



# RAISE THEM UP

## FAMILY GUIDE

*HELPING YOUR HOUSEHOLD ESTABLISH A  
SUSTAINABLE RHYTHM OF DISCIPLESHIP*

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# INTRODUCTION

## *The Guide*

Being a parent is one of the most stressful, fun, messy, beautiful, overwhelming, encouraging and difficult callings in the world. Every child in every family is unique, and raising kids is an endlessly challenging adventure.

In this adventure, God has called parents to disciple their children: to teach them to obey all that He has commanded and to see Christ formed in them (Matt. 28:20; Gal. 4:19). Whether you are a new parent, you have older kids, or you are a grandparent, our desire is that this Family Discipleship Guide will get you and your household on the same page of how you will address the spiritual upbringing of the next generation and help you establish a sustainable rhythm of gospel-centered living, talking and discipleship. Our hope with the guide is not to add to an already overloaded family schedule but to create space for your family to worship God and talk about the good news of His plan to rescue the world from the problem of sin through Jesus Christ.

In carrying out family discipleship, having some level of accountability will be essential to the sustainability of your family's rhythm. If you are married, this resource is a great opportunity for you and your spouse to think through your spiritual lives together. If you are a single parent, consider going through this material with your closest biblical community and invite them into the discipleship of your home. If you have older children, think about having them walk through this resource with you and offer them the opportunity to foster ownership in it alongside you.

Inside the guide, you'll find Scripture to consider, questions to answer, structures to implement and ideas to try out in family discipleship. Inevitably, your attempts in discipling your family will not always meet your expectations. Be encouraged! You are not alone. Lean on your church family for support.

As a parent, you may feel your own inadequacies when it comes to your own understanding of God or His Word or your ability to teach. Our hope is that you could set your mind on the promises of God and His ability instead of feeling discouraged by your inability. Raising them up is difficult for everyone. Your family is not the only one whose plans completely fall apart, whose members accidentally "used a bad word" instead of capturing a family discipleship moment, whose family discipleship time ended in an argument, or whose candlelit family holiday tradition culminated with wax in the carpet and a call to 911.

Despite bumps along the way, many of us will see faith sparked in the lives of our children through intentional discipleship. We will feel and know the presence of God in our midst as we gather and we will have the opportunity to celebrate as God reveals Himself to a new generation. It is a privilege to get to plant these seeds of faith in children's lives and to water and cultivate them, but it is God who makes them grow (1 Cor. 3:6). Be relentless in praying to the Lord for His movement in your family, as He is the only one who can save and sanctify us. You and your child belong first and foremost to your Heavenly Father, who knows you the best and loves you the most.

## ***The Framework***

The framework of the Raise Them Up Guide helps structure your discipleship and gives you clarity and support, regardless of what your family looks like. This simple framework can fulfill its function in any and every possible family makeup, including those with grandparents, single parents, foster or adopted children, blended or shared-custody families, those with disabilities, differences in children's and parents' ages and nuclear families. Even in families where the parents differ from one another in their views of God, it can be a valuable resource. We encourage you to include all adults and children in your family in the modeling, times, moments and milestones of discipleship, while constantly praying that those who have not professed faith in Christ one day will.

Before jumping into this framework for family discipleship, we'll give you a biblical foundation for the roles of church and family in a distinctly Christian upbringing. Then we'll cover the importance of having a genuine walk with God yourself (modeling) before walking through the family discipleship framework of time, moments and milestones.

- **Modeling** – Serving as a godly example for your family, living out your genuine walk with God and demonstrating true repentance where and when you fall short.
- **Time** – Creating intentional time built into the rhythm of the family's life for the purpose of thinking about, talking about and living out the gospel.
- **Moments** – Capturing and leveraging opportunities in the course of everyday life for the purpose of gospel-centered conversations.
- **Milestones** – Marking and making occasions to celebrate and commemorate significant spiritual milestones of God's work in the life of the family and child.



## ***Family, According to the Bible***

When God created man, He quickly placed him in a family. Adam was put to sleep, Eve was perfectly crafted out of a rib from Adam's side, and the two became one flesh. They were husband and wife—the first family. Enjoying unbroken fellowship and the blessing of God, they received a command: Be fruitful and multiply and subdue the earth (Gen. 1:28). God called them to have children, fill the earth with His image and tend to both diligently for His glory. God's intention and design was for this to take place through families.

Even in the first family, God created clearly defined roles. There was one husband and one wife, a marriage design that was instituted in God's perfect Garden before sin even entered the world. Their sons and daughters were to come under the authority of their parents. These roles repeat throughout the Scriptures, as the Lord encourages and clarifies His purpose in marriage and His heart for generation after generation.

**God created the family to teach us about His nature and ways.** Families are a gospel shadow. They help us understand the relational nature of God and how He relates to His children. Throughout Scripture, God uses familial imagery and examples to teach His people about His care, provision, power, love and wisdom. When God redeemed a people for Himself, He called them into a family. He is a perfect Father who adopts all who would love and trust His Son, calling them dearly loved children of God.

Our natural, physical families also point us to the eternal family of God, made up of all believers everywhere. We all hope our families are marked by mutual love, care and commitment to one another within the roles God has set in place. God calls His children to the same standard within the body of Christ.

**God created the family to bring forth life and flourishing.** Families are made up of people bound together by marriage, blood and/or adoption. The family is the first and most foundational unit of a society. Families are the means by which mankind multiplies and subdues the earth. Families are the primary place a person is to be nurtured, cultivated and cared for. God's intention and design for His image bearers is that they know the covering, care, instruction, protection and love that comes from belonging to a family. This is so important to God that He commands His people to draw in those without families—the widow, orphan, foreigner and outcast—and provide for them in a family-like manner.

Because God intends for us to flourish within the context of families, He graciously gives instructions about how families ought to function. He appoints roles for parents and children respectively, establishing authority structures and setting boundaries for our good. God calls parents to care for, love, lead, instruct and discipline their children, not harshly, but with compassion and wisdom. God calls children to joyfully submit to the authority of their parents and to honor them in everything. The integrity of the family structure was so key to the flourishing of the nation of Israel that God included commands regarding it in the most foundational portions of the Law.

When God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, He placed Him within a family. Although Jesus did not head a physical family of His own, He made the way for all who love and trust Him to be born again as dearly loved, adopted children of God. Jesus brought forth the spiritual family of God through His death and resurrection.

Regardless of our experience, we can all testify to the impact our families have had in shaping our character, values and beliefs. Whether through their presence or absence, they have marked us in ways no one else can or will. There is no greater potential for human influence in the life of a child than their mother and father. This is by God's design.

## ***The Role of the Family in Discipleship***

In many ways, culture has convinced parents that it is better to outsource the education and training of their children to professionals. We send them to teachers, counselors, tutors, coaches and churches to learn and develop. Because of this reality, many parents walk in insecurity over their parental influence.

There is nothing wrong with utilizing specialists in specific fields for the sake of your child's growth; parents aren't expected to be the expert on everything in the life of their kids. But when it comes to spiritual matters, God gives the primary responsibility of religious instruction and the training of children to parents, as outlined in Scripture (Deut. 6; Ps. 78, 145; Eph. 6).

Not only does God intend the family to foster human flourishing and model His character, He also intends families to be a means of making disciples. In God's good design, parents are given the closest proximity and greatest influence in the lives of their children. Parents have the incredible privilege of helping their children discover the world and teaching them to know, love, trust and obey the One who made them. Whether they realize it or not, parents are constantly imparting truth of some sort to their children. Kids naturally imitate their parents. They mirror mannerisms, repeat words and mimic facial expressions. They learn what's important in life by watching how mom and dad spend their time, money and attention.

For this reason, God commands parents to actively and intentionally shape the character of their children and help form their faith. While God calls one generation to commend His works to the next, which is certainly a community undertaking, there is a particular sense in which mothers and fathers are responsible for the spiritual formation of the children entrusted to them. God calls parents to recount the past faithfulness of God, declare His works and teach His commands. They have a unique responsibility to testify to His goodness, encourage belief and model glad-hearted obedience.

Foundational to a parent's ability to disciple their children is having an active relationship with the Lord themselves. Before you can make a disciple, you must be a disciple. Therefore, a parent's first and greatest obedience is to love the Lord their God with all they are. God calls us to walk in confession and repentance, to share life with other believers in community, serve those in need and share Jesus with the lost. Of course, perfect obedience is not a prerequisite for faithfully discipling your children, but you cannot sincerely and effectively teach a child to follow Jesus if you aren't following Him yourself. Children need to see their parents actively, humbly loving the Lord and seeking to obey Him.

As parents model love for God and others, they also diligently teach their children the fear of the Lord and obedience to His commands. This looks like sharing the stories of faith found in God's Word and explaining not only what God calls His people to do but also why He calls us to do it. Parents have a unique opportunity to teach their children how to see the world and their experiences through gospel lenses. They also have the privilege, both through modeling and instruction, to show their children how to engage relationally with the Lord in prayer, worship and Bible study.

Many parents are intimidated by the prospect of teaching their children things about the Lord that they don't completely understand themselves. Some are insecure about their ability to explain God's Word in a way that is accurate and makes sense. Few things lead to deeper dependence on God's help and grace than parenting a child and seeking to faithfully disciple them. God graciously provides what we need in order to be faithful to His call on our lives. One way He does this for parents is by giving them the church family.

## ***The Role of the Church in Discipleship***

Commending the works of the Lord to the next generation is a command to God's people generally: for the community as a whole to recount God's power and faithfulness, testify to His character and teach His ways. Deuteronomy 6 calls all of Israel to know the one true God, to love Him fully and diligently and to raise up future generations to do the same. While parents bear primary responsibility, the church family as a whole is also entrusted with the joyful duty of discipling the next generation.

In our culture, the Church generally works itself out both organically and organizationally. Typically, when people think of “church,” they think of a place instead of a people. But this should not be so! The Church is primarily a people, not an institution or location. The organic nature of the Church is simply the relationships we have with fellow believers as we walk together in community. The Church is the men and women who carry our burdens, share our sorrows and celebrations, pray with us, encourage us and receive our crisis phone calls late at night.

In this respect, the role of the Church is to help disciple children by coming around parents and caregivers with love, support, accountability and prayer. Faithful brothers and sisters provide additional voices of truth for children and students, not to assume parental influence but rather supplement and strengthen it.

The church family also takes care of the spiritual orphan. They draw in those without believing parents and teach them the ways of God. Many of us first heard the gospel from a camp counselor, teacher, coach, small group leader or friend who loved us enough to share. Discipling the next generation is a community undertaking.

The organizational nature of the Church exists to help the organic expressions of the church family flourish. The pastors of a local church are charged with faithfully preaching God’s Word and leading the church toward joyful obedience as they follow Jesus and make disciples together. This includes helping parents obey God’s call to disciple their children. Pastors and ministry leaders extend encouragement, provide training for parents and supplemental biblical teaching for children and students. This may manifest both in age-specific ministries and in corporate gatherings.

# MODELING

In the context of family discipleship, **modeling** consists of serving as a godly example for your family, living out your genuine walk with God and demonstrating true repentance where and when you fall short.

1. If a stranger took a look at your weekly schedule or read a transcript of every word you said in a day, what do you think they would guess are the most important things in your life?

We make time for what we consider to be important. Looking at how you spend your time can help you assess what you have prioritized. What time in your week is strategically and intentionally given to your relationship with God and your family's relationship with God?

One of the best ways that you can love your son or daughter well is by loving God well. While we are called to disciple our kids, no one is asking us to fake our spirituality. It is essential for the spiritual development of your home that you have a genuine walk with God, fostered through spiritual discipline and rooted in a love of God and others. Before you can lead your home, you have to follow your God.

2. Describe how a "walk with God" was or wasn't modeled for you in your own upbringing.
3. What would you like to see repeated from your own upbringing? What would you like to see redeemed or changed for the better?

Read Deuteronomy 4:9 and 6:4-9. Take note of the things God calls us to do "diligently."

"Diligent" describes a strong commitment to something. In other words, it's something we work hard at and don't give up on easily.

4. What do you think it looks like to "care for your own soul"? How would someone care for their soul diligently? What about "teaching your children"?

Our kids learn from how we live. Read Galatians 5:19-23.

5. What are you struggling with or what have you struggled with that you hope your kids don't see modeled in you?

6. What spiritual habits and fruit of the Spirit would you like to see developed in your kids that you want to work on modeling?
7. If your son or daughter asked you, "What's the difference between someone who is a Christian and someone who isn't?" how would you respond? What Scriptures would you share with them to help answer this question?

When it comes to spiritual growth, knowing where to start can be a struggle. Some of us have never seen a healthy version of it lived out. It's easy to feel distracted, not to mention the issues we face of timing, scheduling and consistency. Even when we've set the time aside, it can seem dry, lifeless or dutiful. We must remember that we are called to be diligent in the care of our own soul, to work hard and not give up easily.

Take a couple minutes and consider your personal rhythm of spiritual disciplines.

8. What are the biggest challenges you face when it comes to...

- Personal Bible study?
- Worship?
- Rest?
- Prayer?
- Fasting?
- Generosity?
- Evangelism?
- Solitude?
- Confession?
- Serving?
- Discipling?
- Engaging in biblical community and accountability?

9. When can/do you have protected times set aside for intentional personal spiritual development?

If you are married, another great way to love your kids well is to love your spouse well. Take a few minutes to consider your rhythm of practices that promote spiritual intimacy with your spouse.

10. What are the biggest challenges you face when it comes to...

- Sincere intercession (praying for your spouse)?
- Praying with your spouse?
- Practicing confession and repentance?



- Sharing your hopes, dreams and vision for your family?
- Giving permission for feedback?
- Asking each other good, thought-provoking questions?
- Creating space for intimacy?
- Studying the Bible or a book together?
- Offering encouragement and affirmations?
- Serving one another?
- Serving with one another?
- If you are married, when can/do you have intentional times set aside for spiritual development with your spouse?
- If you are married and your spouse is not a Christian believer, what are some ways that you can humbly and respectfully model spiritual development in your home?  
Who can join you and support you in seeking the salvation of your household?

It is important to remember that we are talking about working in healthy rhythms, not trying to condemn anyone or heap guilt on anyone for what may be lacking. Remember that growth is gradual. We should be diligent but also patient. Also, it's great to be creative and have fun with how you plan to care for your spiritual health in your home.

In the chart on the following page, design what you'd like a typical week to look like for your spiritual disciplines. These might be things like daily quiet times, a meeting with an accountability partner, an evangelistic meal or a weekly fast. If you're married, include what you'd like intentional times and spiritual disciplines with your spouse to look like. These might be things like date nights, a time of morning prayer or an hour intentionally set aside for spiritually checking in with one another.

## ***Additional Resources***

- Consider using a Bible reading plan to aid you in consistently studying the Word. We have some available at the church, but you can also find plans online, on some Bible apps and in the appendices of some Bibles.
- Buy a journal or journaling Bible to read and write through so that one day you can give it to one of your children.
- Book recommendation on parenting – Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family by Paul David Tripp

# EXAMPLE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES PLAN

	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
<b>S</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pray and read the Bible</li><li>• Meet with Small Group</li><li>• Worship with church family</li></ul>		
<b>M</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pray and read the Bible</li></ul>		
<b>T</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pray and read the Bible</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fast and pray during lunch</li></ul>	
<b>W</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pray and read the Bible</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Attend Bible Study</li></ul>
<b>T</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pray and read the Bible</li></ul>		
<b>F</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pray and read the Bible</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spiritual check-in with spouse</li></ul>
<b>S</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pray and read the Bible</li><li>• Meet with mentor or accountability partner for breakfast</li></ul>		



SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES PLAN			
	MORNING	AFTERNOON	EVENING
S			
M			
T			
W			
T			
F			
S			

# TIME

**Raise Them Up Time** is creating intentional time built into the rhythm of the family's life for the purpose of thinking about, talking about and living out the gospel.

1. What personal relationship has had the most significant spiritual impact on your life?

Family discipleship time is about cultivating spiritual maturity in your household through loving, gospel-centered relationships. It isn't exclusively about formal teaching, although that can certainly play a role. It's planned time that is intentionally dedicated to the spiritual growth of your family. You may utilize rhythms and gathering points that already exist in your household, like going to church services together, eating a meal together, commuting to school or work, getting ready for the day or getting ready for bed. It might also mean establishing a new rhythm, like a family game night, a family Bible study or a family service project.

2. On a scale of 1-3, rate how much time and consideration your family gives to the following activities. Note: If you are looking at this with someone else, it is okay to have differing opinions and preferences on many of these things.

1 = Not enough time and consideration

2 = The right amount of time and consideration

3 = Too much time and consideration

- ☐ Each family member has time to themselves.
- ☐ The whole family does something fun together.
- ☐ The whole family has an in-depth conversation together.
- ☐ We have fun spending time with people outside the family.
- ☐ We talk about the gospel together.
- ☐ We serve or worship together.
- ☐ The whole family eats meals together.
- ☐ The parent(s) plan(s) time for when the family will be together.
- ☐ We work out, participate in activities/hobbies and/or play sports.
- ☐ We work at our job(s).
- ☐ We sleep.
- ☐ We watch TV, read, play video games and/or listen to music.
- ☐ We build relationships with those who don't know Christ.
- ☐ We spend time with our biblical community.
- ☐ We manage conflict in a healthy way.
- ☐ If married: My spouse and I have time for just the two of us, without kids.

3. Now that you have finished the exercise, consider both the downtimes and the busy times of your household. What are the first words that come to mind? Where do you see healthy or unhealthy tendencies? Is there anything that you would like to change?
4. When you think about your family's typical week, what rhythms do you identify? What are your gathering points when/where you are together?
5. Is there intentional time built into the rhythm of your family for discipleship? When? Where does it fall on your list of importance? Where should it be on that list?

Whenever they might happen, the two key components of family discipleship time are rhythm and intentionality.

- **Rhythm:** designating the times (committed and consistent)
- **Intentionality:** designing the times (planning and purpose)

Some good questions to evaluate your family discipleship time are, "Is it planned well?", "Is it purposeful?" and "Is it happening with consistency?"

6. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Looking more closely at verse 7, where do you see those times in your family's rhythm? Where are you intentionally and regularly talking about the things of God with your family?
7. In a busy house, it may be easier to be more intentional with the time you already have than to add a new family gathering. Is there more you could do to intentionally leverage your family's time together for thinking about, talking about and living out the gospel? How can increasing intentionality and planning in your current family gatherings make them better?
8. If your son or daughter asked you, "Why are we doing this?" what vision would you cast for them to explain family discipleship time?

Family discipleship times might be small things you do every day. They might also be weekly or monthly times your family spends together. Here are some ideas to get you started:

## ***Daily Family Discipleship Time Ideas***

- **Family Meals** - Plan certain meals that you can share and maybe even cook and clean up together. Pray together and guide the mealtime conversation toward the gospel and Scripture. You could even add Scripture reading/memorization or family devotional to breakfast or dinner.
- **Family Prayer** - At some point in the day—first thing in the morning, last thing at night, on your drive to or from work/school—pray together.
- **Bedtime Routine** - If you have younger children, gather them together before bedtime to read a Bible story. Choose a verse to pray over your children or with your children as you say goodnight.
- **Family Commute** - As you drive the kids to school or activities, leverage your time in the car to sing together, pray together or talk about how your family would like to see the gospel lived out today.

## ***Weekly Family Discipleship Time Ideas***

- **Family Night** - Plan a night that involves family, food, fun and your faith.
  - **Movie Night** - Watch something together that could spark conversations while you eat snacks. Most movies have a theme of rescue, heroism, sacrifice, friendship, redemption or evil being defeated or converted. Use these as jumping-off points for a conversation about the gospel.
  - **Game Night** - Play a board game, a card game or a sport together and then spend some time encouraging each other in the fruit you see the Spirit growing in each other, i.e. patience, kindness, self-control, joy.
  - **Restaurant Night** - Take the family out for dinner and talk about what the Lord is doing in your lives. Seek opportunities to live out your faith in public, to love your server or the people you encounter while you are out.
- **Worship Service** - Go to church services together and afterward discuss what you remember or learned from the teaching.
- **Family Bible Study/Devotions/Worship** - Pick a devotional study, catechism, book of the Bible or use the weekly Kids Ministry resources we pass out and study it together. Sing worship songs together.
- **Community** - Attend worship services, Wednesday Night Bible studies, or get together with other families for the purpose of mutual edification, encouragement and accountability.

- **Weekly Family Traditions** - In general, consider anything that your family does on a regular basis and think about how you might intentionally design the time for family discipleship. This could be just about anything, from watching your favorite show together, sports activities, yard work, grocery shopping, etc.

## *Monthly Family Discipleship Time Ideas*

- **Service** - Find somewhere you can serve together on a regular basis. This could be anything from serving a meal at a homeless shelter, to helping a neighbor with housework, to serving on a serve team at church together.
- **One-on-One Time** - Create space for one parent to take out one child individually—to a movie, to a meal or anything fun and special to that child. If you have more than one child, have a night of the week or month where one of your children receives intentional and complete attention from you. Maybe you can let one of your kids stay up a little later for some special, focused time or you can do something special for them on the same day each month, like a note, a gift or an event.
- **Guys' Night or Girls' Night** - Have the boys of the family do something with Dad or the girls with Mom on a regular basis to encourage and discuss biblical masculinity or femininity. We're not saying that moms shouldn't engage with sons and dads with daughters in these discussions, but rather, there is a unique perspective each brings to these conversations. If you're a single parent, consider how your biblical community might help you with this.
- **Friend Group Get-Together** - Have your friends or neighbors over regularly to foster a ministry of hospitality and evangelism with your kids.

Reading through this list of ideas can be exciting or it can be intimidating. In your mind and heart, actively work against any feelings of discouragement or anxiety about "opportunities lost" or "one more thing" to put on your calendar. Remember that this is a call from the Lord, one for which there is much to enjoy.

9. What times of your day, week or month could you dedicate to family discipleship? How often will you do them (what's your rhythm)?
10. How can you help keep the commitment to "Raise The Up" times so that it is consistent, thoughtful and intentional?

In the chart on the following page, design what you'd like a typical month to look like for your Raise Them Up times. Think about not just when but also where, what and who. Who can remind you and hold you accountable?

# EXAMPLE RAISE THEM UP TIME PLAN

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
<b>S</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend Worship Service Together</li> <li>Family Game/Movie Night</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend Worship Service Together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend Worship Service Together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend Worship Service Together</li> </ul>
<b>M</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>
<b>T</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>
<b>W</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend Church Together</li> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend Church Together</li> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend Church Together</li> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend Church Together</li> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>
<b>T</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family devotional</li> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family devotional</li> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family devotional</li> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family devotional</li> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>
<b>F</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bedtime: Read, pray, sing</li> </ul>
<b>S</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Big family breakfast</li> <li>One-on-one time with child</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Big family breakfast</li> <li>Dinner with friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Big family breakfast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Big family breakfast</li> </ul>

# RAISE THEM UP TIME PLAN

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
S				
M				
T				
W				
T				
F				
S				



# MOMENTS

**Raise Them Up Moments** are capturing and leveraging opportunities in the course of everyday life for the purpose of gospel-centered conversations.

1. Can you think of an unplanned event that has had a profound impact on your life? What was it?

Family discipleship moments are about being observant and prepared to take advantage of opportunities to communicate God's truth whenever circumstances might come your way. Leveraging moments to disciple your children will involve the use of Scripture, and it is important for us to acknowledge the temptation to abuse Scripture to suit our own needs. Family discipleship is not about using Scripture as a means to get your own way, to be made much of or to discourage your children. Remember, much of family discipleship is modeling. In every situation your kids will be looking to you to be the living example of God's truth.

So what should you do? Be prepared and be genuine.

"...but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect..." -1 Peter 3:15

2. Make a list of the goals you have in the discipleship of your family. Think about what you want them to know and what you want to see formed in them.
3. How are your everyday interactions with each other working toward those goals? If they aren't currently, how can they?
4. Can you think of a time you had an unplanned conversation about spiritual matters with your family? How did it go? What could have made it better?
5. What is your practice of confession and repentance like in your home? Making a mistake and asking forgiveness can be a great "Raise Them Up" moment for parents as well as kids. How can your family grow in the way you practice repentance?
6. Are there pervasive idols or ungodly habits in the life of your household that could be addressed with kind words in a family discipleship moment?
7. Is there fruit of the Spirit you'd like to see grow in your family that you can address with family discipleship moments (Gal. 5:22-23)?



8. If you have more than one child, how are your children different? How does that impact what you are trying to do in discipling each of them?

Jesus captured and leveraged discipleship moments often. Read through some of these scriptural examples and consider how Christ leveraged His circumstances in order to disciple.

- **Luke 21:1-4 - *The Widow's Small Copper Coins***  
Christ points to something happening right around His disciples to teach about kingdom economics.
- **Luke 13:1-5 - *The Tower of Siloam***  
Christ points to current events to answer "why bad things happen."
- **Luke 11:37-12:3 - *Dinner With the Pharisees***  
Christ takes advantage of an opportunity to confront sin where He sees it.
- **Mark 10:17-27 - *The Rich Young Ruler***  
Christ teaches His disciples about a right view of wealth after seeing a man saddened by being asked to give it all up.
- **Mark 10:35-45 - *James' and John's Desire to Be Great***  
Christ uses a dispute among His disciples to teach them about true servanthood and humility.

A Raise Them Up moment could come at any time. It might come when you leverage an opportunity to pray over a passing ambulance, to visit a sick friend or when you drive by a funeral or a wedding. It could be in moments of discipline or moments of celebration. It might be to correct, to inform or to encourage. There are myriad opportunities in everyday life that you can leverage to communicate the goodness of God and His call on our lives.

There are two main things we are trying to communicate and teach in Raise Them Up moments.

- **Attributes of God:** to know God (Who is God? What has He done? What is He doing? What is He like?)
- **Godly Character:** to grow in godliness (Who am I? Who has God called me to be? What has He asked of me? How can I become more like Him?)

A great way to be prepared for family discipleship moments in your household is by having a unified language. Deciding on family language, values, goals, etc., with your spouse or close community will help you to be on the same page when opportunities arise, and it will assist in maintaining a level of consistency, regardless of who is having the conversation.

Consider these next few questions as you read through the language examples below.

9. What are attributes of God you'd like your kids to be well aware of? What kind of circumstance might you be able to leverage to communicate those attributes? What will you say?
10. What are character traits and fruit of the Spirit you'd like to see your kids exemplify? What common situations might be opportunities to foster those traits? What will you say?

## ***Developing Family Discipleship Language***

We've created some language that may assist you in capturing your Raise Them Up moments. Below is a list of them you might consider implementing in conversations in your home as you talk about God and what it means to be godly. These short phrases can be used to answer many of life's questions and can be applied to a multitude of circumstances. Imagine getting on your child's level, looking them in the eyes and speaking these truths in a loving manner. Circle or underline the pieces of language that you would like to start using in your home and as you leverage Raise Them Up moments.

### **1. Five Foundational Truths**

- Jesus came to save sinners.
- God is good.
- God is in charge of everything.
- God wants to talk with us.
- God made everything.

### **2. Attributes of God**

- **Wise:** God knows what is best.
- **Generous:** God gives what is best.
- **Loving:** God does what is best.
- **Good:** God is what is best.
- **Unchanging:** God never changes.
- **Creator:** God made everything.
- **Holy:** God is completely perfect and separate from sin.
- **Just:** God is right to punish sin.

- **Faithful:** God always does what He says He will do.
- **Provider:** God meets the needs of His children.
- **Merciful:** God does not give His children the punishment they deserve.
- **Attentive:** God hears and responds to the prayers of His children.
- **Sovereign:** God has the right, wisdom and power to do all that He pleases.
- **Almighty:** Nothing is too hard for God.
- **Compassionate:** God sees, cares and acts when His children are in need.
- **Glorious:** God shows His greatness and worth.
- **Worthy:** Only God deserves all glory.
- **Refuge:** God is a place of safety and protection for His children.
- **Deliverer:** God rescues His children.

### 3. Godly Character

- **Patience:** being slow to anger, waiting kindly and quietly
- **Joy:** delighting in things that honor God
- **Peace:** a calm confidence in God's goodness and power
- **Love:** a caring commitment to God and others over yourself
- **Goodness:** doing the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason
- **Kindness:** being generous with your possessions, your words and your actions
- **Gentleness:** expressing compassion in words and actions
- **Self-control:** freedom from obedience to our sinful thoughts and emotions

### 4. Christian Vocabulary and Phrases

- **Sin:** It's more than just the bad things we think, feel, do and say; it's why we do them. Our hearts are sick with sin.
- **Sinful nature:** All people are slaves of sin without Jesus.
- **Repentance:** to confess your sin and turn away from it to follow Jesus
- **Glorify:** to show, honor and enjoy God as most valuable
- **Pride:** to show, honor and enjoy yourself as most valuable
- **Authority:** the right to be in charge
- **Compassion:** to see, care and act when others are in need

- **Worship:** the right response to the goodness of God
- **Daily bread:** everything we need to gladly glorify the Father
- **Forgiveness:** to release someone from their wrong
- **Disciple:** a friend and follower of Jesus
- **Confession:** telling the truth about your sin
- **God's children** are those who love and trust Jesus.
- **God adopts** into His family those who love and trust Jesus.
- **The kingdom of heaven** is where Jesus is honored as the highest and best King.
- **Heaven** is good because God is there.
- **Grace:** God freely gives His children what they don't deserve.
- **Gospel:** the good news of God's plan to rescue the world from the problem of sin through Jesus Christ
- **The Bible** is God's true Word. It is from God and about God.
- **Jesus:** When we look at Jesus, we see what God is like (because Jesus is God).
- **Prayer:**
  - We pray to the Father because of the Son with the help of the Holy Spirit.
  - There are *four types of prayer*.
    1. Praise and adoration – telling God how great He is
    2. Thanksgiving – thanking God for what He does and gives
    3. Confession – telling the truth about your sin
    4. Request – asking God to do or give something
- There are two ways we can know what is true. We can know with our minds: **understanding**. We can know with our hearts: **belief**.
- **Forgiveness:** God forgives fully, freely and forever.
  - Fully: all my sin, all the way. All of your sin is forgiven and it is forgiven in full.
  - Freely: a gift, not something you can earn or deserve
  - Forever: God's forgiveness is lasting. He does not change His mind or take back His forgiveness.

**Examples in Scripture:** Here is a list of some Scriptures you might consider using in various circumstances as you capture moments in the life of your household for the sake of the gospel.

- **"One Another" Verses:** There are many Scripture references that speak about how we interact with "one another." These can be very useful in Raise The Up moments.
  - Outdo one another in showing honor. -Romans 12:10
  - "Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." -John 13:34
  - Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. - Romans 15:7
  - For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. -Galatians 5:13
  - Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. -Galatians 5:26
  - Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. -Galatians 6:2
  - Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. -Ephesians 4:32
  - Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices... - Colossians 3:9
  - Therefore encourage one another and build one another up... -1 Thessalonians 5:11
  - See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. -1 Thessalonians 5:15
  - And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works... -Hebrews 10:24
  - Do not speak evil against one another, brothers. -James 4:11
  - Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. -1 Peter 4:9
  - Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. -1 John 4:7
- **Diligence/Work Ethic:**
  - And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. -Galatians 6:9
  - Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. - Colossians 3:23-24

- **Sadness:**
  - "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." -Matthew 11:28
  - "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." -Revelation 21:4
  - My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word! -Psalm 119:28
- **Gladness:**
  - But the righteous shall be glad; they shall exult before God; they shall be jubilant with joy! -Psalm 68:3
  - "Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." -Luke 10:20
- **Anger:**
  - Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil. -Psalm 37:8
  - Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil. -Ephesians 4:26-27
- **Complaining:**
  - Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world... -Philippians 2:14-16
- **Fear/Courage:**
  - Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. -Jeremiah 17:7
  - So we can confidently say, "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?" -Hebrews 13:6
  - When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. -Psalm 56:3
  - Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." -Joshua 1:9
- **Encouragement:**
  - But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. -Hebrews 3:13

- **Forgiveness:**
  - "Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him..." -Luke 17:3
  - If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. -1 John 1:9
  
- **Humility/Servanthood:**
  - Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. -Philippians 2:3
  - Whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. -1 Peter 4:11
  
- **Hardship/Suffering:**
  - "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." -John 16:33
  - The LORD is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him. -Nahum 1:7
  - So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. -2 Corinthians 4:16
  
- **Honesty/Integrity:**
  - Let your "yes" be yes and your "no" be no, so that you may not fall under condemnation. - James 5:12
  - Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but he who makes his ways crooked will be found out. -Proverbs 10:9
  - Lying lips are an abomination to the LORD, but those who act faithfully are his delight. - Proverbs 12:22
  
- **Kindness:**
  - "And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them." -Luke 6:31
  - See that no one repays anyone evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. -1 Thessalonians 5:15

- **Temptation:**

- Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith... -1 Peter 5:8-9
- Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. -Ephesians 6:10-11

- **Identity:**

- He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will... -Ephesians 1:5
- Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. -2 Corinthians 5:17
- I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. -Galatians 2:20
- But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God... -John 1:12



# MILESTONES

**Raise Them Up Milestones** are marking and making occasions to celebrate and commemorate significant spiritual milestones of God's work in the life of the family and child.

1. If you could relive one day of your life over and over again, which would you choose? If you could make it so that one day of your life never happened, which would you choose?

In our culture we celebrate many milestones: of age in birthdays, of marriage in anniversaries and of accomplishment with awards, licenses or degrees. Ceremonies, rituals, traditions: These are all common around milestones. If you imagine your life like a line graph of events, milestones are likely both the highest peaks and the lowest valleys.

A Raise Them Up milestone is an event or change that is so significant, so profound, that it is worthy of recurring reflection. It could be something that brings back joy to remember (the birth of a child) or something that brings up difficulty or pain to think back on (the loss of a loved one). What they will all have in common is that they will all be experiences that bear witness to God's faithfulness.

Of course, milestones are not the only times that a family should be discipling, but they should be part of an overall plan to see your kids brought up in the Lord. Raise Them Up milestones are also a tremendous opportunity to extend the discipleship process to your child's extended family, friends, your neighbors and your biblical community.

2. What are the most profoundly joyful and wonderful things that you have ever done or that have ever happened to you? How have you seen God work through them?
3. What are the most profoundly sorrowful and distressful things that you have ever done or that have ever happened to you? How have you seen God work through them?
4. Are there events in your past that you wish had been marked more profoundly or intentionally with gospel truth?

**Examples in Scripture:** The Bible has many instances where God's people were given something to remind them of God and His faithfulness. Consider what we've seen God's people do in the past to commemorate and celebrate what God has done by reading some of these passages.

- **The Rainbow** (Genesis 9:12-17) – God gave His people a sign for all time to remind them of His wrath and His promise.
- **Building Altars** (Genesis 8:20, 12:7-8, 35:1; Exodus 17:15; Joshua 8:30; Judges 6:24; 1 Samuel 7:17; 2 Samuel 24:25) – God's people built altars in order to honor God and commemorate what He had accomplished and to remind the people of what God was like.
- **Festivals and Holy Days** (Exodus 12:1-20; Leviticus 16) – God initiated several Holy Days (holidays) and festivals to remind His people of His goodness, power and history of faithfulness.
- **Jar of Manna** (Exodus 16:31-33) – God commanded Moses to fill a jar with manna so that future generations would be able to see the keepsake and be reminded of how God cared for His people in the wilderness.
- **The Rescuer** (Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 7:18, 26:8) – Throughout the Old Testament, God reminded His people time and time again of how He had rescued them from slavery in Egypt.
- **The Stones of Remembrance** (Joshua 4) – God instructed Joshua to place 12 stones (for the 12 tribes of Israel) next to the Jordan River so that the people would be reminded of how God provided a way into the Promised Land. This also provided a way to tell the next generation about God's provision.
- **Ebenezer** (1 Samuel 7:12) – Samuel placed a stone near a battlefield to remind the people that God is their help and wins their battles for them.
- **Jesus Gets His Name** (Matthew) 1:20-21 – Names, name changes and even nicknames often have meaning in the Bible. They commemorated some change in a person's life or pointed toward God's mission.
- **The Last Supper** (1 Corinthians 11:23-26) – Jesus instituted a ritual meal in which His people would be reminded of His broken body and shed blood on the cross.
- **The People of God Are Called Christians** (Acts 11:25-26) – To designate the disciples as those who follow Christ, they were given the title "Christians."
- **Baptizing the Jailer** (Acts 16:25-34) – In response to the Lord saving him and adopting him as His son, the jailer was baptized and cooked a meal to celebrate with his household.

5. You can see in many of the scriptural examples that milestones often include a physical reminder. Can you think of some items, rituals or places that serve as reminders to you of God's faithfulness in your life?
6. Did you have any family traditions growing up that you'd love to see continue in your family? Do you have any family traditions now that could be better leveraged for a Christian purpose?
7. What family traditions could you create in the way you celebrate birthdays that will bless each of your children as individuals and point them to love and fear the Lord?
8. What are some common "rites of passage" you can think of for boys and girls in our society? What are some common or unique "rites of passage" you might consider for your own child?
9. A "pilgrimage" is a trip with spiritual significance. Is there anywhere that your family could travel as a kind of family pilgrimage?

Raise Them Up milestones may be manufactured by you (made) or they may happen unpredictably or unexpectedly (marked).

## ***Making Family Discipleship Milestones***

One of the best ways to make a family discipleship milestone is by redeeming the way you celebrate birthdays, baptisms, deaths, holidays or other anniversaries.

- **Birthdays:**
  - Have each family member take turns encouraging the birthday child or parent with ways they've seen them grow that year and then pray for their next year.
  - Invite friends and neighbors to celebrate what the Lord has done in the life of the child or parent and pray for even more growth.
  - Set individual spiritual goals for the next year.
- **Holidays:**
  - Read Advent Scriptures leading up to Christmas.
  - Read Lent Scriptures leading up to Easter.
  - Bake a birthday cake for Jesus at Christmas.

- Serve together somewhere for a holiday.
  - Invite unbelieving friends or neighbors to celebrate a holiday with you.
  - Commemorate Thanksgiving by creatively expressing what each of you is grateful for through prayer, crafts or sharing.
  - Celebrate the New Year by making spiritually-focused family resolutions or goals.
  - On Veteran's Day, write letters to people you love and pray for them.
- **Anniversaries:**
    - If you're married, celebrate your anniversary with your whole family. Have the kids celebrate and share creatively what God has done in keeping mom and dad together.
    - Commemorate a loved one who has died on the anniversary of their death and leverage the opportunity to testify to the faithfulness of God and the reality of our hope with Him in eternity.
    - Celebrate the anniversary of your child's salvation and baptism by treating it like you would a birthday—with a cake, cards, blessings and presents.
- **Family Adventures:**
    - A family mission trip
    - A family camping trip/retreat
    - Annual family vacations
    - Moving to a new house or city, getting a new job
- **Rites of Passage:**
    - Child dedication
    - A ceremony or intentional experience with close friends or family to acknowledge a transition to manhood or womanhood
    - Graduation
    - Winning or completing a competition

After your child crosses a milestone, you may decide to give them new responsibilities. This could be coming to church services with mom and dad, getting a driver's license, getting a job, taking communion, reaching a savings goal, cooking for themselves, doing laundry or yard work, paying a bill, serving in ministry, etc. Giving a gift may also serve as a symbol of remembrance. This could be a family keepsake, a purity ring, a new Bible, a letter, a nickname or their first "fill-in the-blank."

## ***Marking Family Discipleship Milestones***

Unlike “making” family discipleship milestones, “marking” is what we do to commemorate the work of God in our child’s life in ways that we didn’t see coming. You can make a milestone out of a significant birthday or out of high school graduation because you know when they will happen. However, for big life events like when your son or daughter becomes a Christian or when a loved one dies, you can find ways to mark and commemorate what God has done even though you didn’t know when it would happen.

## ***Making a Milestone Plan***

Spend some time considering the different life stages and events that your child might encounter and design some Raise Them Up milestones that you could dedicate to the Lord along the way.

## ***Ideas and Examples***

- **Birth:**
  - Choose a verse to pray over your child nightly as you put them to bed and share that verse with your community.
  - Dedicate your child to the Lord along with your church family through child dedication.
- **1 Year Old:**
  - Throw a birthday party with your family and friends. Testify to the goodness of God that you’ve seen in your child’s life, reaffirm your commitment to raising them in the way of the Lord and invite some friends to pray for specific things you’d like to see in your child’s life.
- **2 - 4 Years Old:**
  - Get your child their first Bible. The Jesus Storybook Bible is a good first choice.
- **5 - 10 Years Old:**
  - Hope and pray to celebrate their salvation and baptism.
  - Take your child on annual family adventures where you explore, serve and talk about God.
  - Involve them in annual birthday and holiday celebrations to bless them and cultivate a love and fear of God.

- **11 - 14 Years Old:**

- Have a more substantial talk about purity and sexuality.
- Give them their first study Bible.
- Find an opportunity for them to serve in the church.
- Add significant responsibilities.
- Consider having them join the family in taking communion.
- Send them or go with them on their first mission trip.

- **15 - 17 Years Old:**

- Organize a "rite of passage" ceremony/adventure.
- Celebrate them getting their driver's license.
- Add responsibilities that build the independence they will need after high school.

- **18 Years Old and Up:**

- Celebrate their graduation/college acceptance/job placement/launch into independence.

# RAISE THEM UP MILESTONES PLAN

YOUR IDEAS

**IDEAS FOR FAMILY  
TRADITIONS**

**IDEAS FOR FAMILY  
ADVENTURES**

**IDEAS FOR GIFTS/  
MOMENTOS TO GIVE**

**IDEAS FOR  
BIRTHDAY /  
ANNIVERSARY  
TRADITIONS**



# RAISE THEM UP MILESTONES PLAN

	SAMPLE	YOUR IDEAS / PLANS
<b>BIRTH</b>		
<b>1</b>		
<b>2 - 4</b>		
<b>5 - 10</b>		
<b>11 - 14</b>		
<b>15 - 17</b>		
<b>18+</b>		



# CLOSING THOUGHTS

As you've worked through the Raise Them Up framework for family discipleship in this guide, we pray that it has been useful to you. We hope that you've been blessed by the conversations you've had with your family and close community. These lists, ideas, questions and thoughts to process are not meant to assign failure; they are meant to encourage. Things will go wrong, and sometimes that is the most exciting part of the adventure we've been called to in family discipleship. The methods and means presented in the guide are meant to whet your appetite for the Word of God and for the pursuit of spiritual health in your home.

We don't disciple our families out of heartless duty. We disciple our families because God uses these efforts to influence the hearts of our children, our friends, our church and ourselves. We study God's Word because it is true and useful, we pray because God answers, and we worship together as a family because God deserves it.

As you start to work out these ideas in your own home, know that we are praying for you and are here to help you and walk beside you. We encourage you to be diligent to seek accountability for how you want your home led in family discipleship and to hold others accountable, as well. Love one another as God, in Christ, has loved you and rejoice in doing so. Being a parent isn't always a breeze, but it is a privilege and a joy.

