

# WHAT'S NEXT?

A GUIDE TO LEADING  
YOUR GROUP THROUGH  
THE FIRST TWO YEARS.





# PURPOSE

**Congratulations! You have completed this leg of the journey into starting a relationally connected, Christ-centered, disciple-making Nextlevel Group.**

Wherever you find yourself in the journey of leading your Nextlevel Group, this booklet has been made to help effectively guide you and your group to the *next level* of relational connection and growth toward Christlikeness.

The road toward spiritual maturity has many ups and downs. As your group travels that road together we trust that God will use this booklet to help you navigate through the first two years and beyond.

**Sincerely,**

*Luke* *Steve*

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# PLANNING

As a group leader, one of the most important investments you will make in your group is *prayerful planning*. This planning does not only happen at the beginning of your group's journey together but should also be an ongoing leadership commitment that you pursue.

The fact that we need to plan is important but the more important question is: how can we as group leaders be used by God to bring about *His* plan? God has a plan and a purpose for every single member of our group. Isaiah 55:9 says, "His ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts are higher than our thoughts."

So, let us consider how we can be engaged in the work that God has prepared before hand for us to walk in (Ephesians 2:10).



**THE HEART OF  
MAN PLANS HIS  
WAY, BUT THE LORD  
ESTABLISHES  
HIS STEPS**

**PROVERBS 16:9**



# 1 PLAN PRAYERFULLY

Your primary role as a group leader is prayer. Let everything that you do and dream of for your group be bathed in intimate conversation with the Lord who is in control of all things. We often think, “Let’s plan and then ask God to bless our plans.” But what if we became men who didn’t move forward without the Lord’s direction. What if we became men who trusted God at His every word and followed Him obediently in how we lead our groups?

# 2 PLAN COLLECTIVELY

It is easy as a group leader to think, “for the sake of time and to make things easy I will just do everything myself.” But this is not the type of leadership that we want to build. First, we want to ensure that our planning always happens alongside a co-leader. Second, we want to involve our group members in part of the planning process. After you and your co-leader have sought the Lord and come up with a plan, bring this plan to your group, pray together, and seek their input.

# 3 PLAN RHYTHMICALLY

Here are some recommended planning rhythms for you to build into your life as a group leader:

## DAILY

Prayer for your group and group members

## WEEKLY

Preparation for each meeting

## MONTHLY

Connection outside of meeting with each group member (text, call or meet)

## QUARTERLY

Planning Meeting with your co-leader (see Quarterly Planner Tool) and attend Group Leader FORUMS

## YEARLY

Debrief of the previous year and planning for upcoming year (*see pg 13*)



# LIVING WATER

**SIR, GIVE ME THIS WATER SO  
THAT I MAY NOT BE THIRSTY OR  
HAVE TO COME HERE TO DRAW  
WATER.**

**JOHN 4:15**

Every man is in search of satisfaction. And so often men find themselves going to wells that only provide water that does not *truly* satisfy and to which they have to keep returning over and over. This swampy, unsatisfying water could come in the form of work, or sex, or pride, or many other things. Ultimately these worldly things will never provide the satisfaction that a man truly needs.

Jesus Christ is the only one who can provide the full and lasting satisfaction that every man desperately needs. Every page of **the Bible** points us to Him.

This is why it is vital that as you plan for your first two years, you make it your commitment to ensure that you bring the water of the **word of God** before your group *every single week*.

# GROUP HEALTH CHECK

NOTES:

Below, you will find questions that will help inform your consideration of what material to work through as a group. Ask these questions with your co-leader before deciding on material for the year.

As you and your co-leader work through these questions and consider what material will be most appropriate for the season you are planning for, ensure that the material you choose is Bible focused and will point your group members back to Jesus. Consider these questions together every time you prayerfully plan for a new season.

## GROUP HEALTH CHECK: RELATIONAL. SPIRITUAL. MISSIONAL.

- ✓ Is attendance consistent and is commitment high?
- ✓ Is the trust strong, and the sharing deep and real?
- ✓ Are the men connecting outside of weekly group time?
- ✓ Are you consistently practicing the “one anothers”?
- ✓ Is there evidence of spiritual growth in each man?
- ✓ Are you providing the men with a nourishing, balanced diet?
- ✓ Are the men spending quality time with God each day?
- ✓ Has your group become isolated and self-focused?
- ✓ Are you missional; caring, giving, serving, discipling?
- ✓ Are the men attending and serving in their local church?
- ✓ What is your next level as a group?

*\*NOTE: These questions can also be found in the Quarterly Planner tool that Nextlevel provides to group leaders every quarter.*



# YEAR ONE

## **“THE PURPOSE OF OUR GROUP IS NOT JUST THE TRANSFER OF INFORMATION BUT TRANSFORMATION”**

### **LAUNCH – SESSION TWO**

The purpose of Year One is that your group would establish a strong foundation, set a vision for what the group will be about, and agree to wholeheartedly pursue that vision (*LAUNCH*). Year One will also help you establish healthy, authentic relationships with one another by providing opportunity to hear one another's life stories (*My Story Retreat*), and explore together the fabrics that make up spiritual friendships (*LAUNCH*

*and Everybody's Normal 'Till You Get to Know Them*). Year One also provides opportunities for group members to have a foundational understanding of the gospel of Jesus Christ and His free gift of grace (*How Good is Good Enough*). Finally, Year One provides an opportunity for the group to tackle one of the biggest threats to a man's spiritual growth in our culture today: Sexual Sin (*Surfing for God*).





# LAUNCH

## A 10-WEEK JOURNEY INTO RELATIONAL CHRISTIANITY

Establishing a foundation for life transformation starts with *LAUNCH: A 10-Week Journey into Relational Christianity* where the group experiences Jesus' plan for community.

Launch is the essential starting place for every Nextlevel Group. It helps your group explore the crisis of male isolation and helps set a vision for a remedy to that problem. It considers what true Biblical community is all about.

It presents a new kind of accountability founded on encouragement and geared toward inviting the input of trusted friends.

It culminates in the formation of a group covenant; a founding commitment that will guide your group for years to come.



### NOTES:

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## MY STORY RETREAT


Immediately after the group has completed LAUNCH is a great time to do the **My Story Retreat**. Whether your group goes on a classic night-away retreat to complete the process or they choose to do it over multiple weeks on their regular group night, the *My Story Retreat model*, provided by Nextlevel will take your group to the Nextlevel in each man knowing every other man's life story. Each man comes away from this experience having a deeper understanding of the formative moments in his own life as well as in the life of his brothers in his group. This experience is an important aspect of developing authentic spiritual friendships.

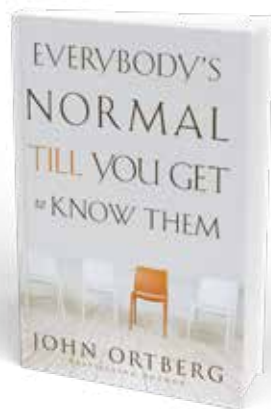


Nextlevel Leaders Guide  
Available.

## 3 EVERYBODY'S NORMAL 'TILL YOU GET TO KNOW THEM

Following the retreat, the group spends time digging deeper into the scriptural concepts found in *Everybody's Normal 'Till You Get to Know Them* by John Ortberg. You will probably recognize two chapters of this book which are both covered in LAUNCH. It is recommended that groups go through this book in the first year of their journey together because groups often need more practice and focus on the principles that they learned and established during LAUNCH.

 Nextlevel Leaders Guide Available.



## 4 HOW GOOD IS GOOD ENOUGH

As your group pursues Christ together, it is vital that you have a clear and unified understanding of the saving work of Christ. *How Good is Good Enough?* by Andy Stanley provides logical reasons and Biblical evidence for why Christ is the only Way to God. Stanley emphasizes that salvation is a free gift from God that cannot be earned.



## 5 SURFING FOR GOD

Sexual Purity is a key topic that most men deal with. Surfing for God helps men see that they could be using sex to try to fill a hole in their hearts that only God can fill. Sexual sin is a common barrier for men as they seek to grow in spiritual maturity partly because of the shame and identity struggles that it causes. It is a key topic for your group to cover as you move forward in your pursuit of Christlikeness.



# YEAR ONE RHYTHMS

## FUN NIGHTS

Plan a fun night once every 6-8 weeks or so to enjoy some less structured time of fellowship together. As you build relationship, it is important and healthy to invest in ways for you and your group members to get to know each other in different environments.

## FOOD

There is something life-giving about eating together. We would encourage you to keep up the habit of having snacks or food to share during your meetings each week. Have each person in the group be in charge of food for each respective week.

## SERVICE

Ask the Lord how you might serve together and build it into your schedule every 6-8 weeks. Service is a key way for your group to grow in relationship while investing in the kingdom. It also encourages your group to look outside itself at the greater needs of the body of Christ.

## SUMMER

Remember that relationship and spiritual needs are present in the summer just as much (sometimes more) than in the non-summer months. Also, remember that summer is an important time for you and your group members to rest. You can use the summer months to “switch it up”.

### Here are a few suggestions:

- ✔ **One Week Study, One Week Fun.** Many groups decide that throughout the summer they are going to operate on an alternating schedule for their group meetings. One week is considered a “fun night” where some fun activity is planned for people to do together. The following week is a sharing and praying night. This rhythm is repeated throughout the summer.
- ✔ **Take a break as a leader.** Have your group members take turns leading and planning the summer months.
- ✔ **Invest in each other outside of group time.** Often summer affords more flexibility. Encourage your group to use this flexibility to be pursuing each other outside of group time in a way they may not be able to during more busy months.
- ✔ **Group Retreat.** Plan an extended time away as a group at least once a year.

# YEAR ONE SAMPLE SCHEDULE

## FALL



LAUNCH:  
A 10-WEEK  
JOURNEY INTO  
RELATIONAL CHRISTIANITY  
**10-12 Sessions**



MY STORY  
RETREAT  
**4 Sessions  
or 1 Weekend**

## WINTER



EVERYBODY'S  
NORMAL 'TILL  
YOU GET TO  
KNOW THEM by  
John Ortberg  
**8-12 Sessions**

## SPRING



HOW GOOD IS  
GOOD ENOUGH  
by Andy Stanley  
**4 Sessions**



SURFING FOR GOD  
by David Cusick  
**12 Sessions**

## SUMMER

✓  
One week study, one week fun.

✓  
Take a break as a leader.

✓  
Invest in each other outside group time.

✓  
Group retreat.

# MY YEAR ONE SCHEDULE

CREATE YOUR PLAN

RHYTHMS & RESOURCES

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SEASON 1

LAUNCH:  
A 10-WEEK  
JOURNEY INTO  
RELATIONAL  
CHRISTIANITY  
**10-12 Sessions**



SEASON 2

RHYTHMS & RESOURCES

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GROUP  
SERVICE  
PROJECT



SEASON 3

RHYTHMS & RESOURCES

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GROUP  
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PROJECT



SUMMER

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# YEAR ONE CHECKLIST

- ☐ LAUNCH Completed
- ☐ Covenant Signed
- ☐ Every Group Member has shared their life story (*My Story Retreat*)
- ☐ Fun Night Rhythm Established (*every 6-8 weeks*)
- ☐ Service Nights Rhythm Established (*every 6-8 weeks*)
- ☐ Group Co-leaders meet quarterly (*see quarterly planner*)
- ☐ Year-end debrief with co-leader (*see quarterly planner*)
- ☐ Year-end debrief with group (*see group year-end debrief tool*)
- ☐ Plan for Year Two



# YEAR TWO

## **WE ARE EACH ON A JOURNEY TO BECOME MORE LIKE JESUS CHRIST**

### **LAUNCH – SESSION TWO**

You have made it through year one! This can often be one of the hardest years. As you get to know each other and learn to love one another you realize that you are not alone and experience the joys of brotherhood but you also see the brokenness in other men's lives.

Now that you know your group members a little better you will be more

informed to be able to discern with your co-leader what topics might be most important to cover in year two.

As you plan, don't forget the planning principles on page 4-8.

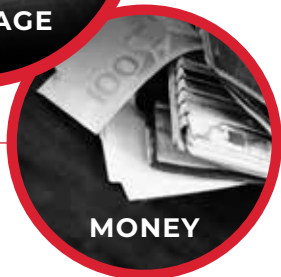
Always start your year by reviewing the covenant and talking together about how the group has been doing in each of the areas outlined in the covenant.



# TOPICS

Here are some of the topics that we think should be considered for year two.

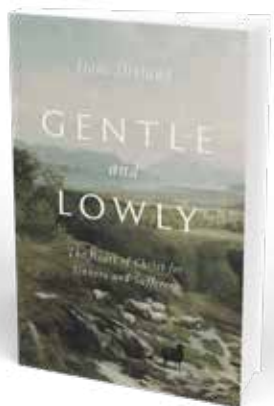
Discernment on the part of the group leaders will be needed when it comes to determining what topics are most important and what material to choose.



# GOSPEL

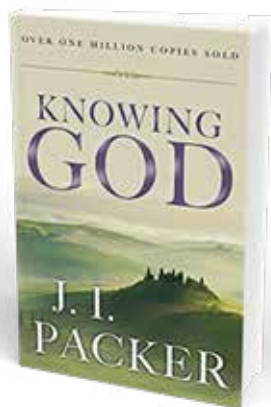


## DANE ORTLUND GENTLE AND LOWLY



Christians know what Jesus Christ has done—but who is he? What is his deepest heart for his people, weary and faltering on their journey toward heaven? Jesus said he is “gentle and lowly in heart.” This book reflects on these words, opening up a neglected yet central truth about who he is for sinners and sufferers today. The gospel flows from God’s deepest heart for his people, a heart of tender love for the sinful and suffering. These chapters take us into the depths of Christ’s very heart for sinners, diving deep into Bible passages that speak of who Christ is and encouraging readers with the affections of Christ for his people. His longing heart for sinners comforts and sustains readers in their up-and-down lives. A group study guide is available for this book.

## J.I. PACKER KNOWING GOD

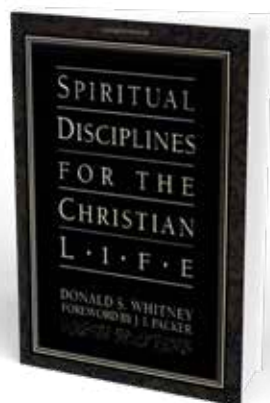


Stemming from Packer’s profound theological knowledge, *Knowing God* brings together two important facets of the Christian faith knowing about God and also knowing God through the context of a close relationship with the person of Jesus Christ. Explaining both who God is and how we can relate to him, Packer divides his book into three sections: The first directs our attention to how and why we know God, the second to the attributes of God and the third to the benefits enjoyed by those who know him intimately. *Knowing God* is a foundational book for men to read and would be a great help for a group desiring to grow deeper in the knowledge of who God is and their relationship with Him. A group study guide is available for this book.

# SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

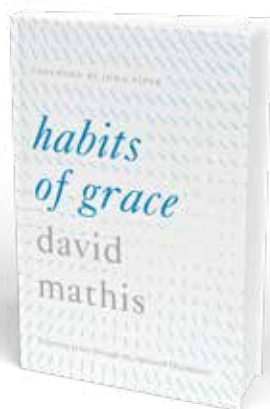
## DONALD S. WHITNEY - SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Drawn from a rich heritage, *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* will guide you by illustrating why spiritual disciplines are important, showing how each one will help you grow in godliness, and offering practical suggestions for cultivating them. *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life* will provide you with a refreshing opportunity to become more like Christ and grow in character and maturity. As you walk through this material with your Nextlevel group, don't forget to have each man apply it personally to their lives. When you finish the study, it should be clear to all in the group what spiritual discipline each man is committed to growing in. A group study guide is available for this book.

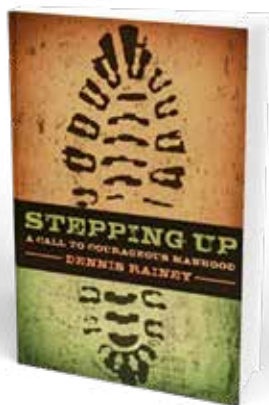


## DAVID MATHIS THE HABITS OF GRACE

Hear his voice. Have his ear. Belong to his body. Three seemingly unremarkable principles shape and strengthen the Christian life: listening to God's voice, speaking to him in prayer, and joining together with his people as the church. Though often viewed as normal and routine, the everyday "habits of grace" we cultivate give us access to these God-designed channels through which his love and power flow—including the greatest joy of all: knowing and enjoying Jesus. If your looking for a more focused book that will help your group cultivate the key disciplines of prayer and hearing from God, this is a great book to consider. A group study guide is available for this book.



# MANHOOD



## **DENNIS RAINEY STEPPING UP: A CALL TO COURAGEOUS MANHOOD**

As men, all of us face decisions in life that demand courage. Big or little, complex or straightforward, these choices—let's call them battles—matter a great deal. One courageous choice can lead to another; tomorrow's integrity depends on today's bravery.

Dennis Rainey tackles head-on the call to living breathing manhood, offering a powerful vision for what it means to be a man who truly conquers and wins.

This is a great book for your Nextlevel group to go through together early on in your journey as you seek to become more Christlike in your manhood.



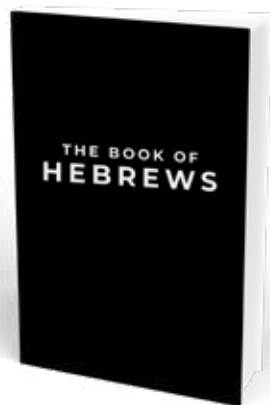
Note: A video study for this book is also available on [rightnowmedia.org](http://rightnowmedia.org)

# BIBLICAL COMMUNITY

## HEBREWS 10

The writer of Hebrews has important things to say to believers about the importance of Christian community.

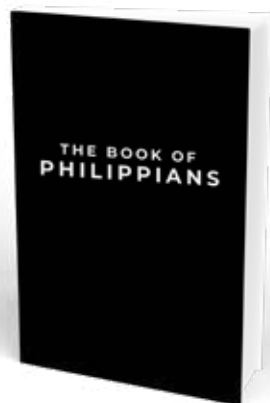
Nextlevel recommends that groups take time to dig deeper into Hebrews chapter 10 to discover what God has to say about the nature of their group, the importance of community, and how vital it is that we pursue Christ *together*.



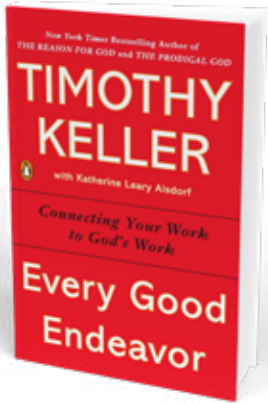
## PHILIPPIANS 2

Philippians 2 looks to Christ's example for the way brothers in the church should interact with one another. It is an essential passage for every group to look into together.

As you look toward Christ's example as a group, consider how you might emulate him as you love one another week in and week out.



# WORK



## **TIMOTHY KELLER EVERY GOOD ENDEAVOR: CONNECTING YOUR WORK TO GOD'S PLAN FOR THE WORLD**

With deep conviction and often surprising advice, Timothy Keller shows readers that biblical wisdom is immensely relevant to our questions about work today. In fact, the Christian view of work—that we work to serve others, not ourselves—can provide the foundation of a thriving professional and balanced personal life. Keller shows how excellence, integrity, discipline, creativity, and passion in the workplace can help others and even be considered acts of worship - not just of self-interest.



Nextlevel has prepared questions to go along with each chapter in this book for your group to go through.

# MONEY

## MANAGING OUR FINANCES GOD'S WAY

Did you know there are over 2,350 verses in the Bible about money? Did you know that nearly half of Jesus' parables are about possessions?

The Bible is packed with wise counsel about your financial life. In fact, Jesus had more to say about money than about heaven and hell combined.

Use this material with your Nextlevel group to help you grow in your financial stewardship.



Note: A video study for this book is also available on [rightnowmedia.org](http://rightnowmedia.org)

# SEX



## **PAUL DAVID TRIPP SEX IN A BROKEN WORLD**

Sexuality is a fundamental part of what it means to be human--part of God's beautiful design when he created all things. And yet, sex in our world today looks nothing like the way that God intended it to be. Sexual brokenness surrounds us and, in one way or another, affects us all.

This sexual brokenness reveals our deep need for redemption--something quick fixes, mere behavior modification, or a set of rules can't provide. Honest and direct yet kind and caring, this book points us to the only place we can find help for sexual brokenness--the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. Only this grace offers hope for a life of freedom, purity, and joy as God intended.

This book will help ground your group's view of Sex in the Bible and would be a key investment in the life of each man around the table.

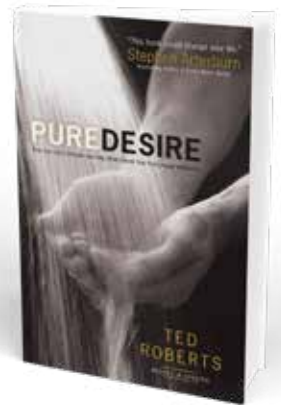


## TED ROBERTS - PURE DESIRE

### Hope and Healing to Break Free From Sexual Addiction

There is a battle going on. Millions of victims are trapped in the struggle of sexual addiction with no apparent way out. Pure Desire is the answer to this desperate cry for help from men and women who have tried to build sexual holiness into their lives and failed . . . and failed . . . and failed.

Pure Desire gives men a thorough understanding of the issue of Sexual addiction and provides practical tools as well as a healthy assessment of the core issues that are causing their addiction. There are multiple group study guides to go along with this book.



## DOUG WEISS - CLEAN

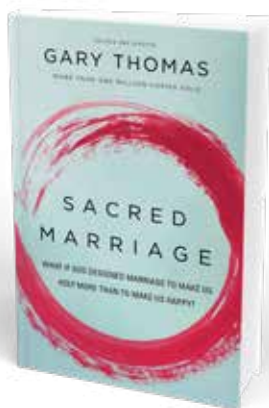
Every Christian man is born into a sexual war. The enemy attacks the young, hoping to scar them permanently and leave them ruined. But your past is not enough to keep you from the enduringly clean life you want.

Clean is a priceless, no-nonsense resource for every husband, father, brother, son, friend, pastor, and Christian leader on the front lines of this war. It is a soldier's handbook for those ready to reclaim their homes, churches, and nations for the God who has built them to succeed.



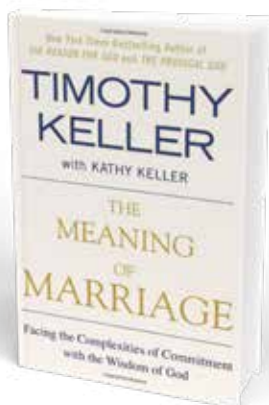
Note: A video study for this book is also available on [rightnowmedia.org](http://rightnowmedia.org)

# MARRIAGE



## GARY THOMAS SACRED MARRIAGE

Your marriage is more than a sacred covenant with another person. It is a spiritual discipline designed to help you know God better, trust him more fully, and love him more deeply. What if God's primary intent for your marriage isn't to make you happy . . . but holy? Sacred Marriage doesn't just offer techniques to make a marriage happier. It does contain practical tools, but what married Christians most need is help in becoming holier husbands and wives. Sacred Marriage offers that help with insights from Scripture, church history, time tested wisdom from Christian classics, and examples from today's marriages. A group study guide is available for this book.



## TIMOTHY KELLER THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE

Modern culture would have you believe that everyone has a soul mate; that romance is the most important part of a successful marriage; that your spouse is there to help you realize your potential; that marriage does not mean forever, but merely for now; and that starting over after a divorce is the best solution to seemingly intractable marriage issues. But these modern-day assumptions are wrong. Timothy Keller, with insights from Kathy, his wife of thirty-seven years, shows marriage to be a glorious relationship that is also misunderstood and mysterious. The Meaning of Marriage offers instruction on how to have a successful marriage, and is essential reading for anyone who wants to know God and love more deeply in this life.



Note: A video study for this book is also available on [rightnowmedia.org](http://rightnowmedia.org)

# FATHERHOOD

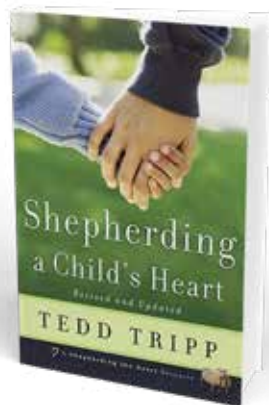


## **TEDD TRIPP SHEPHERDING A CHILD'S HEART**

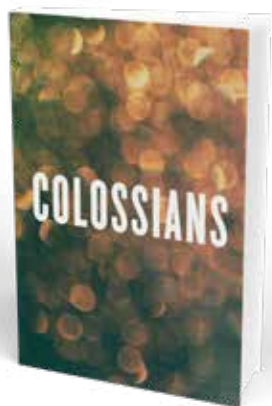
With so many men coming from homes where Fathers were not taking responsibility for their roles it is time for us men to humbly ask God to shape us into fathers who truly care about and invest in the hearts of our children.

Many parenting books are based on hit-or-miss theories steeped in secular thinking. This one draws from Pastor Tripp's seasoned experience as a father- and from God's Holy Word. Grounded in the Bible's divine plan for parenting, this guide defines your goals as a parent and provides the Scriptural methods for accomplishing them.

This book is a must-read for any father, soon-to-be father, or aspiring father. It offers great practical help for you and your group to discuss and apply together.



# BIBLE STUDY



## MATT CHANDLER COLOSSIANS

The Colossians series looks at the person of Jesus Christ and who He is. Covering the history of Rome and how it was believed to be the great salvation, this series points to the true source of salvation, Jesus Christ, asking the question, "Where have you put your hope?"



Note: A video study for this book is also available on [rightnowmedia.org](http://rightnowmedia.org)

# MY YEAR TWO SCHEDULE

CREATE YOUR PLAN

RHYTHMS & RESOURCES

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SEASON 1

COVENANT REVIEW

1-3 Sessions



GROUP SERVICE PROJECT

SEASON 2

RHYTHMS & RESOURCES

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GROUP SERVICE PROJECT



SEASON 3

RHYTHMS & RESOURCES

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GROUP SERVICE PROJECT



SUMMER

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# rightnow MEDIA

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# NOTES

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# WHAT'S **NEXT?**



Nextlevel Ministries  
89 Auriga Drive  
Ottawa Ontario  
K2E7Z2

[WWW.NEXTLEVELMINISTRIES.CA](http://WWW.NEXTLEVELMINISTRIES.CA)