

SESSION FOUR

To Shetter
or Not to
Shetter



*And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus,
and you will be saved, you and your household."*

ACTS 16:3

Welcome back for the fourth week of our journey to build Flourishing Families. We sincerely hope that you're engaged in profound and enriching dialogues within your households concerning the biblical principles we've been exploring. We're optimistic that you're in the process of cultivating fresh routines and patterns that are fostering positive transformations and advancement in your family dynamics and relationships.

During our previous session, we delved into the concept of the trophies we pursue and how we establish our priorities. Today, we're about to embark on what might be the most challenging conversation of this series. Pastor Ben will be guiding us through the topic of choosing to shelter or not to shelter our kids from the world. In this discussion, we will address the immensely tough choices that all parents are grappling with in these times as we strive to nurture virtuous and godly children within an increasingly secular world. This session will provide practical insights that you'll want to revisit repeatedly.

Remember to peruse the supplementary resources in the study guide's additional section, which includes books, videos, and podcasts, to complement your learning experience. Again, we are so glad you're with us on this journey.







coming together

During each session, we will begin with a question or brief activity designed to “put us on the same page” for the session.

- To what degree did your own parents shelter you? Would they have been considered “free-range” parents, “helicopter” parents, or somewhere in between?
- What have been the greatest challenges for you regarding sheltering your own kids from the world?



learning together

WATCH THE VIDEO



growing together

In the questions that follow, you will review and expand on the teaching you just experienced.

- Where has your family encountered the “counsel of the wicked” or the “seat of scoffers”?
- What disciplines and rhythms has your family developed to stay grounded in God’s Word? What does it look like practically?
- How do you think Psalm 1 informs decisions we make for our kids like: school choice, entertainment, smart phones, social media, etc...?
- How much freedom do you give your kids in relation to time with friends?



going deeper

If there is time, and you feel God nudging you to go deeper, take some time in group or by yourself before the next meeting to dig further into His Word. Explore the Bible passages related to this session's theme on your own and jot your reflections in a journal or in this study guide. A great way to gain insight on a passage is to read it in several different translations. You may want to use a Bible app or website to compare translations.

In Matthew 18:1-6 (ESV) it says,

“At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

- Why do you think Jesus used a child to illustrate the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?
- Who do you think Jesus meant by “one of these little ones” (v.6)?
- How might these verses be applied to the question of how much to shelter your children?
- Where might we over-shelter in our effort not to “cause one of these little ones” to sin?

resources

BOOK

“Social Media and Depression” by Gregory Jantz

“The Tech-Wise Family” by Andy Crouch

RIGHTNOW MEDIA

“Parenting and Technology” by Kathy Koch

“Parenting a Teen in a Social Media World”

by Annie F. Downs

PODCAST

“Screen Time: Less is More” by Jonathan McKnee

[https://www.focusonthefamily.com/episodes/broadcast/
screen-time-less-is-more/](https://www.focusonthefamily.com/episodes/broadcast/screen-time-less-is-more/)



daily



Read and reflect on the following Scriptures between group meetings. Use this section to seek God on your own throughout the week. This time at home should begin and end with prayer. Don't get in a hurry; take enough time to hear God's direction.

Day 1

Psalm 138:7

"Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my enemies, and your right hand delivers me."

Reflect:

This verse is about the way God shelters us by delivering us from our enemies. Do you think there is any balance of sheltering versus allowing our kids to manage themselves that we can learn from the way God "parents" us?

Day 2

Psalm 146:9

"The Lord watches over the sojourners; he upholds the widow and the fatherless, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin."

Reflect:

Our Father watches over us and upholds us. What are some ways we can watch over and uphold our own children?

reflections

Day 3

Isaiah 54:3

“For you will spread abroad to the right and to the left, and your offspring will possess the nations and will people the desolate cities.”

Reflect:

Do you think this passage shows us encouragement for sending our children out “to the right and to the left” to possess the nations? Do you see anything practical in this verse about the topic of how much to shelter our children, especially as they get older?

Day 4

Isaiah 54:13

“All your children shall be taught by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children.”

Reflect:

How does the Lord teach our children?

Day 5

Isaiah 45:25

“For thus says the Lord: ‘Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken, and the prey of the tyrant be rescued, for I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children.’”

Reflect:

How encouraging is it that God promises to contend with those to contend with us and save our children? In what ways do you struggle to believe that?