

INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK STARTED WITH A COMPLIMENT: “YOU ARE THE MOST intentional parent I know.”

We sat around a bright blue table at a crowded Mexican restaurant one evening, a group of friends who were all PTA moms. Our neighborhood elementary school had brought us together, and we forged friendships over many years based on common interests, namely our children.

My birthday was coming up, so each person at the table took turns paying a compliment to me, as was our tradition. It was nice; I felt affirmed. Who doesn't like compliments, right? Over chips and salsa, my friends built me up, yet in that moment I could never have known that Cheryl's words to me would be life changing: “You are the most intentional parent I know.”

Really? Me? The most intentional parent she knows? I glanced over my shoulder to see if someone was standing behind me. Surely she meant that compliment for someone whose children obeyed, had good table manners, and possibly brushed their teeth every now and then. What does that mean . . . *intentional*? And how did I, of all people, display intentionality?

She must not have very many friends, I thought.

I was most certainly *not* a perfect parent. I had lost my temper on more than one occasion. I got frustrated regularly. Some days were hard, really hard, and I spent most of my hours reacting to situations rather than proactively pouring spiritual truths into my kids.

The funny thing is that my dear friend Cheryl knows this about me. She knows my flaws and my weaknesses. She knows that I have never claimed to be a perfect parent. Just like her and all my other friends sitting around the table that night, I was just trying to make it to the “other side” of parenting, hopefully unscathed, and with my children still somewhat intact.

I was far from my ideal of what a perfect parent should be. I still am.

And yet . . . that compliment. It came from somewhere deeper. My friend knew my weaknesses and saw beyond them to what I was trying to instill in my kids. She saw something that I could not see: that my husband and I weren't trying to fulfill someone's cookie-cutter ideal of what constitutes a perfect family. She saw that we were looking to the future, or at least trying to. Cheryl saw that we were attempting to envision the kind of family we wanted to be, the kind of kids we wanted to have, and the kind of influence we could have on the world. And she saw that we were trying to make those visions become reality by God's grace.

Let me tell you something—it is *only* by God's grace that I am writing this book, because my early dreams did not include being a parent.

I was never the little girl who wanted to play house and have lots of babies around her. In fact, my childhood play involved making worksheets, lining up chairs, and standing in front of a classroom full of dolls and stuffed animals.

I always wanted to be a teacher. I never wanted to be a mom.

It's not that I didn't *want* to be a mom; I just never *thought* about it. Even when we married, my husband, Brian, and I said, "Oh sure, we'll get around to having kids one day. We're supposed to do that, right?" But first we had other plans: grad school, jobs, and backpacking through England.

We married young—we were both twenty-two—so for the first six years of our marriage, parenthood rarely crossed our minds. We'd talk sporadically about having kids someday, but for better or worse, being parents was not something we gave much thought to.

Until one day in 1991, after six or so years of marriage, when we suddenly realized it was time. Talk about being reactive! We just had an inkling, a thought that maybe having kids should be next on our to-do list, and we went for it. No planning. No forethought. Not a lot of intention.

Soon we were blessed with our first daughter, Kate; two years later we were blessed with Caroline, and four years after that, Julia.

Brian and I knew two things (and pretty much only two things) about

parenting in those early days. First, our role as parents was a sacred responsibility to nurture our children in the “discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4); our efforts couldn’t be left to chance. And second, we were grossly ill-equipped for the job; we could not do this on our own.

We needed help.

So we consulted books and sermons and lectures that seemed to align with our thinking, yet many of these resources simply gave us a list of tasks to do. They seemed (to us) to say, “Here’s how to raise perfect, godly children” without giving the rationale as to *why*. And frankly, having perfect children was already out of the question. My daughters, I knew very well, came with unique personalities, inclinations, and (ahem) strong wills. If perfection was the goal, I fell far short in my parenting efforts.

The Importance of “Why?”

As a young parent, I fielded a lot of “why” questions, and I’m sure you have too. My three daughters would never settle for the “Do this” command; rather, they always wanted to know why.

“Why do I need to clean up my room before school in the morning?”

“Why should I look people in the eye when I speak to them?”

“Why do I need to obey?”

“Why?” It’s the cry of every child’s heart, isn’t it? When children ask “Why?” they are really asking, “What are you about, Mom and Dad? What is your purpose? Why should I follow you?” These are big, deep, important questions that should cause us to become more intentional.

Kids aren’t the only ones to ask why. Psalmists in the Bible asked why. Job asked why. Even Jesus asked why. The great thing is that God isn’t afraid of our why questions. We may not always understand God’s ways, nor do we always get an easy answer, but asking the question helps us get closer to a purpose. And as parents, we desperately need a purpose because some days are just plain hard. Am I right?

Clarity about our role as chief disciplers of our children came for my husband and me when we simply stepped back and asked why. Why were we doing what we were doing as parents? Why were we involved

in the activities we chose? Why were we emphasizing certain spiritual values with our girls . . . and were there others we should consider?

Why were we doing what we were doing as parents?

You see, when we focused on how to parent, we were more worried about external results than internal change. We just wanted kids who behaved the way we thought others expected our kids to behave, instead of wanting to capture their hearts for Jesus. When we started asking why, our purpose became clear—we are called to be parents who raise children who know and love Jesus, who love others, and who will make a difference in the world for Christ. Asking why has guided our choices and involvements, and it has helped us purposefully disciple our daughters. Asking why has brought focus to our parenting and has changed everything about the way we raise our kids.

A Word About Struggling Families

Over the years, as we have grown in our efforts to intentionally disciple our children, my husband and I have become convinced that leaving a Christ-following legacy is our primary calling as parents. Yet sometimes even our most persistent efforts may not bear the kinds of fruit we'd like to see in our kids. I know of many godly parents whose children have chosen to go in a different direction. I can't answer the question as to why this happens; I honestly don't know. I'm not sure anyone really does.

In John 6, Jesus performs two amazing miracles—he feeds five thousand people with just a few loaves of bread and some fish, and then he walks on water. You'd think that everyone who saw these miracles would have followed him forever, yet John 6:66 tells us that many of his disciples turned away and “no longer walked with him.” I am sure that Jesus must have been devastated to watch people he loved turn away from following him. Yet he continued in his calling.

If you're a parent of a struggling child, realize this: God knows. He sees your child, and he loves your child more than even you do. He wants the same outcome as you—a child who knows Jesus intimately, loves him deeply, and has a heart that desires to serve him fully. God hears your prayers for your child, so do not give up praying! Even our consistent prayers can be a matter of intentionality.

Perhaps your family is struggling. Or maybe you're feeling alone and unsupported as you seek to disciple your children. It can feel as though you're just fighting too many battles and that hope is pointless. Hear this: God wants to redeem your family. I believe it with all my heart. God uses Christian families today who hold together under pressure, families who exhibit the power of forgiveness, families who are not perfect (what added pressure that would be!) but redeemed. Our world needs you, imperfections and all, to point others to the one who brings ultimate hope and healing.

About This Book

This book is about my own journey as a parent and how I learned the importance of discipleship in my daughters' lives. I have considered an important aspect of my calling as a parent to redirect my child's focus away from me and out toward the world, and I have tried to reflect that focal progression in each section of the book.

Part 1, "Our Charge," sets the stage by discussing what discipleship is and how setting a vision for our family can help us become more intentional about family life. It's all about our calling as parents to make disciples.

Part 2, "Our Challenge," emphasizes the importance of our children's relationship with their heavenly Father—the inward focus of their hearts—which, I believe, needs to be tended to early. Heart work isn't easy, but it sets the course of their lives.

Part 3, "Our Compassion," encourages an outward focus and examines virtues that will help our children maintain godly relationships with others. As our kids' love for God grows, so should their love for others.

Finally, part 4, "Our Contribution," discusses some ways that strong families can bless the world and, in so doing, bring glory to God. As I

often say, we're not here to take up space—our lives should bring value to the world around us.

What I present here are just a few of the areas of spiritual growth that Brian and I thought were important for our family as a whole and for each individual child. We have prayed over these aspects of our family life, thought about them, and talked them through until they have just become a part of the DNA of our family. Most people who know us know that these are our values because they see us trying to live them out every day. But we didn't stop once we had compiled these few ideas; we put them into action, looking for ways to strengthen our family even further. Discipleship is an ongoing effort and will continue as long as we are blessed to be parents.

Here's what I know: your family is different from ours. (I hope it is, because we're kind of loud and obnoxious when we're together, and the thought of every family being like ours is frankly frightening to me.) I understand and celebrate that each family is as unique as the children within it and that each family thrives with its own set of convictions and challenges. Because of this, the way we parent our kids and do family life will vary from one family to the next.

You may find that some areas of discipleship that I've highlighted here are not those you would choose to emphasize in your family. That's OK. Remember that we're all different, and God gave our families different personalities and challenges. Thankfully, the principles in God's Word never change; they are accessible to all of us and still apply today to each of our diverse family situations. My desire is that you will understand and embrace the uniqueness of God's purpose for *your* family.

So as you read this book, think and pray over what you want to teach your child about faith in Christ and what areas of discipleship will be most important for him or her. Think about the vision you have for your kids and for your family. Think carefully about how you might share the love of Christ with those around you who may be hurting. Think about how your family might make a difference in your church, your community, and your world.

And as you begin to define your unique family and disciple your unique children, first ask why.

PART 1

Our Charge

Go therefore and make disciples.

MATTHEW 28:19

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DISCIPLESHIP 101

From Failure to Freedom

THE SAME SCENARIO PLAYED OUT TIME AFTER TIME IN OUR HOME when our girls were young. Our family of five sits around the dinner table to enjoy a meal. Sort of. With three little girls, it's hard to get anyone to actually sit their bottoms in a chair for five minutes, let alone through an entire meal. And as far as *enjoying* that meal, well, that's a relative term. Squirmy kids. Picky eaters. Long days. I'll just be honest and say that dinnertime with little kids isn't always the Ozzie-and-Harriet scenario I want it to be.

So there we are, just trying to get through another meal, when my husband looks at me and says, "Should we try it tonight?" I know what he means because we've talked about this so many times I could recite it by memory.

Family devotions. The concept fills us with both anticipation and dread.

Anticipation, because tonight might be the night we have a breakthrough. What if tonight one of the girls "gets it" and begins to appreciate what we are trying to do?

Dread, because we're pretty sure we know how this will go down. We've traveled the family devotions road before, usually with a crash-and-burn ending. Why can't we seem to get this right? Why do these few moments never go as well as we hoped? And our biggest fear: *Are we failing our kids?*

My husband, Brian, and I both think having family devotions is something we're supposed to do after dinner. It has been ingrained in us since before we even had kids. Every good Christian family has devotions. After dinner. Every night.

Right?

Except us. We can't seem to make it work. One girl is too young and keeps getting up from the table, even though we've told her a hundred times to stay in her seat. Another is crying because she hates peas and doesn't want to eat them and we're making her. Another is eager to learn but keeps talking over her sisters.

With each passing non-family-devotional day, our guilt mounts.

Brian grabs the devotional book we've been working through for the past year—I think we're on chapter 2. He starts to read. Julia jumps from the table to let the dog out. Caroline moves the peas around on her plate. Kate is engaged . . . maybe just a little too engaged since she's the only one talking.

Finally, Dad gets frustrated and puts the book away. "We'll try it again another time," he says, his slumped shoulders revealing his defeat.

I'm just over it. Between trying to wrangle the kids to sit in their chairs and act interested in what should be a precious family moment, all I can think about is how late it's going to be before I get the mess from dinner cleaned up. And the homework done. Never mind piano practice.

Brian and I have discussed our mutual concerns about the family devotions scenario. Why are we trying to fit this square peg into a round hole? Will we ruin our kids forever by forcing family devotions? Is this what discipleship looks like? Why should we bother?

We know that we bear the responsibility of teaching our children about Jesus—we feel it deeply. But what exactly does that look like? What *should* it look like? All we know is that it doesn't look like the scene around our table after dinner.



Later, I scan my memory of the New Testament. Jesus had disciples. What did he do?

I remember a dinnertime scene in which Jesus taught his disciples, but he didn't open a book or read from a set of ancient scrolls. You know what he did? He stooped down and washed the disciples' feet (John 13:1–9). He instructed them by showing them what a life lived with him looked like. In that instance, it looked like service.

Sure, there were other meals and other moments of discipleship in the New Testament, but for some reason I cannot think of a single scene in which Jesus and his friends stopped to read the Bible, or perhaps a devotional book, and discuss what it meant after they finished eating a meal. Not one.

What I see in the Bible are many scenes of Jesus and his disciples walking down a road or through a field or in a village. Living life. And then something would happen, and Jesus would stop what he was doing to tell the disciples how the situation fit with what Christ had come to do. He would explain the gospel in everyday terms so his disciples would understand it.

**Jesus understood that the best time to teach
was when his disciples were listening.**

Yes, Jesus explained the Scriptures; he did a lot of Scripture teaching. But I don't see his teaching as structured time right after dinner when people are tired, worn-out from their day, thinking about the homework that needs to be done or the instruments that still need practicing. I think Jesus understood that the best time to teach was when his disciples were listening.

A Parent's Number One Role

Thinking of Jesus and his disciples brings me to the focus of this book: discipleship. I believe with all my heart that parents are and should be the primary influence in the lives of their children, especially where matters of faith are involved. I want for my children what Paul wanted for the Colossians when he wrote, "Therefore, as you received Christ

Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving” (Col. 2:6–7). Paul feels burdened that the Colossian people, now that they have heard the truth about Jesus, grow in Christ, and throughout the book he offers several suggestions about what that life in Christ should look like in their lives. My job as a parent is to bring the truth of Christ to my children every day, and to intentionally guide them throughout their lives so that they will grow deep roots of faith. That’s discipleship.

In this book, we will look closely at several areas of discipleship, particularly discipleship with intentionality. Because without intentionality we may very well feel as though we’re treading water, never really getting anywhere, and, on most days, like a failure.

Discipleship, in its simplest terms, means teaching and learning the basic principles of faith. There are those who teach, who disciple (a verb), and there are those who learn, who are disciples (a noun). This discipleship scenario implies a relationship between those who teach and those who learn, and it also implies a subject matter that is deeply important to both.

When we take our babies home from the hospital, in fact the moment we become parents, we become disciplers, whether we realize it or not. Our primary responsibility is to teach our children to follow Jesus throughout their lives. *How* discipleship happens is different for everyone because no two families are alike. *Why* discipleship matters is the issue I want us to think deeply about in this book.

Please hear me: I do believe there is a place for discussion and Bible reading as a family. I do not want to discount that or discourage you from trying to have family devotions. Some of our sweetest family memories are of seasons when we memorized large passages of Scripture together.

On one memorable occasion, we unintentionally left our youngest out of the experience; I guess we thought she was too young to memorize Scripture, let alone Psalm 19. But one day, as we asked each of our two oldest daughters to recite a few verses of the psalm, three-year-old Julia got our attention and said, “Could I try it too?” To our amazement, Julia

stood and, with her sweet little-girl lisp, clearly recited, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge” (vv. 1–2 NIV).

Four mouths hung open as our youngest taught *us* something about God’s Word—it penetrates even the youngest of hearts. Our baby girl was listening to and absorbing God’s Word because of those moments around our kitchen table. So, no, I would never try to discourage you from structured family devotional moments.

But in our discouragement over how things usually went in our family, Brian and I felt that we were failing our daughters or that somehow we were missing something. As we talked and talked and talked about how we could best teach our daughters what our faith in Jesus meant and how it looked in everyday life, we finally decided that discipleship in our family should be so much more than five minutes a day after dinner when everyone was distracted, tired, and crabby.

For me that often meant talking through my daughters’ days over cookies and milk at the kitchen island after school. For my husband it often meant teaching our very young girls the great hymns of our faith at bath time or, when they were old enough, enjoying God’s creation together on hikes in nearby forest preserves. For all of us it meant talking about important topics of faith while we walked to town for ice cream or, yes, sat around the dinner table.

Enter intentionality.

As our thinking about discipleship began to change, Brian and I realized that we needed to be intentional about how we went about instructing our kids about faith in Christ. We took a step back from the how-do-we-disciple-our-daughters question and started to ask, *Why* should we even try? Because, honestly, there were days we wanted to give up.

Reactive Versus Proactive Parenting

We parents all experience moments that require us to react—our child slams her finger in the car door, gets sick at school, or breaks a bone on the playground. These are unforeseen circumstances that need our

immediate attention. But the spiritual development of our kids is not something we should be reactive about. It's not as if we wake up one day in a cold sweat because we suddenly realize that Johnny doesn't know how to pray or Suzie doesn't want to go to church. The spiritual growth of our kids should be something we invest in proactively throughout their lives. Colossians 2:8 is a good reminder: "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ." This verse spurs me on to proactively encourage the spiritual growth of my kids, for good reason. The enemy is eagerly searching for a chink in their armor, hoping to take our children captive for something other than living for Christ.

Intentionality simply means being purposeful or deliberate—something done by design. Words meaning the opposite of *intentional* are *accidental*, *haphazard*, or *random*. When these opposite concepts are considered in the context of our families, I know which I want. When I think of my children learning the most important aspects of my faith, I certainly don't want it to be an accidental process that's left to chance. Proactive parents are those who are intentional about instilling the gospel into the hearts and lives of their children.

God's Purpose for Our Families

What if we intentionally set aside the world's distractions and took time to think about our kids—their personalities, their needs, their unique place in our family? What if we became convinced that our family is important enough to think about strategically? Because it is, you know. God didn't give us families just so we can all live together under one roof and have a good time. We know there's got to be something more because, let's be honest, some days really aren't that much fun. Some days the basement floods, and people panic trying to save old pictures and books. Some days the washing machine breaks, or our teenager scrapes the house with the car, or our fifth grader just can't get the hang of math. Some days moms and dads disagree. Some days are hard.

Some days a bigger picture, a longer view, is just what we need.

God had a plan for families right from the beginning, and his plan

was that the world would see his redemptive process lived out in our messy families every day, in all its glory. Restoration, reconciliation, redemption—it's all there within the four walls of our home. When we mess up, when our relationships are broken within the family, we ask for forgiveness and are restored to one another. When we disagree but try hard to see each other's perspectives, we become reconciled to one another. When we show grace to one another, our relationships are redeemed for the sake of Christ. And the world sees.

Our families are a flesh-and-blood picture of the gospel. When our neighbors see us living out our messy day-to-day lives, they get a small glimpse into what Jesus has done for us. God doesn't expect our families to be perfect, but he does want us to know that we are here for something more than mere shared existence. He wants us to shine the light of Jesus into the dark corners of the world, and sometimes he uses our families to hold the lantern. Our effectiveness depends on our intentionality.

How the Bible Helps Me Understand Discipleship

It might seem a little strange, but the book of Deuteronomy is one of my favorite books of the Bible. (Stay with me here!) See, Deuteronomy follows Leviticus and Numbers, two books that lay out the hundreds, if not thousands, of rules for the Israelites' worship—rules that are impossible for humans to follow, rules that, in light of the New Testament, point us to the need for a Savior.

But here in Deuteronomy—and this is why I like it so much—we find out *why* it's important to follow God's rules: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" (Deut. 6:4–5).

Why were the people of Israel commanded to follow the rules that Moses had shared with them? Because the Lord, the God of Israel, who had led his people out of slavery in Egypt, is a holy God, deserving of their (and our) complete devotion. As a parent, I wonder how on earth I am supposed to teach this to my children. It feels like a pretty big task, an important lesson, and something that might take some time.

Thankfully, Moses continues: "And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your

children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (Deut. 6:6–7).

Suddenly, everything clicks into place for me. Discipleship of my children is not simply a five-minute devotional after dinner (thank goodness); discipleship happens all day long—when we are at home, when we care for our pets, when we get ready for bed, when we eat breakfast. Discipleship is meant to dig its roots deep into the hearts of my children and change them.

Discipleship happens all day long.

Discipleship is intentional.

As the book of Deuteronomy unfolds, Moses reminds the people of Israel of the rules he laid out for them in Leviticus and Numbers, the rules for living a holy life. Once he has finished instructing (or you could say “discipling”) the people, Moses again answers the why question, in chapter 30, where we find some of my favorite verses in all Scripture. These are verses that remind me over and over again why I do what I do as a parent. They are verses that help orient my thinking and guide my choices as I teach my children how to live a life of faith: “Today I have given you the choice between life and death, between blessings and curses. Now I call on heaven and earth to witness the choice you make. Oh, that you would choose life, so that you and your descendants might live! You can make this choice by loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and committing yourself firmly to him” (Deut. 30:19–20 NLT).

Here we find a loving God who desires good things for his children. Here we see that, as his children, we have a choice to make—we can choose either life or death, blessings or curses. As a parent, I want so much for my children to choose life, an abundant life, a life of following Jesus wherever he calls them to go. I want their lives to be fully committed to him. And so, as a parent, it is my responsibility to help guide them toward this life intentionally.

This guidance takes on so many forms and will look different in every family. But the best way to begin to figure out how it will look for your family is to first ask *why*.

Why Intentionality Is Important

There are many reasons to purposefully and proactively nurture the spiritual development of our children, but let me highlight two that have guided my thinking as I've raised my daughters.

First, our culture needs Christian kids who grow into Christian adults who can shine the light of Jesus in a dying world. Just read the headlines—our world is in bad shape. Yet God isn't surprised by what's going on; as God's people, we are called to bring hope. As a parent, I feel the weight of responsibility to raise up a new generation that can speak hope into the lives of peers, coworkers, and neighbors. I cannot quit in this endeavor, so I intentionally pour my efforts into nurturing my daughters' faith for the sake of the gospel.

Second, intentionality is critical because our kids won't just "get it" through osmosis—they have to see us model our faith every day. As I said earlier, I can't just leave discipleship to chance; I've got to show my kids that my faith is real, that God is at work, and that the gospel is true. I do this by choosing, each day, to model a genuine, authentic faith in God. As Paul Tripp says, "I don't mean that parents should 'preach' to their children in the Sunday-morning-sermon style. I mean you should look every day for every opportunity to point your needy kids to the presence, promises, power, and grace of Jesus."¹ Discipling our kids means modeling what true faith looks like.



I had lunch one day with a mom from my Bible study small group. She has four very young children; her hands are full, and she's tired. As we talked about raising these little gifts, she told me that she didn't read many parenting books and confessed that she's never finished one because she didn't like the idea of someone giving her pat answers for her children. I understand her frustration. My friend said, "I don't need

anyone to tell me how to be a good parent. Our family is unique. I want someone to challenge me to think ahead and work within the uniqueness of our family.”

Exactly! Within the pages of this book, I want to encourage you to look ahead, even if you can’t imagine your child wearing anything but footie pajamas right now. Some of the most effective parents I know are those who picture the results they’d like to see in their kids—the fruit, if you will—and then think about how to accomplish those results in a way that works for them. These wise parents know that it may take years to see fruit, but the effort will be worth it. *How* parents go about nurturing that fruit may look different in every family. God has given each of us different personalities, gifts, and challenges, so why would we assume that parenting by a formula would work the same for everyone?

Why would we assume that parenting by a formula would work the same for everyone?

Here’s a small snippet of what intentional discipleship looks like in our family. Over the years, Brian and I have thought a lot about the kinds of people we’d like to see our children become and what we need to do to help them become those people. For instance, we wanted our kids to understand and embrace God’s love for all the people of the world, so we thought they would benefit from a global perspective. We also wanted them to know what missionaries do and how they live. So when our girls were very young, Brian and I decided that travel would be an important part of our family life. Our discipleship in this area meant intentionally traveling with our girls, and talking with them about why we travel. (You can read more about this in chapter 11.)

The most important moments of intentional discipleship often happened around our dinner table, where we’d try to not rush so that we could engage in deep discussions. We’d talk about our days—the good and the bad—and sometimes we’d reflect on what was happening in the news or even dream about the future. With a household of girls, it

wasn't hard to get conversation going! Once we took the pressure off and stopped labeling these moments as "family devotions," we all felt free to discuss really important topics, sometimes with a book, usually without, but always with an eye toward seeing God's hand at work in all of life.

As you begin to think about areas in which you want to disciple your children, ask yourself questions like these: Whom do you want to see your child become? What kind of person do you want to see in ten, fifteen, even twenty years? What values are important to you, and *why* are these values important? These are the questions we must ask ourselves as parents so that we can purposefully lead our children to cultivate lives that God can use for his glory.

Consider

1. What are some ways you intentionally disciple your kids? What are some areas in which you could be more purposeful?
2. What is the difference between being proactive and reactive? How have you been reacting to situations with your children? How would being proactive make a difference as you think about discipling your kids?
3. Think for a minute about God's purpose for our families. How has your family shown the love of Jesus to your neighbors recently?