

## **PARENTING: CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER DISCUSSION GUIDE**

*This document offers a chapter-by-chapter discussion guide.*

### **INTRODUCTION AND CHAPTER 1**

1. In his Introduction, Paul Tripp paints a big picture to give Christian parenting duties purpose and meaning. What vision does he cast?
2. Tripp suggests we can approach parenting in two ways. What are they, and how do the two parenting styles differ?
3. Discuss the things that Tripp says gets in the way of our ambassadorial calling? Are there others?
4. How do we find rest of heart as we parent our children?
5. In Chapter One, what is the principle of calling?
6. Tripp reminds us that we all live in pursuit of what we've named important. Parenting is either a treasure to you, or it's not. How do you demonstrate your stance? What values compete in your heart?
7. What is the most important thing that a child could ever learn about? Do you agree or disagree?
8. Why is this lesson so important, and what lessons compete with this primary lesson in your home?
9. How can you become a faithful tool in God's hands for this essential work?
10. Read and discuss Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

### **CHAPTER 2 AND CHAPTER 3**

1. In Chapter 2, what is the Gospel Principle of Grace?
2. What is the silent but deadly problem that afflicts so many Christian parents? Discuss how you experience this problem in your own life.
3. What are the three time zones of grace and how do they differ?
4. How will understanding God's grace change you as a parent?
5. Why does God call unable people to do important and impossible things?
6. According to Tripp, what parents make the best parents and what does God ask of us as parents?
7. What does an "able" parent look like?
8. Discuss what Tripp says about God's greatest gift to you as a parent. Do you agree?
9. God frees us from having to deny our weaknesses. As a parent, how are you in need of God's grace?
10. In Chapter 3, what is the Gospel Principle of Law?
11. What is the only thing that can change the heart life of a child?
12. Why do we need God's law?
13. Discuss what is true of all children, of all humans. What do you make of this idea?
14. What is the greatest danger to your child? Why does Tripp believe this is true? Do you?
15. What often drives our responses to our children?
16. As a parent, how can you give grace to your children?

## **CHAPTER 4 AND CHAPTER 5**

1. In Chapter 4, what is the Gospel Principle of Inability?
2. What is the problem if you think you have power that you don't have?
3. According to Tripp, what is good parenting really about?
4. What authority do your children need you to exercise, and why?
5. In our human wisdom, what are the three most often used parenting tools?
6. How have you used these tools, and how long do these tools produce change in our children? Can you give any real-life examples?
7. Our Heavenly Father is never content with just controlling us. He wants permanent heart change. How can you give yourself to the hard process of heart change in your children?
8. In Chapter 5, what is the Gospel Principle of Identity?
9. How has this chapter re-shaped your understanding of identity?
10. Where are the two places humans look for identity? Are there more that Tripp is missing?
11. What are the three things Tripp mentions about trying to get our identity from our children, and how have you seen this at work in your life?
12. What are five sure indicators that you're putting your identity on the shoulders of your children?
13. What does it mean to get your identity from God, and how do you faithfully pursue this pathway instead of the other?

## **CHAPTER 6 AND CHAPTER 7**

1. In Chapter 6, what is the Gospel Principle of Process?
2. When we ask our children, "Why would you do such a thing?" or try to win battles with them, what do we want from them?
3. If parenting is not a series of dramatic confrontation-confession events, what is it?
4. Discuss your experiences with the three mentalities does Tripp present to shape ambassadorial process parenting.
5. What character qualities are required for process parenting? How do we acquire these qualities?
6. Which process parenting qualities do you personally long for and why? Which qualities have you already begun to nurture in your life?
7. In Chapter 7, what is the Principle of Being Lost?
8. What do we learn about being lost from the parable of the lost sheep? The lost coin?
9. What do we learn about being lost from the parable of the lost son, and how does this help us understand our job description as parents?
10. What are two big lies every lost child believes, and how might you speak truth into these lies in your home?
11. What do all lost children need?
12. God will empower your work as a parent. What quality will you ask Him to grow in you to help you better love and rescue your children?

## CHAPTER 8 AND CHAPTER 9

1. In Chapter 8, what is the Gospel Principle of Authority?
2. What is the thing that shapes, directs, and controls our children's behavior?
3. Why is authority an important heart issue for every child? How was this an important aspect in your upbringing (for better or for worse)?
4. Discuss the fundamental battle of the heart, and why rejecting authority such a serious issue.
5. What picture of God's authority are you giving your children by the way you exercise yours?
6. How can you combine moments of discipline with patient, insight-giving instruction?
7. What is obedience? And where does true obedience always begin?
8. How can you exercise your authority in your children's lives with patience and grace?
9. In Chapter 9, what is the Gospel Principle of Foolishness?
10. All of our lives are controlled by our hearts. What is a biblical definition of the heart?
11. According to Tripp, why do your children disobey?
12. If your parenting focuses on the heart, what two things must you keep in mind? Can you give a few examples of how you might put these into practice?
13. Discuss what must accompany discipline and what is necessary for lasting heart change?
14. What is the greatest danger to us and our children, and why is it so destructive?
15. Tripp gives us four words to help us parent fools. What are they and how do we apply them?
16. The mystery of God's way is that he sends fools to rescue fools. How can we deal with our own foolishness?

## CHAPTER 10 AND CHAPTER 11

1. In Chapter 10, what is the Gospel Principle of Character?
2. What is character?
3. What kinds of things do we teach our children to develop their character?
4. According to Tripp, the Bible connects character issues to what significant human function?
5. There is a daily battle being waged for the control of our heart. What two things fight to control us, and give examples of how you've seen this fight in you or in your children?
6. In Chapter 11, what is the Gospel Principle of False gods?
7. Discuss the difference between *behavior management* and real gospel-centered change. Why is understanding this important distinction crucial for parents, children, and Christians in general?
8. Change is not so much about behavior management as it is about what?
9. What happens when we put ourselves in God's position? What happens to our children when they put themselves in God's position?
10. What was the human craving for worship intended to lead us to?
11. How does Tripp define idolatry, and what kinds of things (other than God) do human beings worship?
12. What must we focus on in order for parents to be tools of rescue leading children to insight, confession, and repentance? What might this look like in actual interactions with your children?
13. Where are God replacements in our children's hearts revealed? Do you see this happening in your child? If so, how?
14. Tripp says we are to be instruments of seeing in our children's lives. How do we do this?
15. Tripp lists practical steps we can take to be sharp tools in God's hands. What are these steps, and which of these steps seems most significant to you?
16. No one gives grace better than a person who admits she needs it herself. What are your worship struggles? Do you crave something in nature? What good thing has become a bad thing in your heart because it has become a ruling thing?

## CHAPTER 12 AND CHAPTER 13

1. In Chapter 12, what is the Gospel Principle of Control?
2. What forms your job description as a parent? How would you define your job description as a parent?
3. Discuss a few of the fifteen good things God calls us to deliver into our children's lives.
4. According to Tripp, the need our kids have for these things is rooted in a much deeper need. What is this foundational need of all people, and how might you begin to help your kids understand this?
5. From Psalm 51, Tripp shares parenting agenda-setting observations. What are the six things he lists that our children need?
6. How does Tripp caution us to talk with our children about their sin? How might you apply this immediately with your own children?
7. In Chapter 13, what is the Gospel Principle of Rest?
8. How does Tripp say we should spend our mental and spiritual time?
9. Tripp says the Great Commission, Matt. 28:18-20, offers real hope and help to every Christian parent. Why?
10. Do you believe that raising disciples is your ultimate job as a parent? If you are going to raise willing disciples of Jesus, what do you need to do?
11. What soil do good, loving, faithful, grace driven parents grow in?
12. What thoughts from this chapter give your heart rest?
13. Tripp reminds us we cannot make our children love God, believe, confess, or worship. Only God can. So how does Tripp say we measure our parental success?

## CHAPTER 14 AND CHAPTER 15

1. In Chapter 14, what is the Gospel Principle of Mercy?
2. How does Tripp define mercy, and how does this definition add to your understanding of mercy?
3. Tripp says our primary calling as a parent is not first to represent God's judgment, but rather to constantly deliver mercy. How can we deliver mercy to our children?
4. What does Tripp say mercy is NOT? Why is this so important to understand?
5. Tripp says every moment of foolishness and failure of our children should do what?
6. Since responding with mercy is not natural for us, what is our only hope?
7. What does God expose to us through the needs of our children?
8. In what ways can you make the invisible mercy of God visible?
9. How can we shower our children with grace?
10. What is Grace NOT about? Why is this important to understand?
11. How do we get our children to grow in awareness of their own heart?
12. What does humbly accepting our limits as a parent involve?
13. What can we do to comfort our natural tendency to dread, worry and fear as we parent?
14. The Bible is our primary tool for the purpose of forming God's image in our children. What do all people learn from the Bible? Why do you need to be a person of the Word?
15. Tripp encourages us to pray without ceasing for our children. What does this look like, practically speaking, in our everyday lives?
16. According to Tripp, this book has been an elaborate discussion on what? How has your perspective on parenting changed based on the content and ideas presented in this book?