Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 1 – Getting to the Heart of Behavior

(based on Intro. & Ch. 1 of book)

Icebreaker: What is something God has taught you from His Word this week?

1. Read Proverbs 4:23. Why is it important to deal with the heart of your children when disciplining and correcting them?
2. Read Matthew 15:18-20. How could this passage describe the connection between the heart and behavior in us and in our kids?
3. Why do you think it is so easy to get sidetracked with behavior when issues of the heart are clearly much more important?
4. Read Matthew 15:8 and 1 Samuel 16:7. What is wrong when we try to change behavior without having a change in the heart?
5. If the point of discipline is to change the direction of the heart, how should that change your current approach to discipline and correction?

Share a prayer request based on how you are challenged by this session.

Pray for each other based on these requests.

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 2 – Shaping Influences & God-ward Orientation

(based on Ch. 2 & Ch. 3 of book)

Icebreaker: Share a verse or thought from God’s Word that encouraged or challenged you this week.

Discussion Questions:

1. What immediately sticks out to you from this session?
2. Read Matt. 6:21, Mark 12:30-31, Matt. 28:19-20. How are the values in these verses being reflected in your home? How can you see room for improvement in your life or your children’s lives in what you/they value most?
3. What do you think is the Godward orientation of your children? Are their lives and responses organized around God as a Father, Shepherd, Lord, Sovereign, King? Or do you see them living for some sort of pleasure, approval, acceptance or some other false god? (Prov. 9:7-10)
4. What step can you take to focus the correction of your kids on the deeper issues of Godward orientation? How can you help your child see how he is investing in things that cannot satisfy (i.e. idolatry)?
5. Are you and your spouse spending time in prayer for God to reveal himself to your children? Ultimately, God initiates any work in your children’s hearts. (1 Tim. 2:1-4, 2 Cor. 4:3-6, John 16:8, Acts 26:18, Mark 6:20)

Prayer question: What is one step you can take or change you can make based on today’s discussion? Pray for each other to have the courage, grace and wisdom to follow through on this!

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 3 – Discerning the Abundance of the Heart

(based on Ch. 7 & Ch. 10 of book)

Icebreaker: What is something God has taught you from His Word this week?

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What sticks out to you most from this session?
2. Which of the unbiblical methods mentioned in this session have you seen yourself use? Can you think of any other common unbiblical approaches to discipline and correction? What is wrong, in your understanding, with these unbiblical approaches?
3. “The behavior of our children is not the problem – the root issue is their hearts.” How have you seen this to be true? How have you struggled to apply this in your home?
4. James 1:19-20. How well are you doing at listening to what your child is saying?
5. Js. 5:16. How could confessing your sins, where appropriate, be a regular part of your communication with your children? How might that impact your children’s willingness to be honest with you?
6. If you were to have the kind of communication with your children outlined in this session, what would the cost be for you? Are you willing to pay that price?

Prayer: Share a request you have based on this discussion. Pray for each other.

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 4 – Embracing Biblical Methods: Communication

(based on Ch. 8 & Ch. 9 of book)

Icebreaker: What is something God has taught you from His Word this week?

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What sticks out to you most from this session?
2. Read Prov. 18:2, 18:13 & 20:5. How well are you doing these things with your kids?
3. What are five or six good questions for drawing out what your child is thinking or feeling that helps them understand not just the “what” of behavior but also the “why” of their behavior?
4. How would you talk to your 7 year old who seems to have stolen some money from you, but would not admit to it? What part of God’s Word would you use in this conversation? (See 2 Tim. 3:16-17)
5. Prov. 23:26. How would you encourage your child who had failed miserably, but seemed genuinely to desire God’s help? How would that empower your child to trust you with his/her heart?
6. Of the eight communication types mentioned in this chapter, which ones are you most proficient in? Which ones to do you struggle most with?

Prayer: Share a request you have based on this discussion. Pray for each other.

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 5 – Embracing Biblical Methods: Appeal to Conscience

(based on Ch. 11 of book)

Icebreaker: Share a verse or thought from God’s Word that encouraged or challenged you this week.

Discussion Questions:

1. Read Rom. 2:14-15. How have you seen signs that your child feels accountable to God when he sins? If not to God, to whom does your child feel accountable for their sins?
2. Read Col. 3:20. How do you keep your children focused on the fact that their obedience to you, is really about them pleasing/obeying God?
3. Are you focusing your correction and direction on behavior or on attitudes of the heart? Do your children think of themselves as sinners because of what they do or because of what they are?
4. Read Luke 6:45. How is appealing to the conscience different from addressing behavior? What benefits come from appeal to the conscience rather than focusing on behavior?
5. Read 1 Peter 1:13. How can you focus your hope for your (sinful) child in the work of Christ? Have you ever talked (i.e. yelled) at your kids in such a way that it would be impossible to stop and pray for Christ to help them?
6. Read Hebrews 4:12. How would you rate your ability to use the Word of God to appeal to the conscience of your kids? What do you need to do to improve in this area?

Prayer question: What is one step you can take or change you can make based on today’s discussion? Pray for each other to have the courage, grace and wisdom to follow through on this!

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 6 – Embracing Biblical Methods: The Rod

(based on Ch. 11 of book)

Icebreaker: Share a verse or thought from God’s Word that encouraged or challenged you this week.

Discussion Questions:

1. Prov. 22:15. What is the problem in your children that requires the use of the rod? How would you describe in your own words the ‘foolishness bound up in their hearts”?
2. Prov. 22:15, Prov. 23:14, Prov. 29:15,17. What is the function of the rod?
3. Prov. 29: 17. Whom has God authorized to discipline children with the rod?
4. Review the common objections to the rod. Have any of these been your objections?
5. What are several distortions of the rod? How have these influenced your thinking about the rod now or in the past?
6. Read Prov. 23:13-19. How would you describe the relationship between communication and the rod? Which method is easier for you?

Prayer question: What is one step you can take or change you can make based on today’s discussion? Pray for each other to have the courage, grace and wisdom to follow through on this!

A Great Answer on Youtube: John Piper – Would Jesus Spank?

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 7 – Critiquing Your Goals

(based on Ch. 5-6 of book)

Icebreaker: Share a verse or thought from God’s Word that encouraged or challenged you this week.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stuck out to you most in this session?
2. How do you define success in your parenting? How would your child complete this sentence? “What Mom and Dad want for me is\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?”
3. We are all affected and influenced by ‘unbiblical goals.’ Which of these unbiblical goals has the greatest negative impact on your parenting?
4. Read Ps. 73:25-26. How are your children seeing this in your life?
5. Are you honestly excited about this vision for life: Living for the glory of God? Does this idea drive, energize or connect with you in any deep way, or is it more like a bland religious idea?
6. How are you doing at shepherding your kids toward a life that is centered on God? How do your day to day family habits and way of doing things reinforce this goal?

Prayer question: What is one step you can take or change you can make based on today’s discussion? Pray for each other to have the courage, grace and wisdom to follow through on this!

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 8 – Keeping the Gospel Central

(new Material…)

Icebreaker: Share a verse or thought from God’s Word that encouraged or challenged you this week.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the particular conversations, questions or issues that you seem to be dealing with your kids, over and over again?
2. What are some scriptures that you could share with them, that would pertain to your answers to #1? (Use a concordance or biblegateway.com if you need to.)
3. Read Heb. 4:12. How will sharing God’s Word help you to address the heart issues involved here, rather than getting stuck in the cycle of only addressing behavior issues?
4. How could the moving toward the hope we have in Christ alone to overcome our sin be helpful in our conversations? (Read: Hebrews 2:14-18, Hebrews 2:10-11, 2 Peter 1:3-4)
5. Do you regularly pray with your kids after you have corrected or disciplined them? How often does this become a meaningless ritual? How can the advice in this video empower you to make such a prayer time more meaningful?
6. How often have you shared about God’s grace & goodness when you correct and discipline your kids? What will you do to improve in this?

Prayer question: What is one step you can take or change you can make based on today’s discussion? Pray for each other to have the courage, grace and wisdom to follow through on this!

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 9 – Playing Catch-Up

Icebreaker: Share an encouraging or challenging parenting story from the last week or so.

Discussion Questions:

1. How have you ever felt like you were ‘playing catch-up’ in trying to parent your kids in a way that honors God?
2. Read Ps. 34:18-19. How would an honest discussion with your kids outlining your past failures and new changes you plan to make in your parenting be important?
3. How well have you instructed your children in the having the following areas:
   1. Eph. 6:1-3 - The ‘circle of blessing’ & how correction/discipline helps bring them back into that circle.
   2. Prov. 4:23, Luke 6:43-45 - That their behavior is an overflow of the heart.
   3. 2 Cor. 4:16-18 - The spiritual, unseen reality in our world.
   4. Rom. 1:25 - The God-ward Orientation of our Hearts (you either worship God or you worship idols).
   5. Ps. 145:3 – The supreme glory and excellence of God.
   6. An age-appropriate basic understanding of the gospel (including creation, the Fall, redemption in Christ)?
4. What are some steps that you’ll need to take in order to help your kids grow in these or other important areas of Christian understanding?
5. Why do you think good communication with your kids is so important when making changes in your parenting? Which of the ideas presented on how to do this were most helpful to you?

Prayer question: What is one step you can take or change you can make based on today’s discussion? Pray for each other to have the courage, grace and wisdom to follow through on this!

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 10 – Age 0-5: Goals and Objectives

(Ch. 4 & 14 in book)

Icebreaker: Share an encouraging or challenging parenting story from the last week or so.

Discussion Questions:

1. Read Gen. 18:19, Eph. 6:1-3, Deut. 6:1-9. What do these scriptures say about your authority as a parent? How could you do a better job of establishing godly authority in your home?
2. What are the patterns of disobedience and disrespect you have tolerated at home?
3. Prov. 6:23. What are some things that you can to do keep your discipline focused on turning your children to the paths of life, rather being than an interpersonal contest?
4. Eph. 6:1-3, Ex. 20:12. Why is obedience the best thing for your child?
5. **How would you describe your job as God’s agent for discipline?** How will seeing yourself as God’s agent, change the way you discipline?
6. 1 Cor. 11:1. Are you a good model of submission to authorities? How does your example affect your kid’s ability to make an appeal to you?

Prayer question: What is one step you can take or change you can make based on today’s discussion? Pray for each other to have the courage, grace and wisdom to follow through on this!

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 11 – Age 0-5: Methods

(Ch. 15 in book)

Icebreaker: Share an encouraging or challenging parenting story from the last week or so.

Discussion Questions:

Read the following scriptures: Proverbs 13:24, 19:18, 22:15, 23:13-14, 29:15-17

1. How has it been hard for you to apply these verses in your own home? (Either recently or in the past.)
2. Which is easier for you, using the rod or communication with your children? How can you avoid imbalance in this matter?
3. What scriptural principles guide when & how we are to use the rod of correction?
4. What would you say to someone who said that spanking is an outmoded concept that robs children of their dignity?
5. Which of the most frequently asked questions did you resonate with personally?

* What if my child says, “I didn’t hear you?”
* Won’t I be spanking my kids all day long?
* What do I do if I am with people who don’t understand about spanking?
* What if it’s too late?

Prayer question: What is one step you can take or change you can make based on today’s discussion? Pray for each other to have the courage, grace and wisdom to follow through on this!

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

Proverbs 19:18 – *Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death.*

Proverbs 22:15 – *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 – *Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. 14 Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.*

Proverbs 29:15-17 – *The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to himself disgraces his mother. 16 When the wicked thrive, so does sin, but the righteous will see their downfall.  17 Discipline your son, and he will give you peace; he will bring delight to your soul.*

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 12 – Age 6-12: Goals & Objectives

(Ch. 16 in book)

Icebreaker: Share an encouraging or challenging parenting story from the last week or so.

Discussion Questions:

1. How would you articulate the difference between the goals of parenting children in the ages 0-5 and the ages 6-12 years?
2. What are the specific character objectives that you have been building into your school-aged children?
3. When was a time that you felt like this: “If I had been there I could have controlled my child, but I wasn’t there.”?
4. When was a time you kept your child away from an activity because you were afraid he would not be able to handle himself acceptably? What can you do to equip him to function well independently of your presence?
5. What are some questions you can come up with (or that you have used) that can help you understand your child better when considering these areas of relationship: your child in a relationship to God; to himself/herself; and to others?
6. How often do you sit down and analyze your children in terms of these three areas?

Prayer question: What is one step you can take or change you can make based on today’s discussion? Pray for each other to have the courage, grace and wisdom to follow through on this!

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 13 – Age 6-12: Methods

(Ch. 17 in book)

Icebreaker: Share an encouraging or challenging parenting story from the last week or so.

Discussion Questions:

1. Do you have any situations in which there is a significant character issue in your child’s development, but you are not sure what to do with it? How could
2. Have you ever accepted a child’s behavior, even though, you knew the child was not behaving from the heart? (i.e. Saying “I’m sorry” because you require it, not because they really are sorry…) How can you better deal with this hypocrisy in the future?
3. How would you described in your own words the difference between the "when," the "what" and the "why" of behavior? Which is the most significant?
4. Can you name five character-training objectives that you have for your son or daughter? What are they?
5. What is an example of a time when made an appeal to the conscience to your kids? Or when was a time when you could or should have made one?

Prayer question: What is one step you can take or change you can make based on today’s discussion? Pray for each other to have the courage, grace and wisdom to follow through on this!

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 14 – The Teen Years: Goals & Objectives

(Ch. 18 in book)

Icebreaker: Share an encouraging or challenging parenting story from the last week or so.

Discussion Questions (for parents with teens):

1. What is the main point or truth that stood out to you most in this session?
2. Prov. 1:10-19. Do you discern any rebellion that may be linked to earlier mistakes in your parenting? What can you do to open dis­cussion of those things?
3. Prov. 1:7. How have you helped your teen to internalize the gospel? How have you helped your teen to focus on the greatness and the glory of God?
4. Prov. 1:8-9. How are you currently providing parental instruc­tion for your teens? How are you leading your teens to grow in God’s Word?
5. How could sharing your personal experiences (both mistakes & victories) help your kids to learn to follow God?
6. What are some ways you can provide a home in which your teenager(s) would feel have a special sense of belonging, feel loved and accepted?

Prayer question: What is one step you can take or change you can make based on today’s discussion? Pray for each other to have the courage, grace and wisdom to follow through on this!

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 14 – The Teen Years: Goals & Objectives

(Ch. 18 in book) –

Icebreaker: Share an encouraging or challenging parenting story from the last week or so.

Discussion Questions (for parents with younger kids):

1. What is the main point or truth that stood out to you most in this session?
2. Prov. 1:10-19. How is your parenting with young kids preparing them to avoid rebellion and its consequences in the future?
3. Prov. 1:7. What are steps you can take now to help your kids have a right understanding of the gospel of Grace and the greatness and glory of God, so that they are on the right track by their teen years?
4. Prov. 1:8-9. How do (or will) you plan to provide parental instruc­tion for your teens? How do you forsee yourself leading your teens to grow in God’s Word?
5. How could sharing your personal experiences (both mistakes & victories) help your kids to learn to follow God?
6. What are some ways in which you could help your teenager(s) have a special sense of belonging and feel loved and accepted?

Prayer question: What is one step you can take or change you can make based on today’s discussion? Pray for each other to have the courage, grace and wisdom to follow through on this!

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 15 – The Teen Years: Goals & Objectives

(Ch. 19 in book)

Icebreaker: Share an encouraging or challenging parenting story from the last week or so.

Discussion Questions (for parents with younger kids):

1. If you found your relationship strained with one of your teens, what could you do to promote understanding and healing? What are there things for which you must repent and seek forgiveness?
2. Prov. 12:18. How have you experienced this with your children? Why would you see using gentle reproofs and pleasant speech to in­fluence your teens with insights drawn from the Scripture to be important?
3. Have you thought about having to shepherd your teenager through pe­riods of doubt and confusion about faith? What scares you about this possibility? How can you prepare now for it?
4. Prov. 1:8-9. What is the wisdom in finding “good times” for you to address things with a teen and avoid “bad times” to address things with a teen?
5. How have you been conscious to raise your children to leave? How does your vision for parenting blend into a relationship of mutuality with adult children?

Prayer question: What is one step you can take or change you can make based on today’s discussion? Pray for each other to have the courage, grace and wisdom to follow through on this!

Shepherding a Child’s Heart DVD Series

Session 15 – The Teen Years: Goals & Objectives

(Ch. 19 in book)

Icebreaker: Share an encouraging or challenging parenting story from the last week or so.

Discussion Questions (for parents with teens):

1. If you find your relationship strained with one of your teens, what can you do to promote understanding and healing? What are there things for which you must repent and seek forgiveness?
2. Prov. 12:18. How have you experienced this verse? How do or can you use gentle reproofs and pleasant speech to in­fluence your teens with insights drawn from the Scripture?
3. How have you learned to shepherd your teenager through pe­riods of doubt and confusion about faith? How well do you help them explore their questions and confusion?
4. Prov. 1:8-9. What are good times for you to address things with your teenager? When do you find openness and receptivity to in­teraction?
5. Are you consciously raising your children to leave? Does your vision for parenting your teens blend into a relationship of mutuality with adult children?

Prayer question: What is one step you can take or change you can make based on today’s discussion? Pray for each other to have the courage, grace and wisdom to follow through on this!