

Welcome to Visionary Parenting! You are about to begin a journey that God wants to use to transform your family. Whether you are going through this experience on CD, DVD, or at a live workshop, this booklet will help you keep your notes and thoughts in one place. For each of the seven sessions you will find an outline for you to take notes, followed by an action worksheet. The action worksheets will provide you with questions to talk about with those going through the study with you, and will help you focus on putting into practice the things you learn in the sessions.

The journey of parenting is unlike any other. God has called you to it, and He has great plans for you, your children, and your family.

God's Love,

Rob Rienow
Family Pastor
Wheaton Bible Church
Visionary Parenting
www.visionaryparenting.com

Visionary Parenting
Session 1 – God’s Vision for the Family

I. An overview of our purpose

The purpose of Visionary Parenting is to help parents capture a biblical vision for the eternal and spiritual purpose of parenting, to inspire honest self-evaluation, and to move toward life changing action. (What should be? What is? What needs to change?)

II. The importance of vision

III. God created family with a purpose

IV. The Great Commandment – Matthew 22:35-38

V. The Great Commandment – Old Testament – Deuteronomy 6:4-8

VI. The centrality of the heart (verse 6)

VII. God’s primary plan of evangelism and discipleship

VIII. Some “how tos” to impress the Great Commandment (verses 7-9)

IX. The enemy will attack your parenting

X. God never calls us to do anything that He does not also empower us to do

XI. It starts in our hearts...turning our hearts to God, and turning our hearts to our children. (Malachi 4:4-6 and Luke 1:17)

Additional Notes:

Visionary Parenting Worksheet One
Vision Exercise

During this week ahead, find time to sit down with your spouse, or with a close Christian friend if you are not married, and discuss and complete this “vision exercise.”

Part 1 - God’s Vision for My Child:

(Complete this section as if you were in God’s shoes. If God were completing these statements, what would He say?)

God’s vision for _____ (your child’s name) is that he/she be:

God’s vision for _____ is that he/she becomes:

God’s vision for _____ is that he/she feels:

God’s vision for _____ is that he/she believes:

God’s vision for _____ is that he/she:

(This is the place for your own action words. You may write things like “makes a difference in the world,” “leads others to Jesus,” “saves sexuality for marriage,” etc.)

Part 2 – What are we, as parents, currently doing to intentionally and strategically develop these things in our child’s life?

Part 3 – What specific things can we begin to do, not do, or change, that would more directly encourage these things in our child?

Visionary Parenting
Session 2 – Multi-generational Faithfulness

Parenting is designed to build a legacy

Principle #1: Generational connection matters to God (Genesis 5)

Principle #2: Generational connection is a powerful influence in creating faith in children.

a. Genesis 18:18-19

b. The God of your fathers

c. Following the biblical example of “generational talk” in our homes

Principle #3: Our present actions as parents have significant impact on the generations to come.

- a. Sinful patterns spread in family trees (Exodus 20:4-5)
- b. God blesses the generations of faithful parents (Exodus 20:4-5)
- c. Life example, David's great grandson. (1 Kings 15:1-5)

Principle #4: Generational faithfulness is built upon honoring our parents and grandparents.

- a. Our elders have lost value in society
- b. The fifth commandment: A lifelong command
- c. Honoring and caring for those who have gone before (1 Timothy 5:3-8)

d. Action steps for creating a culture of honor in your family.

1. Put grandparents at places of honor

2. Bring your children to their grandparents for instruction and stories.

3. Talk specifically with your children so that they will see that God has a multi-generational vision for their lives.

4. Recognize your calling.

Visionary Parenting Worksheet 2
Session 2 – Multi-generational Faithfulness

Take time to consider these questions with your spouse, or if you are single, with a close Christian friend.

1. What are we specifically doing to show honor to the elders in our family?

2. Our actions towards our elders teach our children's hearts. To what degree do you see the virtue of honor in your children's hearts towards you and toward their grandparents?

3. What are a few ideas that you could experiment with in the next few weeks that would be an active step forward in honoring the elders in your family?

Visionary Parenting
Session 3 – A Vision of a God-Filled Normal Life

I. The call to “impress” (Deuteronomy 6:5ff)

II. The beliefs of the head and heart (Jeremiah 17:9)

III. The repeated, regular, normal experiences in the life of our family powerfully shape the hearts of our children.

Principle #1: Who we are at home is who we really are.

Principle #2: A child’s heart is impressed by experiencing the character of his/her parents.

Principle #3: A child's view of God is formed through the character of his/her parents.

Principle #4: A child's heart learns what is important through the family schedule.

Possible signs of a God-filled normal life

A. Talk about normal life from a spiritual perspective.

"God really blessed me today at work. The problem I was having with my boss really took a turn for the better."

"I am so sorry that your friend made fun of you like that. That would really hurt my feelings. Why do you think God is letting this happen?"

"It doesn't make me happy to have to give you this punishment. But I am responsible before God to teach and train you to do what is right. So if I didn't discipline you, I would be being disobedient to God."

B. Exchange and seek prayer requests frequently

"Kids, would you please pray for me today? I am really anxious about this meeting I have at work. I need your prayers."

"Kids, what is one thing I can pray for you today?"

C. Spending visible time in prayer and Bible study

D. Spontaneous prayer

E. Talk about movies and music from a spiritual perspective

F. Emphasizing prayer as a non-crisis activity

G. Encourage them to listen to the voice of God

H. Pray easily and quickly for sickness and injuries

I. Family worship

Additional thoughts:

Visionary Parenting Worksheet 3 **A Vision for a God-Filled Normal Life**

Take time to consider these questions with your spouse, or if you are single, with a close Christian friend.

1. What are the core spiritual values that you want to see take root in the heart of your child?

2. What are specific steps that you can take to create or modify your family schedule to cultivate these values?

3. What is an area of your private/personal life that God wants to change/develop in you so that you can be a more effective spouse/parent? What are you going to do about that?

Additional thoughts:

Visionary Parenting
Session 4 – A Vision For a Safe Home

I. The responsibility to provide a “safe” home extends far beyond the physical.

II. Our Heavenly Father actively works to create peace, protection, and security for His children. (2 Thessalonians 3:16)

III. The sources, dangers, and remedies for fear (Psalm 32:7)

Principle #1: Unconditional acceptance creates security

Principle #2: Defending your child creates security

Psalm 12:5, 2 Thessalonians 3:3, Prov. 29:25

Principle #3: Stating and living God's order creates security

Principle #4: The practice of parental blessing creates security and peace in the hearts of our children.

Genesis 1:28, Genesis 48:15-16, Numbers 6:22-26

How safe is our home right now?

1. Talk directly with your kids about this issue

On a scale of 1-10 how accepted do you feel, by mom and dad?

On a scale of 1-10 how much peace do you feel in our home?

On a scale of 1-10 how comfortable do you feel telling us about your feelings?

2. How clearly do your children SEE God's priorities evident in your life?

3. Do you see your kids emotionally withdrawing from you?

Visionary Parenting Worksheet 4

A Vision for a Safe Home

Take time to consider these questions with your spouse, or if you are single, with a close Christian friend.

1. Study Psalm 119:165 and Isaiah 32:17. What is the pre-requisite to having peace in our homes?

2. Go to the beginning and end of each New Testament letter, and see if you can find examples of “blessings.” Write these down on 3x5 cards. Begin to use them to bless your children. As you find other examples in the rest of the Bible, add those cards to your collection. Once you have developed a pattern of blessing your children from the Biblical blessings, begin to use your own words as you bless them.

3. How can you bless each of your children with a “personalized blessing?” Help each other put this into practice.

4. Are there areas of concern that you have regarding the physical, emotional, or spiritual safety for your children that you have not shared with your spouse? Do you believe your spouse is hurting or neglecting the children physically, emotionally, or spiritually? Look for an appropriate time to raise those concerns. If the discussion heats to an argument or results in a stalemate, be sure to seek the help of an outside counselor.

5. Talk about your heart struggles with “performance orientation.” Do you feel more or less valuable based on your performance? This may be a subtle area of brokenness in our lives.

Recommended reading: [Search for Significance](#) by Robert McGee.

Visionary Parenting
Session 5a – A Vision For a Biblical Fatherhood

I. The importance of the father

II. First role: Love our wives (Ephesians 5:25-26)

III. Second role: Train and instruct our children in the Lord (Ephesians 6:1-4)

IV. Where things went wrong (Genesis 3:1-7)

V. Starting places for the renovation of a man...

Additional thoughts:

Visionary Parenting Worksheet 5a

A Vision for Biblical Fatherhood

Take time to consider these questions with your spouse, or if you are single, with a close Christian friend.

1. Evaluate yourself carefully on your responsibilities to your wife.

How mature is your love for her? Use 1 Corinthians 13 as your measure.

How mature is your service to her? Consider both your heart and your actions.

How mature is your spiritual leadership in her life?

2. Evaluate yourself carefully on your responsibilities to your children.

How faithful are you being to God's directive in Deuteronomy 6 to talk with your kids about spiritual things at the four key points in the day?

What is your current “spiritual training plan” with your kids? (if any)

What is your current “spiritual instruction plan” with your kids (if any)

3. Review the notes from our last section on “renovating the heart.” Is your heart, as a man, and as a father, in need of renovation? Where is God calling you to start?

4. Consider taking a step of faith and 1) going to a current small group of men you meet with and raise the accountability in this area of your life or 2) contacting a pastor to request his help in creating such a group so that you can increasingly succeed in the things that matter most.

Visionary Parenting
Session 5b – A Vision for Biblical Motherhood

I. Biblical Motherhood starts with a love relationship with God.
(Exodus 20, Ten Commandments, 2 Kings 17)

II. Loving our husbands
Titus 2:4

A. Created as “helper”

B. Loving our husbands is a great gift to our children

III. Loving our children

A. Is our heart really with them?

B. The noble calling of motherhood

Additional thoughts:

Visionary Parenting Worksheet 5b

A Vision for Biblical Motherhood

Take time to consider these questions with your spouse or with a close Christian friend. If you are single, some of these questions may not apply.

1. Consider the “believers” described in 2 Kings 17. They were, on one hand, worshipping God, and on the other hand “sacrificing their children.” Write any thoughts you have about those historical events.

2. Are you taking any active steps to draw closer in your personal relationship with Christ? If so, what are those steps? If not, what is one thing you might be able to commit to doing in the coming weeks that would deepen your walk with Christ?

3. Why do you think that society has such a negative reaction to the concept of wife as “helper” of her husband as described in Genesis?

4. What was your response when you learned that this biblical term is one of great significance and not subservience?

5. Have you ever considered your responsibility as described in Titus 2, to help wives who are younger than you to love their husbands and children better?

6. If you are married, pray now, and ask God to show you the unique ways that you have been created to help the husband He has given you.

7. Do you feel that you are treating your husband the way that you would like your sons to be treated by their future wives?

8. Do you feel that you are treating your husband the way that you want your daughters to treat their future husbands?

9. Reminder! If you are in a situation where someone in your home is dangerous, erratic, dealing with addictions, or violent, please seek help from a pastor, counselor, or family service center.

10. Which fruit of the Spirit (Read Gal 5:22) are most evident in you as you parent? Which are least evident? Chose one that is least evident and pray for 30 days to ask God to help you grow in that area.

11. How do you feel about your calling to motherhood? Do you see it as noble or a burden? Ask God to give you a vision for the noble calling of motherhood and to confirm in your heart that you don't need to find "real life" elsewhere.

Visionary Parenting
Session 6 - A Vision for Family Worship

I. Biblical foundation for family worship

- A. The family is God's primary vehicle for evangelism and discipleship
Deuteronomy 6:5ff

- B. Family worship is the engine that powers the family.

- C. Family worship is the launching pad for ministry outside the home
Genesis 18:19, Psalm 78:5-7, Prov. 1:8, Eph 6:4

II. Historical Foundation

- A. Family worship in the early church

- B. Family worship and the Reformation

- C. Family worship through the industrial revolution through today

III. Principles of family worship

- A. Family worship is the intersection of right relationship with God and right relationship with family.

- B. Family worship will be a key target of the enemy

C. Family worship is more than family devotions

D. Family worship is the foundation for worship in the family of God (church)

IV. Practice of family worship

A. Start somewhere

B. Vary your approach

C. Engage your passion and creativity

D. Schedule the time well in advance

E. Consider designing a worship room or worship space in your home

Recommended Resources: www.famtime.com

Visionary Parenting Worksheet 6

A Vision for Family Worship

Take time to consider these questions with your spouse, or if you are single, with a close Christian friend.

1. Did you experience family worship in the home you grew up in? If so, describe the experience.

2. Why do you think that family worship is practiced so little in modern culture?

3. How do you think our communities today would be different if our church leaders held families accountable for family worship and the spiritual training of their children?

4. As you interacted with this message, did you sense God encouraging you to make family worship more of a focus in your home?

5. We talked about “starting somewhere.” What would be a good first step toward family worship in your home? Who can help keep you accountable to doing it?

6. Are there schedule changes that you will need to face in order to make family worship a priority?

7. If you have older children, and family worship has not been a part of your families schedule and habits, what will you need to do in order to help prepare their hearts for this new focus?

Visionary Parenting
Session 7 – A Vision For Discipline that makes Disciples

Discipline is hard because it reveals cracks in our character as parents.

Principle #1: The purpose of discipline is discipleship

- A. Proverbs 6:23 and 19:18

- B. Obedience to parents is a precursor for obedience to God

- C. Contrasting worldly definitions of discipline

- D. Can we change our “lingo?”

**Principle #2: The ultimate goal of discipline is the impressing of the heart.
(Deut. 6)**

- A. Every action is made up of the fruit and the root.

- B. The results of focusing only on outward behavior.

C. David's example in 1 Kings 1:5

D. The need to deal with both the "what" and the "why" (Prov. 4:23)

E. Dealing with passive rebellion

Principle #3: Discipline that disciplines is consistent.

A. Children thrive in structure.

B. Inconsistency trains children to be professional whiners.

C. Inconsistency trains children that they can break any rule more than once.

1. The repeated direction...

2. The window for continued disobedience...

3. The empty threat
(Ephesians 4:6)

4. Consider the “if – then” chart

Principle #4: Discipline that disciples is integrally connected to God and His Word.

Step 1: Put yourself, as parent, under God’s word.

“What does God say that I need to do as a parent in this situation?”

Step 2: Focus on the action/choice.

“Now let’s talk about what just happened. What choice did you just make?”

Step 3: Bring the action under God’s word.

“What does God’s Word have to say about that choice?”

Step 4: Clarify God’s purposes

“Why does God say not to do that?” – the answer always relates to His love for us and His desire for us to experience His best in life.

Step 5: Focus on the heart/attitude

“Let’s put that aside for minute, and let me ask you a hard question. Why did you make that choice? What were you feeling inside? What was in your heart?”

Step 6: Calmly deliver an appropriate consequence.

“Because you made this choice, here is your consequence.”

Step 7: Affirm the purpose of discipline and your love for your child.

“Don’t forget, the whole reason we are doing this is because God tells me that I have to help you become more like Jesus. I love you very much.”

Principle #5: Discipline that disciplines increases consequences as needed to cause change.

- A. A consequence is not a consequence if it does not cause discomfort.

- B. Repeated consequences that don't lead to change are not effective.

- C. Anger and yelling are not effective increases in consequence.

- D. This principle hits hardest in the teen years.

Recommended reading:
Shepherding Your Child's Heart by Tedd Tripp
Parenting Is Heart Work by Scott Turansky

Visionary Parenting Worksheet 7

A Vision for Discipline that Disciples

Take time to consider these questions with your spouse, or if you are single, with a close Christian friend.

1. What was the purpose of the way your parents disciplined you? What was the heart behind their discipline?

2. Which of your character flaws are revealed when your children do things wrong?

3. How do you think it would change your discipline if you approached each situation with the attitude that it was a “discipleship opportunity?”

4. Every behavior has a “what” and a “why.” Which of these do you more naturally focus on when you discipline?

5. Do you see passive rebellion in your children? What is your normal response to it?

6. In what ways do you see inconsistency in your parenting?

7. Do you believe that you and your spouse (if married) are on the same page when it comes to responding to “discipleship situations?”

8. If you do not already have an “if then chart” for your children, take the time right now to begin thinking about things you might put on it.

9. How often do you use your anger as a punishment for your children? Take time right now to confess that to God and repent of that. Ask Him to change your heart.

More parenting resources at www.visionaryparenting.com

*Free audio downloads of parenting workshops on key issues facing your home.

*Send your parenting questions to us through the Q and A forum.

*Schedule personal phone consultations to talk about your parenting issues.

*Shine, A special resource for moms and daughters to deepen their relationship.

*Resources for teens to prepare them in advance for healthy marriages and biblical parenting.

*Order the entire Visionary Parenting series on CD, CD Rom, or DVD. The DVD series is designed for use in small groups, or for Adult Education gatherings.

*Resources for your church to inspire and equip parents to disciple their children.

Contact Us:

Rob and Amy Rienow

rob@visionaryparenting.com

amy@visionaryparenting.com

www.visionaryparenting.com