

# DAY 1 TOOLS

So, one day you're going about your every day life, minding your own business, and as if it catches you by surprise, EVERYTHING changes. The *man cave* is replaced with brightly-colored walls and miniature furniture.

Your beloved Harley has been traded in for a college fund and the sporty two-seater convertible is now a minivan. Congratulations! You're now a proud parent!

As parents, we look at the bundle in our arms then look out at a broken world and wonder how we'll ever be able to be the parent we need to be!

How do I prepare this little creature for a great big world?

How can we be the parents we need to be? READ Deuteronomy 6:1-9 and Mark 12:33. As parents, central to everything we ever say, teach, or do, is what is in and on our own hearts. What does it look like to love God with all your heart, soul, and strength? What about having these things on our hearts?

These verses speak of intentionality. We intentionally choose to follow our Rabbi and to learn from Him. What kind of parent do we need to be?

One who is intentional, taking steps to think, feel, and act more and more like Jesus.

## DAY 2

The magnitude of our role as parents intensifies the first time we look up while in a crowd and realize his/her little hand is no longer in ours.

We move into complete panic, sending out the search and rescue teams.

As soon as our little wanderer is safely back in our grasp, we promptly inform him/her of every hazard that he's/she's narrowly escaped and danger which awaits around every corner.

READ Luke 2:41-52. Can you imagine? Mary and Joseph didn't just lose their son, they lost the son of God! What do you imagine went through their minds as they anxiously searched for Jesus? LOOK at how Jesus responded to his parents' obvious worry and concern (vs 49).

"Why were you searching for me?" Really? I'm sure Mary and Joseph could have rattled off a hundred reasons why they were searching for him!

What happened next? In verses 51-52, we typically focus on what Jesus did: He was obedient, he grew in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and man.

What do you think is central from a parental perspective?

The obedience or the growth? Why?

## DAY 3

LOOK again at Luke 2:41-52.

As parents, it's easy to focus solely on obedience (the end result) but Mary considers, ponders, treasures these things in her heart. We see her possibly questioning her role as a parent, "Is my ultimate purpose to raise an obedient child who is externally motivated to follow the rules?"

"Is my role to equip and prepare my child to do what's right from the outflow of a transformed heart?" Interestingly enough, the ways in which Jesus grew and matured mentioned in verse 52

are things by which we greatly influence our kids' lives. THINK about what each of these aspects of growth and maturity encompasses.

WISDOM: knowledge of what is true or right coupled with just judgment as to action; discernment, insight.

STATURE: height, degree of maturity attained

IN FAVOR WITH GOD AND MEN: approved or held in regard

These heart level attributes are external evidence of what is internal.

PRAY: Father, I see such wisdom in your way.

I ask You to open my eyes to the heart of my child.

Help me parent with this in mind.

## DAY 4

READ Ephesians 6:4.

REFER to the TOOLS THAT GET SHORT-TERM, SLOPPY RESULTS: SHAME, INDIFFERENCE, SILENCE, PRESSURE, ANGER, AND FEAR on the weekend outline. THINK about how parenting with each of those tools might look. COME up with examples of parenting with these tools. Do you recall a time you were parented in one of these ways? What was that like? What about the tools necessary for external results (PUNISHMENT AND REWARD)? Can you think of a time when you were parented this way and it resulted simply in external results? THINK about a time you picked up one of these tools in parenting. Whether we're tired and emotionally spent or find ourselves in that desperate frame of mind when our child causes a scene in public, the closest, handiest tool may be anger.

Every parent picks up the wrong tool now and then.

Why do you think you responded that way? What was the result?

## DAY 5

RE-READ Deuteronomy 6:4-9.

Refer to the TOOLS NEEDED FOR INTERNAL, LASTING RESULTS: ENGAGEMENT, LISTENING, FORGIVENESS, AWARENESS, EXAMPLE, RESPECT, AND FUN on the weekend outline. What are some examples of parenting with these tools? DESCRIBE a time when you parented using one or more of these tools. What was that like? These are the parenting tools which shape their hearts and equip/prepare our kids to mature into good people from whom good things naturally flow. REFLECT on your parenting tools of choice. Will they produce external, short-term results or internal, lasting results? CONSIDER the hearts of each of your children as you reflect on the long term, internal tools. Is there a tool that has been neglected or they just need more than others right now? How can you incorporate that specific tool in your parenting this week? CONSIDER spending some one-to-one time with each of your kids over the course of the summer. FOCUS on seeking their individual hearts, personalities, and needs as you do stuff together.

PRAY: Father, help me to be someone who loves you with my whole heart, soul, and strength. Help me to parent in such a way so my kids not only hear about You by my words, but they would see You through my actions.