

## *Effective Parenting in a Defective World* **Book Discussion Guide**

### **Chapter 1: How to Raise Positive Kids in a Negative World**

1. How would *you* define parenting success?
  
2. What are one or two of your top goals as a parent right now? For example, “I want to teach my child one new character trait (such as obedience) every month, including memorizing a definition and acting out scenarios where the character trait is important in life,” or “I will take Josh to the father/son retreat every year,” or “Sarah will take care of her own laundry by age twelve and prepare one meal a month for our family starting at age fifteen.”
  
3. Now try to explain your “why” for each item you listed under question 2. Example: If you wrote, “I will teach Jordan how to divide his allowance, giving a tenth to the church, saving a tenth for the future, and carefully stewarding the rest toward wise purchases,” you might write, “My purpose is to teach Jordan how to be a good steward and to understand that everything belongs to God and is simply managed by us.”
  
4. What are some positive ways your children model the example you have lived out in front of them?
  
5. What are some negative ways they model your example?
  
6. What one positive step could you take this week to improve the way you model Christlikeness for your child?

### **Chapter 2: Building Relationships That Bond**

1. Look at the following eight keys to building a stronger bond with your children. Think of one way that you can incorporate each of these keys into your relationship this week.

***Eight Keys for Building Relationships That Bond***

Unconditional love

Scheduled time

Focused attention

Eye contact

Ongoing communication

Meaningful touch

Fun

Prayer

2. Take some time to reflect on your parenting. Can you identify one key attitude or behavior that, with God's help, you'd like to adjust? How might you begin to do so?

**Chapter 3: How to Develop Your Child's Full Potential**

1. Ask each of your children what kinds of things make him or her feel special and loved (or what you might do to make him or her feel special and loved). What key discovery did you make?

2. Next ask each of your children what kinds of things make him or her feel secure. Your child may not give the "right" answer ("When you enforce the boundaries.") But just

listen and record below any sensitivities, fears, concerns, or other issues you haven't seen before. Did you discover anything new?

3. Look at the Spiritual Formation and Mental Development chart (see page 55) and identify the level of instruction (rules, relationship, reasons, or resolve) that correlates with each of your children's current ages.

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of instruction: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of instruction: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of instruction: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of instruction: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's name: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of instruction: \_\_\_\_\_

4. What specific responsibilities does each of your children have in your home? for their own room? housework? pets? meals? laundry?

5. How can you be more effective in helping them take responsibility for themselves and their actions?

#### **Chapter 4: God's Process for Teaching Obedience**

1. Of the five resources discussed in this chapter (doctrinal truth, personal devotions, biblical knowledge, systematic instruction, and teachable moments), which one comes most naturally for you as a parent?

2. Which one needs the most work?

3. God's Word says that obedience is your child's greatest responsibility. In contrast, what are some of the things the culture around you says about children and their responsibilities?

4. What areas of your family's lifestyle need to change to reflect this biblical priority?

### **Chapter 5: How to Discipline Your Child Effectively**

1. Ask your spouse and/or a good friend—people who can be completely honest with you—to examine Reuben Hill's analysis of the four styles of parenting (see page 85). Then ask them to describe where you fit on the grid and to give some examples that support their opinion.

2. Does your perception of your parenting line up with what your spouse/friends have told you?

3. If you believe change in your parenting style is needed, how might you adjust your style to best suit the emotional needs of your children?

### **Chapter 6: Punishment versus Discipline**

1. If you are uncomfortable using biblical spanking as a form of discipline, identify the reasons why. (Check all that apply.)

Lack of belief in spanking

Unable to manage frustration/anger and portray love/gentleness while spanking

Too softhearted to inflict pain on my child

Too difficult to spank consistently

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Are there some instances when you would consider using spanking as a form of discipline? For example: "When my child deliberately defies me," "When Jeffrey talks back disrespectfully and intentionally," "Only when I have given clear warning first."

2. In contrast, name a time when you would use another form of correction. Provide a *scenario* (for example, “for minor infractions”); a *situation* (“When Jeffrey forgets to answer properly, I will correct him verbally”); and a *stipulation* (“when another consequence is more logical, such as taking away a privilege to correct misuse of that privilege”).

### **Chapter 7: Words That Discipline**

1. Name an uncomfortable situation you might have been able to avoid in the past month if only you had said no firmly to one of your children.

2. In addition to being decisive, an important part of discipline is teaching your child to own the consequences of his or her actions. One way to do this is with contracts (see pages 122–126). What is one way you could use a contract to transfer responsibility to your child?

### **Chapter 8: Five Smooth Stones**

1. Become a student of your child by asking a few probing questions to get to know his or her heart.

a. First, ask your child, “What are you most concerned about?” Record and reflect on his or her answers below.

b. Next ask him or her, “What makes you feel afraid?” Write your child’s response and your reflections below.

2. Now consider some signs that may help point to your child’s vocational calling in life.

- a. My child's favorite things:
  
- b. My child's dreams:
  
- c. My child's gifts and talents:

## **Chapter 9: When All Else Fails**

1. Read together the following Scriptures that teach us about God's holiness. Discuss what they mean for us who follow Christ. Record your observations below.

Exodus 3:5-6

Isaiah 6:1-8

1 Peter 1:15-16

Revelation 4:1-11

2. Though your children should understand that you have high standards, they also should realize that you balance those standards with extreme grace toward everyone who doesn't meet them—in other words, you should model that failure is never final. Consider the last time one of your children really blew it. Did you demonstrate grace to him or her? How? Is there anything you might do differently in the future?

3. Now that you've worked through this book, can you identify the one area in which you would most like to grow as a parent? As you look to God to help, are you extending the same grace toward yourself as He does to you? Explain.