

# SESSION 6: **THE OTHER RELATIONSHIPS**

## ► **GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE**

We created this guide to help you discuss Jim's content in a group setting. Discussion is a great way to personalize his material for your parenting. To help you get the most out of this guide, here are a few tips to keep in mind.

### **FOR THE FACILITATOR/LEADER:**

**BE PREPARED.** As the discussion facilitator, you should spend a few moments preparing for your group's time together. Use this time to read the chapter(s) in the book, watch the video, think through the principles, and read the discussion questions. Consider using the following schedule (for a 60-minute session). Take more time if you have some to spare.

- Hang out and reconnect—or eat a meal together!  
15-20 minutes
- Watch the video.  
5-10 minutes
- Discuss as a group.  
15-30 minutes

**BE CHOOSY.** We've provided a lot of questions—probably too many for your group to discuss in one meeting. The questions ought to be a launchpad for conversation, so pick the questions that best fit your group. Don't feel any pressure to "get through" all of them; the goal for your time together is not to answer every question. If you come up with your own questions, that's great too!

### **FOR EVERYONE IN THE GROUP:**

**BE RISKY.** The best discussions are open and honest, and sometimes this means taking a risk by sharing something personal. Even though this isn't easy, it's a good thing! Authenticity is always the best teacher.

**BE SAFE.** If a group isn't safe, no one will take a risk and share something personal. Safe groups are accepting of others even when there is disagreement. Safe groups also don't try to fix one another. Most of the time, a person is not looking for a solution; they just need their feelings validated.

**Finally, confidentiality is essential. What's shared in the group stays in the group!**

**BE CONSISTENT.** Make a commitment to meet every week. Life is busy for everyone, but making a weekly meeting a priority will have the greatest impact.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## PRINCIPLE EIGHT: WEAR BEIGE AND KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT.

- What is implied by Jim's principle about wearing beige and keeping your mouth shut?
- From blockbuster films to angsty conversations between close friends, the words "in-laws" and "stepfamilies" certainly carry a lot of baggage. Why do you suppose this is?
- When you extend grace to your son and/or daughter-in-law and family, how will it likely influence your relationship with your own adult child?
- "Protect your family and do the right thing." How does this statement work in a practical way with your family?
- There is no rule that says you must like your adult child's new partner or family, but it makes sense to be as honorable as you possibly can to them. What are some ways you can show honor—even with difficult people?

### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FROM THE BOOK

When it comes to in-laws and stepfamilies, do you agree or disagree with the principle "Wear beige and keep your mouth shut"? Share the reasons for your response.

When you were younger or first married, were you ever on the receiving end of criticism from an in-law? If so, what insights might that experience provide to keep you from criticizing your inlaws now?

Share an illustration of how you or someone you know violated the principle, "Don't make your child choose between you and their new family." What happened as a result? In what subtle or not-so-subtle ways might you have pressured your child to make this choice? How might you guard against doing this?

What unique relational pressures do you experience with your adult children around the holidays or on special occasions? What can you do, or have you done, to navigate family times well?

What was the best guidance for you in this chapter? Share the reasons for your response.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

## PRINCIPLE NINE: BEING A GRANDPARENT MAY BE YOUR GREATEST LEGACY

- What does it personally mean for you to leave a legacy for your grandchildren?
- In order to maintain a close relationship with your grandkids, living in close proximity isn't a requirement. How can you use technology to stay connected?
- If you live close, are you willing to be the "chief babysitter"? Why or why not?
- How might you be reinventing your relationship with your own kids when you become a grandparent?
- If you are already a grandparent, do you find it difficult to keep your mouth shut and to follow the rules set by your adult children? Which rules (or lack of rules) bother you most?
- What does it mean for you to be a "fully-engaged grandparent"?

### ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FROM THE BOOK

What do you like best about being a grandparent? If you are not yet a grandparent, what do you most look forward to about being a grandparent?

Looking back, how would you describe the influence your grandparents had on you? Was the influence direct or indirect? Positive or negative? In what ways does your experience (or lack of experience) with your grandparents shape the influence you hope to have in the lives of your grandchildren? What kind of a legacy would you like to leave them?

What family traditions do you most want to celebrate with your children and grandchildren from year to year? What do you hope they remember most about you because of these traditions?

In what practical ways might you support your adult children in their role as parents?

When you have breathed your last breath, how would you like to be remembered by your grandchildren?

# SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING

This section is for those who would like to think about the content from a Christian point of view.

*"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves" (Philippians 2:3 NIV).*

- How could this Scripture be an important building block to a relationship with someone you don't necessarily like?

*"Outdo one another in showing honor" (Romans 12:10 RSV).*

- How can you show honor when people are not honorable to you?

*"Good people leave an inheritance to their grandchildren" (Psalm 13:22 NLT).*

- This could refer to material wealth, which is great... but what kind of inheritance—what kind of legacy—lasts forever? Knowing you have a God-honoring legacy to leave, how might this affect the conversations and relationship you have with your grandkids?

*"Children's children are a crown to the aged . . ." (Proverbs 17:6 NIV).*

- You may not be feeling "aged," but how can your grandchildren be your crown?