

SESSION 7: **NOW WHAT?**

▶ **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

- How has this group time been helpful to you personally?
- What are key takeaway points from this time together?
- For the 9 principles of *Doing Life with Your Adult Child*, which one was most challenging?

Principle One: Your Role as Their Parent Must Change

Principle Two: Unsolicited Advice Is Usually Taken as Criticism

Principle Three: You Can't Ignore Your Child's Culture

Principle Four: They Will Never Know How Far the Town Is If You Carry Them on Your Back

Principle Five: Move Them from Dependence to Independence

Principle Six: You Can't Want It More Than They Want It

Principle Seven: Financial Independence and Responsibility is the Goal

Principle Eight: Wear Beige and Keep Your Mouth Shut

Principle Nine: Being a Grandparent May Be Your Greatest Legacy

- In the afterword of the book, *Doing Life with Your Adult Children*, Jim mentions four suggestions for every parent of an adult child:

Develop a well-thought-out plan.

Parent in community, not on an island.

Practice the principles in this book, but realize life is messy.

Trust that God is on your side.

- Though it doesn't always feel like it, your love toward your adult children is seen and appreciated. Describe a time when you felt appreciated by your adult children. Whether it was a kind word or a special gift, how did they show their gratitude?
- Jim says the relationship you have with your adult child(ren) is not a sprint; it's a marathon—as is the case for everything worthwhile in life. How is this truth evident in your other relationships?

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.

SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING

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

“Be KIND and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, even as in Christ, God forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

- Kindness matters. Kindness in a relationship can melt relational walls. How can you show acts of kindness to your adult child?

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.” (Matthew 7:24-27)

- Apparently rain and storms come to all people at one time or another. How can building your relationship with your adult child on the rock keep it from crashing?

“Well done, good and faithful servant!” (Matthew 25:23)

- God sees your commitment to making your relationship with your adult child a healthy one—a relationship that operates out of abundance. Hear him say to you, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” How can these words be a comfort to you?