick, blurt out whatever comes to min, are easily angered, and use explosive words. Sin infiltrates all of our communication." (p. 97). Do you agree or disagree? Are you willing for someone to speak to your blind spot? We will give this as an assignment at the end of class.

What did you take away from the section on the power of words and discerning different seasons? How does the diagram on page 100 help understand the different seasons?



## **Chapters 11 & 12 – Keeping Your Hearts Connected by Skillful Communication**

Read James 1:19. What are the different parts of good communication from this verse? How does this verse apply to your parenting? To your children?

Good communication needs time, says the author. (p. 102). What are some of the problems that occur when we don't take time to communicate about important things with our children? Do you think this is a problem in our culture?

What is the difference between intentional communication and spontaneous communication? Why is each important? [Optional: Since writing *The Disciple-Making Parent*, I have also released *The Donut Date Journal*. It gives specific help to parents in taking their children out on donut dates. You find more information and can order in bulk at [www.donutdatejournal.com](http://www.donutdatejournal.com).]

### **Listening and Questions**

Are you surprised that the first communication skill is listening? Why do you think that is? What was written about listening that challenged you? How did the diagram on page 107 strike you?

As you look over the list of questions, which ones seem like they would work in your family context? Are there other questions that we could share with each other that are also helpful?

Which of the skillful words categories (p. 112-114) struck you as an area of needed growth? Why?

### **Anger**

Unfortunately, anger is a hidden sin in too many homes. What six principles does the author give for handling our anger? Which ones had you not thought of? (This is a good chance to encourage counseling) If this is an area of struggle for you, come see one of the pastors. Just as an aside, there is never any excuse for physical or emotional abuse in a home. If you are on the receiving end of abuse and need to confide in a pastor, we are here for you.

### **Chapter 13 – Restoring Broken Heart Connections**

Why is forgiveness such a needed skill? Had you thought of how its inclusion in the Lord's prayer makes it a daily need?





What is our forgiveness of others based on?

What commands does the Lord give us for carrying out forgiveness? What does “I’m sorry” really mean? Why is it inadequate for asking forgiveness? How would following this biblical pattern on page 124 transform our churches, our marriages, and our families?

## WEEK 6 ASSIGNMENT

Next week we will be talking about The Power of the Word.

1. Read or listen to Chapter 14– Nourishing Your Children in the Word, Chapter 15 – Teaching, Talking, and Tattooing – Part 1, Chapter 16 – Teaching Talking, and Tattooing – Part 2, Chapter 17 – Nourishing Your Children with Family Devotions.
2. Complete the reflection questions for these chapters.
3. Meditate on these verse for devotions: 2 Timothy 3:15, Matthew 4:4, Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Ephesians 6:4.
4. Ask your spouse and a good friend this question, “How could I grow as a communicator? What are sins and weaknesses that you don’t think I see but everyone else sees?”
5. [Optional: Order The Donut Date Journal for each one and starting taking your children out on Donut Dates to communicate better.]





## CLASS 6: THE POWER OF THE WORD

### CLASS OBJECTIVES

This class gives a chance to focus on making church attendance and instruction a priority. In addition, it is a chance to talk about making Scripture a part of the family life. It also gives the class a chance to talk about Bible memorization and family devotions. The teacher will have a chance to make an ongoing group application like memorization and devotions.

### SUGGESTED FORMAT

#### Prayer

Opening Prayer. (If you are having someone report on the prayer chapter, this might be a good time for a few sentence summary of a chapter section. And then include that prayer suggestion in your opening prayer.)

Read 2 Timothy 3:15. What did Paul say was true of Timothy regarding the Scriptures? (He learned them from infancy/childhood.) How do you think his mother and grandmother pulled this off?

Read Ephesians 6:4. Who does God command here? What are they to do? How does this overlap with Psalm 78:5-7 and Deuteronomy 6:5-8? Had you thought before that the Bible emphasizes men and family as the first children's ministry?

#### Chapter 14 – Nourishing Your Children in the Word

What metaphor of the Word does the author draw our attention to in this chapter. The Word is like.....? How does that metaphor help us think rightly about teaching our children? Which of the bullet points on page 129-130 struck you?

Who does God command to teach the Scripture? Does this emphasis surprise you? What is the benefit to us as parents?

What four goals of teaching the Bible to our children did the author suggest?



What verse is the roadmap to teaching our children at home? What are the four parts? Let's talk about the first one. These commands are to be on your heart. How do we delight in the Word as parents? What is our example teaching our children about our view of the Word?

### **Chapters 15 & 16– Teaching, Talking, and Tattooing the Word**

Read Deuteronomy 6:7. What are the commands here? What is assumed about family life? (We will do things together like sit at home) How can outside family activities and media pull us away from these things?

How many times a week does your family have dinner together? Do you realize how eating dinner together lowers the risk factors of your children? Have you weighed the cost to the whole family of individual activities that usually occur at dinner time? How can we fight back and hold onto to dinner time as special?

What stops us from talking about the Word with our younger and older children? What are the barriers?

The author says, “God wants the Word to saturate our day. In a non-dominating, non-suffocating, grace-filled, joyful way, we can bring one piece of Scripture to relate to one situation in life” (p. 139).

Which of the suggested ways of informal teaching on page 142-143 struck you? What resources are you using for some of those? (This is a good time to suggest certain resources for teaching the word at home.)

What are the benefits of memorizing the Word of God (p. 147-148). Do you agree? Why is memorization so difficult? How can posting Scripture around the house help us? Why is memorizing as a family such a good habit?

### **Chapters 17 – Nourishing Your Children with Family Devotions**

Read Deuteronomy 6:7. What are the commands here? What is assumed about family life? How can outside family activities pull us away from these things?

How does the practice of family devotions wrap together the previous idea of reading or memorizing the Word? What barriers stop families from consistently having a time that might be called family devotions?

Which of the Principles to Guide Family Devotions struck you? Why?

Which of the Ten Suggestion on What to Do struck you? Why?

Which of the Practical Tips struck you? Why?

How are we as a class going to put this into practice?



## WEEK 7 ASSIGNMENT

Next week we will be talking about The Power of Purpose.

1. Read or listen to Chapter 18 – Raising Your Children to Take the Land, Chapter 19 – Enjoying Life but Not Loving the World
2. Complete the reflection questions for these chapters.
3. Meditate on these verse for devotions: Judges 2-3, Matthew 28:18-20, Genesis 1:26-28, Luke 12:48, Matthew 25:14-30, Matthew 13, Matthew 9:37-38.
4. As a class, what can we start doing for family devotions?





## CLASS 7: THE POWER OF THE PURPOSE

### CLASS OBJECTIVES

This class will give you a chance to focus on discipling our children to be givers to the kingdom of God. Too many families are child-centered and that carries over into their church going. Functionally, we are not training workers but consumers. When we realize that sin causes us to curve in on ourselves then we will think about training our children to be givers. In addition we will think about how our children can be tempted by worldliness.

### SUGGESTED FORMAT

#### Prayer

Opening Prayer. (If you are having someone report on the prayer chapter, this might be a good time for a few sentence summary of a chapter section. And then include that prayer suggestion in your opening prayer.)

#### Chapter 18 – Raising Your Children to Take the Land

Read Judges 2:10-11, 22. One generation came out of Egypt and then died in the desert. Another generation invaded the Promised Land. This passage occurs as that generation is dying off and the next generation is taking over. What can you learn about God's purpose for this third generation?

What does it mean to understand the kingdoms in conflict and the assigned fields? (p. 166-167).

#### Self-Denying Serving vs Selfishness

“If we disciple our children to be self-denying, kingdom-building, God-exalting, others-oriented warriors, they will come to know and experience God intimately. By fighting they will experience peace. However, if we train our children in self-serving, entertainment-oriented, me-focused walk, they will experience the harassment of sin.” (p. 167).



Do you agree with this quotation? How does the child-centeredness of our culture and our children's sinful nature push us toward the latter? Suggestions for Serving

### **Suggestions for Serving**

Which of the eleven suggestions struck you? (p. 168-170). What are some ways they can build the local church here? And spread the Gospel?

What do you think about the suggestion to be a greater doer not a great don'ter? (p. 170-171). How does that suggestion change your parenting?

Are you tempted to overemphasize this chapter because you are like Martha? Or underemphasize it because you are tempted to center on your children? Why?

### **Chapter 19 – Enjoying Life but not Loving the World**

Read 2 Timothy 4:10, 1 John 2:15. What do these verses all warn about “the world.” Read the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13. How does this apply to our children? Particularly think about that third soil.

What are the three ways that the word “world” is used in Scriptures? What is the definition of the negative sense in which it is used? (p. 175).

What do you think about the quotation on page 176? Have you thought of what stirs your affections for Jesus and what robs you of those affections?

How does following Jesus make us different than others? What are some ways we can be different without being weird? Is it difficult to ask your children to do things that will make them different than others? Why or why not?

What analogy does the author give to help us understand legalism and libertinism? Most churches and youth err on libertinism today. How does thoughtfully applying the Bible to our family help?

How does coming up with family standards change over the young years, the middle years, and the teen years?

Look over the questions to ask the older teen. (p. 182-183). Do you need to ask yourself those questions?

Look over pages 258-259. What is the conscience? What are the different parts? What are our responsibilities toward God and our conscience? How does David's acting against his conscience (2 Samuel 24:10) show us how important it is to inform and follow our conscience? How do we pass this on to our children? What is a calloused conscience?





## WEEK 8 ASSIGNMENT

Next week we will be summarizing the different chapters that might apply to teens.

1. Reread Chapter 3, starting at page 27 for a reminder about what teens often go through.

Read or listen to Chapter 22 – Preparing for Doubts about the Truth of Christianity, Chapter 23 -Preparing for Doubts about the Goodness of Christianity, Chapter 24 – Equipping Your Children for God-Honoring Friendships, Chapter 25 - Pleasing God with Media and the Arts, Chapter 26—Walking by the Spirit, Chapter 27-Seeking God not Checking a Box. [My suggestion is to have individual parents summarize these chapters in their own words during the next class.]

Read Chapter 28 –The Preeminent Disciple-Maker

2. Complete the reflection questions for these chapters.
3. Meditate on these verse for devotions: 1 Peter 3:15, John 10:10, Matthew 7:13-14, Proverbs 13:20.





## CLASS 8: BECOMING CONVINCED

### CLASS OBJECTIVES

This study has assumed that the participants were parents of young children. This one (!) class is to prepare them for some teen issues. All of the previous chapters are important for both small and teen children. The third section of *The Disciple-Making Parent* deals with some issues that are felt more strongly by junior high and high school children. From a big picture point of view we want to remind our parents that their children's childhood faith needs to grow up into an adult faith. If they have made a profession of faith already we are praying they will be convinced. If they are not genuinely converted, we will pray that it will happen during this time. This class is also a time to try and skim different parts of the book.

### SUGGESTED FORMAT

#### Prayer

Opening Prayer. (If you are having someone report on the prayer chapter, this might be a good time for a few sentence summary of a chapter section. And then include that prayer suggestion in your opening prayer.)

Revisit 2 Timothy 3:14-15. What are the verbs that Paul uses for Timothy (Continue, learned, convinced or firmly believed)? The later teen years and college years are often when our children are making up their mind about following Christ.

My suggestion is to have different individual parents summarize each of the chapters for the class.

#### Chapter 22 – Preparing for Doubts about the Truth of Christianity

As a minority, the truth of Christianity will be attacked. What did you learn about helping our children stand against those doubts and attacks?



### **Chapter 23 – Preparing for Doubts about the Goodness of Christianity**

Jesus does call his followers to a high standard. What did you learn about persuading our teen that Jesus' commands are good for us rather than fun-squashing?

### **Chapter 24 – Equipping Your Children for God-Honoring Friendships**

Have you ever thought that God cares about and gives instruction about friendship? What did you learn?

### **Chapter 25 – Preparing Your Children for Media and the Arts**

What can we learn about this huge area of media? What suggestions were most helpful? How can you make counter-cultural decisions? How can parents in the church support each other?

### **Chapter 26 – Walking by the Spirit**

How does this chapter make the Christian life exciting and unpredictable rather than boring and moralistic?

### **Chapter 27 – Seeking God**

How does this chapter challenge the idea of being all set with our relationship with God?

### **Final Thoughts**

What attitudes have you changed from this study? Where has there been repentance?

How has God convicted you to make new priorities?

What new activities will you continue? (Like communication dates, family devotions).

Who else can we tell about this valuable message and valuable resource?

If this resource changed your family, please go to [www.theapollosproject.com](http://www.theapollosproject.com) and let Chap know. He would love to hear from you!



