

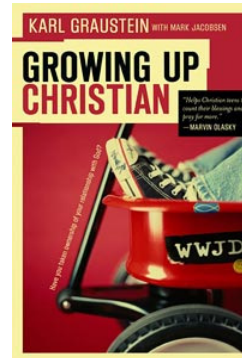
GROWING UP CHRISTIAN STUDY GUIDE for Small Groups



REACH teens growing up in the church today

POINT them to Christ

INSPIRE them to live all out for Him



E-BOOK

This e-book is a study guide for the book [Growing Up Christian](#) by Karl Graustein published by [P&R Publishing](#), 2005, ISBN 978-0-87552-611-9.

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For more information about the book and the author, please visit www.growingupchristian.com.

Please feel free to email this document to anyone you think will benefit from it,
and feel free to post it on your website or blog.

OVERVIEW

What is in this guide anyway?

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GETTING STARTED

A few things to keep in mind

Teen Readers

Thank you so much for looking at this guide and for being willing to study more about God and seeking to strengthen your faith. My prayer is that each of you will take ownership of your faith and develop a vibrant, joyful, growing, personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Structure of the Book

The book is designed with a consistent structure to each chapter. The goal is to draw in the reader and walk him or her through the chapter in a clear and consistent pattern.

Here is the structure for most of the chapters:

1. **Opening Story** – an illustration relating to the main theme of the chapter
2. **Danger / Tendency** – a unique danger church kids face
3. **Take His Word for It** – a look at what the Bible says about the theme of the chapter
4. **A Look in the Mirror** – questions for self-evaluation
5. **Tips for Growth** – practical suggestions to overcome the danger and grow in Christ
6. **A Call to Action** – a closing thought
7. **Questions for Reflection and Discussion** – questions to guide personal application or group discussion of the chapter
8. **Sing a New Song** – lyrics from a song related to the topic of the chapter

Structure of the Guide

This study guide also has a consistent structure throughout:

1. **Pre-Assignment** – a few things to do before your group meets
2. **A Look in the Mirror** – a self-reflection section, which is identical to the section in the book
3. **One Question** – a chance for you to write down one question that came to mind as you read the chapter
4. **Small Group Discussion Questions** - the small group discussion questions found at the end of the chapter, plus a few more.
5. **Take Away** – a chance to reflect on the lessons learned during the group discussion of the chapter

SUGGESTIONS FOR LEADERS

As you lead your small group discussions

Encouragement

First let me encourage you as you seek to reach the hearts and minds of the teens in your youth group or discussion group. I pray that God gives you wisdom and creativity for the task. And I pray that God will use you to help each teen develop a faith and a walk of their own.

Get Them Reading

Teens are busy with school, extracurriculars, and work. Be creative in getting them to read the book before you discuss it. You may even want to take 20 minutes and have them spread out and read the chapter. This is a simple way to make sure they read it, and it will be fresh on their minds as you transition to discussion.

Get Them Talking

Prayerfully consider ways to get your teens talking. That is, get them talking and resist lots of talking by adults to them. Ask good questions that require more than “yes” or “no” answers. Follow up initial answers with, “why do you think that?” or “can anyone add to that?” or “what do the rest of you think of that?”

Get Them in the Word

Help your teens see the connection between the Bible and their lives today. Have them bring their Bibles to each meeting, have them read it aloud, and have them make connections to their lives today.

Feel free to e-mail me at kgraustein@gmail.com.

CHAPTER 1: CHURCH KIDS

The dynamics of growing up Christian

Pre-Assignment

- Read chapter 1
- Complete the “A Look in the Mirror” self-evaluation below or in the book
- Write down one question you had as you read the chapter

A Look in the Mirror

How do you know if you are a church kid? You’re a church kid if many of these statements apply to you.

(Check each one that applies to you)

- Your parents are Christians.
- Your parents became Christians before you were born.
- You have considered yourself a Christian for most of your life.
- You have attended church most of your life.
- You attend youth group meetings or other church ministry meetings on a regular basis.
- You often read the Bible.
- You know most of the stories of the Bible.
- You often pray.
- Your family has family Bible studies.
- Most of your friends are Christians.
- You attend a Christian school or you are home schooled by your parents.

One Question:

Write down at least one question that came to your mind as you read this chapter:

Small Group Discussion Questions

Here are the small group discussion questions found at the end of the chapter, plus a few more:

1. What is a church kid?
2. Are you a church kid? Which qualities of a church kid apply to your life? In what ways is your experience different?
3. What are some of the blessings of growing up in a Christian home?
4. What are some challenges church kids face?
5. What do you think about the J.C. Ryle quote on page 21?
6. What did Paul mean when he told Timothy to “continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it”? (II Timothy 3:14-15)
7. The subtitle of this book is “Have you taken ownership of your relationship with God?” What does this mean? What is your answer? How would you recognize it if another person has taken ownership of their faith?
8. Section two of this book is titled “Thinking Biblically” and section three is titled “Living Biblically.” What is the connection between thinking biblically and living biblically?
9. What do you hope to gain from reading this book?

Take Away

What is one point that challenged you from the small group discussion or the reading?

What is one specific application for your life today?

CHAPTER 2: IN or OUT?

The danger of false assurance

Pre-Assignment

- Read chapter 2
- Complete the “A Look in the Mirror” self-evaluation below or in the book
- Write down one question you had as you read the chapter

A Look in the Mirror

Take a few moments to read, consider, and answer each of these questions.

When You Are By Yourself...

1. Do you pray? What do you pray about?
2. Do you read the Bible? Do you enjoy reading your Bible? Do you experience God teaching you when you read your Bible?
3. Do you worship God? Why do you worship?
4. Do you think about God? What aspects of God do you think about?
5. Do you confess your sin to God?

Your Motives

1. Why do you pray?
2. Why do you read your Bible?

3. Why do you go to church?
4. Why do you attend youth meetings?
5. What do you think about in times of corporate worship?
6. Why do you do good works?
7. Why do you acknowledge sin in your life?
8. Why do you obey your parents?

Your Relationships

1. Do you talk about God with your friends?
2. Do you tell non-Christians about your faith?
3. Do you have a good relationship with your parents?
4. Do you enjoy spending time with true Christians?
5. Do you desire to serve others?

One Question:

Write down at least one question that came to your mind as you read this chapter:

Small Group Discussion Questions

Here are the small group discussion questions found at the end of the chapter, plus a few more:

1. What is false assurance of salvation? What is true assurance of salvation?
2. Why do church kids tend to assume they are Christians, even if they are not? Why is this so dangerous?
3. How does a person become a Christian?
4. How can you know if a person is a Christian? What kind of words and actions would you expect in the life of a true Christian?
5. Who is one person you know that you are confident is a Christian? How do you know?
6. Why is it important to consider the thoughts and motives behind your actions?
7. What did you learn about yourself through the “Look in the Mirror” II Corinthians 13 self-test?
8. Are you a Christian? How do you know?
9. Do your parents believe you are a Christian? Why?
10. If you are a Christian, do you remember a specific time when you first believed?
11. What is the gospel? What does it mean to believe the gospel? Why did Jesus have to die on the cross?

Take Away

What is one point that challenged you from the small group discussion or the reading?

What is one specific application for your life today?

CHAPTER 3: UN-AMAZING GRACE

The danger of taking the grace of God for granted

Pre-Assignment

- Read chapter 3
- Complete the “A Look in the Mirror” self-evaluation below or in the book
- Write down one question you had as you read the chapter

A Look in the Mirror

Read the following statements, and rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10. 10 means you strongly agree and 1 means you strongly disagree.

- _____ 1. I am extremely grateful that God has saved me.
- _____ 2. I regularly think of what my life would be like if God had not saved me.
- _____ 3. When I look at my life, I see a lot of sin.
- _____ 4. I am often amazed that God forgives me, even when I repeatedly sin.
- _____ 5. When I pray, I frequently thank God for forgiving my sins.
- _____ 6. I love to worship God and express my love for him in song.
- _____ 7. I really enjoy talking with others about God.
- _____ 8. I look for opportunities to share my faith with others.
- _____ 9. I am extremely excited about spending eternity in heaven.
- _____ 10. I regularly thank God for saving me from eternity in hell.

One Question:

Write down at least one question that came to your mind as you read this chapter:

Small Group Discussion Questions

Here are the small group discussion questions found at the end of the chapter, plus a few more:

1. What is *grace*? What is forgiving grace? What is saving grace?
2. What does it mean to be amazed at the grace of God in your life?
3. Who is one person you know who is clearly amazed at the grace of God in his or her life? How do you see it evidenced in his or her life?
4. Why do church kids tend to lack an appreciation for the grace of God? Why is this dangerous?
5. How do individuals who become Christians as adults tend to vary from those who were saved at a young age? Why are they different?
6. What did you learn about yourself from your self-evaluation? Would you describe yourself as amazed or un-amazed at the grace of God? Why or why not?
7. What advice would you give someone who wants to grow in amazement of the grace of God in his or her life?
8. Consider the seven tips for growing in your appreciation for the grace of God. Which one do you already do well? Which one do you feel you most need to concentrate on in the next few months?
9. How should someone pray if he or she wants to grow in amazement of the grace of God in his or her life?

Take Away

What is one point that challenged you from the small group discussion or the reading?

What is one specific application for your life today?

CHAPTER 4: THE COST OF COMPROMISE

The danger of loving the world

Pre-Assignment

- Read chapter 4
- Complete the “A Look in the Mirror” self-evaluation below or in the book
- Write down one question you had as you read the chapter

A Look in the Mirror

Take a few minutes to consider what influences you.

Briefly answer each question.

1. What are your favorite TV shows, movies, and bands?
2. What values do they promote?
3. How do their values compare to the Word of God?
4. Do you critically evaluate TV shows or music CDs? How?
5. Is there anything you refuse to watch or listen to? Why?

6. What types of Internet sites do you tend to visit?
7. How do you determine if a site is worth exploring?
8. Do you think your entertainment habits please God?
9. What qualities do you look for in friends?
10. Do you see these qualities in your current friends?
11. Do your friends influence you toward godliness or worldliness?

One Question:

Write down at least one question that came to your mind as you read this chapter:

Small Group Discussion Questions

Here are the small group discussion questions found at the end of the chapter, plus a few more:

1. What does it mean to love the world?
2. What does John Piper mean when he talked about “endless nibbling at the table of the world?”

3. Why is loving the world a particular danger church kids face?
4. What is wrong with loving the world?
5. Why is hiding your love for the world from your parents a dangerous sign?
6. What are the key ways you are influenced by the world? How do music, TV, movies, and friendships influence you?
7. How effectively do you evaluate television, movies, music, Internet, & friendships?
8. What is the discipline of watching? How does someone develop the discipline of watching?
9. What is one way you can love the world less in the next month?
10. What is one way you can love God more in the next month?
11. How can your parents, pastor, and friends help you in loving the world less and loving God more?

Take Away

What is one point that challenged you from the small group discussion or the reading?

What is one specific application for your life today?

CHAPTER 5: GREATNESS

Cultivating a humble heart

Pre-Assignment

- Read chapter 5
- Complete the “A Look in the Mirror” self-evaluation below or in the book
- Write down one question you had as you read the chapter

A Look in the Mirror

Consider the following characteristics of the proud, and mark each one that applies to you.

- I often talk about myself and my accomplishments.
- When I am in a group setting, I regularly compare myself to others.
- When I pray in public, I am quite concerned with what others think.
- In times of public worship, I often wonder what others think of me.
- After a youth meeting or a gathering of friends, I spend a lot of time thinking about what I said, and I wonder what people think of me.
- In a group setting, I am hesitant to speak because I fear making a mistake or saying something stupid.
- I look for ways to serve in public so I can be noticed and praised.
- I do not confess sin to others because I don't want others to know my weaknesses.
- I am driven to get straight A's in school and nothing else will do.
- I like when others ask me for advice.
- I like being the leader because people look up to me.

- I fear leading because I may mess up in front of others.
- I am extremely concerned with my clothes. I spend a lot of time thinking about what I will wear before going to school or out with friends.
- I like to dress in a way that draws attention to myself.
- I laugh at other's mistakes, but blush at my own mistakes.

Consider the following characteristics of the humble, and mark each one that applies to you.

- I am amazed that the infinite, holy, all-powerful God loves me and wants to have a relationship with me.
- I often think about how much greater God is than I am.
- I understand my weaknesses, and I am willing to talk about them with others.
- When I serve others, my primary goals are to bless them and honor God.
- I enjoy leading so I can serve others as I use my gifts.
- I enjoy following so I can assist the leader and serve others.
- I do not mind serving in private ways, even if never recognized or thanked.
- I often ask others for advice.
- I regularly study the Bible for guidance and direction.
- I compare my life to the standards of God.
- I regularly confess my sin to others.
- I look for ways to spend time with individuals who may not be considered cool or popular.
- I realize I am going to make mistakes and say stupid things so when it happens I usually am not surprised or embarrassed.

- I know how to laugh at myself.
- I dress modestly.
- I realize my gifts and talents are from God and he deserves the glory for my accomplishments.
- I regularly ask my parents for their advice.
- I seriously consider my parents' advice and requests.

One Question:

Write down at least one question that came to your mind as you read this chapter:

Small Group Discussion Questions

Here are the small group discussion questions found at the end of the chapter, plus a few more:

1. How does Robert Frost's poem help us understand the choice we have between the path of humility and the path of pride?
2. What is an example of a moment where you had to decide between humility and pride? What did you decide? How did you make your decision?
3. How would you define *pride*? *humility*?
4. Why is it hard to be humble?
5. How would you define *self-righteousness*? Why do church kids struggle with self-righteousness?
6. What does *self-preoccupation* mean? How can a people tell if they are preoccupied with themselves? How is this related to pride?
7. What are the promises of God toward the humble? What do you think about these promises?

8. What prideful characteristics do you see in your life?
9. What is the role of the Holy Spirit and what is your role in growing in humility?
10. Why should a person pray for humility?
11. Why would studying the attributes of God or creation help us grow in humility? Why would learning a new skill help us grow in humility?
12. Who is one humble person you know? How do you see humility demonstrated in his or her life?

Take Away

What is one point that challenged you from the small group discussion or the reading?

What is one specific application for your life today?

CHAPTER 6: MORE THAN MIMICKING MOM AND DAD

Developing personal biblical convictions

Pre-Assignment

- Read chapter 5
- Complete the “A Look in the Mirror” self-evaluation below or in the book
- Write down one question you had as you read the chapter

A Look in the Mirror

What questions go through your mind as you try to decide if you should attend a movie with your friends?

(Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10. 1 means never and 10 means always.)

- _____ 1. What would my parents think?
- _____ 2. Will anyone find out?
- _____ 3. Will I get in trouble?
- _____ 4. What do I want?
- _____ 5. What do my friends want me to do?
- _____ 6. What would Jesus do?
- _____ 7. What does the Bible say about this?
- _____ 8. What does God think about this?

Self-Test #1

Take a few minutes to consider and answer these questions.

1. What would you say to someone who asked why you believe God exists?
2. What would you say to someone who asked why you believe the Bible is true?
3. What would you say to someone who asked how to tell if something is right or wrong or if something is true or false?
4. What would you say to someone who asked why it is wrong to lie?
5. What would you say to someone who asked how you know heaven is real?
6. What would you say to someone who asked you how you know Satan is real?
7. What would you say to someone who asked why you believe Christianity is true and other faiths (such as the Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, and Islamic faiths) are false?
8. What would you say to someone who asked why you attend church every Sunday?
9. What would you say to someone who asked how you know Jesus truly was God and wasn't just a great prophet?
10. What would you say to someone who asked why you are a Christian?

Self-Test #2

How would your parents rate your motives in comparison to the Word of God?

Use a scale of scale of 1 to 10. 1 means it does not line up with the Bible and 10 means it completely lines up.

- _____ 1. Why you attend youth group meetings
- _____ 2. Why you attend church on Sundays
- _____ 3. Why you pray
- _____ 4. Why you read the Bible
- _____ 5. Why you have the friends you do
- _____ 6. Why you surf the Internet
- _____ 7. Why you read books
- _____ 8. Why you watch TV
- _____ 9. Why you read magazines
- _____ 10. Why you do or do not date
- _____ 11. Your goals in life
- _____ 12. Your view of Jesus
- _____ 13. Your view of the Holy Spirit
- _____ 14. How you treat your siblings
- _____ 15. How you honor your parents

Note: Consider having your parents rate you in these fifteen areas.

One Question:

Write down at least one question that came to your mind as you read this chapter:

Small Group Discussion Questions

Here are the small group discussion questions found at the end of the chapter, plus a few more:

1. What is a conviction? Why are they important?
2. What is a personal conviction? What is a biblical conviction?
3. What can we learn from the data presented on page 98?
4. Why do church kids tend to mimic the convictions of their parents? Why is this dangerous?
5. Can you think of any area in which you mimic your parents' convictions?
6. In the section called "A Look in the Mirror", you evaluated yourself in three different areas:
 - a. What thoughts most commonly go through your mind when making a decision?
 - b. What is an example of an area in which you do not have a *personal* conviction?
 - c. What is an example of an area in which you do not have a *biblical* conviction?
7. Can you recall a time where you had an in depth conversation with a mature Christian that helped you understand their values and convictions? What did you talk about and what did you learn?
8. How can you use the Bible to develop a conviction about a particular topic (like going to a parties, attending movies, listening to music, playing computer games, surfing the Internet...)?
9. Why is prayer vital in developing convictions?

Take Away

What is one point that challenged you from the small group discussion or the reading?

What is one specific application for your life today?

CHAPTER 7: FAMILIAR YET THANKFUL

Growing in gratefulness for the blessings from God

Pre-Assignment

- Read chapter 7
- Complete the “A Look in the Mirror” self-evaluation below or in the book
- Write down one question you had as you read the chapter

A Look in the Mirror

Gratefulness Self-Test: *On a scale of 1 to 10 rate your level of gratitude for each. 1 means not grateful at all and 10 means you are extremely grateful.*

- _____ 1. God creating the world
- _____ 2. God’s love for me
- _____ 3. God sending his Son to die on the cross for me
- _____ 4. God saving me
- _____ 5. God never changes
- _____ 6. God hearing all my prayers and knowing each one of my needs
- _____ 7. God being holy and never sinning
- _____ 8. God being perfectly wise and knowing everything
- _____ 9. God providing me the Bible to help me grow in my knowledge of him and his will
- _____ 10. God providing me the Bible to encourage and direct me
- _____ 11. God helping me to read the Bible on a daily basis
- _____ 12. God placing me in a Christian family

- _____ 13. God giving me my parents
- _____ 14. God using my parents to teach and train me in his ways
- _____ 15. God using my parents to tell me the gospel
- _____ 16. God placing my family in our church
- _____ 17. God using my pastor to help me grow in my knowledge of God
- _____ 18. God providing many opportunities for me to serve in my church

Gratefulness Over Time

- ✓ Go back to each of your answers above and rate your level of gratefulness today compared to your gratitude a year ago, using the following symbols: “+” means it has increased, “-” means it has decreased, and “=” means it has stayed the same.

One Question:

Write down at least one question that came to your mind as you read this chapter:

Small Group Discussion Questions

Here are the small group discussion questions found at the end of the chapter, plus a few more:

1. Why does our gratitude for someone or something tend to fade over time? Why do we often lack gratitude for things we are familiar with?
2. Why should we be grateful for growing up in a Christian environment?
3. What is the difference between being thankful for the Giver and being thankful for the gift? How are they related?
4. Why is it so hard to be thankful in all circumstances?

5. In the section “A Look In The Mirror,” what did you learn about your gratefulness for God, the Bible, your parents, and your church? Is your gratefulness increasing, decreasing, or staying the same?
6. How would you counsel a friend who wants to grow in gratitude?
7. What is the role of prayer in growing in gratitude? What is the role of the Bible in growing in gratitude?
8. Why do many teens have a poor relationship with their parents? What do you think God wants the relationship between a teenager and his or her parents to look like?
9. What do teenagers do that harm their relationship with their parents? What is one thing you can do this week that will strengthen your relationship with your parents?
10. How can you get more involved in your local church? Who is one person you can thank for their service in your church?

Take Away

What is one point that challenged you from the small group discussion or the reading?

What is one specific application for your life today?

CHAPTER 8: BUILDING A FIRM FOUNDATION

Loving the truths of Scripture

Pre-Assignment

- Read chapter 8
- Complete the “A Look in the Mirror” self-evaluation below or in the book
- Write down one question you had as you read the chapter

A Look in the Mirror

Below are nine truths from the Word of God. Briefly explain why each is important in the Christian faith.

Scripture says...

1. God never changes.
2. God does not lie.
3. God works all things for good for Christians.
4. Every person is born sinful and has a sinful nature.
5. Salvation is by faith alone.

6. We reap what we sow.
7. All Scripture is God-breathed and God-inspired.
8. One day everyone will stand before the judgment seat of God.
9. Some day Christ will return.

Match the Truth with the Situation.

Which truth, letters a-e, will help you with situations 1-10?

Situations:

- _____ 1. You cannot sleep at night because you are anxious about a big test tomorrow.
- _____ 2. You need to encourage your friend whose mother just got diagnosed with cancer.
- _____ 3. You're trying to decide what college to attend when you graduate.
- _____ 4. You need to decide if you will attend a particular movie.
- _____ 5. You just had a conflict with your parents.
- _____ 6. Your employer called and asked you to work all day on Sunday.
- _____ 7. You just discovered your best friend cheated on his history test.
- _____ 8. You cannot overcome a particular sin in your life.
- _____ 9. Your friend asks you what's so important about attending church.
- _____ 10. Your college professor says the Bible isn't inspired by God. He believes it is just good writings by good people from the first century.

Choices:

- a. Truths regarding the character of God (i.e. all-knowing, all-powerful, never changes...)
- b. Truths regarding the Word of God (i.e. inspired by God, powerful, applicable to our lives...)
- c. Truths regarding the nature of man (i.e. created in God's image, sinful by nature, can have a personal relationship with God...)
- d. Truths regarding Christ and his death on the cross (i.e. Jesus lived a sinless life, his death paid the price for my sins, his righteousness is credited to me...)
- e. Truths regarding the church (i.e. God wants unity in the church, God has equipped people to serve in the church, believers are to gather together...)

One Question:

Write down at least one question that came to your mind as you read this chapter:

Small Group Discussion Questions

Here are the small group discussion questions found at the end of the chapter, plus a few more:

1. What is doctrine? Why is it important to study biblical doctrine?
2. Why does the study of doctrine seem to intimidate some Christians?
3. What is the difference between firsthand and secondhand knowledge of the biblical truths?
4. Why do church kids tend to have secondhand knowledge of biblical truths? Why is this dangerous?
5. What is the relationship between knowing biblical truth and applying it to your life? What is an example of a biblical truth that you currently apply to your life?
6. What does the Great Commission say about teaching others? How should this affect our pursuit of studying biblical truths?
7. What does it mean to watch your life and doctrine closely? What is one area in which you need to watch yourself closely?
8. In the section “A Look In the Mirror,” what did you learn about your knowledge of key biblical truths? What did you learn about your application of doctrine to everyday circumstances?
9. Why is it important to be both knowledgeable and passionate about biblical truths?
10. Which doctrinal area would you like to focus on in the next few months? What can you do to study it? How can

your parents and pastor help you in this?

Take Away

What is one point that challenged you from the small group discussion or the reading?

What is one specific application for your life today?

CHAPTER 9: BANKING ON GOD

Learning to trust God

Pre-Assignment

- Read chapter 9
- Complete the “A Look in the Mirror” self-evaluation below or in the book
- Write down one question you had as you read the chapter

A Look in the Mirror

What is the opportunity you have to trust God when...

1. You have to study for and take final exams?
2. You are babysitting the neighbor’s children and the two-year-old throws up?
3. You have to give an oral presentation in history class?
4. You are trying out for the varsity football or volleyball team?
5. You get cut from the basketball team?
6. You fall and break your wrist?
7. You fail a math test?
8. You don’t get accepted by the college you want to attend?
9. School is difficult for you, and no matter how hard you try you cannot get good grades?

10. You don't have many friends at school?

11. Note: A list of possible answers is given in the book at the end of chapter 9.

One Question:

Write down at least one question that came to your mind as you read this chapter:

Small Group Discussion Questions

Here are the small group discussion questions found at the end of the chapter, plus a few more:

1. What does it mean to trust God?
2. Why is it easier to trust ourselves than God?
3. Why is it easier to trust our parents, pastors, teachers, and friends than God? Why is this dangerous?
4. How are your parents, pastors, teachers, and friends instruments God uses to guide you?
5. Why is God worthy to be trusted? What attribute of God gives you the most confidence to trust him? Why?
6. When do you find it hardest to trust God?
7. Why should we trust God in trials?
8. Can you think of a time in your life where God clearly used a trial for your good? What happened?
9. In the section "A Look In the Mirror," what did you learn about yourself in the first chart? The second chart?
10. What is one current situation in your life where you have an opportunity to trust God?
11. Which of the five tips would you like to work on in the next month?

Take Away

What is one point that challenged you from the small group discussion or the reading?

What is one specific application for your life today?

CHAPTER 10: THE FIGHT OF YOUR LIFE

Battling sin

Pre-Assignment

- Read chapter 10
- Complete the “A Look in the Mirror” self-evaluation below or in the book
- Write down one question you had as you read the chapter

A Look in the Mirror

Consider each statement below, and mark each one that describes why you fight your sin.

I try to stop sinning so...

- I will be well-respected by my friends
- I will be well-respected by adults around me
- I will be popular at school
- My parents will be happy
- I wont get into trouble
- God will be pleased
- I wont have to feel guilty
- I wont get grounded
- I can be happy
- I can earn more privileges

- I can be thought of as a leader
- I want to live according the standards of the Bible

Take few minutes to consider these scenarios. List possible wrong motives, desires, or cravings that could drive each wrong action.

1. Handing in a history paper that you copied off the Internet.
2. Sneaking out of your house in the middle of the night to hang out with your friends.
3. Listening to secular music that your parents wouldn't approve of and hiding it from them.
4. Lying to your parents about the people you talk with in Instant Messaging and the Internet.
5. Yelling at your sibling for coming into your room without your permission.
6. Slandering your science teacher as you talk with your closest friends.
7. Dating someone you know your parents will not approve of and hiding it from them.
8. Choosing to not speak up when your friends begin to gossip about a classmate.
9. Stealing a candy bar from the local 7-11.

Note: Possible answers are listed in the book at the end of chapter 10.

How Do You Fight Sin?

Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10. 1 means you never do it and 10 means you always do it.

To fight my sin...

- _____ 1. I pray to God for help
- _____ 2. I ask my parents for help and advice
- _____ 3. I get counsel from my pastor
- _____ 4. I read and study my Bible
- _____ 5. I memorize Scripture verses relating to my sin
- _____ 6. I talk with my friends
- _____ 7. I find someone to hold me accountable to changing
- _____ 8. I promise myself that I won't do it again
- _____ 9. I find a way to punish myself for my sin
- _____ 10. I read books that can help me
- _____ 11. I remind myself of the consequences if my parents find out
- _____ 12. I listen to Christian music

One Question:

Write down at least one question that came to your mind as you read this chapter:

Small Group Discussion Questions

Here are the small group discussion questions found at the end of the chapter, plus a few more:

1. Both Jesus and Paul made radical statements in Matthew 5:19-20 and Romans 8:13. According to their statements, why is it so important to battle sin?
2. What is sin? How do you know if something is a sin? What is the difference between a sinful motive, a sinful thought, and a sinful action?
3. Why do church kids tend to not take sin seriously?
4. Do you categorize some sin as major and some as minor? Why is this dangerous?
5. What does God think of sin? Why?
6. What have you found to be the consequences of not battling your sin?
7. What did you learn about yourself in the self-evaluations? Why do you battle your sin?
8. Why is it hard to identify the motives, desires or cravings behind our sinful actions?
9. What do you find are the most effective methods in battling your sin? Why?
10. How can the Word of God help in battling sin? How can your parents help in battling sin?
11. How does the Holy Spirit help us in battling our sin?

Take Away

What is one point that challenged you from the small group discussion or the reading?

What is one specific application for your life today?

CHAPTER 11: SPIRITUAL PUSH-UPS

Passionately practicing the spiritual disciplines

Pre-Assignment

- Read chapter 11
- Complete the “A Look in the Mirror” self-evaluation below or in the book
- Write down one question you had as you read the chapter

A Look in the Mirror

What do you do to pursue a relationship with God? Consider the list below, and mark all that apply to you.

- I regularly have a personal time alone with God.
- I read my Bible.
- I spend time thinking about key Scripture verses.
- I memorize Bible verses.
- I pray, asking God for help.
- I pray, asking God to enable me to grow in godliness.
- I pray, asking God to teach me as I read the Bible.
- I occasionally get away for an extended time alone with God.
- I spend time worshiping God in private.
- I regularly serve others.
- I regularly read Christian books that focus on key truths of the Christian faith.

Consider each question and why you practice the spiritual disciplines

1. Why do you read your Bible?
2. Why do you memorize Scripture verses?
3. Why do you pray?
4. Why do you have a personal time with God?
5. Why do you sing worship songs?
6. Why do you serve others?
7. Why do you read books that focus on key truths of the Christian faith?

Consider the results of your practice of the spiritual disciplines. *Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10. 1 means you strongly disagree and 10 means you strongly agree.*

- _____ 1. When I read my Bible, I feel God speaking to me.
- _____ 2. When I pray, I feel the presence of God.
- _____ 3. When I spend personal time with God, I feel him guide, direct, and encourage me.
- _____ 4. When I get away for an extended time with God, I feel him speak to me.
- _____ 5. When I worship God, I feel the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- _____ 6. When I serve others, I find God blesses and encourages me.
- _____ 7. When I read Christian books, I feel God teaching me.

One Question:

Write down at least one question that came to your mind as you read this chapter:

Small Group Discussion Questions

Here are the small group discussion questions found at the end of the chapter, plus a few more:

1. What are the spiritual disciplines? What is the purpose of practicing the spiritual disciplines?
2. What hinders you from regularly practicing the spiritual disciplines? What can you do to overcome these hindrances?
3. What is our role in our spiritual growth? And what is the Holy Spirit's role in our spiritual growth?
4. In the section "A Look In the Mirror," what did you learn about your motives in practicing the spiritual disciplines?
5. What results do you see in your life for your faithful practice of the spiritual disciplines? And for your lack of practice of the spiritual disciplines?
6. How often should a Christian teenager have a quiet time? What should a person do during a quiet time?
7. Why is reading and studying the Bible so important? Why is prayer so important?
8. What Christian songs do you find yourself regularly singing? How do these songs affect you?
9. What are some great books you have read recently that have strengthened your faith? What is one book you would like to read in the next few months?
10. What is the difference between a time of solitude and a daily quiet time?
11. Where is a good spot you could go for three hours of uninterrupted time with God?

Take Away

What is one point that challenged you from the small group discussion or the reading?

What is one specific application for your life today?

CHAPTER 12: MAKING THE MOST OF IT

Faithfully stewarding your God-given talents

Pre-Assignment

- Read chapter 12
- Complete the “A Look in the Mirror” self-evaluation below or in the book
- Write down one question you had as you read the chapter

A Look in the Mirror

Consider your personal gifts, and rate yourself in each of these areas. *1 means you are not gifted at all in this area and 10 means you have a very strong gifting in this area.*

- _____ 1. Playing a musical instrument
- _____ 2. Singing
- _____ 3. Academics
- _____ 4. Public speaking
- _____ 5. Teaching
- _____ 6. Serving and helping others
- _____ 7. Leadership
- _____ 8. Leading a small group discussion
- _____ 9. Organization and administration
- _____ 10. Encouragement
- _____ 11. Hospitality – hosting guests or groups
- _____ 12. Evangelism

_____ 13. Working with young children

_____ 14. Other: _____

_____ 15. Other: _____

Consider how you can develop your strongest talents. List your top five gifts from the previous list and a.) write down ways you are currently using your gift and b.) ways you can use your gift more.

1.

a.)

b.)

2.

a.)

b.)

3.

a.)

b.)

4.

a.)

b.)

5.

a.)

b.)

One Question:

Write down at least one question that came to your mind as you read this chapter:

Small Group Discussion Questions

Here are the small group discussion questions found at the end of the chapter, plus a few more:

1. What does it mean to steward your gifts, talents, and abilities?
2. What aspects of stewardship did the financial investment chart highlight?
3. What challenges do church kids face in stewarding their talents?
4. What is the main point of the *Parable of the Talents*?
5. What is the connection between being faithful in little and being faithful in much? What are some little things in your life in which you need to be faithful right now?

6. What are the two sides of the sowing and reaping principle outlined in Galatians 6:6-9? What are examples of sowing to the sinful nature? Sowing to the Spirit?
7. What does it mean to store up treasures in heaven? What is one thing you can do that will store up treasures in heaven?
8. Which stewardship pitfall seems to trip you up the most?
9. What is one talent God has given you? How can you put it to work in your home, church, or community?
10. How can your parents and pastor help you identify and develop your talents?
11. What does John 15:5 mean? Why is this important to keep in mind as you walk out the Christian life?
12. Who is one mature Christian who has a talent similar to a talent you have? What could you ask him or her that would help you more effectively use and develop your talent?

Take Away

What is one point that challenged you from the small group discussion or the reading?

What is one specific application for your life today?
