

Premeditated Parenting

Discussion Guide

Steve Nelson
Doug Dale

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Introduction

This discussion guide is intended for small group leaders, parenting class leaders, and individuals to use along with the Premeditated Parenting book to “dig deeper” into the parenting concepts presented. You can use this on your own to help you think through your own parenting and consider how these ideas can be applied. However, these questions will be the most helpful to you if you can join with a group of other parents in the same stage of life and discuss them together.

The Discussion Guide consists of six sets of questions, one for each chapter in the book. In addition, Appendix A of the full-sized version of the Discussion Guide contains additional questions. The full-sized version is available at www.premeditatedparenting.net/book_resources.htm.

This gives you the option of printing out the appropriate page for everyone in your group, or creating your own set that is better suited to your group using questions from the Appendix.

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Chapter 1 – Rethinking Parenting

- 1) What do you think it means to “win” with your kids?
- 2) As you look at the teens in your church, do you think that parents have “won” with the majority of these kids? How does it make you feel about the state of Christian families?

- 3) “Parenting is God’s crucially important mission that He has delegated to you because he wants to bless you and accomplish His purposes through your family. If you can view it as such you will be able to embrace parenting along with whatever challenges come with it.” (p. 13)

Do you view parenting as a “crucially important” mission that God has given to you? Does this encourage you or scare you?

- 4) When you think about the importance of the mission God has given parents, and you look at the teenagers and young adults around you, do you feel like most parents need a tune-up or a complete overhaul?

Appendix

Additional discussion questions are available at:
www.premeditatedparenting.net/book_resources.htm

- 5) Which of the five precarious parenting patterns do you personally struggle with the most?

- 6) What does “premeditated parenting” mean? What kind of effort does it require?

- 7) List all of the qualities you would like to see in your child at age 16. You may want to start this list now, then take this home and think through it some more.

Chapter 2 – Parenting With Confidence

1) Who do you turn to for the majority of your parenting advice? Dr. Spock, Dr. Laura, Dr. Dobson, Gary Smalley, Tedd Tripp, magazines, parents, friends, peers, God, pastors, church leaders, books, TV (Super Nanny), radio, someone else?

2) How do you know which advice is worth listening to?

3) What keeps us from praying about our kids (or anything else, for that matter)?

4) The Bible does contain some direct parenting advice, but maybe not as much as we'd like. How can it help your parenting to have a strong knowledge of all of God's Word?

5) If your family truly lived their lives a Jesus taught, do you think your kids would grow up feeling like they had religion crammed down their throats? If not, what creates that feeling?

6) **Matthew 22:36-40 (NIV)** “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”³⁷ Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

What would our lives and our kids' lives look like if we learned to obey just these verses?

7) In regards to all that was presented in this book and in our discussions, what has impacted you and your family the most so far?

Chapter 6 - Teaching and Training

5) **Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)** Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.

Do you think this verse is a guarantee that your kids will turn out? Why, or why not?

1) As you look around at the people you know, what would you say have been some of people's greatest struggles in life?

2) What can you do to equip your child to handle those trials?

6) "Everyone else may think that your job as a parent is just to educate, provide for, and protect your kids until they are on their own. Everyone else may think that you just have to cross your fingers and hope they turn out okay, but you are not everyone else. You must lock into the responsibility that God has given you. He clearly states that you can change the outcome of your kids' lives. *Do you believe this?*" (p 50)

3) What do you think about the analogy of training being like a gun barrel (pp. 191-192), do you think that the typical parents today has a barrel that is too short, too wide, too narrow, or just right?

Do you believe this? Why or why not?

7) How and why do we continue to keep pressing forward with our parenting when we know that there is a chance our kids might still rebel or otherwise not "turn out"?

4) What are the benefits of children obeying quickly, completely, and cheerfully?

Chapter 3 – Winning Ways

1) What are your answers to these questions from page 67: What does your child need from you that you are not giving him or her? What areas in your parenting do you sense that God wants you to change but you are reluctant to do so?

2) **James 1:22 (NIV)** *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

What steps can you take to go from *knowing* the things you need to do (from the previous question) to *doing* them?

3) What's wrong with the thinking of the dad who said he did a good job with his kids because he "went to all their games" (p. 83)?

4) What would you say to someone who gave any of the following reasons not to spank:

- Spanking is abusive
- Hitting leads to hitting
- Kids who are spanked may be compliant, but their hearts aren't changed
- Kids who are spanked struggle with decision making later in life
- We're supposed to love our kids, not hit them

4) When do you think spanking should be used, and when should parents use other forms of discipline?

5) Why must effective discipline be *immediate, memorable, and consistent*?

6) **2 Corinthians 2:6-8 (NIV)** The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.

When you apply this verse to the discipline of children, why is it crucial that all the steps (sufficient discipline, forgiveness, comfort, and reaffirmation of love) be a part of the process?

Chapter 5 – Discipline

- 1) A bonsai gardener continually prunes his trees so that they can be shaped as they should be. What, then, does “bonsai parenting” look like?
- 2) Read about Eli and his sons in 1 Samuel chapters 1 and 3. It seems like Eli’s sons were pretty old. Why didn’t God just deal with them directly instead of holding Eli responsible? What does this imply about God’s view of parents’ responsibility to discipline their children?

3) **Proverbs 13:24 (NIV)** *He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.*

Proverbs 22:15 (NIV) *Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.*

Proverbs 23:13-14 (NIV) *Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. ¹⁴Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.*

Proverbs 29:15 (NIV) *The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother.*

How can the Bible promote the use of the rod when so many experts today say that it is a harmful thing for your children?

4) Share an example of something your kids have imitated after seeing you do it.

5) Think back to the list of characteristics that you would like to see in your kids when they reach the age of 16 (from the discussion of Chapter 1). How many of those things will they learn by *imitating* you?

6) **Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)** *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

How does this passage relate to parenting?

7) **Mark 3:25 (NIV)** *If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand.*

Why is unity among parents important to children?

Chapter 4 – Parenting in Love

1) If you had to choose between one or the other, would you say you are too soft on your kids or are you too hard on your kids?

2) “Rules without relationship results in rebellion.”

Why is this? How do you maintain the proper balance?

3) Do you think your own parents were expressive enough in how they showed love to you? If not, why would you say that? If so, can you think of examples of how they showed love?

4) How do you think the example you saw modeled by your parents will affect your own parenting when it comes to the expression of love?

5) **Matthew 3:17 (NIV)** *And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”*

Matthew 17:5 (NIV) *While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!”*

What is the difference between loving someone and being pleased with him or her? Why are *both* important?

6) “One common deception is to think you are critically important at work, but at home you’re somewhat expendable. Your spouse, or even someone else, can pick up the slack at home, but no one can pick up the slack at work. Or can they? The very fact that you can be fired implies that someone else can do your job, or that your job can even go undone. The fact that you can’t be fired at home highlights your need to be there. No one else will do your job.” – p. 112

What are your thoughts about this statement?

7) How will your attitude about parenting and your kids affect your response when you are dealing with the unpleasant aspects of the job (like cleaning up vomit at 2 a.m.)?