

NO PERFECT

Parents

DISCUSSION GUIDE



Contents

Real Parents Welcome

SESSION ONE: The Bullseye

SESSION TWO: The Minivan Days (Ages 0-12)

SESSION THREE: The Teenage Years

SESSION FOUR: Make Your Home a Haven

SESSION FIVE: Our Parenting Mistakes

Where do we go from here?

Real parents welcome.

C'MON IN.

Does it feel like a “duh” to say this job is hard, frustrating, exhausting, and flat-out scary?

Maybe you feel like you're constantly ducking flying arrows (or toys), drowning in a sea of grape juice and pretzels, or battling over screens, yes, again.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE.

Through this study, we hope to make you laugh, cry (just a little), and help you build a future generation that thrives and honors God.

The No Perfect Parents study hands you a five-session series to help you navigate whether you've got kids in the car seat phase or you're handing over the keys. These ideas work whether your kids are biological or not, whether you're married or flying solo, whether you're scraping by or just cleaned out Costco in your last grocery run.

This study can empower you in one of the hardest things you do: raising kids.

Based on our book, *No Perfect Parents* (Zondervan, 2021), the study in your hands equips you to

- Reflect on the good and bad parts of your own childhood and how it steers your parenting
- Create space to get real about our greatest fears—instead of them managing you
- Know what you're aiming for—your parenting bullseye

- Discover four keys to your kids’ teenage years
- Equip you to speak life to and encourage your kids
- Understand why God chose you as your kids’ parent or stepparent

After watching each video, we provide the questions so it’s easy to facilitate real conversation with your spouse or a small group of parents.

3 TIPS FOR GROUP LEADERS

1. Set Expectations

Minimize surprises by explaining the format of this study and the length of each session. Respect people’s time by keeping your group moving and ending on time. But plan at the outset for enough margin to cultivate genuine, thoughtful conversation (even for the introverts!).

- Break the ice and help everyone arrive with the provided Kickstarter question (about 5-10 minutes)
- Watch the video (about 30 minutes)
- Move through the “Let’s Talk.” feature to facilitate conversation (about 20-30 minutes)

2. Show Up

As with most things in life, you’ll get out of this study what you put in. Encourage your group to stay committed and to trust the process—while remaining mindful of what makes this rewarding (...or demotivating) for them.

3. Explain and Maintain Healthy Ground Rules

Set your entire group up for success by laying wise ground rules. Here’s what we recommend.

- 1. Be vulnerable.** Genuine connection heals and helps all of us.
- 2. What happens in our group stays in our group.** Trustworthiness makes rule #1 possible.
- 3. No tattling on a spouse.**
- 4. Remember why this course matters to you: Do the homework.**



Session One:

THE BULLSEYE

KICKSTARTER

How would you describe each of your kids in a few words?

What's one key to someone who would want to know what makes that child tick?

What one word best describes your family?

We'll go first. We're Dave & Ann Wilson. Our three sons are in their 30s and married to incredible women. We have six grandkids who are the absolute joy of our lives.

One word to describe our family: Adventure-seekers!



WATCH THE VIDEO

“We believe there is a secret to parenting that most parents have never considered, and it is found in two key questions: *What are we trying to raise?* And *Who are we raising?*”

“When those two questions are answered, we can begin to develop a plan of *how* we're going to navigate these years of parenting, regardless of *where* the varying circumstances lead.”

NO PERFECT PARENTS, PAGE 8



LET'S TALK

- Let's talk expectations versus reality. What did you *think* parenting was going to be like? (Metaphors welcome.)
- What is parenting *actually* like? Share what's hilarious—and what's straight-up hard.
- *In the video, we shared that our parenting mission statement or bullseye is to “train and launch ‘L3 warriors (love others, lock arms, and live openhandedly)’ who make a dent where they’re sent.”*

Think about the target you're aiming for in parenting—whether intentionally, or less so. Take a few minutes and jot down what comes to mind, then share.

- From your own upbringing or childhood, what do you hope to pass on to your kids—and what do you hope to avoid?

“But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

JOSHUA 24:15, NIV

“You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

EXODUS 20:5-6

All Scripture verses are displayed in the English Standard Version.



HOMework

Before the next session, formulate a family mission statement. Don't be overwhelmed by this. It's really just a few lines that sum up what you want your family to represent. Unsure where to start? Try the activity below.

Ideas to get you started:

1. **Pray** about who you think *God* wants your family to be.
2. Complete a “**brain dump**” list of your family's values.
3. From your list, select **three to five values** that take priority or incorporate others (for example, “love” could express values of empathy or generosity). As you're thinking and prioritizing, consider
 - Who you want to be
 - What you want to do
 - Where you want to go
4. Think: What does “**success**” for your kids look like? (The Wilsons' mission statement, for example, focuses largely on *impact* for the kingdom of God. Do you share this ultimate goal?)
5. What **Bible verses** sum up your life goals as individuals, and for your family?
6. What's the “**elevator pitch**” (30 seconds or less) that sums up your driving motivations as parents? Refine this as your mission statement, making it concise and memorable. Chew on it for a few days, listening to God.
7. Consider grabbing some snacks and **pitching your mission statement to your family**. Encourage discussion from your kids and even pushback.
8. **Display** your mission statement somewhere where it can encourage your family. You might even have your family sign their names at the bottom.