

COURAGEOUS GRANDPARENTING LEADERS GUIDE

This Leader's Guide is designed to help you provide a meaningful discussion in your group about the REVISED version of Courageous Grandparenting. If you are using the original version (red and white cover), you will find the layout and topics in the REVISED version very different from the original.

ORIGINAL VERSION: Our recommendation for those using the original version is to use the discussion questions at the end of each chapter in the original book. We have found that you can easily set up that study for an eight-week plan if you are limited in time. Here is our recommendation for segmenting the original book version for an eight-week timetable:

1. Week One: Preface and Introduction
2. Week Two: Chapters 1-2
3. Week Three: Chapters 3-4
4. Week Four: Chapters 5-7
5. Week Five: Chapters 8-10
6. Week Six: Chapters 11-13
7. Week Seven: Chapters 14-15
8. Week Eight: Chapters 17-18

If you have a longer time period for your group study, you still have chapters 16 and 19 you can add in. However, Chapter 19 is specifically targeted for men (grandfathers). This tends to have the greatest impact if you can work through the material with men only, but you could include the women. The other option is to split the group for this session into men and women, do a session specifically for grandmothers. We can provide you an outline for the women's session if you're interested.

If you have an eleven to thirteen-week time frame for your group, there will be certain topics that you can spread out into two-week sessions. For example, Part Two: Wise Up and Part Three: Size Up could each easily be stretched into two-week sessions. You will also find that Chapter 13 (*Plugged In or Plugged Up*) can be a stand-alone session.

Throughout this Leader's Guide, comparable material in the original version is referenced. This would allow you to use this guide even if some of your group has the older version of the book.

REVISED VERSION:

We suggest that you create a Lesson Breakdown Sheet for your group that reflects the schedule you will be keeping for your group. This handout should include dates and times you meet, the study plan based upon the number of weeks you will be meeting together, and the chapters your participants will be expected to read for each week.

Below are three templates that may help you in this for 9, 12 and 16-week study plans:

Nine Week Template:

- Session 1: Introduction
- Session 2: Preface, Chapters 1 & 2

Twelve Week Template:

- Session 1: Introduction
- Session 2: Preface, Chapters 1 & 2

Session 3: Chapters 3 & 4
Session 4: Chapters 5 & 6
Session 5: Chapters 7 & 8
Session 6: Chapters 9 & 10
Session 7: Chapter 13
Session 8: Chapters 14 & 15
Session 9: Chapter 16 & 17

Session 3: Chapter 3
Session 4: Chapter 4
Session 5: Chapters 5 & 6
Session 6: Chapter 7
Session 7: Chapter 8
Session 8: Chapter 9 & 10
Session 9: Chapter 11 OR 12
Session 10: Chapter 13
Session 11: Chapters 14 & 15
Session 12: Chapters 16 & 17

Sixteen Week Template:

Session 1: Introduction
Session 2: Preface, Chapters 1 & 2
Session 3: Chapter 3
Session 4: Chapter 4
Session 5: Chapters 5 & 6
Session 6: Chapter 7
Session 7: Chapter 8
Session 8: Chapter 9

Session 9: Chapter 10
Session 10: Chapters 11 & 12
Session 11: Chapter 13
Session 12: Chapter 14
Session 13: Chapter 15
Session 14: Chapter 16
Session 15: Chapter 17
Session 16: Chapter 18 (Optional)

We would love to hear your feedback from your group study. Share some of your stories and ways we might be able to make this group experience even more valuable to others.

May God bless you and stir within your participants an earnestness to be biblically intentional grandparents who courageously tell the next generation the Good News of Christ.

Cavin Harper

Jacqueline Vander Kraatz

SESSION ONE

INTRODUCTION

[We recommend that this first session be built around a potluck or dessert time to mingle and get acquainted with one another. Use an icebreaker activity to make it more fun.]

HANDOUTS:

- Have **books** available for purchase
- **Name tag's** – please write your name and how many grandchildren you have
- Pass around chart to collect names, phone #'s/emails
- Chart for children and grandchildren's names and their ages (this will be shown in next week's class so we can see how many family members are within our sphere of influence.)
- Participant Study Booklets for taking notes

GETTING ACQUAINTED:

Get acquainted with one another. Some questions you may want to ask of your group:

1. How many of you are great grandparents?
2. How many of you are raising your grandchildren?
3. How many of you are long-distance grandparents?
4. How many of you have grandchildren in their teens?
5. How many of you are expecting grandchildren?
6. Is there anyone we have left out????

Allow 2 minutes for each person to introduce themselves...

1. How many grandchildren do you have? Ages? Near or close?
2. What did you learn about grandparenting from your grandparents?
3. Why are you in this study and what do you hope to take away from it?

OVERVIEW:

Thank you for sharing your thoughts about why you are here for this study on grandparenting. Our hope is that you will discover and embrace the biblical roles that God has clearly given to grandparents as recorded in His Word. Before we talk further about what we hope to achieve, I would like to invite you to turn to the Introduction in the book (page 3) and allow me to read this parable out loud as you follow along. [READ INTRODUCTION: Keeper of the Spring story; Note: original version is slightly different]

What did you take from this story? How are we, as grandparents, like the Keeper of the Spring?

[DISCUSSION TIME: Approximately 10-15']

This study is about understanding and putting into practice the responsibility God assigns us as grandparents—much like the Keeper of the Spring. The real objective of our study is learning how to be conduits through which God works to help our grandchildren walk in the truth (3 John 4). We want to be

able to say that our grandchildren can never say they did not know because we did not tell them, but only that they might say they did not choose to walk in it.

This study we are doing is important because across the country there has been a **significant void** in the field of family ministry and the church concerning any clear explanation of the biblical instructions to grandparents. As a result, many grandparents have absorbed a *secular* or *cultural* philosophy of grandparenting, rather than a biblical one.

In general, society has lost its compass regarding why the generations should interact, how they are to do so, and what responsibilities each has to the other. It is likely that a percentage of Christian grandparents have embraced the “Leisureville” mentality requiring a renewed biblical vision regarding their role in the family and purpose in society.

“Leisureville” is a term coined from Andrew Blechman’s book, *Leisureville: Adventures in a World Without Children*. In his book he described his journey into what is probably the biggest Del Webb retirement community in the world in central Florida: *The Villages*. With a population of nearly 100,000 and growing, it is larger than Manhattan and boasts a golf course for every day of the month, two downtowns, its own newspaper, radio, and TV station. The only thing missing... children. Other Del Webb communities in Arizona have similar living styles banning underage children as permanent residents. This is a phenomenon that is rapidly growing across America.

The whole point of ‘Leisureville’ communities is for older adults to escape the demands and responsibilities of life and simply do whatever you want to do when you want to do it. For nearly sixty years, the success of these and similar communities have changed the image of retirees from frail, impoverished old people to energetic, well-off adults enjoying a resort-like lifestyle. While some experts predicted these communities would fail and undermine the obligations between generations (something that has indeed happened), they are now firmly embedded as one possible extension of the American dream. This is a sad example of a truly narcissistic society.

Even if you are not caught up in the “Leisureville” frenzy, research by Dr. Josh Mulvihill shows that three out of four Christian grandparents do not view the discipleship of their grandchildren as a high priority or something they consider their responsibility. We hope to change that perspective by the time we conclude our study together.

We have inserted a **lesson breakdown sheet** in your Study Guide booklets... if you could please find that. We have very limited time to get through the 18 chapters of *Courageous Grandparenting* in the [#] weeks we will be together. So, you will find that we have either left out some of the chapters or combined chapters in one study week. While we believe every chapter is significant, we may not have time to spend on each chapter individually. We will try to summarize those that we will not be able to dig into, so we can focus on the most important ones for the sake of time.

In our next session we will be cramming the Preface and Chapters One and Two into one session. That’s pages 11 through 30 (almost 20 pages of reading). You are grandparents so you have nothing else to do right?! Just kidding. Each session will involve questions and discussions related to the chapters we are studying, so we ask you to read the assigned portions BEFORE you come each week.

REVIEW STUDY GUIDE BOOKLETS:

Guidelines for Group Discussion...

- Come prepared
- Participate in discussions

- Stay on topic
- Expect God to teach us
- What is shared in the class stays in the class!

Any questions? (Field questions)

Let's conclude our time together in prayer.

SESSION TWO
(PART ONE: WAKE UP!)
Lessons from Nehemiah

Reading Assignment: Preface, Chapters 1 and 2
[Original version: Preface, Chapters 1 and 2]

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

GROUP QUESTION:

Here are three questions for the group to start the lesson:

1. Do you believe everyone leaves a legacy? Explain
2. Does it matter what kind of legacy we leave? Why or why not?
3. Do you believe that as a grandparent you should make a significant impact on your grandchildren's life and faith journey? Why or why not?

LESSON INTRODUCTION:

The author of the book we will be studying believes you can and should make an impact by leaving a legacy that matters. By the way, so does the Bible.

In fact, biblically, family is clearly God's design for reaching the **hearts** of our children and grandchildren for Christ. We know that faith begins at home and each member of the family (not just Mom and Dad, but grandparents and extended family) are given a God-ordained role which is not replicable by or interchangeable with other influencers in your grandchild's life.

God instructs grandparents in **Psalm 78:4-7** to leave a **rich, godly heritage** of faith. ***“Tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of God, His power and the wonders He has done... that the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born... then they would put their trust in God”*** Scripture sees old age as a divine blessing and a source of godly wisdom. Yet the American culture has fed grandparents an ambiguous message leaving them confused, ignored, overlooked and mislabeled as “irrelevant!” Sadly, this message has seeped into the church resulting in few resources to support and equip the millions Christian grandparents living in North America today.

Together we will gain a Biblical perspective on what it means to be an intentional, “relevant” Christian grandparent for such a time as this. So, let's make sure we understand why this study is so important. Let's begin by talking about what grandparenting is all about.

QUESTION FOR DISCUSSION:

What does “grandparent” mean to you? What do you think of when you think of a grandparent? (Allow for responses)

Those are some interesting responses. One thing is certain: we all want to be good grandparents. We just may have a different understanding of what that means compared to God's view of grandparenting. One thing we will learn in our time together is that being a “good” grandparent is not good enough.

FOR DISCUSSION: What brings you your greatest joy when it comes to your grandchildren?

John wrote in 3 John 4: “I have no greater joy than to hear my children are walking in the truth.” Would that not also be true of us as grandparents? Is there not any greater joy than to see our grandchildren walking in the truth?

But the reality is that it is not always the case. Many of us have adult children who are not walking in the truth, and we may also have grandchildren who are not either, even if their parents are. There are probably not just a few of us here who know that pain, and wonder if there is anything we can do to make a difference in their lives.

While there are no guarantees, this study is intended to convince you that you can and must make a difference. But it begins with acknowledging three things:

1. **We have a problem.** We are not in Kansas anymore. This is not the world we grew up in, and the problem is that too many of the younger generations are walking away from Christianity as they know it... and they are not coming back later in life like many previous generations.
2. **We could be part of the problem.** God does not call grandparents to be their grandchildren’s BFF, but those who will faithfully pass on to another generation the Gospel story and why it is so important for life and eternity. There is also the matters of owning up to our own sin.
3. **We (grandparents) must make a choice:** Obey God and His command to us or choose the way of the world.

Courageous Grandparenting is an urgent call to Christian grandparents to take seriously our role in helping our grandchildren navigate these turbulent times and walk in the truth. The author compares this call to Nehemiah’s call to rebuild the walls and fight for their families.

To help us work through the three issues we just noted, let’s turn to Nehemiah (Read excerpts found on Page 17)

Let’s start with #1 and work through each of the three points in the context of Nehemiah’s situation...

1. **Nehemiah’s response to the problem.** (What was the problem Nehemiah identified? Why was it a problem?—ruin and disgrace) Did he respond with finger pointing. No... **he wept and mourned, prayed and fasted.** When was the last time any of us wept over the condition of our land? Do we turn to God in prayer before we open our mouths or try to blame others for the problems in our time?
2. **Whose problem is it?** We need to acknowledge that we are part of the problem. Nehemiah had every reason to say it was not his problem because he was in exile and never been in his homeland. Yet, in his prayer he confessed and **repented** of his sins and the sins of his fathers. When was the last time we fell to our knees and repented of our sins which have contributed to the problems in our day? What does it even mean to repent? What sins did Nehemiah confess? (His, his family’s and the nation’s [Israel])
3. **A crucial choice.** Nehemiah chose to humble himself and, by God’s help, be part of a solution to the problem that existed. He could have played it safe and remained in his cozy position, but he didn’t. He asked God to grant favor for the action he was going to take. And God blessed him mightily... beyond anything he likely imagined would happen. What kind of choices do we need to be making as grandparents?

The author makes this statement: **YOU CANNOT GIVE WHAT YOU DO NOT HAVE.** What do you think he means? What is your understanding of the Gospel? (Read Ephesians 2:1-10)

- Saved FROM something (sin, judgment of God, condemnation)
- Saved FOR something
 - To live to the praise and glory of God doing the good works He has prepared for us
 - To live with the certain hope of life everlasting; the best is yet to come

What is the difference between a “fan” of Jesus and a “follower” of Jesus? (Your grandchildren will know the difference!) What kind of actions should we be taking in order leave a Gospel legacy for the next generations? (ask for responses)

ACTION STEPS: (personal put into practice suggestions for your group)

1. Consider keeping a legacy journal recording some of your life stories and faith journey. Let this be something you will pass on as a written record for your grandchildren.
2. Get a copy of “My Declaration” by Larry Fowler and place it in a prominent place in your home as a reminder to you and your family of your commitment to build a legacy that matters.
[NOTE: We recommend that you purchase the 25-Pack of the Declaration print and give to your group members, or have them pay \$1.00 per print (www.legacycoalition.com)]
3. Reexamine your understanding of the Gospel. In what ways does your life reflect the Gospel, and in what ways does it not?

Next week, your assignment is to decide what you will do with these action steps and read Chapters 3 and 4.

Close with prayer.

*Our Father in Heaven, give us the long
view of our work and our world.
Help us to see that it is better to fail in a
cause that will ultimately succeed than to
succeed in a cause that will ultimately fail...
May Your will be done here as in heaven
above party and personality,
beyond time and circumstance,
for the glory of Your Name and Kingdom.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

Thought for the day:

**“Like any recipients of a gift, grandparents have the choice
to receive or reject God's good gift of grandchildren.”**

SESSION THREE
(PART ONE: WAKE UP!)
Don't Lose Track of What's Important
Reading Assignment: Chapters 3 and 4
[Original Version: Refer to Chapters 11-12]

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

NOTE: This is one of those sessions you may want to divide into two sessions (Part A and Part B) to cover this material. See division suggestions below

1. Pray: Ask God to reveal His truth and how we might put it into practice.
2. Ask the group to share any new insights from last week's lesson and Action Steps.
3. Transition to Session Three...

God has called us to be more than “good” grandparents who love our grandchildren and love to spoil them. That's because there are more important things our legacy ought to be about than simply having a good time with our grandchildren. The question we want to investigate today is... Are we guilty of losing track of what is important—what distractions do we need to identify that may be keeping us from being Gospel grandparents?

GROUP QUESTION: Can any of you relate to Cavin's stories of losing track of his own daughter and grandson? (Let some share) In what ways may we be guilty of losing track of what's important when it comes to our grandchildren's faith journey? Does the Judges 2 passage cause any concerns for you in our day?

PART A (12 or 16 week plans)
THE BIBLICAL MANDATE FOR GRANDPARENTS

Assign the Scriptures passages on page 36 to various members of the group (*You will need to add this extra one: 2 Timothy 1:5*). Ask each to read their passage. Engage the group in discussion about what each says and what it has to do with grandparents.

DISCUSSION POINTS: Based upon these passages...

1. Do you think grandparenting matters to God?
2. To whom has God given the primary responsibility for teaching and training (discipling) our children? (parents and grandparents: not the church, not teachers and schools)
3. Is this mandate just for Bible times or is it applicable to today?
4. What are the risks/stakes if do not take this seriously? (Read Judges 2:10)
5. Knowing what we just discussed, what impact does this have on your perspective of grandparenting?

If this is all true, and based upon our discussions of what the Gospel means and how it transforms a life, let's take a closer look at how the Gospel ought to shape our carrying out this mandate from God...

NOTE: If you will be doing Part A and Part B in separate sessions, wrap up what you discussed in Part A and make these Action Step suggestions:

ACTION STEPS:

1. How does our discussion change how I view my role as a grandparent?
2. What one practical way will I put this into practice this week?

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Pray for one another as you seek to listen to what God asks you to do to be more than just a ‘good grandparent.

**PART B (12 or 16 week plans)
MARKS OF GOSPEL-SHAPED GRANDPARENTS**

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

1. Pray: Ask God to reveal His truth and how we might put it into practice.
2. Ask the group to share any new insights from last week’s lesson and Action Steps taken.
3. Transition to Session Three: Part Two...

How do you respond to this statement...?

***It’s not good enough to be a “good” grandparent!
Our children need the Gospel more than they need our good gifts and good times.***

This is not intended to be a “cute” or “clever” cliché. It is the truth. We cannot give our grandchildren anything more valuable than a knowledge of the Gospel and a relationship with their Creator through Jesus Christ. But what does that look like? The author guides us through three key marks, or actions, (there are many more than these three) that will characterize gospel-shaped grandparents (page 41):

1. Proclamation and Instruction
 These two actions are different but related. They both involve presenting the truth as God revealed it. Help the group understand the differences and how the Gospel compels us to engage in these activities:
 - a. Proclamation: Actually sharing the Gospel with our grandchildren. What are ways we can do that at various ages? (Let group respond) [Share your faith story; Wordless Book; Five Finger Gospel, etc.]
 - b. Instruction: Grandparents have a responsibility to “guard the truth” (2 Timothy 1:14). In a sense, we do that as we serve as “apologists” for our grandkids. That is simply a fancy word for discipleship—building upon the foundation of the Gospel so they will know how to recognize the difference between truth and falsehood. Talk about ways we can help our grandchildren know the difference. (Suggestion: learning to ask good questions is usually better than ‘preaching’) We’ll dig into this in more depth in our next session.

2. Supplication
 Another way to speak about prayer. Little prayer, little power. Much prayer, much power. We must never forget this important reality: *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places”* (Eph. 6:12 ESV).

What are some of the challenges you face in maintaining a consistent prayer discipline? How can we encourage one another in the use of this important weapon God has given to us to do battle for our grandchildren and families?

3. Imitation

Read Philippians 4:9 “*Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me—or seen in me, put into practice.*”

What is your response to this audacious statement by the Apostle Paul? Does this seem unrealistic to you? Was Paul claiming to be perfect?

Elsewhere Paul tells us to “imitate him” (I Cor. 4:16). Would you be willing to say this to your grandchildren?

Review the story of the clay balls at the beginning of Chapter 4, then read Philippians 1:20-21. How does this relate to the clay balls story? If Christ is the all-satisfying treasure we want to give to our grandchildren, how careful are you about how you share that treasure? Perhaps all of us have carelessly thrown away some of the treasures God put into our care. What can we do now to preserve those treasures and pass them on to another generation?

ACTION STEPS:

1. Be courageous enough to ask at least one of your grandchildren this week this question: What do you think I treasure most?
2. Does their response surprise you? If so, what will you do differently beginning this week?
3. Start a prayer journal to record your prayers and answers to prayer for each of your grandchildren. Commit to praying for them every day.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

How can you pray for each other to treasure this Gospel gift God has given you through His Son, Jesus and make much of it in the eyes of your grandchildren (and others)?

Assignment: Read Chapters 5 & 6 for next week.

SESSION FOUR

(PART TWO: STAND UP!)

Two Pivotal Roles

Reading Assignment: Chapters 5 and 6

[This is new material not found in the Original Version]

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

1. Pray: Ask God to reveal His truth and give us the wisdom and courage to put it into practice.
2. Ask the group to share any new insights from last week's lesson and Action Steps.
3. Transition...

It was good for us to be reminded last week that our grandkids are watching us, and we can either make Christ look great and hopefully, they will want to know Him to, or we can create an image of a Christian with which they will want nothing to do. It's important that our walk and our talk match.

In this session we want to examine two positive and pivotal roles God has given us to make an impact as Gospel-shaped grandparents in our grandchildren's lives. So, let's dig in...

ROLE #1: GATEKEEPER

ASK: What is a "gatekeeper"? What does a gatekeeper do?

Like Nehemiah discovered in Jerusalem when he arrived in his day, we are living in a time when the gates of truth and godliness are pretty much in ruins. As Nehemiah discovered, the gates are burned, and the people are living in disgrace. How are we to rebuild the gates, remove the disgrace, and protect our families from the Enemy's constant attacks?

First of all, we need to recognize there are two important facets of being an effective gatekeeper:

Have someone read Deuteronomy 4:9 *"Only be careful and watch yourself closely so that you do not forget the things you have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and your children's children after them."*

Facet #1: Watch YOURSELF Closely (literally: keep your soul diligently)

In Chapter 5 the author suggests we need to guard our heart, our mind, our mouth and our character if we are to be good gatekeepers and sustain an impact in Facet #2. Do you agree with him? Why or why not? Why is this important to examine?

Which of these four areas are most difficult for you? Why?

(NOTE: You may want to take time here after some discussion to pray for one another)

Facet #2: Guard the Truth

One way we guard the truth is to "teach" it to our children and grandchildren. We teach God's Word and the wondrous things He has done. Remember what Judges 2:10 says. Within two generations of Joshua and Caleb's generation, their grandchildren did not know the Lord and what He had done. Incredible, isn't it? Current studies confirm that throughout history, it takes only two generations for the orthodoxy

of one generation to be almost completely lost to the third generation if the first generation is negligent and inattentive to teaching the next generation.

The Enemy loves this. He is going about like a roaring lion, we are told, seeking to devour and destroy our children. When we do not keep watch at the gates by faithfully teaching and training our children to walk in the truth and view life through a biblical worldview lens, we make them easy prey for Satan.

So, what are the truths we need to teach the next generations: (See page 57).

1. The truth about God
2. The truth about ourselves and the world
3. The truth about our need for salvation
4. The truth about our redemption (Gospel)
5. The truth about eternity

ROLE #2: STORYTELLER

Jesus used story (parables) all the time to teach and remind people who they were and who God is. Story is still powerful for communicating truth, both in terms of God's Story and our stories in that grand story. Let's look briefly at these two aspects of grandparents as Storytellers:

1. Tell HIS Story
Here are some practical ways we can do that: (See pages 65-66)
 - a. Family Time
 - b. Christian Holidays
 - c. Prayers
 - d. Read together
 - e. Audio recordings/radio theater
2. Tell YOUR Story (Pages 67-68)
 - a. Your family history
 - b. Your personal life and faith testimony

While all of this vitally important, remember the two-generation principle we discussed earlier. Judges 2 is not the only example of this phenomenon. If we were to look at any of the great Revivals in England and the US, you would see this principle at work. When one generation encounters the living God and the Gospel of Christ and is born again, the pattern is almost always that while the second generation knows about God from their parents, it does not necessarily mean they KNOW God. There is often an assumption on the part of the first generation that their children will get it because they go to church and pray at meals. They may even have family devotions, but somewhere the connection with the Gospel as a transformational encounter with Christ through repentance and lordship is missed. What often follows next is a third generation that rejects God or, at least, the Gospel.

To know about God and the Gospel is not to KNOW Christ and the power of the Gospel. Unless there is a born again encounter with the living God through Christ in which we know Him and are transformed by Him, we may know and even teach about God/Christ, but in the end, another generation will not know about or know personally the God who made them and sacrificed His Son for their eternity.

What does this mean for us as grandparents today? How do help another generation not just know about God and these truths we discussed, but truly KNOW Him so that a life is transformed—a renewed mind that is no longer conformed to the pattern of this world?

This is what “discipleship” is about. Teaching *about*, yes... but the teaching must be evident in the life of the one teaching, filled with grace and the Holy Spirit. Our goal is to lead them to KNOW Him, not just know about Him.

The problem is that we can too easily assume if they know the truth, they will walk in it. While we have no guarantees that our children or grandchildren will choose to follow Christ because of our faithfulness or example, if we are faithful, we can at least know that they chose that course as opposed to our causing their choice. Here are three Action Steps we need to consider so we can impact another generation to know, love and serve Christ:

ACTION STEPS:

1. Watch yourself closely, so you can confidently say with Paul, “Imitate me!” Choose at least one of the four areas we discussed and decide how you will make improvements in that area this week.
2. Be intentional about proclaiming and telling the next generations about all God has done and how the Gospel has transformed your life and way of thinking. Tell your faith story.
3. Pray for the Spirit’s anointing on the interactions we have, and for receptive hearts to know Christ, not just about Him.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Pray for one another to faithfully live out the two roles we have discussed in this session in obedience to God.

SESSION FIVE

(PART TWO: STAND UP!)

Allies or Adversaries

Reading Assignment: Chapters 7 and 8
[Original Version: Chapters 3-4]

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

1. Pray: Ask God to reveal His truth and give us the wisdom and courage to put it into practice.
NOTE: This is one of those sessions you may want to divide into two sessions (Part A and Part B) to cover this material. The second chapter (*Get a Grip!*) is really focused on how to rebuild those relationships that have been damaged or completely broken. The principles also work for sustaining strong relationships)
2. Ask the group to share any new insights from last week's lesson and Action Steps.
3. Transition... How would you describe your relationship with your adult children right now?

PART A (12 or 16-week plans) GETTING IT TOGETHER

This might be one of the most difficult sessions of this study, at least for some of you in the group. Statistically, Barna tells us there may be as many as 70% of Christian grandparents today whose grandchildren are not walking with the Lord... or who want nothing to do with Christianity. Not all, fortunately, may be hostile toward you sharing your faith, but they may be ambivalent or apathetic.

Before we talk about the not-so-grand grandparenting situations, let's turn our attention first to Proverbs 17:6. "*Children's children are a crown to the aged and parents are the pride of their children.*" Let's consider the two parts of this proverb.

The first part says, "*Children's children are a crown to the aged...*" I suspect most of us can relate to that part of the verse. There are few things in life more important than being valued by our own grandchildren. (Describe what that feeling is like in your personal story) They are our pride and glory!

The second part of the verse says, "*parents are the pride of their children*". That's talking about us! What could be a greater honor for **our** children than to have wise and godly parents who bless them and pray for them throughout their adult life. On the other hand, foolish or wicked parents force their children to be ashamed of them, and they will not care to acknowledge their connection. The **glory** of old age is a long line of descendants, and a long line of ancestors who walk with the Lord is the **glory** of those descendants.

Here's a question for us to ponder:

Q: Are your children proud of you? I certainly want them to be and I am certain you do too!

The author opens this section with an illustration from real life represented Chelsea and Dan. Chelsea dreaded going to her mother-in-law's home due to her mother-in-law's consistent violation of rules Chelsea and her husband, Dan, wanted enforced. If Chelsea tried to intervene her mother-in-law reprimanded her for depriving her children of fun! Chelsea resented the damage they would have to undo when they returned home and she wondered why Dan's mother couldn't simply respect their rules and boundaries for their kids.

Do you think any of your adult children or their spouses might identify with Chelsea and Dan? Why do you think we need to feel like we can break the parents' rules when the grandchildren are with us?

It is easy to forget that grandparenting is not primarily about the grandparents getting their way with the grandkids, nor is it about us and the grandkids doing our thing together without concern for the parents' rules and boundaries. After all, if your adult children are believers, wouldn't it stand to reason that we are all wanting to work towards the same objective—helping the children walk in the truth?

Successful grandparents know it is not just about the grandkids and them. They understand they have a larger responsibility to find ways to foster an environment in which our adult children can become the greatest parents possible. Our top priority is to figure out how parents and grandparents can work together as allies, not adversaries.

Let's look at the **first question** in your Study Guide again...

Q: How would you describe the relationship you have with your adult children and their spouses right now? Can you identify in any way with the challenges Dan and Chelsea faced with their children's grandmother? (Allow time to discuss)

If our goal is to work towards the same **objective** – to help our grandchildren become all God wants them to be, what are some practical ways we can do that? What are some things that will get in the way of that happening? [We must always respect the parents and work **with** them and not **against** them!] (vision of handcuffs)

Don't Lose Heart

Roughly half of today's children have multiple sets of parents and grandparents, often separated by great distances. Divorce has dramatically changed the landscape of family dynamics. Grandparents must now cope with a myriad of complicating factors created by divorce and remarriage, or relationships from same-sex 'marriages', or even outside of marriage.

Despite these obstacles, the importance of a *mutually* supportive partnership remains unchanged. It may be more complicated, but it is still important and achievable in most cases. In fact, the need for such a partnership is made even **more** necessary by these complications.

Either you read, or ask someone to read from page 73, second paragraph (page 36 in original book) beginning with... "*It will always be true that a mutually cooperative partnership between.....*"

Who pays the heaviest price when relationships between parents and grandparents go south? (The kids do!) Conflict between parents, not to mention parents and grandparents, leave the child caught in the middle as mediators. That is not where children belong.

In Dan and Chelsea's situation, they knew something had to be done or things would only get worse, for everyone. They knew that everyone would lose if something did not change. So, they chose to sit down together with Dan's mom to talk about the situation. This willingness to openly talk about the problem cleared the air and made it possible to lay a foundation for a mutually satisfying partnership that was a win-win for everyone, especially the kids.

Have any of you ever had a similar conversation with your adult children? How did it go? If not, would you like to have such a conversation? What is keeping you from doing it?

The author goes on to say (page 74)... *“So many conflicts could be resolved if the effort was made to talk about them with humility and honesty.....Most parents want their kids to have a positive relationship with their grandparents just as much as the grandparents do. For that to happen **someone** needs to step up to the plate and put the ball in play!”*

Food for Thought: For things to change in our families, it might be worth doing some self-examination and then consider a different viewpoint.

Bite Your Lip (page 75; page 37 original edition)

Most of the comments and requests for help from grandparents involve their relationships with their adult children and the questions generally fall into two categories:

1. How do I deal with hostility by one or both parents towards any overt discussion about my Christian faith?
2. How do I cope with the resentment I feel relative to matters of power and control when I'm around the grandkids, particularly in areas of discipline, rules, and parental boundaries?

We must always bear in mind that our children are the **gatekeepers to our grandchildren!** Your adult children are parents and have the primary role for gatekeeper. As we practice our role as gatekeepers, we need to know the difference between matters of personal preferences and biblical principles. Even then, we must be careful to not assume a role that has not been given to us in the family. Grandparents are not the parents (unless you are raising your grandchildren).

If we want access to our grandchildren where we can have that godly influence, and attain a place of honor in their lives, we must **forgive** and **repair** our relationships with our children and their spouses!

That's what we will talk about next... **NOTE: Stop here with action steps if you are doing this session in two parts.**

ACTION STEPS (Part A):

- Do you need to have a conversation with your adult children about how they want you to work with them when it comes to the grandchildren? If so, determine to schedule that conversation this week? Ask them two questions:
 1. What things do we do that make it difficult for you to be the parents you want to be?
 2. How can we better partner with you to help you be successful parents and raise children that will have the chance to be all they are capable of being?
- Do you need to ask forgiveness for overstepping your bounds with your adult children? If you do, don't wait to do it.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Pray for one another as you consider the conversations that you may need to have with your adult children.

PART B (12 or 16-week plans) GET A GRIP

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

1. Pray: Ask God to reveal His truth and give us the wisdom and courage to put it into practice.
2. Ask the group to share any new insights from last week's lesson and Action Steps taken.
3. Transition...

For the process of repairing relationships to get underway, we need to understand this principle of human relationships: PERCEPTION MATTERS! It does not matter if I am right if the other party perceives I am wrong. "Only when I learn to understand and acknowledge another's perceptions can trust be rebuilt" (page 77). **Ask:** Do you agree or disagree with that statement? Explain. How important is perception to removing obstacles in any relationship?

Perspective refers to a point of view whereas perception occurs when people organize and make sense of information gathered through their senses. **Perception is based on a variety of personal factors such as educational background, past experiences, current feelings, socioeconomic status and cultural background. These are factors that influence the way a person perceives incoming information. Gender, age, race and occupation are others.**

Frequently, we judge our children or even our grandchildren's decisions in light of our own personal perceptions – our own recognition or insight of how things should be! Based on our beliefs, our opinions and our own interpretations. For example... (share something from your own experience)

Even when we acknowledge and account for perception differences, the wall of personal conflict can sometimes seem insurmountable, especially with our own children. Despite such conflicts, let us not forget that with God nothing is impossible!

Effective grandparenting is a more achievable goal if you can maintain, as much as is in your power to do so, a strong, healthy relationship with your grandchildren's parents. This divine alliance is a key component for keeping the conduit of God's blessing unclogged.

Now turn to pages 81-90 and explore the author's illustration of rock climbing with your group using the Five Handholds as expressed in the study of selected passages from Ephesians 4.

FIVE VITAL HANDHOLDS: (See pages 82-90)

#1: HUMILITY

"Be completely humble and gentle..."

- Define humility: The act of losing oneself and consider the interests of other above my own
- What are obstacles to humility?
- Why is humility so important to our relationships, especially in our families?
- Why does the author say this handhold is critical to the remaining handholds?

#2: PATIENCE

"Be completely humble and gentle, bearing with one another in love..."

As both parents and grandparents, it can be tempting for us to want to jump into a situation and try to “fix it”. We need to learn to be patient and trust God to do an amazing thing when the time is right.

[Share the story of the Chinese bamboo farmer: pg. 84]

- How does the example of the Chinese bamboo farmer help your understanding of patience?
- Do you ever find yourself just wanting to fix a relationship or conflict? Why?

“There is a time to be silent and a time to speak.” Eccles. 3:7 We need... I need, to give the Holy Spirit room to work in our families lives *according to the will of God*. God is changing and maturing our children as parents at the same time that He is changing and maturing us as grandparents! He never stops molding and shaping us into the image of Christ. It's called sanctification! Human beings ultimately cannot sanctify themselves. The Triune God sanctifies. And He has promised to finish what he has begun... not just in our children and grandchildren, but also in us, as grandparents. I have realized that I am actually pretty lousy at being the Holy Spirit and He is pretty spectacular at it! The longer I walk with the Lord, the more I find I have enough to deal with in my own life. I don't have time to police yours.

#3: FORGIVENESS

“Be completely humble and gentle, bearing with one another in love... forgive, just as in Christ, God forgave you.”

Pg. 85: *“Deep hurt carried around in an unforgiving heart is like large stones constantly being stacked one on another until a massive rock wall is erected across the path of reconciliation... Forgiveness tears down the wall of bitterness so that peace and unity can flourish.”*

Jackie V: *“I truly believe that forgiveness is a supernatural act of God. It has nothing to do with our feelings and everything to do with obedience! It is not a suggestion, it is a commandment.”*

Here's a bit of Jackie's story. Feel free to share it, or share your own story of forgiveness:

I grew up in the home of an alcoholic. He was a terrible father. But by God's grace and my sincere desire to obey, a miracle happened. Did I feel like forgiving him? No, I did not, but I definitely did not want that boulder standing between me and my relationship with God! So, I gave the mountain of bitterness to Him and He made it fall into the sea never to rise again!

Shortly before my father died, unexpectedly at the age of 72, I was able to tell him that I had forgiven Him and when I did... the chains fell off me! I was set free! The feelings did follow that decision to forgive, and I feel a great deal of compassion towards my father today. I carry no resentment.

God helped me to see into his soul...you see my father was taken captive as a prisoner early in WWII at the tender age of 16. His experience was brutal, and I am not surprised now that he turned out the way he did. I knew complete forgiveness had taken place as I was able to thank God for my earthly father and using him to bring me to Christ. Yes, all things do work together for good if we trust and obey and do what God asks of us. If you have unforgiveness in your family, bring it to the foot of the cross, act in obedience, and watch God do the rest!

The author makes this statement (pg. 87) *“An unforgiving heart will shut the door to healthy relationships; forgiveness opens it and keeps it open.”* Do you believe that to be true? Why or why not?

1. Is there anyone in your family who you need to forgive or go to and ask for forgiveness?

2. What is the first step you could take to reconcile with that person?
3. What does it mean to you to be forgiven? Think about how your grandchildren could or do thrive in an environment in which forgiveness is lived out freely.

#4: PEACEMAKING

“Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace... vs. 8”

Jesus and the apostles always used the word “peacemaker” when talking about this matter of peace in relationships. Is there a difference between a “peacemaker” and a “peacekeeper”? (Open for group discussion; see author’s comments on pg. 88, paragraph 1 and 2)

Four Marks of a Peacemaker:

1. They listen carefully and compassionately.
2. They are not afraid to admit they may be part of the problem.
3. They value everyone and their ideas; everyone is invited to the conversation
4. They don’t focus on or dig up the past; they look for ways to build up all parties in the conflict. Reconciliation is the goal... not winning!

Would your adult children say these are the marks of the relationship you have with them?

#5: BLESSING GIVER

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come from your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen”(4:29)

Read Howie’s story (pg. 89). Do you know any “Howie’s”? Do you have a grandchild that might be a “Howie”? How do you think that person might respond to someone speaking words of blessing into their life?

Food for Thought: How do you think your grandchildren have been or would be affected by receiving your blessing?

We will be digging deeper into this concept of spoken blessing in our next session. For now, it is important to understand that we have the power to speak **blessing** or **cursing** into our adult children’s lives. It might be possible that God will use this handhold of blessing to get us over the wall and begin a healing relationship with our adult children.

Don’t expect this climb to be easy. We cannot control how our adult children will respond. They have to make their own choices and we can only pray they will choose to engage the climb on the other side of the wall... and join us at the top. (pg. 90)

Whether adult children respond or not, remember **the only thing we have control over are our own choices...** so let’s clip in and climb. As Romans 14:19 reminds us... *“Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.”* Making every effort means not giving up. It means we keep on climbing even when our muscles are aching, and it seems the progress is slow. (Pg. 91) *The rope has been tossed to us. It is up to us to clip and scale the walls that hinder those relationships with the handholds God has provided. There is too much at stake if we don’t try. Our belayer, the heavenly Father, will never let go... we have everything we need for a successful climb, so grab the rope, reach up and climp!*

ACTION STEP: Pray for each other in the area of your greatest struggle with these handholds. Find another godly person who will help you and pray for you in these areas. Then set up a plan for implementing these four handholds **intentionally** in your relationship with your adult children and family members.

Seventeenth Century Nun's Prayer

Lord, thou knowest better than I know myself that I am growing older and will someday be old. So...

Keep me from the fatal habit of thinking I must say something on every subject and on every occasion.

Release me from craving to straighten out everybody's affairs.

Make me thoughtful but not moody; helpful but not bossy. With my vast store of wisdom it seems a pity not to use it all, but Thou knowest Lord, that I want a few friends at the end.

Keep my mind free from the recital of endless details; give me wings to get to the point.

Seal my lips on my aches and pains. They are increasing and love of rehearsing them is becoming sweeter as the years go by.

I dare not ask for grace enough to enjoy the tales of other's pains, but help me to endure them with patience.

I dare not ask for improved memory, but for a growing humility and a lessening cock-sureness when my memory seems to clash with the memories of others.

Teach me the glorious lesson that occasionally I may be mistaken.

Keep me reasonably sweet; I do not want to be a saint - some of them are so hard to live with - but a sour old person is one of the crowning works of the Devil.

Give me the ability to see good things in unexpected places and talents in unexpected people.

And give me, O Lord, the grace to tell them so. *Amen.*

(Included in participant Study Guide)

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Pray for each other in the various issues and strains that may exist in relationships with your adult children and spouses. Where those relationships are strong, pray for continued growth and that the Enemy would not get a foothold.

SESSION SIX
(PART THREE: BUILD UP!)
Unleashing the Power of Spoken Blessing
Reading Assignment: Chapters 9 and 10
[Original Version: Chapters 14-15]

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

1. Pray: Ask God to reveal His truth and give us the wisdom and courage to put it into practice.
2. Ask the group to share any new insights from last week's lesson and Action Steps taken.
3. Transition... (NOTE: This is one of those sections that could be divided into two parts: Part A: Chapter 9; Part B: Chapter 10; otherwise, combine Part A and Part B for a single session)

PART A (16-week plan)
WHAT IS A SPOKEN BLESSING?

If you have the capability, show this clip from Fiddler on the Roof to the group:
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RH3xL8H8tu4>).

Do you remember this ditty we often said as kids: "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words can never harm me!" We know it is lie, don't we? Words have the power to bless or to curse... no matter how thick-skinned we may believe ourselves to be.

So, what is the spoken blessing?

Definition: "to speak well of another; (Heb.) endow with divine favor"

Talk about what each understands a 'blessing' to mean. Why do you think this is something worth learning about and putting into practice in our families?

For centuries, many Jewish have faithfully practiced the spoken blessing at each Sabbath (like we saw in the clip), and at Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah. Where did this idea of spoken blessing come from?

1. Genesis 1:29 – The very first act of God to man on the sixth day of creation after he created man and woman was to bless them. (Read passage)
2. The Patriarchs: The practice of spoken blessing was part of the passing of the promise God gave to Abraham from generation to generation. God blessed Abraham first with the covenant he made with him in Genesis 15, and then again Genesis 22:15-18 (the renewal of the Abrahamic Covenant after the testing with Isaac). This blessing was passed from one generation to another through each of the Patriarchs.
3. Aaronic Blessing (Number 6:22-27): This is the only time God commands the practice of speaking the spoken blessing as a corporate expression.
4. Jesus blesses the children (Matthew 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15-17).
5. The Father's blessing over the Son at both Jesus' baptism (Mark 1:11; Luke 2:22) and Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5; Mark 9:7).

Page 98: *"My hope is that you will grasp to value and importance of the spoken blessing in your family. Imagine the impact if thousands of grandparents across this land set the example of practicing this good work in their families."*

Let's look at the three elements of a spoken blessings as described by the author (Pgs. 99-105):

1. Spoken Message
2. Meaningful Touch
3. Active Commitment

Examine and discuss these three elements carefully.

ACTION STEPS:

1. Have you ever received a spoken blessing from someone of authority and/or importance in your life? If yes, what impact has that had on your life? If not, what might have been different for you had you received one?
2. With your understanding of what a blessing is and the three elements we've discussed, what would keep you from speaking a blessing on the most important people in your life: your spouse, your adult children, your grandchildren?

Next time we will look at some specific "how-to's" for using the spoken blessing and examine more closely the significance of the Aaronic blessing in Numbers 6. Your assignment for next session: **Read Chapter 10 – Speak the Good Word.**

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Pray for one another to embrace the value of spoken blessing and to begin to ask God how this can become a regular practice in your family traditions.

PART B (16-week plan)
SPEAK THE GOOD WORD
(Chapter 10)

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

1. Pray: Ask God to reveal His truth and give us the wisdom and courage to put it into practice.
2. Ask the group to share any new insights from last week's lesson and Action Steps taken.
3. Transition...

It is never too late to pursue the implementation of a spoken blessing tradition in your family. The tradition of speaking a benediction (literally: blessing) at the end of service has been around a long time. We once had a pastor who called this benediction "speaking the good word". Why not do the same for our families.

If you are unsure how to do this, even though you understand what blessing is, this session will hopefully give you some good tools to put it into practice in your family. Let's take a look at two possible methods (approaches) for establishing a tradition of spoken blessing:

1. **PERSONAL (MILESTONE) BLESSING**
(Pages 112-119)

What distinguishes the Milestone blessing from the General blessing? Talk about some of the specific milestones listed in the examples and others they might want to consider as an opportunity to speak a special blessing.

2. **THE GENERAL (RECURRING) BLESSING**

Numbers 6 is a great example for a general blessing that can be used for anyone at any time. But it is important to understand what this blessing is saying. It was given by God, so it has a very specific purpose and reason for the wording used. Let's unpack this powerful blessing God gave Aaron and the Levites for blessing their people. **(Pages 108-112)**

Note to Leaders: The author has used a personal example for the first "facet" of this blessing. Feel free to use this, but you may have a personal example of your own that will communicate the same message about what this part of the blessing is all about—God's Protection because He is always present. Here are the key points you will want to stress about the Numbers 6 blessing:

- a. The entire blessing focuses on the importance of God's Presence with those who are His. Each phrase in the blessing expresses particular consequences, or benefits, of His presence in our lives.
- b. "May the Lord bless you and keep you..." focuses on His protection because His presence with us. It is this knowledge of God's presence that helps drive out all fears and rest in the knowledge that He will never leave us.
- c. "May He make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you..." focuses on God's pleasure with us. Because we are His ("This is my kid!"), He takes great pleasure in us for He sees us through the righteousness of Christ. It is His smile upon us that leads to His gracious acts on our behalf.
- d. "May the Lord turn His face toward you..." is a focus on God's persistence. Remind your group that God once had to turn His face AWAY from us because of sin. But in

Christ, we are His people, and He promises to always give us His full attention. And these things all lead to...

- e. God's amazing peace. With the knowledge of His presence and that it means for us, why would we not enter into His peace. This blessing is a powerful statement of God's peace for us because of His presence.

BLESSABLE MOMENTS: This is a great opportunity to talk about the kind of blessable moments outlined for us in Deuteronomy 6... (See pages 114-118). What are ways you do or can make these opportunities a time to speak a word of blessing over your grandchildren?

- When you sit at home
- When you walk in the way
- When you lie down
- When you rise up

ACTION STEPS:

1. Write out a spoken blessing for each of your grandchildren this week. This can be a Milestone Blessing or a General Blessing. And while you're at it, do one for each of your adult children and their spouses.
2. If your grandchildren are close-by, set up a time when you will speak this blessing over them in person and present them with the written copy (you may want to frame it).
3. If your grandchildren are long distant, determine a time when you can Skype or Facetime and speak this blessing over them. Reach out and touch your screen to symbolize your putting your hand on their heads. Either mail your written copy to them or tell them you will give it to them in person when you next see them.
4. Discuss a regular plan for doing a spoken blessing with your grandchildren and adult children.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Pray for each other as you step out in faith and courageously find opportunities to use this spoken blessing in each of these ways with your grandchildren and children.

OPTIONAL SESSION
(PART THREE: BUILD UP!)
A Well-Versed Legacy
Reading Assignment: Chapter 11
[Original Version: Chapter 16]

NOTE: *This is the first optional session for those doing either the twelve or sixteen-week schedule. For the 12-week plan choose either this session or the next one, A Good Man's Inheritance. For the 16-week plan, you will do both optional sessions.*

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

1. Pray: Ask God to reveal His truth and give us the wisdom and courage to put it into practice.
2. Ask the group to share any new insights from last week's lesson and Action Steps taken.
3. Transition...

How important is the Word of God? (Pause for responses)

Read the opening story on page 121. Does this describe your view of scripture and the intentionality you have for building a "well-versed" legacy? Why or why not?

Read together Nehemiah 8:1-9:3 and talk about this incredible event:

1. What stands out to you about what transpired in this passage? (It was focused on the Word of God, and they listened to it being read from daybreak till noon)
2. How did they respond when they heard the Word that Ezra read to them? (wept and mourned) Why do you suppose there was this kind of response?
3. What are ways you communicate the importance of the Word of God in your family?
4. How do you respond to the author's statement (page 122): "The centrality of God's Word is what distinguishes true disciples from merely religious people."

Practical ways to build a Bible-centric legacy with our grandchildren:

1. Memorization: what are ways we can encourage our grandchildren to memorize Scripture?
2. Read the Bible stories to your grandchildren
3. Write down what you've learned from God's Word you want to pass on to your grandchildren. Discuss why this would be a valuable resource for the next generations.

ACTION STEPS:

1. Choose one or two suggestions from Carolyn Boykin's book (see page 125) that you will put into practice with your grandchildren. Set up a plan for when and how you will do it.
2. Get a journal and begin writing down some of the lessons God has taught you from His Word.

CLOSE WITH PRAYER: Pray for one another as you figure out how to build a love for God's Word in your life and the lives of your grandchildren.

OPTIONAL SESSION
(PART THREE: BUILD UP!)
A Good Man's Inheritance
Reading Assignment: Chapter 12
[Original Version: Chapters 12-13]

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

1. Pray: Ask God to reveal His truth and give us the wisdom and courage to put it into practice.
2. Ask the group to share any new insights from last week's lesson and Action Steps taken.
3. Transition...

This session will explore the concept of a new LIVING Living Will paradigm. But before you talk about this new paradigm, you are encouraged to discuss with your group why giving those we love more 'things' does not necessarily build character or help them experience Life (with a capital 'L'). What is the purpose of an inheritance? And is an inheritance different than a legacy? (An inheritance is what we leave TO someone after we die; A legacy is what we leave IN someone)

Read Haggai 1:5-6. Why does God call the practice of accumulating stuff like putting wages in a purse with holes in it?

Discuss your group's responses to the quotes on page 133 from Andrew Murray and Jim Elliot.

Let's explore a different way of using the assets and resources God has given us to pass on as an inheritance and legacy for the next generations. It's called a Living Living Will, or an Ultimate Living Will. Discuss the difference between this and an ordinary living will (being unplugged versus plugged in).

Read Matthew 25:14-30 (Parable of Talents) What are two non-negotiable truths we can glean from this parable Jesus taught?

1. We have each been entrusted with specific assets
2. We will each give an account for how these are used

Page 135-136: What is the difference between material and non-material assets? Why are the non-material assets as valuable, or more valuable, than material assets? Do think Jesus was referring only to material things in this parable? Why or why not?

The author believes non-material assets are likely more valuable than any material asset we may leave to another generation. Here are some examples of non-material assets we ought to consider:

- Time
- Talents/skills
- Spiritual gifts
- Knowledge
- Life experiences
- Family
- Faith

Read Ephesians 2:10 “For we are God’s workmanship created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” These “good works” are particular related to the non-material assets we have been given. These are powerful opportunities to impact others, especially our families, with the Good News of Christ by putting what He has given us into practice now.

Review and discuss the three intentional actions of the Ultimate Living Will plan found on page 136. Here is a great idea submitted by one of our ministry partners for making this Ultimate Living Will a memorable tool in your family: Host a Reading of the Will.

This may sound weird and may even freak your family members out a bit. But consider how powerful and impactful this could be. Invite all your family together for a Reading of the Will. Here’s what you do when they gather:

1. Schedule a time and place; invite family and friends
2. Read aloud your reason and purpose: that you want to bless them with the understanding that among all the assets God has given you to use for His purpose, you want to invest those in these family members (or friends) in attendance while you are still alive and able to do so.
3. Share each asset with the individual who is present and how you will be investing this in them. Then, place your hand on their head or shoulder and speak a word of blessing over them, and declare your commitment to fulfill your promise of using this asset for their good.
4. Enjoy a time of worship and celebration together. Sing, read scriptures, share testimonies

A FINAL SUGGESTION:

Incorporate symbols in the delivery of your asset to the recipient. A symbol could be something you already have (a tool, a knick-knack, a piece of jewelry, a knitting needle, an artist paint kit, etc.) or something you make (a carving, a painting, a poem, etc). Look over your asset inventory and see if you can picture a symbol that would be appropriate for that asset. For example: a friend who is an artist, wanted to give her granddaughter the gift of time to help her develop her own artist gift. She gave her an artist paint set with brushes and paints along with a card promises a certain number of hours every month sitting with her in her own studio to coach her in her painting skills.

Some symbols may be the asset itself (a cross representing your faith you want to pass on; a painting that represent a particular image of something you want to see developed in them, etc.). If a symbol, such as a pair of knitting needles, is representative of something more tangible such as time invested with them to teach some skill, you will want to explain that carefully so they know what it means.

In the end, it is important to remember that God works in small things. This does not have to be a huge project, but it will require personal investment of time and relationship. You are asking God to reveal what assets He has given to invest in others. Material assets are part of the investment, but not the only thing that matters.

ACTION STEP:

1. Sit down with pen and paper and take inventory of your assets
2. Make a plan for distributing these assets and do it.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Pray that God will give each person clarity about their assets and how God wants them to be used to bless another generation while you are still living.

SESSION SEVEN
(PART FOUR: WISE UP!)
Modern Day Issachars
Reading Assignment: Chapter 13
[Original Version: Chapters 14-15]

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

4. Pray: Ask God to reveal His truth and give us the wisdom and courage to put it into practice.
5. Ask the group to share any new insights from last week's lesson and Action Steps taken.
6. Transition...

READ I Chronicles 12:32- This particular group from David's Mighty Men hailed from the tribe of Issachar. They alone were noted for this skill of "understanding the times and knowing what to do". I think it possible that God is looking for grandparents who will be the modern equivalent of the tribe of Issachar for the sake of your grandchildren's generation.

That's what we will be exploring in this session. It's something we cannot afford to neglect and assume someone else will step into that role. Pg. 142: *"Ignorance and abdication only give Satan an advantage in deceiving our grandchildren. We must not allow ourselves to be seduced by a pied piper's smooth-sounding tunes of self-centered pursuits that ultimately lead down a path of destruction..."* for the sake of our grandchildren.

Understand the Times

A. Culture

1. What does it mean to understand the times?
2. What is culture? (See page 143)
3. How does understanding the culture in which our grandchildren live impact worldview?
4. In his book *Culture-Making*, Andy Crouch identifies **four cultural postures that hinder** our ability to shape culture and gain the trust of our grandchildren (see pages 144-146). Discuss how these are hindrances to making changes.

B. Worldview

1. What is worldview?
2. What is the dominant characteristic of a secular worldview?
Relativism: Promoting the supremacy of individualism (Truth determined by individual feelings and comfort (page 147)
3. How does relativism impact...
 - a) Meaning and purpose of family
 - b) Sanctity of life
 - c) Religion (Faith)

For Review:

How does relativism line up with with Romans 1:18-32. How does Proverbs 16:25 describe the outcome of any worldview that does not line up with Scripture? Do you believe that?

Talk about ways you can begin have conversations with your grandchildren about culture and worldview, and why worldview matters.

ACTION STEPS:

1. Pray Psalms 139:23-24. Ask God to reveal any places where relativism may have crept into your thinking.
2. Identify and write down those places in your thinking impacted by relativism.
3. Ask God to show you how to replace such thinking with the truth.

In our next session, we will explore the impact that technology is having on the shaping of culture, and how it also impacts worldview. Just knowing about such things does not cause change, but knowing what to do according to God's wisdom does. We'll talk about some of the "knowing what to do" practices that can lead all of us towards the way of life... not destruction.

Next week read chapters 14 & 15.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Pray for one another to understand how our worldview shapes so many areas of life. Pray against the scheme of the Enemy to promote relativism in this generation.

SESSION EIGHT

(PART FOUR: WISE UP!)

Technology 101

Reading Assignment: Chapter 14-15
[Original Version: Chapters 8, 9, 10]

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

1. Pray: Ask God to reveal His truth and give us the wisdom and courage to put it into practice.
2. Ask the group to share any new insights from last week's lesson and Action Steps taken.
3. Transition... (NOTE: This is one of those sections that could be divided into two parts: (Part A: Chapter 14; Part B: Chapter 15))

PART A (16-week plan)

Tech-wise Grandparenting

Open conversation with these questions:

1. Can you relate to the story that opens Chapter 14? What are some of the challenges and frustrations you face as grandparents when it comes to today's technology?
2. How many of you sometimes feel the pace of technological change is too much for you to keep up with? Where do you think you fit in the range of 'tech-savvy' ability or interest the author discusses on pages 157-158? (Disinterested → Very savvy)
3. Why is it important to engage with the digital world and understand at least something about that world?

Today's digital devices have a way of unexpectedly wreaking havoc on our family interactions. What's a grandparent to do?

Discuss the three foundational principles of technology (Pgs. 159-160). Do you agree or disagree? Why?

The author suggests we need to have "disciplined discernment" when it comes to technology. What do you understand that to mean? (pages 160-161)

Discuss the ideas the author provides for taking control of technologies like smartphones and digital devices when you are gathered with your grandchildren and their family. Which of these would work in your situation? Which would not? Why?

ACTION STEPS:

1. Make the decision to intentionally learn what you can about today's technologies that would be appropriate to your situation. Pick one or two resources from Appendix 1 that you will begin to examine this week.
2. Pick one Tech-Free activity from the chapter that you could do with your grandchildren next time you see them. Build a plan and then share with the group next week or whenever you do it how it went.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Pray for each other to seek God's wisdom to understand the times with respect to technology, and to know how help the next generation use it well.

PART B (16-week plan)
Avoiding Technology Traps

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

1. Pray: Ask God to reveal His truth and give us the wisdom and courage to put it into practice.
2. Ask the group to share any new insights, blessings or challenges from last week's lesson and Action Steps that you put into practice.
3. Transition...

As grandparents you may feel that you do not have much authority or ability to impact the technological world of your grandchildren. We may even feel it's not really our responsibility. That's the responsibility of their parents to deal with. Do any of you feel that way?

Well, in this session we are going to examine why we need to be involved as grandparents. We will examine four traps of technology the author describes in this chapter, and how we as grandparents can make an impact in these areas with our grandchildren. Here they are...

TRAP #1: Death by Amusement

Big Idea: The extensive exposure to devices and amusements is actually rewiring the brain

TRAP # 2: Virtual Unreality

Big Idea: The addictive obsessions of digital technology is changing the way we relate to one another and creating a significant aloneness

TRAP #3: The Boredom Syndrome

Big Idea: Wonder and imagination are being stripped from our grandchildren's generation and is contributing to ever increasing digital preoccupation

TRAP #4: Predator Vulnerability

Big Idea: The lack of parental controls and technological controls is creating a whole new wave of vulnerabilities for predator invasions and attacks on our children... and older adults.

What information provided in each of these areas was new to you or something for which you had not given much thought before? Did anything surprise you?

How has your view of technology changed after reading this chapter?

Which of the four traps provides the greatest challenge to you as a grandparent? How can we help one another in these areas?

ACTION STEP:

Review the action steps listed in this chapter under each of the TRAP headings. Pick one or two and develop a plan for how you will use them in your family, particularly to help your grandchildren avoid these traps.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Pray for courage and wisdom for each other in this area of technology.

SESSION NINE
(PART FIVE: STEP UP!)
Repristinator or Reposer?
Reading Assignment: Chapter 16-17
[Original Version: Chapters 7, 17-18]

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

1. Pray: Ask God to reveal His truth and give us the wisdom and courage to put it into practice.
2. Ask the group to share any new insights from last week's lesson and any Action Steps taken.
3. Transition... (NOTE: This is section that can be divided into two parts for a longer schedule: (Part A: Chapter 16; Part B: Chapter 17))

PART A (16-week plan)
Repristinator or Reposer?

NOTE TO LEADER: The author acknowledges that neither of these words are legitimate dictionary words, but they are derived from legitimate words. "Repristinator" is based upon "repristinate", which means "to restore something to its original state or condition". It's a word that implies intentionality. "Reposer" is derived from 'repose': to sleep or lay in rest from work. While repose is often used to express tranquility or peace, it is also the state of being dead or sleeping when there is work to do. The author has created the word "reposer" to express that in which we essentially say, "Oh, well, it's not my problem."

ASK: What is the difference between a 'repristinator' and a 'reposer'? Which would your grandchildren likely say describe you in your involvement with them?

Challenge your group to discuss the 10% unshakable belief principle, and if it is true, how might the unshakable faith of those who follow Christ make a difference in our families and our nation? How might the **Six Practical To-Do's on pages 182-186** contribute to making an impact in our families?

Questions for Discussion:

1. Which of the six suggestions do you find relatively easy to practice?
2. Which are the hardest for you? Why? How can we pray for you in these areas?
3. What are you doing to protect the family table in your home? Have you discussed the importance of the family table with your adult children? Why or why not?
4. Read together Nehemiah 4:7-15. In what ways does the opposition described in this passage mirror the kind of opposition the family and the church face today? What would it look like to 'fight' for our families today as Nehemiah challenged his people to do in his day?

ACTION STEPS:

1. Read Daniel 1 & 3: Here is an example of how four young men (they were likely teens when they arrived in Babylon) lived in a pagan culture thrust upon them. Consider sitting down with your grandchildren (or Skyping) and discussing how their example might speak to us today.
2. Choose at least one of the Six To-Do's to implement this week. Invite a friend to pray with you as you seek to put this into practice.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Pray for each other to not yield to the opposition of the world, but to fight for our grandchildren's hearts and minds.

PART B (16-week plan)
Take Back the Hill Country

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

1. Pray: Ask God to reveal His truth and give us the wisdom and courage to put it into practice.
2. Ask the group to share any new insights from last week's lesson and any Action Steps taken.
3. Transition...

In our last session we discussed the 10% principle for impacting any culture or society. Less than 10% of Americans make up the 'cultural elite' in our day who control most of the policies and cultural standards in our time (political correctness). Why do you think Christians, who make up about 10% of our population, have so little impact?

When you think of biblical heroes, who comes to mind for you? Certainly, one who deserves to be at the top of our list would likely be a guy named Caleb. What do you know about Caleb that would qualify him to be in that category of hero? What impact might happen if more of us had the faith and wholehearted devotion of Caleb?

SPIRAL OF SILENCE (pgs. 191-195): What does the author mean by the term "spiral of silence"? Can you relate to this? What impact do you think this has on our lack of impact as Christians in our families and our nation? How does fear keep us ineffective? What lessons can we learn from Caleb to overcome fear?

DEPLOYMENT ORDERS (pgs.195-200): Discuss one by one the five deployment orders the author lists in this section for fighting the battle for our families. What are some of the obstacles that keep us from fulfilling these deployment orders? What role does compassion have for effectively deploying in these areas?

Discuss how we can continue to pray for, encourage and support one another in these things from this point on. What steps can we take to make sure we do not forget these things and also draw others into the things we have learned together?

ACTION STEPS:

1. Make a list of things that create fear and discouragement in your life. Lay these before God and confess them. Then ask Him to replace your fear with courage to do the right things, and trust in Him as you walk in His truth.
2. Decide how you will link arms with one or more in your group to encourage and stir one another in the battle for the hearts, minds and souls of your grandchildren.
3. Take 2 Timothy 4:2 as your battle orders, and write down ways you will put these into practice in your family.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Pray for each other in these areas of fear, and that we will encourage one another to live courageously for the sake of another generation.

OPTIONAL SESSION
(PART FIVE: STEP UP!)
The Unique Impact of a Grandfather
Reading Assignment: Chapter 18
[Original Version: Chapter 19]

NOTE TO LEADER: Be sensitive to the grandmothers in your group as you discuss this lesson. As the author says, “Every human being matters because we are all, male and female, made in the image of God... but there’s another sense of mattering. For example, men and women matter in the lives of their children and grandchildren in different ways.” This lesson can be just as important for the women to know and understand as it is for the men. It will also be good to have the female perspective as you move through this lesson.

OPTION: The Christian Grandparenting Network does have some material available specifically for grandmothers. You could divide this group into two groups (male and female) to discuss separately. For information about the grandmother lesson, send an email to info@christiangrandparenting.net and ask for “A Grandmother’s Role”.

BEFORE YOU DIG IN:

1. Pray: Ask God to reveal His truth and give us the wisdom and courage to put it into practice.
2. Ask the group to share any new insights from last week’s lesson and any Action Steps taken.
3. Transition...

Share the Kenyan Proverb (page 206). Ask: Is there a difference between the way men and women impact children and youth? If you do, why is that so?

Read Craig Glass’s comment (page 206-207). Do you agree that men have a disproportionate impact on a child, especially boys? Why or why not? Even if you disagree, the statistics support the fact that fatherless boys are more likely to grow up without any sense of who they are as men. Our prisons are filled with such men today. This is just as true and significant for grandfathers as it is for fathers.

Review the cultural messages on pages 207-208. Have any of you bought into one or more of these messages? Do these actually reflect God’s view of manhood and aging?

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE: Review pages 209-212. Why do these things matter? What are the things you struggle with most as a man and a grandfather? Why do you think so few men, compared to women, are intentional about making an impact on the next generations?

PREPARING FOR ADULTHOOD: Do you believe that our boys (sons and grandsons) need mature, godly men to prepare them for manhood and life? Or do you believe they should be left on their own to figure it out themselves? Which approach most fits your current practice? The truth is that if we don’t teach them, someone else will... and the question we need to ask is whether those ‘someones’ are the ones we WANT teaching them.

Paul gives us a ‘holy dare’ in Philippians 4:9. Read it and discuss what Paul means by this audacious statement. Is this something you would say to your sons and grandsons?

ACTION STEPS:

1. Stop and consider whether your grandchildren would say you “smelled like Jesus” at your funeral? Ask God to search your heart (Psalm 139:23-24) and expose those things in you that might keep them from saying that.
2. Consider writing a letter to all your sons and grandsons (regardless of age) sharing some of the lessons you have learned about what it means to be a man, and what God has to say about it. You might want to read Robert Lewis’ book, *Raising a Modern Day Knight*, if you need some help about what to say.
3. Ask God to reveal one thing you can do this week to take a more courageous stand as an intentional grandfather. Ask your wife what she thinks.

CLOSE IN PRAYER: Lord, give this men the courage to live their lives so that they smell like Jesus.