

parenting with hope

STUDY GUIDE

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How to Use This Study Guide

If you're like me, you would welcome a parenting instruction manual, especially during the teen years. I'd love for someone to whisper in my ear, guide me in wisdom, and say, "Do this!" and "Don't do that!" Every day, we have parenting decisions to make and it's difficult to know whether we're choosing what's best. We're learning at each stage of the journey. Parenting is a lot like trying to build a car while driving it.

While we don't have a ready resource manual for all our decisions, thankfully, we have help. The Holy Spirit is available to guide us in supernatural ways with wisdom and insight. Jesus promised his disciples, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13).

I hope this study guide will allow you time to slow down and listen to the Spirit. As we read various Bible passages, God's Word transforms us: reminding us of God's goodness, convicting us of truth, nourishing our souls, and providing wisdom. As you spend time in prayer, God will be at work in both you and your teen. These moments spent in quietness and reflection will fortify and strengthen you for the busiest moments of your day.

To help you glean as much as possible, the study guide will

follow this pattern: **Read** the chapter, **Respond** to a few questions about the chapter, **Reflect** upon various Bible passages, and **Request** to the Lord through prayer.

As you use this guide, begin by reading the corresponding chapter in *Parenting with Hope*. Take notes, underline, and write in the margins. I'll ask three questions so you can begin responding to what you've read. Don't skip this section! Taking the time to write out your answers is a key part of remembering what you're reading. As you thoughtfully engage with what you've read, you're more likely to recall these principles in the midst of daily parenting struggles.

In addition, I'll guide you through some Bible passages and questions so that you have time to meditate and reflect upon the Word on your own. You can do all of these in one sitting, or spend a couple of days working through them. You don't have to write out your answers (no one is checking your homework). However, the more you write out, the more you will remember. To help close your time in prayer, I've left some space for you to consider how to pray and provided a Bible verse to help guide you in prayer. As you read the book and use this guide, I hope you'll be able to see God at work in specific ways in response to your prayers.

In Part 4 of this study guide are **Group Discussion Questions** (from page 95 onward) for each of the lessons. If you are reading the book *Parenting with Hope* with others, then you can go through these questions with your spouse, a group of moms, a group of dads, or perhaps a couple's small group or Sunday school class. So when you finish the **Read, Respond, Reflect,** and **Request** questions in each lesson, make sure to go on to the **Group Discussion Questions** for that same lesson in the group discussion section. Talking about these ideas in community will be such a rich blessing.

As you study, I'm praying for you:

May the Spirit direct your steps and guide you on your path. May the Word give wisdom, insight, and clarity. May God remind you daily of his grace through Jesus. May you experience his presence and know he's with you during this journey. Amen.

Let's begin.



PART 1

**The Basics:
Foundations
of a
Christian
Home**

A decorative sunburst background consisting of numerous thin, light gray lines radiating from the top center of the page, creating a fan-like effect that frames the central text.

LESSON 1

An Instruction Manual for Life: God's Word

*Your testimonies are my delight; they are
my counselors (Psalm 119:24).*

Read

In your copy of *Parenting with Hope*, read chapter 1, “The Instruction Manual for Life: God’s Word,” and then take a moment to write down your responses to the questions below.

Respond

- What biblical principles stood out to you in this chapter?

- In what ways did this chapter impact how you want to engage with your teen?

- What parenting principle or idea do you want to remember from this chapter?

Reflection Questions

Principles for Parents: Thinking Biblically

I love yummy food. I can talk on and on about the little hole-in-the-wall restaurant with the most amazing chicken gravy (and how it's perfect for dipping with their hush puppies). Or where to get the best salted caramel brownie in town. Or the freshest acai bowl. And don't get me started talking about my favorite pizza places. That might take hours of your time!

When we're excited about something, we want to talk about it. And naturally, we share our excitement with others in a compelling way.

When it comes to sharing God's Word with our teens, one of the most important aspects is that we enjoy it ourselves. As we meditate and reflect upon God's Word, it naturally overflows into our interactions with our teens. Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9, and answer the following questions.

1. In this passage, Moses is speaking to the people of Israel. What does he tell them to do?

6. What is one way you could be listening to God's Word more this week? Perhaps you set aside some time to read it each day, or listen to a Bible app on your way to work, or memorize a Bible verse. What would help you reflect upon God more as you go through your day? If your desire for God is cold, begin each day by praying, "Refresh my heart, O God. Give me a deeper desire to know you."

7. Consider verses 7-9. How does this passage instruct us to engage with our children?

8. Do you feel comfortable talking with your teen about the Bible? Why or why not?

9. What's a practical way you could talk with your teen this week about God or the Bible?

In addition to enjoying food, I also love to garden. Every spring, I watch with amazement as tomatoes slowly grow on the

The most effective parent conversations about religion with children are children-centered rather than parent-centered. In them, children ask questions and talk more while parents mostly listen; the questions about religion are clearly related to the children's lives; parents try to help children understand their religious faith and practices; the conversations are open, not rigid or highly controlled; and the larger relationship between parents and children is thereby nurtured. When parents, by contrast, talk too much, make demands without explanations, force unwanted conversations, and restrict discussions to topics that they control, faith transmission to children is likely to be ineffective or counterproductive.¹

11. How would you describe your conversations with your teen about God, faith, and the Bible? Are these comfortable or uncomfortable conversations in your home? Why or why not?

12. When your teen has questions about the Bible, how do you respond? How could you make your conversations more open and less rigid?

13. In what ways could you invite your teen to ask more questions about the Bible? How could you be a better listener?

Practical Advice: Living Wisely

14. How would you describe the home in which you grew up: negligent/absentee, permissive/indulgent, authoritative/shepherding, authoritarian/domineering?
15. How would you describe your parenting style? Do you lean more toward permissive or authoritarian? How would you describe your spouse's parenting style?
16. In what ways can you be more shepherdlike in your parenting this week? How can you lead with expectations, patience, gentleness, warmth, and responsiveness?

Request

1. As you think about your teen(s) today, what is your specific prayer for them?

2. As you think about your parenting, in what ways do you need the Lord's help?

Spend some time in prayer, using these verses to guide you:

Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes;
and I will keep it to the end.
Give me understanding, that I may keep your law
and observe it with my whole heart.
Lead me in the path of your commandments,
for I delight in it.
Incline my heart to your testimonies,
and not to selfish gain!
Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things;
and give me life in your ways.

—Psalm 119:33-37

Group Discussion Questions

If you are going through the *Parenting with Hope* book and study guide with your spouse or a group, be sure to continue with the group discussion questions for Lesson 1, beginning on page 99.