

SESSION 3: **FROM LINGER TO LAUNCH**

▶ **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 FOUR: THEY WILL NEVER KNOW HOW FAR THE TOWN IS IF YOU CARRY THEM ON YOUR BACK.

- In the story about Sean, his mom said, “Sean has a problem!” What do you think about her statement? Do you think Jim was correct in saying that perhaps the bigger problem was the parents—the way they enabled Sean to live like he was living in the home?
- Is there anything you might be doing for your adult children that they are capable of doing themselves?
- Who do you think is currently more invested in making sure your child embraces adulthood—you or your child?
- One of the principles for helping your adult child become a responsible adult is *setting clear expectations*. You will want to begin with a goal in mind and set deadlines for progress. How would you describe the goal you have for your adult child? What deadlines would you like to set?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FROM THE BOOK

Many experts consider this generation of young adults to be more entitled than previous generations. Do you agree with this perspective? Why or why not?

What boundaries have been difficult for you to negotiate with your adult child?

The sidebar, “Nuggets of Wisdom about Setting Boundaries,” lists four statements that are helpful to remember. Which of these statements do you find most helpful? Why?

- “You earned it.”
- “You can choose the pain of self-discipline or the pain of regret.”
- You can’t want it more than they want it.
- When the pain of remaining the same is greater than the pain of changing, they will change.

Overall, would you say that clearly communicating expectations to your adult child is something you are comfortable doing or uncomfortable doing? Share the reasons for your response.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

PRINCIPLE FIVE: MOVE THEM FROM DEPENDENCE TO INDEPENDENCE.

- Because letting go can be difficult, many parents hang on too long. Though their kids do eventually exert independence, it's often in defiance. What steps can you take today to let go sooner rather than later, in order to prevent a strained relationship down the road?
- What decisions are you still making for your children? How is this an example of failing to "land the helicopter"?
- Early adulthood is packed with milestones: college graduation, marriage, birth of a baby, etc. How does your family celebrate these rites of passage? Is there anything you can do to enhance the idea of celebrating such milestones?
- Many parents, when asked what they want for their kids, say, "I want them to be happy." How might the goal of happiness delay maturity?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FROM THE BOOK

In what ways have your children experienced a failure to launch? What do you wish you had done differently?

To what degree do you relate to the description of a helicopter parent? When might you have hovered or been overprotective of your children?

What makes "landing the helicopter" difficult for some parents? What are ways to land the helicopter and move your adult child toward independence?

"Change always involves a sense of loss," wrote C. S. Lewis. What losses might you need to sustain to move your relationship with your adult child in a positive direction?

What came to mind when you read about celebrating rites of passage? Did your family celebrate your rites of passage as you entered adulthood? How? What rites of passage might you celebrate in your adult child's life?

SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING

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

"Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18).

- Working with your adult child to develop an action plan and road map toward responsible adulthood is a wise and good thing to do. How might you help them create a compelling vision?

"Is not wisdom found among the aged? Does not long life bring understanding?" (Job 12:12 NIV).

- Experience is almost always a better teacher than advice. This is true for both positive and negative experiences. Share a personal story of how experiences have shaped your own young adult years. Is there anything your adult child is going through right now that will end up being a good experience for them even if it's difficult right now?

"Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are children born in one's youth" (Psalm 127:4).

- Arrows are released with a target in view—an endgame in sight. As you think about helping your adult child move from dependence on you toward independence, do you believe you are helping them aim in the right direction? Do you think they feel launched by you in a healthy way?

"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Matthew 19:5).

- How is this concept—the need to leave their father and mother—critical to becoming a responsible adult?