

SESSION 4: **DIFFERING VALUES**

► **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 SIX: YOU CAN'T WANT IT MORE THAN THEY WANT IT.

- What are some examples of you “wanting it” more than your adult child wants it?
- If you have differing values than your adult child, what are some key differences?
- Do your children’s current values ever make you second-guess your parenting style?
- What would you say is the basis for your values? Where does your adult child get their values?
- Do you feel somehow responsible for the decisions your adult children are making, whether good or bad? How so? How do you feel about this statement: “Even good parents have children who make poor choices?”
- Tough love is a discipline and strongly expressed boundary that promotes responsible behavior and long-term change. Some people confuse tough love with meanness. What do you think is the difference between “being mean” and building healthy boundaries?
- There’s a saying: “When your kids are young, they look like their parents. When they are old, they look like their decisions.” Do you agree? Why or why not?
- When your adult child violates your values in “cringe factor” ways, what can you do to get the help you need to be loving but firm with your values?
- Give examples of how to relate to your adult child(ren) without being a “one topic parent.”
- What are your thoughts on “keeping the mat out”? Does this come easy or hard for you? Be honest.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FROM THE BOOK

We tend to think that good parents have children who become responsible adults. How do you respond to the statement, “Even good parents have children who make poor choices?” When it comes to how young adult children lead their lives, do you believe that parents have a lot of influence, little influence, or somewhere in between? Share the reasons for your response.

How would you describe “tough love” in a positive, helpful way? Share any examples of how you have shown tough love to your child. What kept your actions from being simply mean or punishing?

When an adult child has violated your values and your heart is breaking, what are practical ways not to become a one-topic parent?

If you had a good friend whose adult child had strayed from their values, how might you counsel them? What encouragement might you offer to give them hope? What steps might you encourage them to take?

Joni’s story demonstrates the power of both the attitude and perspective we adopt on our hardships. How would you describe your attitude and your perspective right now on any poor choices your children have made? What might it mean for you to “take a victory” any way you can?

SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING

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

"Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it" (Proverbs 22:6 NLT).

- Does every adult child who has strayed always come back around? Even though the answer is no, this Biblical principle still rings true. How can this Proverb with a promise be a comfort to you?

"Stand firm, and you will win life" (Luke 21:19 NIV).

- This verse challenges people to stand firm. Sometimes we need to practice perseverance and endurance with our adult children. How can you apply this Scripture to your relationship with your adult child right now? What is challenging your perseverance?

"Who, then, are those who fear the LORD? He will instruct them in the ways they should choose. They will spend their days in prosperity, and their descendants will inherit the land" (Psalm 25:12-13).

- God promises to instruct us when we choose to respect (fear) him. Following God's ways leads to blessing, and yet far too many adult children have strayed. Given what you know about your adult child's attitude toward God, what do you believe he is "instructing you to do?"