

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE



LEAD

YOUR FAMILY

LIKE JESUS

GROUP EXPERIENCE

NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLING AUTHOR

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FOCUS
ON FAMILY

PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

LEAD YOUR FAMILY **LIKE JESUS**

**POWERFUL PARENTING PRINCIPLES
FROM THE CREATOR OF FAMILIES**



FOCUS[®]
ON THE FAMILY



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Lead Your Family Like Jesus DVD Series
Participant's Guide

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QUICK START GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Whether you're studying in a group, as a couple, or individually, this book is for you. It's packed with discussion questions, advice, biblical input, and application activities.

But maybe all you'd like to do right now is watch the accompanying video and talk about it with your spouse—or think about it on your own. If so, go directly to the “Watch This!” section of each chapter. There you'll find the discussion questions you're looking for.

When you have more time, we encourage you to explore the other features in this book. We think you'll find them family-changing!

WELCOME!

If there's anything you don't need, it's one more thing to do.

Unless, of course, that one thing might make the *other* things a whole lot easier.

We can't guarantee that this video series will take all the challenge out of parenthood. It won't keep your kids from forgetting their lunch money, make them trade in their video games for art museum passes, or remind them to scoop the cat's litter box.

But it *will* help you understand why leading your family is so crucial, how to follow the servant leadership example of Jesus, and how to enjoy the journey to the fullest. In other words, you'll discover how to be the mom or dad you really want to be.

That takes effort, but it doesn't take boredom or busy work. So we've designed this course to be provocative and practical. At its heart is a powerful, down-to-earth video series featuring three parents with plenty of experience in walking the leadership trail Jesus blazed. And in your hands is the book that's going to make it all personal for you—the Participant's Guide.

In each chapter of this book, you'll find the following sections:

Grand Opening. Read this brief excerpt to focus on the subject at hand.

Watch This! Use this section as you view and think about the video; it includes thought-provoking questions and biblical input.

So What? Practice makes perfect, so here's your chance to begin applying principles from the video to your own family.

Your Turn. To wrap up, you'll find encouragement and a challenge for the week.

Whether you're using this book as part of a group or on your own, taking a few minutes to read and complete each chapter will bring the messages of the video home.

And isn't that exactly where you need it most?

Note: Many issues addressed in this series are difficult ones. Some parents may need to address them in greater detail and depth. The video presentations and this guide are intended as general advice only, and not to replace clinical counseling, medical treatment, legal counsel, or pastoral guidance.

Focus on the Family maintains a referral network of Christian counselors. For information, call 1-800-A-FAMILY and ask for the counseling department. You can also find plenty of parenting advice and encouragement at www.focusonthefamily.com.



CHAPTER 1

To Lead Is to Serve

THE POINT: Jesus wants us to be servant leaders in our families, and showed us how.

GRAND OPENING

Getting Your Thoughts Together



Under the Influence

by Ken Blanchard

By looking at Jesus, you can learn how to build a loving relationship with your spouse, children, and extended family—no matter how you were raised and no matter what challenges your family faces.

Those challenges are all around us. In too many families love has been distorted to “you don’t love me unless you [fill in the blank],” rather than the unconditional serving that Jesus modeled. Self-promotion (pride) and self-protection (fear) have replaced love and vulnerability. We’re afraid to give our whole hearts to others because we don’t want to be hurt. Indifference moves in and intimacy is replaced with isolation.

The good news is that there’s a better way. There’s a perfect

leadership role model you can trust. His name is Jesus. All families matter to Him. The big question is, does Jesus matter in your family? . . .

[Family leaders make] personal choices about how and to what end they will use their influence. When it comes to decisions like these, each of us must decide: *Am I seeking to serve God and the well-being of my family members, or am I seeking my own self-interest?*

When parents lead like Jesus, they serve God and others with love as the ultimate goal. As a result, spouses enjoy greater intimacy and fulfillment, children gain character-building skills and self-worth, and family relationships thrive!¹

Why is it hard to stop “looking out for Number One,” even when you’re a parent? What do people fear might happen if they do that?

Is it tough to believe that putting the well-being of your family above your own interests could actually benefit you? Why or why not?

WATCH THIS!

Viewing and Discussing the Video

In this portion of the video, Ken Blanchard explains what leadership is: a process of influencing the thinking, behavior, or development of someone else. He reveals that anyone can be a leader, that every parent is a leader, and that leading a family as Jesus would has great benefits.

Tricia Goyer discusses what it means to be a family leader. It doesn't mean controlling everything, being an "expert," or being perfect. It's all about serving—like Jesus. Finally, Phil Hodges describes how Jesus demonstrated loving leadership—and why leading your family as He led isn't an unreachable goal.

After viewing the authors' presentations, use questions like the following to help you think through what you saw and heard.

1. "Any time you seek to influence the thinking, behavior, or development of another person, you take on the role of a leader." That's how Ken Blanchard defines leadership. Is that different from the way you've been defining it? If so, how? And since it puts you as a parent in the "leader" category, which of the following describes your feelings about that?

- nervous
- like I just got a promotion
- like I haven't been doing my job
- like it's time to fire my kids
- other _____

2. Read Philippians 2:5-11. Why do you suppose Jesus "did not consider equality with God something to be grasped"? How does that explain why He was a servant leader? When we refuse to

“make ourselves nothing” for the sake of our families, what are we grasping for?

3. Tricia Goyer was an unwed teenage mom. When you know that, how does it affect the way you see her advice on leading your family like Jesus?
- It doesn't.
 - It reminds me that God gives us second chances, and I'm glad He does.
 - It makes her ideas even more believable, because she's "been there."
 - It makes me less likely to take her advice seriously.
 - other _____
4. Read Luke 1:26–38. On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being impossible), how hard would it be for you to have Mary's "servant attitude" in each of the following situations? How might having such an attitude influence the way you handle each scenario?
- Your 19-year-old daughter is arrested for shoplifting a smart-phone case, and pleads for you to bail her out of jail.
 - You find yourself in the hospital emergency room with your five-year-old son, who ignored your warnings not to put dried peas in his nose.

- You discover your eight-year-old son viewing pornography on the Internet.
- Your 15-year-old daughter announces that she must have a set of watercolor pencils, six pounds of modeling clay, and a copy of *Hamlet*—at 10 p.m. the night before her English class project is due.

5. How might Phil Hodges' portion of the video be different if this course were based on each of the following books?

- *Lead Your Family Like Lance Armstrong*
- *Lead Your Family Like the Taliban*
- *Lead Your Family Like Tiger Woods*

When it comes to finding a parenting example, where do you think most people look? If you had to convince them to consider Jesus, how would you do it?

6. When Jesus washed His disciples' feet (John 13:1-17), what was He trying to teach them? If He wanted to teach that lesson today to each of the following people, what might He do?

- the weary parent of a newborn
- your oldest child
- your spouse

If you wanted to be a servant to each of the aforementioned people, how would you do it?



Why I Love the Way Jesus Led

by Phil Hodges

When it comes to humility, Jesus was truly the Master. You've probably heard about the time when, despite His heavenly credentials, He washed His followers' dirty feet. . . .

That was hardly the only time Jesus displayed His humble spirit, however. Early in His ministry, He demonstrated His desire to please only the Father and to turn control of His life over to Him. Jesus made that choice public when He surrendered all to His Father and insisted that John baptize Him "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).

Sometimes Jesus' desire to please the Father wasn't just a matter of doing something that others might have considered beneath their

dignity. He demonstrated this dramatically when He went into the wilderness and was tempted by Satan:

For the third test, the Devil took him on the peak of a huge mountain. He gestured expansively, pointing out all the earth's kingdoms, how glorious they all were. Then he said, "They're yours—lock, stock, and barrel. Just go down on your knees and worship me, and they're yours."

Jesus' refusal was curt: "Beat it, Satan!" He backed his rebuke with a third quotation from Deuteronomy: "Worship the Lord your God, and only him. Serve him with absolute single-heartedness." (Matthew 4:8-10, MSG)

Jesus repeatedly affirmed *whose He was* and *who He was*. He determined that He would live by the mission His Father had given Him for the accomplishment of His Father's purpose. Jesus could have been prideful; He was the Son of God. He could have been fearful; all the powers of darkness were against Him. Instead, in all these situations, Jesus chose the will of His Father. He chose to lead by serving.²

Based on this excerpt, would you say that being humble and being spineless are the same thing? Why or why not? How is it important for family leaders to know the difference?

SO WHAT?

Connecting Principles to Parenting

Foot-Washing: The Next Generation

Cleanup on Aisle 1: Diaper Duty

Your toddler's third birthday is next week. But she can't seem to get potty-trained. A "scientific" potty chair, chocolate-chip bribes, hopeful pep talks—nothing seems to work. You're starting to think she's doing this on purpose; every new diaper is like a nail in your coffin. Based on the example of Jesus in John 13:1-17, how might a servant leader handle this? What might you do to avoid getting resentful and to promote the child's long-term good?

Cleanup on Aisle 2: The Riotous Room

Are you smarter than a fifth-grader? Yes, and tidier, too. Your ten-year-old son's room seems knee-deep in LEGOs, sour gummy worms, and dirty socks. The bed hasn't been made since Pluto was officially a planet, and the smell is starting to make the neighbor's pit bull whimper.

Your blood pressure goes up every time you try in vain to get your son to undo the carnage. You suspect he'd make progress if you offered to man a shovel at his side, but you're hardly in the mood. Based on the example of Jesus in John 13:1-17, how might a servant leader handle this? What might you do to avoid getting resentful and to promote the child's long-term good?

Cleanup on Aisle 3: A Financial Mess

Thanks to your 16-year-old's brief inattention while driving, your Toyota Corolla has acquired a watermelon-sized dent in the hood. The deductible on your insurance guarantees that you're going to pay at least \$1,200. Your child's remorse appears genuine, but so is your anger. The annual income of your teen is approximately nothing, other than the \$25 Amazon gift card Aunt Samantha sends every Christmas. Cleaning up this mess seems to fall to you. Based on the example of Jesus in John 13:1-17, how might a servant leader handle this? What might you do to avoid getting resentful and to promote the child's long-term good?

YOUR TURN

Taking the Next Step at Home



How Does It Look to Lead Your Family?

by Tricia Goyer

Leading like Jesus means leading your family with humility. . . . Humility is an attitude that reflects a keen understanding of our limitations. *People with humility don't think less of themselves; they just think of themselves less.* That grows out of having confidence in God. . . .

But how does [this] look in the everyday rush of parenting? I found out during a very busy time of my life.

My calendar was in chaos. I was having trouble making wise choices about my commitments and my family's activities. One night I broke down crying from being overwhelmed.

My husband, John, asked if we could sit down and go over my schedule. He wanted us to look at everything I'd committed to and figure out where the problem was. He started by asking me to make a list of everything I did in a week.

I scoffed. "You don't have enough paper," I said. Feeling a burden heavy on my shoulders, I started going through the list—caring for our home and children, my work projects, my volunteering, my church service, and all the kids' activities.

After everything was listed, John helped me to rate everything on a scale of one through four. The “ones” were things I *had* to do, such as feeding the kids and homeschooling. The “twos” were things I *should* do, like laundry and housecleaning. The “threes” were things I enjoyed doing and that helped me, such as Bible study or exercise class. The fours, I discovered, were things I did because I was afraid to say no, or because I wanted to look good or have my kids look good.

To refocus and get a better handle on my schedule, I cut out all the fours. I even cut out some threes, realizing that even though they were good things, it wasn’t the right season for them.

Evaluating my activities helped my schedule, and it gave me a glimpse into my heart. I was trying to get others—even God—to love me because of things I did. I realized, though, that God loves me already. When I focus on Him and His plans for me, I can find peace—and have confidence in the things I choose, knowing I’m doing them for God alone.³

This week you can take a step forward in your journey to servant leadership. Try starting with the calendar-clearing exercise Tricia and John Goyer used.

Ask yourself, *Is our schedule designed to serve me or the rest of our family?* List the tasks you perform in a typical week, categorizing them as “ones” (things you have to do), “twos” (things you should do),

“threes” (things you enjoy and that benefit you), or “fours” (things you’re afraid to say no to). Cut out the fours and at least some of the threes. See how you and your family can grow closer by using some of the time you’re saving.