

# THIS IS US

Week 1 Leader Guide Intentional Parenting

## THE WIN

The group member will evaluate the effectiveness of their own parenting by considering and determining best practices through various case studies.

1-2  
minutes

## SERMON RECAP: WHAT DID THE TEXT MEAN? WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

**SAY THIS:** In the message this week we learned that successful parenting is not impossible. However, successful parenting does take work, consistency, and following directives found in Scripture.

3-5  
minutes

## WARM UP

### ASK THIS:

- How old were you when you realized that you could make a significant contribution to the world by simply being you? What role did your parents play in this realization?

**Leader Tip:** *This could be a difficult question for some group members. Be sure to watch the body language, watery or diverting of eyes, flushed face, shifting in seats etc. If you see these signs don't pressure but give them space. This early in the meeting is not the time to push for answers.*

30-35  
minutes

## THE TEXT: WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ME?

**SAY THIS:** As we learned in the message this week the role of the parent in the life of a child is life-shaping. As parents, or someday parents, there is a heavy burden on our shoulders. Probably the largest threat to our effectiveness to our parents, besides spiritual warfare, is busyness.

### ASK THIS:

- What are some of your best reasons for staying as busy as you are during this season of your life?
- What does your reason say about what's most important to you?
- Some people would say that a full schedule and busy pace of life leads to a spiritual walk that is at least mediocre and at best good enough. What would you say to these people?

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- Given the pace of your life recently how would you describe your spiritual walk?

**SAY THIS:** There is so much more to this life than mediocrity. It's possible to be effective parents and have a vibrant spiritual walk. But it's a battle. It's a choice that must be made each day. I think we all know this intuitively but perhaps we sometimes are so distracted to keep our gaze fixed on Jesus.

**HAVE SOMEONE READ:** Matthew 11:28-30

**SAY THIS:** Our Green Oaks Groups Pastor Clayton Aker said in a talk recently that God is literally pleading with us asking "Are you tired? Worn out? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

So God is inviting us to come away with him. To be nourished. To find rest. To slow down and find our meaning and purpose in Him. Let's watch this video and as you watch it use this time to invite God in to do surgery on your soul and bring healing.

**WATCH THIS:** <https://youtu.be/ZZoOfGiqZ7Y>

**ASK THIS:**

- As the video played what emotions did you feel?
- What are the biggest threats preventing you from slowing down?

*Leader Tip: This is a good question to press for authentic answers. If a group member says 'busyness' press for more. Say something like "Busyness is a tyrant for sure but what specifically is it about busyness that is threatening for you?" It's likely at the root of it there might be idolatry towards work/purpose/money/importance. Be careful not to assign motive to your group members. Keep in mind you are a guide only.*

**SAY THIS:** So, if we commit ourselves to take seriously the dangers of a hurried heart, busyness etc. Then this frees us up to focus on our kids and our abilities as a parent. Let's take a look at this next video .

**WATCH THIS:** [https://youtu.be/uwQ2Psb\\_9TU](https://youtu.be/uwQ2Psb_9TU) (Pay attention and try and complete this phrase after watching. Who you are \_\_\_\_\_.)

**ASK THIS:**

- While the kids in video were preschool/grade schoolers there is truth in their frustrations no matter the ages. Share with the group some of your top recent frustrations with your kids.
- What ownership do you take in these frustrations?

*Leader Tip: It's important that group members take ownership of something. God entrusted the child to their care and this makes this responsible for their training and mentorship throughout the child's life. This is a sensitive topic and you might experience some resistance. Use your skills as a facilitator and watch for the subtle cues and respond accordingly.*

1. If you could choose (5) traits that you would hope your child(ren) hope to develop, what would they be?
2. How confident do you feel in your ability to model those traits for them?
3. Share a time where you attempted to model a trait for your child and it backfired. At time when you succeeded?

**DO THIS ACTIVITY:**

Divide up into groups of 3 - 4 and read through each scenario listed below and discuss how you would address the situation in light of what you learned in our time today. Close your time with prayer.

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Jim and Carol are parents of 4 kids (Sophie-14, Rex-10, Roger-10, Olivia-8). Jim and Carol attend church “regularly” but due to Sophie’s club softball schedule and Olivia’s club soccer schedule they miss church due to Sunday games. Jim works as a regional manager for a telecommunications company which takes him out of town often and Carol is a labor and delivery nurse and works the night shift 3x per week. So, Jim and Carol’s parents help out often to help get the kids to and from practices. Rex and Roger are not that interested in sports but rather have established themselves as quite a force as Fortnite and Minecraft gamers YouTube. They stay home alone often filming new content for their subscribers and even have sponsorship deals with a few companies on YouTube has recently made them an official channel since they just hit 10,000 subscribers. Jim and Carol have become unsettled about the state of their family and pace of life. Time is slipping away. They are deeply committed with Sophie’s softball having been on the same team since she was 6. Olivia seems to be finding her way to success in soccer and Rex and Roger are enjoying themselves tremendously. Any change to their current situation will result in conflict and disrupt the family.

4. How could Jim and Carol begin to find more balance in their family?

Paul and Elaine have 2 kids (Rhett-17 and Link-25) and are deeply committed to their local church. God is an important part of their life and the life of their home. Paul and Elaine raised their boys to fear the Lord and to follow Him in all things. Conversations about faith were not always easy but eventually both boys professed Christ as Lord at a young age. As the boys grew up, due to the age difference, Paul and Elaine’s consistency in parenting varied. Rhett, still in high school, is an active member of the student ministry, in the FCA, and even helps serve the under-resourced at large church outreach events. Link is a recent graduate of college and has decided his faith was forced on him by his parents and now he’s not sure what he believes but is leaning towards atheism. He asks for his parents’ patience and acceptance of his decision. However Paul and Elaine have just learned the Link is beginning to influence Rhett in his questioning of faith. The patience and acceptance Link is requesting is not an easy request.

5. When Link’s home life seemed to provide him with love and acceptance which pointed towards God it begs the question “how could this happen?” Understanding that people are free to make their own choices within God’s sovereignty what are Paul and Elaine’s options with Link? What should Paul and Elaine be doing for Link?

3-5  
minutes

## DIGGING DEEPER

Check out this article on “Ways Parents Provoke.” It is an adaptation from ***The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Ephesians***.

<https://www.gty.org/library/articles/A325/ways-parents-provoke>

Don’t have time to look up the article? Here is a summary:

To “provoke...to anger” suggests a repeated, ongoing pattern of treatment that gradually builds up a deep-seated anger and resentment that boils over in outward hostility. Such treatment is usually not intended to provoke anger. Here are eight ways in which parents can provoke their children to anger:

6. Overprotection is a common cause of resentment in children.
7. Favoritism
8. Pushing achievement beyond reasonable bounds
9. Discouragement. A child who is never complimented or encouraged by his parents is destined for trouble.
10. Parents’ failing to sacrifice for their children and making them feel unwanted.
11. Failing to let children grow up at a normal pace. Chiding them for always acting childish.
12. Using love as a tool of reward or punishment—granting it when a child is good and withdrawing it when he is bad.
13. Physical and verbal abuse

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## CLOSING THOUGHT

Hurry is the great enemy of our souls. We must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from our lives.

Dallas Willard