

# ONTRACK

P A R E N T S

Notes & Discussion Guides

SADDLEBACK  
**PARENTS**  
HELPING PARENTS WIN!

## **Week 1: The Purpose of Parenting** Outline Notes

So, what's the purpose of parenting?  
To raise children to be interdependent, lifelong  
followers of Jesus who desire to make a  
kingdom contribution.

*Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously,  
and he will give you everything you need.*

**Matthew 6:33**

### **Purpose #1: Nudging Children Towards \_\_\_\_\_**

*So it is with Christ's body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.* **Romans 12:5**

*Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble. Likewise, two people lying close together can keep each other warm. But how can one be warm alone? A person standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer. Three are even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.* **Ecclesiastes 4:9-12**

1. Begin releasing your grip on the rope early...a little bit at a time.
2. Keep their involvement in church and Christian fellowship a priority.
3. Model it for them!

### **Purpose #2: Setting the Stage For a \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship With \_\_\_\_\_**

*The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.* **John 10:10**

1. Don't rely on the church to disciple your kids. Talk about faith and Jesus regularly...make faith in Jesus a natural part of your family.
2. Focus on Grace more than Guilt. Guilt pushes people away...Grace draws people in!
3. Model it for them!

### **Purpose #3: Helping Children Desire to Make a \_\_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_\_**

*For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.* **Ephesians 2:10**

*God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.* **1 Peter 4:10**

1. Help them recognize and celebrate their unique SHAPE, giftings, wiring...CELEBRATE how God made them!
2. Make ministry and serving others a family practice (things that feel normal in childhood usually become lifelong practices)
3. Model it for them!

## **Week 1: The Purpose of Parenting**

Reflection/Discussion Guide

- What did you want to be “when you grew up” when you were a child? When you were a teenager?
- In what ways is your life what your parents hoped it would become? In what ways is it different?
- In this session, the purpose of parenting is defined as: raising children to be interdependent, lifelong followers of Jesus who desire to make a kingdom contribution. Would you add anything to that definition of the purpose of parenting?
- What has releasing your grip on the rope early...a little bit at a time...looked like for you? If you have more than one child, in what ways has it been different for each? What’s the scariest part about watching your children grow in independence?
- In what ways have you helped your children recognize their need to be part of a faith community, church, etc.? Is the idea of church more than just a place they attend once a week to learn about God?
- *The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.*  
**John 10:10**

God wants to give our children a “rich and satisfying” life. What do you hope that looks like for your child? From what you know of scripture and the definition of the purpose of parenting used in this session, what is the primary source of a “rich and satisfying” life?

- How comfortable/confident/consistent are you in viewing yourself as the primary spiritual influence and discipler of your children? Do you have any family practices, traditions, or rituals that have been particularly successful?
- *God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.*  
**1 Peter 4:10**

In what ways are your children gifted? What special interests do they have? What causes or social issues do they seem to care about? How can you help them use their uniqueness to make a Kingdom contribution?

- How well are you modeling the following to your children?
  - Interdependence: Self-sufficient, yet committed to church
  - Lifelong follower of Jesus: Living out your faith daily
  - Kingdom contribution: Using your gifts to serve others

**Week 2: The Privilege of Parenting**  
Outline Notes

**Raising Children is a Privilege Because Children are a \_\_\_\_\_ From \_\_\_\_\_**

*Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him.*  
**Psalm 127:3**

**Raising Children is a Privilege Because Kids \_\_\_\_\_ a Special Place in Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_**

*And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf is welcoming me.*  
**Matthew 18:5**

**Raising Children is a Privilege Because Parents Get to Help \_\_\_\_\_ a \_\_\_\_\_**

*Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.*  
**Proverbs 22:6**

**Week 2: The Privilege of Parenting**  
Reflection/Discussion Guide

- Go back in time and remember holding your child for the first time in the hospital. What were some of your thoughts? Your hopes? Your fears?
- From what you know about Jesus, why do you think he so values children? What does that say to us as parents?
- As mentioned in the video, parents get to help form a future! That reality is both daunting and amazing. Make a list of the top 3-4 goals, values, character traits, etc. you have for your children. What can you do to help ensure these are realized in your child's future?
- *Direct your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.*  
**Proverbs 22:6**

As mentioned in the video, this verse talks about raising our children both spiritually AND according to their natural bent...their unique wiring, interests, and skills. How easy is that for you? In what ways are you already doing that? In what areas might you have some room for improvement?

- What might you say to a parent of a teenager who is struggling to celebrate parenting as a "privilege"?
- Why is it so easy to focus on the negative aspects of parenting; and the stuff about our children that frustrate us? Is there something you can do that will help focus on the positive aspect of being a parent even during the most strenuous times?
- *Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a reward from him.*  
**Psalms 127:3**

For the next twenty years or so, make this a verse you commit to memory and remind yourself of regularly!

**Week 3: The Potholes of Parenting - Part 1**  
Outline Notes

**Pothole #1: Being \_\_\_\_\_ from Your Children**

**How To CONNECT With Your Kids:**

**C** \_\_\_\_\_

**O** \_\_\_\_\_

**N** \_\_\_\_\_

**N** \_\_\_\_\_

**E** \_\_\_\_\_

**C** \_\_\_\_\_

**T** \_\_\_\_\_

**Week 3: The Potholes of Parenting - Part 1**  
Reflection/Discussion Guide

Do this activity on your own, as a couple, or in your small group and discuss together.

Look at each part of CONNECT again:

- Clean the slate
- Open your eyes to their world
- Notice their progress
- Neglect the small stuff
- Express your love through their language
- Create memories
- Talk with your children

- Which of these come fairly easily/naturally for you?
- Is there one or two that did not come easily, but you've made effort and progress?
- Which do you need to prayerfully improve upon?
  - Is there a parent who you've noticed is good in an area of your weakness that you can take to coffee and learn from?
- **IDEA:** Assign a special day of the week to each letter, and commit doing something intentional on that day to connect with your child in that area.

**Example:**

Sunday = Clean the Slate

Every Sunday, take time to pray for your child's shortcomings; specifically the areas that tend to bother YOU the most. Ask God to examine your heart and help you clean your own slate of expectations where needed.

## Week 4: The Potholes of Parenting - Part 2

### Outline Notes

**Pothole #1: Being \_\_\_\_\_ from Your Children**

**Pothole #2: Being \_\_\_\_\_ with Our Children**

Discontentment with our children almost always starts with:

**C** \_\_\_\_\_

**C** \_\_\_\_\_

**C** \_\_\_\_\_

**C** \_\_\_\_\_

How can we break the discontentment cycle (or avoid it all together)?

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*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. **Psalm 139:13-14***

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*Do everything without complaining and arguing. **Philippians 2:4***

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*A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. **Proverbs 15:1***

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*Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. **Romans 8:1***



## **Week 4: The Potholes of Parenting - Part 2**

### Reflection/Discussion Guide

- Think about a time that you experienced the feeling that someone else was discontented with you. Maybe it was a parent, teacher, coach, family member, or friend. What feelings and memories come up as you think about someone else being discontented with you?
- Now, think about a time that you were discontented with one of your children. What was the circumstance? What did he/she do or not do? Why were you so discontented? How did you respond or react in word or action? Do not think of this as a confessional time, but rather a time of reflection and awareness development.
- As mentioned in the video, “a legacy of children carrying those types of memories awaits the parent who is consistently discontented with their kids.” Wow! Whether you experienced discontentment as a child or felt it as a parent, it is true that with discontentment comes a powerful legacy. Reread and sit with the weight of this quote.
- Time for some honest self-reflection. Which of the 4 “C’s” do you struggle the most with? Why?
- Revisit the “C” that you struggle the most with. Reread and write down the way to break or avoid this part of the discontentment cycle. Share some practical ways that you will break or avoid this part of the discontentment cycle.
- Read Romans 8:1 four times – “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” There is such freeing power in this verse. Spend some time in prayer. Pray that you can be freed from the bonds of condemnation that bind you OR that you may have used to condemn your child. Start fresh today!