

the
GOSPEL-CENTERED
parent

STUDY GUIDE WITH LEADER'S NOTES | SERGE

ROSE MARIE MILLER + DEBORAH HARRELL + JACK KLUMPENHOWER

“*The Gospel-Centered Parent* is a resource to help you see your parenting in light of God’s good news! Practical yet theological, simple yet deeply biblical, this text will provide helpful perspective for many parents.”

Timothy Paul Jones, C. Edwin Gheens Professor of Christian Family Ministry at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; author of *Family Ministry Field Guide*

“*The Gospel-Centered Parent* is an invaluable gift to the church. This ten-week group study will give parents the hope and courage they need as they learn how to give the gospel to their children and to themselves. The weekly lessons are easy to read and applicable to everyday life. The questions at the end of each lesson are thought provoking and will be helpful in creating good discussions. But what I love the most about this study was that when I was finished I found myself more in love with Christ. The gospel is good news for every single part of our lives.”

Jessica Thompson, Coauthor of *Give Them Grace*

“*The Gospel-Centered Parent* small group study is the best small group resource I’ve seen for parents. It is much more than a parenting course; it is parent discipleship at its best. Buy this resource for your small group and watch worry and anxiety in the lives of your parents—trying to find the right parenting technique—be replaced with faith in God and a renewed trust in the life-transforming gospel.”

Marty Machowski, Family Life Pastor at Covenant Fellowship Church, Glen Mills, PA; author of *Long Story Short*, *Gospel Story for Kids* curriculum, and the upcoming *The Ology: Ancient Truths, Ever New*

“I so wish I had this book forty years ago, before I became a parent. Want (need) some fresh reflection on the implications of the gospel for how we love our kids to the glory of God? Start here. Practical without being pragmatic; thoughtful without being cliché; refreshingly honest and pregnant with hope. A parent as chief repenter and thirstiest person for grace in the family system? You betcha. Huge thanks, hugs, and kudos to Rose Marie Miller, Deborah Harrell, and Jack Klumpenhower for this extraordinary gift.”

Dr. Scotty Ward Smith, Author; Teacher in Residence at West End Community Church, Nashville

“It’s great to be a parent; but if you are one, it almost goes without saying that you’re frustrated sometimes, confused sometimes, and fearful sometimes. Maybe even more than ‘sometimes.’ You’re going to love this study. And, also, if you’re a parent, the last thing you need is another guilt-producing book or study guide that will tell you how to do it right. You just don’t need more frustration, confusion, and fear. What you need is Jesus and the gospel. Rose Marie, Debbie Harrell, and Jack Klumpenhower have given a major gift to parents and to the church. Use this guide, rejoice in its truth, then lighten up and take your kids for ice cream.”

Steve Brown, Key Life radio broadcaster; author of *Three Free Sins: God Isn’t Mad at You*

“What a liberating resource! Just reading the first paragraph will set you free. But don’t stop there. Every chapter is full of honest insights into how the gospel can change both you and the way you parent.”

Charles Morris, Speaker and President of the nationwide radio broadcast *Haven Today*

“If I’m honest, too often my parenting has a ‘build-a-better-Pharisee’ feel to it—I’m sadly content to aim for external behavioral conformity and end up missing the heart. *The Gospel-Centered Parent* provides a much-needed antidote to this short-sighted approach. It provides thought-provoking, practical, biblically faithful instruction for parents who yearn to model a lifestyle of faith and repentance before their children. It has proved immediately beneficial in my own parenting.”

Michael R. Emlet, MDiv, MD, Faculty member and counselor at CCEF; author of *CrossTalk: Where Life and Scripture Meet*.

“Having stumbled along through the joy and the mess of parenting for almost eighteen years, it has become clear to us that one thing is needed for this magnificent calling: deep roots in the gospel. We need a grace that gives us permission to fail, and to own where we have failed with our own children. Sometimes the parent who says to a child, ‘I’m sorry, will you forgive me?’ is parenting better and more beautifully than the parent who makes few if any mistakes. But we also need a grace that calls us to something more, to press in with our kids with a generosity, love, and vision that calls them to be and become the very best version of their unique selves. *The Gospel-Centered Parent* is an excellent resource for this endeavor.”

Scott Sauls, Senior Pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church, Nashville, TN; author of *Jesus Outside the Lines: A Way Forward for Those Who Are Tired of Taking Sides*

“It was our privilege to live in community with Jack and Rose Marie as the Lord was teaching us all about being immersed in the gospel and letting go of the illusion of being ‘perfect parents.’ We had a front-row seat as Jack and Rose Marie modeled the humility of parents who were becoming transparent, sharing their weaknesses and inadequacies while being bold in prayer and faith that Jesus was ALL that they needed. We shared a rocky but beautiful journey and saw God’s strength in their weakness. We are indebted to them, and trust that as you go through this study you will be able to let go of your desire to control your children and grow in your desire to run to your Father for forgiveness and grace.”

Dick and Liz Kaufmann, Founding Pastor of New Life Presbyterian Church, Escondido, and Harbor, a church planning network in San Diego, CA; former Executive Pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church NYC

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Rose Marie Miller, Deborah Harrell
and Jack Klumpenhower

Study Guide with Leader's Notes



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ABOUT THIS STUDY

The Gospel-Centered Parent is different from many other studies for parents. Instead of focusing on how to perform better as a parent, this study is about being a parent who lives and acts out of faith in God. Faith makes a huge difference in how we raise our children. Living by faith is not about technique. It's about trusting in Jesus, not in ourselves, and depending on him for help, hope, direction, and wisdom as we parent. As we trust in Jesus, not in our parenting techniques, we are able to rest from the pressure and anxiety we naturally feel as we raise our children.

Because it helps to practice faith with others who are learning it too, *The Gospel-Centered Parent* is meant to be studied in a group. That way, you'll learn from the insights and experiences of others and receive encouragement. The group is a place for discussion and open sharing about not only successes, but also sins and weaknesses. We, the authors of this study, will also share our own family problems and a few stories of others (with details occasionally changed to protect their identities).

Expect the usual struggles that come with a group. Some people will be cheery; some will be weary; some will be confused; and some will be sad. Some will share and others may not feel comfortable sharing. But because you'll be studying the Bible and praying together, also expect God's Spirit to work and to change people—starting with you! That's right, *The Gospel-Centered Parent* is not just about change in your children; it's mostly about gospel growth in you, the parent.

Each lesson takes a little more than an hour to complete in a group and will include these elements:

Bible Conversation. You'll start by talking about a short passage or a few verses from the Bible. It will get the group thinking and learning about the lesson's topic.

Article. The article will present the lesson’s main teaching. Most articles include both Bible teaching and personal stories or reflections from one of this study’s authors. We ask you to read the article aloud as a group so that you all hear the same material that you can then discuss together.

Discussion. You’ll share your thoughts on the article and how it applies to your own parenting.

Exercise. The exercise is like an extended discussion question. It will help you take what you’ve learned and consider how it matters in your family.

Wrap-Up and Prayer. Every lesson ends with prayer. Prayer is one of the chief ways to practice faith. Rather than finish by resolving on your own to be a better mom or dad, you’ll end by asking *your* loving Father to help your family and your parenting. As a parent, you have no greater resource than prayer.

In the back of the study is the **Conclusion**, a resource for you to use as you discover and apply the gospel to your parenting (adapted by Jack Klumpenhouwer from his book *Show Them Jesus*, New Growth Press, 2014). The **Leader’s Notes** at the end of the book give direction to the group’s leader(s) and sample answers for the discussion questions. Everyone can read the answers of course, but you will find it most helpful to grapple with the questions on your own before turning to the back of the book.

Obviously, *The Gospel-Centered Parent* is about the gospel—the good news of Jesus Christ. You don’t have to be a believer in Jesus to join the group and start learning, but it will help if you have a basic understanding of the gospel. Even if you think you already have a good sense of what it means to be “gospel-centered,” you’ll likely find it helpful to read through the following parent-oriented gospel overview.

GOSPEL OVERVIEW

CREATION: GOD AND HUMANITY

The gospel is a wonderfully true story. The Bible tells us that this story began with God—the one Lord of all who exists as three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is infinitely powerful, glorious, good, and loving. He created the universe and everything in it to show and to share that glory.

God especially created men and women “in his own image” (Genesis 1:27). We were made to love as he loves, to practice holiness, wisdom, and truthfulness, and to help care for the rest of his world while we trust, worship, and enjoy our Creator. This gives us meaning and honor.

SIN: REBELLION AND DECAY

But humanity rejected God and his goodness. It all started with the first family, Adam and Eve, who decided they knew better than God how to run their own lives. When they refused to love, obey, and trust God, their relationship with God and others was broken. The world was plunged into rebellion and decay. The Bible calls this *sin*, and all of us are sinners (Romans 3:23). Even if we think we’re pretty good compared to some people, we’re still naturally inclined to put ourselves first rather than loving God and others. Even if you don’t notice this so much in yourself, we can all see it on display in our children. We’ve lost our good purpose in God’s world, to our shame.

Sin is now part of *who we are*, not just what we do. Having turned from God, selfishness and lack of love are engrained in our hearts. We are also unsatisfied, trying to find meaning and honor in poor substitutes that only pull us further from the true Lover of our souls. We end up putting our reputations, comforts, accomplishments, or even our children

at the center of our lives. The Bible calls this idol worship, and the sad result is not happiness or fulfillment. Instead we end up enslaved to the very things we thought would make us happy and fulfilled.

Sin also means we are guilty before God. God made us and our world with a hard and fast rule: sin brings death. Romans 6:23 tells us, “The wages of sin is death.” We are all sinners (we don’t love God and people with our whole hearts, souls, and minds), so we all deserve death and separation from God forever. However, the second half of that verse turns everything around. It says, “But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” This is where the good news—the gospel—kicks in.

JESUS: LOVING REDEMPTION

From the time of the very first sin on earth, God showed grace. He promised that he would not abandon those who put their faith in him, but would send a Savior to defeat sin and rescue them from death. That Savior is Jesus, God the Son, who is also called Christ (meaning God’s anointed, appointed one).

In love the Father sent the Son to be born as a human—one of us! So Jesus is both God and fully a man, but with one amazing difference: he has never sinned. His whole life, he loved God and people perfectly, making him the only person in the history of the world who never disobeyed God and did not deserve punishment and death.

There are many great things Jesus did, but the chief one is this: Jesus took the punishment for sin that we deserve, in our place, and instead gives us credit for all his righteousness. Because he didn’t have to die for his own sins (he had none!), he was able to suffer and die on the cross as our substitute. And as the holy and eternal God, he was a sacrifice of infinite value, able to save completely everyone who has faith in him (Hebrews 7:25). Nothing demonstrates God’s glory and love more than this.

VICTORY: THE WORLD RESTORED

Jesus's resurrection proves that God accepts Jesus's sacrifice for his people and has given him victory over sin, death, and every evil. Jesus has returned to heaven to reign with the Father, and now his kingdom is expanding. We, his saved people, are freed to join in the work! We spread the good news about Jesus and show his compassion everywhere—beginning now, in his name and with his help, to bring healing to the world.

One day Jesus will come again to make all things new (Revelation 21:5). He will judge sin and cast out evil. He will end oppression. He will stop decay and death. The gospel isn't just about us being saved for our own sake; it's about Jesus bringing his whole creation back to glory. He will put right all that is wrong in the world and he will raise his people from the dead and bring us into glory with him, completing our rescue from sin and restoring us to God and each other in perfect relationships.

FAITH: DEPENDING ON JESUS

How do we become one of Jesus's people and share in all of this? It happens *by faith*. We accept the truth that Jesus is the Son of God our Savior, so we turn away from all our worthless and selfish pursuits (the Bible calls this *repentance*) and we pursue him instead. We also stop trusting ourselves and start trusting Jesus (the Bible calls this *faith*). For religious-minded people who may be trying to earn God's approval by being good, this means giving up any thought of being good enough to earn a place with Jesus.

That's right. Contrary to what many people think, being good doesn't save anyone from sin and death. We're saved by faith in Jesus—the only perfectly good person there is.

It's the Holy Spirit who opens our sin-wrecked hearts to believe this gospel and gives us faith, so everything about being saved is from God, not from us (Ephesians 2:8–9). The blessings God gives when we're

joined to Jesus by faith are astounding. They radically change how we live, including our parenting. Consider four of the major blessings:

1. We are declared “not guilty” and perfectly right. Although we deserve punishment for sin, Jesus has already taken all that punishment. “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24). Our condemnation and shame has fallen on him, too. In its place, we get credit for his righteous living. This is “the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe” (Romans 3:22). So in the eyes of God the Judge we are both innocent and righteous forever, because we belong to the Innocent One.

Since we are declared not guilty, gospel-centered parenting means . . .

- We let go of the pressure of trying to prove ourselves through good parenting and right kids. We’re free simply to love our children because our worth comes from Jesus, not them.
- We are humble, openly admitting our sins, deeply aware that we too are big sinners (just like our children) and are righteous only because of Jesus.

2. We are made children of God. “So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God” (Galatians 4:7). Our adoption by God gives us all the privileges any child has. Our Father loves us. He takes care of us. He listens to our prayers. He trains and disciplines us. He shares everything he has with us, and intends for us to be his forever.

Because we are God’s children, gospel-centered parenting means . . .

- We aren’t consumed with building our family’s reputation or image, but instead find joy in being part of God’s family.
- We are dependent and child-like parents, praying often as we trust our own heavenly Father for every family need.

3. We become loving people. God doesn’t just leave us miserable and sinful; he begins transforming us. The Holy Spirit empowers and trains us to love God and others from the heart—to be like Jesus. In this life we taste only the beginnings of this triumph over self-centeredness and

sinful desires, and at times our progress may seem frustratingly slow, but the fight is on! We are being changed “from one degree of glory to another” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Because we are growing to be like Jesus, gospel-centered parenting means . . .

- We are confident and patient with our children, even when they persist in disobeying. We keep teaching them God’s ways and humbly showing them his love.
- We use the Spirit’s tools with our children—prayer, the Word of God, and the gospel message—rather than our own wisdom or nagging.

4. We are given eternal life. Jesus’s resurrection means we have new life too. Even though our lives in this world include suffering and death, we have the promise of resurrection and a future inheritance kept in heaven for us. We will have a share in Christ’s restoration of all things. Best of all, “we will always be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

Since we have eternal life, gospel-centered parenting means . . .

- We don’t live for our children’s success or worldly happiness, and we teach them not to live for it either. Our hope is in Jesus.
- We are not undone by suffering or family disappointments. We know these will not last.

This is the gospel story. It’s all about Jesus but, as you can see, we become part of it through our faith in him. Faith and repentance are ongoing; the constant core of a gospel-centered parent’s life. This can be challenging but it is also thrilling. It’s a way of life that changes everything—because Jesus changes everything.

lesson

1

TRUSTING GOD TO BUILD YOUR FAMILY

BIG IDEA

The core of a gospel-centered parent is *faith in God*. All we do flows from this. It's all too easy to view our parenting as work we must properly carry out and to see our children's character, abilities, appearance, success in school, faithfulness to Jesus—and so much else—as verdicts on our performance. But the truth is that God builds the house. Nothing we do as parents is more important than that we be humbled; that we turn our trust away from ourselves and to our Lord who blesses his families. Then with God's help we become able to resist worry, fear, anger, control, blame—and every other parent-sin that keeps us up at night.

BIBLE CONVERSATION *15 minutes*

In Psalm 127, Solomon writes about safety and prosperity for a household and its community. The psalm deals with a question we often ask ourselves: *will my family be all right?* **Read all of Psalm 127.** (Have someone in the group read the psalm aloud.)

(1) Even in tasks like bricklaying and keeping watch, where the skill and diligence of the worker would seem critical, what is the true source of a family's success?

(2) Long ago, a theologian summarized Psalm 127 by writing, “The order of the home and its success are maintained solely by the blessing of God—not by the policy, diligence and wisdom of men.”¹ What besides God are you most tempted to trust for your family’s success? Is it your *policies*, your *diligence*, or your *wisdom*? Share an example.

(3) Starting from the descriptions in verse 2, how might the temperament of a parent who trusts God differ from a must-do-it-myself parent?

(4) Having many children might seem only to multiply a parent’s frustrations. Why do you think Solomon can instead call many children a blessing? How might the frustrations that come with even one child be more manageable when we trust that “the LORD builds the house”?

We seldom find it easy or “natural” to be parents who trust God to build the house. In the following article, Rose Marie tells how God increased her parenting faith, and what a difference it made in her family. (Take turns reading the article aloud, switching readers at the paragraph breaks.)

¹ John Calvin, *Commentary on Psalms*, trans. James Anderson. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/calcom12.xi.html>.

lesson

1

ARTICLE

UNLESS THE LORD BUILDS THE HOUSE

10 minutes

Even though it was many years ago, I clearly remember the first time I really heard Psalm 127. We had just moved from California for my husband to go to seminary, and I was sitting in the back row of a church in Philadelphia. Our three young children were with me as I tried to listen to the sermon (that's how we did it back in the day!), and I was trying to keep them quiet with snacks, books, and crayons. Usually I had a hard time concentrating, but that Sunday I heard every word.

The pastor read to us, “Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain” (Psalm 127:1). He said that one way God is building his kingdom is through families that love Jesus, and parents are called by God to participate with him in this great work. As I sat there with my children climbing all over me, I felt as if I had received a personal commission from God. My family was to be part of God's kingdom! Despite all of the weariness that came with caring for little ones, I felt that I had a clear purpose in life.

Soon we had not just three children, but five, and we did work hard at building them into godly, respectful Christians. We taught them Bible stories, memorized Scripture and catechism questions, sang hymns (completely off key!), and sent them to Christian schools. But somehow, in the midst of all of these good things, we lost sight of who was doing the building. Instead of participating with God in his work, it

became all our work. We also left out the gospel—the good news that Jesus came to die for sinners.

How could that be when from Genesis to Revelation we read about the good news of God’s faithfulness to rescue his people from sin and death and change sinners into eternal worshipers? Yet, somehow in the busyness of training our children to learn good manners, behave in public, do well in school, and be obedient to us, we forgot the grand message that we are all broken by sin and need to go to Jesus, our Savior, for forgiveness and help every day. We forgot to live by faith in front of our children.

What is faith? Simply put, it’s trusting in the work of another. Psalm 127 tells us to trust the work of God to build our family. We believed that, but we didn’t go far enough. We didn’t see that trusting in the work of God had to be applied to our life together as broken sinners. We didn’t share with our children that we need to daily turn to Christ by faith for forgiveness and that they could do the same. We forgot to share the good news that you don’t have to save yourself or defeat death. All of that is provided by the work of Jesus on the cross for us. Our part is receiving it by faith.

Psalm 127 tells us what happens when we don’t live by faith. We eat “the bread of anxious toil” (v. 2) and all we do turns out to be “in vain.” We all respond differently when children struggle, but the general themes are the same—we become anxious, afraid, angry, controlling, and/or give up in despair. Often those struggles are accompanied by overwhelming fear.

If we think it is all up to us, then we do have much to fear. I talk with parents from all over the world who share their fears with me. How will their children turn out? Who will keep them safe? Will they make a bad choice that destroys their life? I understand why they are afraid. We look at our inadequacies as parents, the influence of the culture, and our children’s struggles and somehow we think we have to come up with a plan to save them.

This was certainly true in our family. We worked hard to get our children to obey outwardly, but we never thought to talk about what was going on in their hearts. Unintentionally we taught them a works-oriented religion. This wasn't our theology (we certainly knew better), but it was our daily practice. And for a while it seemed like it was working. Our children were well behaved, knew the Bible, and could craft a great public prayer.

But hearts that are not changed are eventually revealed. The first inkling I had that all of our efforts to build our family into God's house were not going as I planned was when our eighteen-year-old daughter Barbara angrily left home and faith.² I was filled with fear and questions about how God could have let this happen. I didn't realize it at the time, but Barbara and I were very much alike (although I was much better behaved!). Her lack of faith exposed my own lack of faith. I felt the weight of failure. All my hard work had turned out to be "in vain," and I blamed God and others for the unexpectedly poor result of all of my work in my daughter's life.

But despite my anger and fear, God was still at work. Right at the point where I felt my failure most keenly, God did his work, his way. Of course he started not with our daughter, but with my husband and me. His work in us began with a total teardown! We had to see that our plans, abilities, gifts, education, and desires were not the building blocks of faith. Pride, arrogance, and presumption lay deeply rooted in my heart, and were only dealt with by going to the cross. I knew the facts of the gospel, but not the person at the center. Jesus builds his kingdom with the poor and needy; not with good people or good children, but with those who know they need a Savior.

In our weakness, as we learned that our only hope for ourselves and our children was the work of Jesus, God did his work of building faith in us. Psalm 127 ends with a promise that our children are a gift from God and that he will use them in his kingdom (vv. 3–5). Many years

² For the full story, see *Come Back, Barbara* (P&R, 1997), the book that Rose Marie's husband, C. John Miller, and their daughter Barbara Miller Juliani coauthored.

ago I had glimpsed that truth, but I had to learn that my part in it was moment-by-moment faith. That's how I learned to trust Jesus, the builder of everything (Hebrews 3:3–4), to build my family into his kingdom. His work is still going on—in me, in my children, my grandchildren, and my great-grandchildren. God is using all of us. But not out of *our* strength, only out of our reliance on *his* strength. My prayer for you, as you go through this study, is that you will learn to put all of your trust in Jesus, the builder of everything, and will learn to rely on him daily as you go about the hard work of caring for your children and sharing with them the good news that Jesus has paid it all.

DISCUSSION *15 minutes*

(5) What parts of Rose Marie's early parenting sound familiar when you think of your own family?

(6) How might your parenting be different if you trusted more in God to build your house? What might you *do* (or stop doing) to practice faith in him?

(7) Why is it so important for parents to deeply believe (not just know as a point of doctrine) that they are completely forgiven in Jesus?

lesson

1

EXERCISE

AM I A GOSPEL-CENTERED PARENT?

20 minutes

Let's think about the difference between parents who are focused first on themselves or their children and parents who are gospel-centered. Gospel-centered parents focus first on God. They know that they too are children. They have a heavenly Father who loves them and builds their families.

The following chart shows several ways this difference might play out in our lives as parents. Read the descriptions and pick one or two areas where you particularly want to grow to be a more gospel-centered parent. Share these with the group. (If an item doesn't fit you perfectly, share the part that *does* fit.) Try to give an example from your parenting of your need to grow in that area.

Self/Child-Centered Parents	Gospel-Centered Parents
<p>Live with anxiety over their children’s faith, safety, education, future, or other concerns.</p>	<p>Live with faith that God controls the future. Strive more to be faithful to him while worrying less about where that might lead.</p>
<p>Feel pressure to do parenting correctly and win approval from their spouse, family, other parents, or God. Often compare their family to other families.</p>	<p>Know they already enjoy the favor of God through Jesus who died for them, so are free to parent in love, not out of pressure to impress.</p>
<p>May get angry when children fail to meet behavior or achievement expectations. Blame their children, spouse, or others.</p>	<p>Are humble, knowing how much they too need God’s help and forgiveness—making them able to teach, encourage, and warn their children patiently.</p>
<p>Seldom pray, preferring to focus on fixing problems by themselves.</p>	<p>Pray constantly about both big and little family concerns, trusting their Father to help.</p>
<p>Seldom admit their sins, preferring to be a voice of authority and virtue to their children.</p>	<p>Often admit their sins and their need for a Savior, allowing them to effectively point their children to Jesus as well.</p>
<p>Are controlling toward their children, either overbearing or manipulative, feeling a need to make sure everything goes right.</p>	<p>Trust that God is in control and is the wiser Father. Are chiefly concerned with guiding their children toward him.</p>
<p>May withdraw from their children, especially when problems or spiritual matters arise, out of fear they’ll fail or be exposed as flawed parents.</p>	<p>Are confident that their Father will use even their flaws and failures for good, so prayerfully engage even the most difficult family problems.</p>
<p>May be resentful toward God or others when things don’t go as they want or when their children disappoint them.</p>	<p>Learn surrender, comfort, and forgiveness from their Father who has forgiven them.</p>

Self/Child-Centered Parents	Gospel-Centered Parents
Set aside all else to pursue academic, athletic, or other dreams for their children—and may be devastated by setbacks.	Believe and teach their children that God loves them and works all things for their good, even amid disappointments and suffering.
Feel content only when their children are happy, achieving, and faithful.	Find satisfaction in God alone , letting them care for their children rather than worship family success.
Add your own self/child-centered behavior: _____ _____ _____ _____	Add your own gospel-centered behavior: _____ _____ _____ _____

WRAP-UP AND PRAYER *10 minutes*

Sometimes an exercise like the one we just completed only makes us feel guilty. Resist this by remembering that *the Lord builds the house*. Your Father knows you are weak and sinful. He loves you anyway, and gives his Spirit to help you. *He* is the one who grants blessings to your family—and faith to you! The descriptions of a gospel-centered parent can encourage you even if you don't yet live up to them very well, because with God's help they are possible.

The coming lessons will explore many of these themes further. For right now, let's begin to practice faith-filled parenting by praying together for our families. Include prayers that God would make you into a gospel-centered parent.