

Praise for *Work and Rest God's Way*

“God commands us to work. And God also commands us to rest. Scott LaPierre shows how the Bible discloses the sinfulness of laziness and ‘idleness,’ and he unpacks the contrary biblical virtue of ‘diligence.’ But he also shows how our relationship to work can become sinful. Workaholism turns work into an addiction that can lead to burnout and idolatry. The biblical principle of the Sabbath counters those tendencies with physical rest, the cessation of busyness necessary for spiritual devotion, and the life of faith, in which we realize that our salvation comes not by our work, but by resting in Christ. *Work and Rest God's Way* is a welcome contribution as Christians rediscover the doctrine of vocation in all of its practicality and spiritual richness.”

Dr. Gene Edward Veith—Provost at Patrick Henry College, director of the Cranach Institute at Concordia Theological Seminary, and author of *God at Work*

“*In Work and Rest God's Way*, Scott LaPierre wonderfully reconciles the very real tension between work and rest by resisting the celebrated extremes of workaholism and play by relying on the principles and patterns laid out in God's Word. In an age when so many are sacrificing so much to gain so very little—manifested through materialism on the one hand and hedonism on the other—this book will help you, especially if you're a young man, navigate this life-altering strait.”

Kirk Smith—Church planter, pastor, and Executive Director for the Illinois Christian Home Educators (ICHE)

“Scott LaPierre has produced a much-needed resource to help our churches and families recognize the blessing and purpose of work. He addresses sloth, the penalty for it and overwork and the need to rest, ultimately finding our rest in Christ.”

Gary Powers—Preaching elder and founder and CEO of Ortho Molecular Products

WORK AND REST GOD'S WAY FAMILY GUIDE

Work and Rest God's Way—Sample Chapters

WORK AND REST GOD'S WAY FAMILY GUIDE

*A Biblical Recipe for Finding Joy and Purpose
in All You Do*

Scott LaPierre

Work and Rest God's Way—Sample Chapters

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Dedication

The *Work and Rest God's Way Family Guide* is dedicated to the parents training up their children to “do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Introduction

It's hard to believe we have a teenager. We have eight children, and our oldest, Rhea Grace, recently celebrated her thirteenth birthday. Sometimes it's hard to believe we have eight kids. We've had a few miscarriages, and we look forward to seeing those kids in heaven, but even with those losses, God seems to give us a child about every other year. My dear wife, Katie, is healthy and still in her thirties, so, God willing, we'll probably have more kids! When you have eight children, some people wonder if you wanted that many. I would say we want the number of children God wants to give us, so we've left it up to Him.

Why am I sharing this with you? Because the *Work and Rest God's Way Family Guide* is the culmination of what we've been learning in our family. Since we didn't really have a plan, other than leaving things in God's hands, we've had to figure things out as we go. We've made lots of mistakes. We've had to ask our children for their forgiveness more times than I can count. We've tried to learn from the examples of families we respect, and we've read books, watched videos, and attended family conferences. I have been praying and will continue to pray that this summation of what God is teaching us will bless you and guide your family well.

Prepare Your Children for Whatever God Calls Them to Do

As a pastor, I've often thought about one of my sons becoming a pastor. So far, none of them have shown any interest. This is okay, though, because we don't want them to feel pressured to embrace a

certain calling. We've told our children multiple times the important thing is that they serve Christ, which they can do in any honorable profession: "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men" (Colossians 3:17 and 23). If they do this, then they know Katie and I will be pleased with them, and, most importantly, the Lord will be pleased with them.

As our children have gotten older, one thing that has amazed me is how different they are from each other and from Katie and me. So, how do we prepare our children when we have no idea what they're going to do? We realized there were two things we could do that would benefit our children no matter what they do in life.

1. Since we want them to serve Christ, we preach the gospel to them. I spend more time talking about the gospel during our family Bible studies than any other topic.
2. Since it will benefit them in any profession, we train them to be hardworking and diligent.

Using the *Work and Rest God's Way Family Guide*

The *Work and Rest God's Way Family Guide* is designed with the above two goals in mind: point children to Jesus and teach them to work. While *Work and Rest God's Way* is targeted to people of all ages, the *Work and Rest God's Way Family Guide* is targeted to families and makes a great tool for family Bible studies. While one copy of *Work and Rest God's Way* can be shared by a family (although in a large family, more than one copy may be needed), it's important for each family member eight-years-old and older to have his or her own copy of the *Work and Rest God's Way Family Guide*.

Families shouldn't do the work together. Instead, each person should do the work on their own ahead of time, and then the family

Work and Rest God's Way—Sample Chapters

comes together to share their answers. Here are two recommendations: that of the fifth

1. Read and do the work for one chapter per week, so the work isn't rushed, and the material can be processed.
2. Choose the same day and time each week, so that each family member can keep that time free and know when they must have their work done.

The *Work and Rest God's Way Family Guide* is broken into two parts. **Part I: Why the *Work and Rest God's Way Family Guide*?**—Part I contains four chapters explaining the need for a *Family Guide* like this one, as well as the accompanying questions for each chapter. Chapters three and four have more to do with men's and women's roles.¹ Parents can decide whether they want their children to read or skip these chapters, but I would suggest that teens in the home should read the chapters and do the work. The chapters with brief explanations are:

1. **Chapter One: Our Children Are Growing Up in a Fallen World**—Because our children are surrounded by evil, they need to be disciplined.
2. **Chapter Two: A Sobering Example**—King Joash is as an example of the dangers of children conforming outwardly without being changed inwardly. They need the gospel to transform their hearts.
3. **Chapter Three: A Husband's Spiritual Leadership**—Because of the fallen world we live in and the need for our children to hear the gospel, men must be strong spiritual leaders in their homes and protect their families.

¹ Some of the content from these two chapters is taken from one of my other books, *Marriage God's Way*, and the accompanying *Marriage God's Way Workbook*. If you enjoy the chapters, I hope you'll check out the book and workbook.

Work and Rest God's Way—Sample Chapters

4. **Chapter Four: A Wife Can Make Her Husband's Spiritual Leadership Easier**—A wife can help her husband by embracing and supporting his leadership. There are certain things she should do and others she shouldn't do.

Part II: Accompanying Questions for *Work and Rest God's Way*—Part II contains the questions for the chapters from the book.

Questions for the Introduction

1. If you are a parent, what is one thing you have done well with your children and what is one thing you wish you had done differently?

Prepare Your Children for Whatever God Calls Them to Do

2. If you are a parent, what is one goal you have for each of your children?
3. What are additional ways you can teach the gospel to your children?

Using the Work and Rest God's Way Family Guide

9. As a family, decide the time you will set aside each week to work through this guide. Write the time below and commit to keeping that appointment.

Application: Take some time to pray for God's wisdom for yourself and your family as you move through this guide. Pray for each of your children that God shows you how you can instruct and prepare them for what He has created them to do. If you do not have children, pray for a friend or relative's child. If you are a child or teen, ask God to help your parents teach you.

Part I

**Why the *Work and Rest God's Way*
Family Guide?**

Chapter One

Our Children Are Growing Up in a Fallen World

As our children are getting older, we are recognizing just how little time we have with them. As parents, we should be selfish with this time because we recognize that it's valuable but limited. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the average number of hours in a public school day is 6.64, and this doesn't include the time spent walking, driving, or riding the bus to and from school.ⁱ The average number of school days per year is 180, which adds up to a little under 1,200 hours per year. This means that by the time public school students graduate high school, they have spent over 15,500 hours in school.

This is a lot of time for our children to be away from us. They can be around students who have a strong negative influence on them by exhibiting behaviors and sharing beliefs we don't want our children to embrace. As a former schoolteacher, I will be the first to say most teachers are hardworking and moral, but, though they may have their students' best interests in mind, many of them are not Christians. They don't share the values we want our children to have, and they must teach material that contradicts the Bible. The

Fairfax County Public School Board in Virginia approved lessons about homosexuality and “gender identity” in its “Family Life Education” curriculum.ⁱⁱ In the fifth-largest school district in the nation, Clark County School District officials are considering teaching children as young as five about homosexuality.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Proliferation of Evil

After school, when children sit down to watch a show or a movie, the moral decline is still more evident. Disney aired a cartoon showing a same-sex kiss.^{iv} They’ve changed *Beauty and the Beast* to introduce a homosexual subplot.^v In Disney’s cartoon, *The Owl House*, a demon teaches kids how to become witches.^{vi}

Cover Girl introduced a teenage boy, James Charles, as their new “cover girl.”^{vii} Maybelline didn’t want to be outdone, so they countered by doing the same with a teenage boy, Manny Gutierrez.^{viii} The January 2017 edition of *National Geographic* is a picture of a nine-year-old boy who looks just like a girl. He’s dressed in pink with long pink hair, and the quote from him reads: “The best thing about being a girl is, now I don’t have to pretend to be a boy.”^{ix}

In Proverbs 7, the foolish young man had to look for the harlot and put himself in a place to meet her: “Passing along the street *near her corner*, and he *took the path to her house*, in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night” (Proverbs 7:8–9). He had to head down the street toward her house, and even go out at night when he knew he would not be seen.

The young fool had to go through many steps to reach her, but for young men today to encounter immoral women—how many steps do they need to take? They don’t need to wait for a certain time or even leave their homes. All they need to do is pick up their phones and get on the internet. The availability of sin today is unthinkable. The temptations our children face should motivate us to disciple them.

The Legalization of Evil

Through most of human history, there's been an amount of legalized evil. Drunkenness, fornication, lying, gossip, and immodesty are all sins, and under most circumstances, they're legal. But in recent decades, we've seen even more evil legalized. In 1973, the Supreme Court legalized the murder of babies within the womb.^x On June 26, 2015, the Supreme Court required all states to issue marriage licenses to homosexual couples.^{xi} Laws are being enacted at a fierce rate in favor of transgender people. On June 15, 2020, the Supreme Court issued a law protecting homosexual and transgender workers from workplace discrimination.^{xii} Citizens are required to support and pay for with their taxes, the progress of perversions.^{xiii} President Obama and other national leaders affirm not just the morality of these perversions, but the nobility of them.^{xiv} A few decades ago, if someone running for office defended these perversions, he wouldn't be elected, but call something evil or perverse today, and an individual must doubt whether he could be considered a serious candidate for office.

According to a 2008 study published in *The Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, “Most children with gender dysphoria will not remain gender dysphoric after puberty.”^{xv} In other words, those supposedly confused about their gender will no longer be confused when they're older. But, if they received the free surgery to have their gender changed, it will be too late.

In the state of Oregon, fifteen-year-olds are not legally allowed to drive, smoke, donate blood, get a tattoo, or even go to a tanning bed, but they are allowed to have an operation that attempts to change their gender. They can do so without parental consent, and the state will pay for it through the Oregon Health Plan.^{xvi} I remember being fifteen, and I remember coaching fifteen-year-olds. They are very impressionable and fickle. Dr. Paul McHugh, who led the Johns Hopkins Psychiatry Department, said, “Oregon's policy

amounts to child abuse. It's a very radical and even mutilating treatment. Children age fifteen may not fully understand all the consequences of the procedures they are undergoing." I'd be surprised if they understand even a fraction of the consequences. They're fifteen!

Did you expect one day to be living in a world that affirms children who don't know whether they want to be male or female? Tragically, these children must not have been taught one of the simplest and earliest truths contained in Scripture: "God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (Genesis 1:27; repeated in Genesis 5:2, Matthew 19:4, and Mark 10:6).

Would we have so many children supposedly confused about their gender if parents were teaching their children this one simple truth from Scripture at an early age? Would we be dealing with this problem if men were raising their sons to be fathers and husbands, and women were raising their daughters to be wives and mothers?

The Celebration of Evil

Arthur Ashe was an African American tennis player who contracted AIDS from a blood transfusion. Then he spent much of the rest of his life educating people about HIV and AIDS. After his death, ESPN developed an award named after him. The Arthur Ashe Courage Award, which is described as "one of the most prestigious in sports. Recipients reflect the spirit of Arthur Ashe, possessing strength in the face of adversity, courage in the face of peril, and the willingness to stand up for their beliefs no matter what the cost. Winners of the Arthur Ashe Award strive to carry on Ashe's legacy in their own lives, inspired by those who do so each day."^{xvii}

Tragically, this honorable award has been ruined. The recipient in 2014 was Michael Sam because he was the first player chosen by the NFL after publicly declaring his homosexuality. He was also named one of *GQ*'s Men of the Year, and he was a finalist for *Sports*

Illustrated's Sportsman of the Year. He publicly defied God's Word, but that's not the worst part; people have been doing that for centuries. The worst part is he received a prestigious award for it. The nation celebrated what he did.

The recipient of the award for 2015 was Bruce Jenner, but he's listed as Caitlyn Jenner. Imagine for a moment that a man could mutilate himself as Bruce did, and it would be considered courageous and make him the recipient of a prestigious award. Again, the worst part isn't what Bruce Jenner did; people have always pursued evil and perversion. The worst part is that it was celebrated. Do you think fifty, forty, or even twenty years ago, a prestigious courage award would've been given to a man because he publicly announced his homosexuality, or to another man because he mutilated his body so he could call himself a woman?

There are certain perversions taking place today that used only to be spoken of in whispers; it was rightly considered shameful to publicize perversion. These evils never would've been acknowledged because they were so disgraceful, but now they're celebrated and rewarded.

What Does God Think?

How does God view these things? The term *transgender* isn't mentioned in Scripture, but there are two applicable verses. First, Deuteronomy 22:5 says, "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the LORD your God." This is not saying every article of clothing falls into one of two categories—one for men and one for women—and you must ensure you don't wear clothing that falls into the wrong category. There are some clothes that can be worn by males and females. Instead, the verse is forbidding intentional cross-dressing or transvestitism, which is when people attempt to appear like someone of the opposite sex.

God wants gender distinctions maintained down to the way we dress.

Deuteronomy 22:5 is part of the Old Covenant, and we are under the New Covenant, but the morality of the Old is carried forward to the New. Morality is determined by God, and since God's nature doesn't change, morality doesn't change. If God said something is an abomination, we know we're dealing with something immoral. Another way to think of it is, if God said something is an abomination under the Old Covenant, we can be sure it wouldn't become acceptable to Him later. The simple point is if God said it's an abomination for men to dress like women and for women to dress like men, I don't have words for what He must think about some of the transgenderism He sees today.

Second, Deuteronomy 23:1, which discusses eunuchs, says: "He who is emasculated by crushing or mutilation shall not enter the assembly of the LORD." Why such a severe punishment being kept from corporate worship? More than likely, it is because they were no longer representatives of a man made fully in God's image. They violated God's clearly established gender roles.

The only way our world makes sense is to look at it spiritually, which is to look at it the way God sees it. How else can we explain people passionately fighting to save trees while also passionately fighting to murder babies in the womb, or celebrating homosexuality and transgenderism as the pinnacles of courage? The only way these situations make any sense is in understanding there's a spiritual battle going on between good and evil.

Why all these examples? This is the world our children are growing up in. This is what they're going to be confronted with. This is what's proliferated, legalized, and celebrated. Our children must know God's Word before they encounter these issues so they can recognize the evil and know how to respond. This is why it's so important for Christian parents to disciple their children.

Discipling Our Children

The responsibility to (disciple) train and teach children is on the parents' shoulders. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." This is addressing parents—not the public school system, not the government, and not even the church. It's clearly addressing parents. When Moses gave the Law to the new generation that was about to enter the Promised Land, he said, "*You* shall teach them [the words of God] diligently to *your children*, and shall talk of them when *you* sit in your house, when *you* walk by the way, when *you* lie down, and when *you* rise up" (Deuteronomy 6:7). The "You" is parents. Ultimately, children belong to God, and secondarily, they belong to parents. The phrase "your children" is God's way of saying that parents are charged as stewards to train them in His will and way. Parents must do this all the time, such as when they "sit in your house...walk by the way...lie down...rise up."

Prior to pastoring, I taught elementary school. When the bell rang at the end of the day, the teaching concluded, and I sent the students home. But as parents, we never stop educating our children. God wants us to disciple them around the clock, every day, all day. When I was an officer in the Army, I was trained to "Always have a hip-pocket teaching available." Our uniforms had large pockets on our hips, and we were supposed to have a teaching we could pull out at any moment to share with our soldiers. The same is true with our children. We should look for teachable moments throughout the day to disciple them on work, diligence, rest, laziness, service, joy, and thankfulness. As our children encounter day-to-day situations, we want to repeatedly say, "What does the Bible say about this? How does God's Word apply to this situation?" Typically, children growing up in Christian homes learn Scripture,

but how does this benefit them if it isn't affecting their day-to-day lives, their relationships, and their decision-making?

Avoiding Hypocrisy

One final point for parents. If we're going to talk to our children about fearing and obeying God, we need to ensure we fear and obey God ourselves. Children can see through hypocrisy very easily. If our children know we're not doing what we're teaching, we can be sure they're going to choose rebellion over obedience. I don't know if there's anything that pushes children to rebellion faster than hypocrisy.

The other Person who can see through hypocrisy is God. If parents pray for their children to fear and obey God, it's hard to imagine Him answering those prayers if the parents don't fear and obey Him. As parents, we all want our children to read the Word and be involved in the church, but it's tragic when parents expect this for their children, but not for themselves. They're setting their own children up for failure.

Provide a Christian Worldview

In classrooms across the nation, students learn important subjects: math, reading, writing, science, and history. They also learn some important morals: do not lie, cheat, steal, be kind, work hard, and do your best. We homeschool our children, but if we only teach them academics and morality, then we're not moving beyond anything public schools offer. We must ensure we're doing what Deuteronomy 6:7 commands, diligently teaching our children the Word of God. If they learn academics that get them into the most prestigious schools in the nation, but they aren't committed to using that education for Christ, what good have we accomplished?

Why do we teach our children:

- Reading? So they can read Scripture.

Work and Rest God's Way—Sample Chapters

- Writing? So they can write about the Lord.
- Music? So they can worship the Lord and help others do the same.
- Science? So they can better know the Creator of creation.
- Art? So they can produce works that bring glory to God.
- History? So they can learn about our Christian heritage and the sacrifice many were willing to make to worship God freely and learn from the mistakes of those who rejected that same God.

And why do we teach them to work? So they can serve God: “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10).

Paul’s son in the faith, Timothy, grew up to be a wonderful, godly, young man. He was so impressive that when Paul met him, young as Timothy was, he wanted to bring him along (Acts 16:3). What made Timothy so exceptional? Paul gives the answer: “From childhood you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” (2 Timothy 3:15). From a young age, Timothy knew the Scriptures, which did two things for him:

1. They provided him with salvation; they taught him the gospel and how to be saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus.
2. They [made him] wise; Scripture is where true wisdom comes from.

This is a great example of what we should desire for our children: that they know the Scriptures at a young age, and that they’re wise for salvation, which is to say they know to put their faith in Christ. Where did Timothy receive this instruction? Not from his public-school teacher, wonderful coach, the government, or even the

Work and Rest God's Way—Sample Chapters

church. He received it from his mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois (2 Timothy 1:5). And along with their fathers (see next chapter), this is where our children should receive the same wisdom and discipleship.

Questions for Chapter One

1. When you consider all the time your children are away from you (school, activities, etc.), how does that motivate you to be a positive example for them?
2. How can you be a positive influence for the children in your life?

The Proliferation of Evil

3. What steps have you taken to protect your family from the rampant evil in our world?
4. In what ways can you disciple the children in your lives so they would flee from evil?

Work and Rest God's Way—Sample Chapters

5. Whether you are a parent or child, how are you actively seeking to flee evil?

The Legalization of Evil

6. Knowing that children and teens are watching the adults around them, what sins do you need to repent of before the Lord?
7. Describe the specific things you are doing to raise your sons to be fathers and husbands and your daughters to be wives and mothers.

The Celebration of Evil

8. If you could choose a biblical character who matches the criteria for the Arthur Ashe award of “possessing strength in the face of adversity, courage in the face of peril, and the willingness to stand up for their beliefs no matter what the cost,” who would it be and why?

Work and Rest God's Way—Sample Chapters

9. How could the criteria for the Arthur Ashe award be relevant to your family today? In other words, what criteria could your family strive to apply?

10. If a child or teen came to you to share their gay, lesbian, or transgender lifestyle or confusion about their sexual identity, how would you respond in a loving way that would direct them to God? What Scriptures would you use? If you have older children or teens, discuss with them how they might talk to any peers in these situations.

11. How can you teach the children in your life to embrace the gender God created them as?

What Does God Think?

12. In what ways have you compromised your beliefs or actions because “times have changed,” and you felt you had to go along? Take some time to repent of those things that dishonor God.

Discipling Our Children

13. In what ways are you teaching your children the Word of God throughout the day?

14. Ask God to show you ways you can use teachable moments to bring God’s Word to life for your children. Write down what God is showing you.

Avoiding Hypocrisy

15. Look up the word *hypocrisy* in a dictionary and write the definition below. Ask God to show you any areas you may be living in hypocrisy.

Provide a Christian Worldview

16. After reading this section, how do you view the benefits of academic subjects differently? How can you weave Scripture into your child's school assignments or homework?

17. In what ways were you surprised by the information in this chapter?

Application: If you have children, work with your spouse on a plan to intentionally incorporate more teachings of God's Word into your daily routine. Brainstorm ways how you can do this naturally in addition to any regular Bible teaching you do in your home. If you do not have children, ask God to show you how you can be an example to a child in your life.

Chapter Two

A Sobering Example

Let me illustrate the importance of pointing our children toward Christ and preaching the gospel to them by sharing about Joash, the youngest king in the Old Testament. He began his reign when he was only seven years old (2 Chronicles 24:1)! His grandmother was arguably the wickedest woman in Scripture, Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel.

When Athaliah saw that her son (King Ahaziah of Judah) was killed, she wanted to keep the throne for herself and her family, the house of Ahab. To prevent it from returning to the house of David, she murdered all her grandchildren. This was a satanic act because, by it, she would've destroyed the line of David and thereby prevented the Messiah from coming into the world—if she had succeeded.

When Joash's aunt, Jehoshaba, saw what was happening, she saved her infant nephew by hiding him in the temple. This gave Joash one of the most unique childhoods of anyone in history. He was raised—literally—in the temple. He couldn't leave because if Athaliah knew he was alive, she would've murdered him. As Christian parents, we want to shelter our children. There's probably

never been a more sheltered child in all of history. Joash might have known there was evil in the outside world, but he wouldn't have witnessed much of it.

Making Joash's spiritual upbringing even better, he was raised by two godly people. His adoptive father was the devout priest, Jehoiada. His adoptive mother was Jehoshaba, the woman who risked her life to save him when his siblings were being murdered. His upbringing produced exactly what we would expect: a child who "did what was right in the sight of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest" (2 Chronicles 24:2). Joash was a good son who obeyed, behaved, and was interested in spiritual matters. But did you notice anything odd about the verse? Unfortunately, it suggests he only did what was right during "the days of Jehoiada the priest," which makes us wonder what happened when Jehoiada died.

Second Chronicles 24:4 says, "Joash set his heart on repairing the house of the LORD." This is wonderful. He restored the temple. Going well so far. Second Chronicles 24:15 says, "Jehoiada grew old and was full of days, and he died; he was one hundred and thirty years old when he died." The moment of truth. What's going to happen with Joash now that Jehoiada is dead? This is the critical moment of his life. His adoptive father, the man who's been his spiritual leader and the moral compass in his life is out of the picture. Joash is on his own now. No more godly man telling him what to do and when to do it. He has a big vacuum in his life.

In many ways, Joash is like children who grow up in Christian homes and move out on their own. Joash used to have Jehoiada directing his life, just as young people used to have their parents directing their lives. Joash must decide whether to follow God on his own, just as young people must decide whether to follow God on their own.

Present-day examples would be young people raised in Christian homes who head off to college and hear teaching that contradicts

God's Word, or enter the workplace and find themselves around non-Christian employees who use language they're not used to hearing. Friends and coworkers invite them to compromising places they've never frequented before, such as bars and clubs. They're on their own for the first time; what are they going to do with their new freedom? Will they bring things into their home that they never thought of bringing into their parents' home? What will they do on the computer when nobody is around to monitor their internet usage? Growing up, Sunday meant going to church. What will they do on Sundays now? Will they even go to church?

What happened to Joash? 2 Chronicles 24:17–20 records:

Now after the death of Jehoiada the *leaders of Judah came and bowed down to the king. And the king listened to them. Therefore they left the house of the LORD God of their fathers, and served wooden images and idols*; and wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem because of their trespass. Yet He sent prophets to them, to bring them back to the LORD; and they testified against them, but they would not listen. Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood above the people, and said to them, “Thus says God: ‘Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD, so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He also has forsaken you.’”

The vacuum was filled with ungodly “leaders of Judah.” They influenced Joash toward idolatry and apostasy. God reached out to him through the prophets to bring him back, but he wouldn't listen to them. Then God graciously sent Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, to Joash. Since they grew up together, Zechariah would've been like a brother to him. If there's anyone we'd expect Joash to listen to, it would be him! When Zechariah confronted Joash, he faced the same choice all of us face when we're confronted: respond humbly and

repent or respond pridefully with anger. Sadly, in 2 Chronicles 24:21–22, we learn how Joash responded to Zechariah:

So they conspired against him, and at the command of the king they stoned him with stones in the court of the house of the LORD. Thus Joash the king did not remember the kindness which Jehoiada his father had done to him, but killed his son; and as he died, he said, “The LORD look on it, and repay!”

Joash’s problem is found in the words, “the king did not remember the kindness Jehoiada his father had done to him.” This doesn’t mean he didn’t remember as we think of people not remembering. He didn’t forget how he grew up, or what he was taught, or how kindly he was treated. Instead, it means none of it was in his heart. He was the young man who could say all the right things outwardly, but it didn’t change him inwardly.

If you’re a young person reading this, you need to remember what your parents have taught you! Remember “the gospel which [your parents] preached to you” (1 Corinthians 15:1). Keep in mind how blessed you are to be raised in a Christian home. You are in a small percent of the population, and “To whom much is given, much is required” (Luke 12:48). Keep Joash’s example in mind. You can grow up in the temple and be sheltered from evil in the world, be raised by godly parents like Jehoiada and Jehoshaba, have godly siblings like Zechariah, but if you haven’t embraced the gospel, then it means nothing.

If you’re a parent reading this, you should keep Joash’s example in mind too. You must think about what happens when your children move out, and you’re no longer watching them. Does it really matter if they learned academics and were hard workers who conformed outwardly when they were under your roof, but their

hearts didn't belong to the Lord, and so when they moved out, they didn't serve Him?

We don't want to be fooled into thinking our children are saved if they act a certain way. Joash was able to "[do] what was right in the sight of the Lord," even though he wasn't converted. It's not just about our children conforming to rules or becoming hard workers. The unbelieving world does as much with their children.

We must be concerned about our children's hearts, which can only be changed by the gospel. As parents, we don't want to be deceived into thinking our children "are safe" simply because we sheltered them. We want our children to know about the evil that's "out there"—in the world—and we want to protect them from it. But we also want them to know about the even greater evil that's "in here"—in their hearts—that they must be protected from. The account of Joash's apostasy should encourage all parents never to tire of preaching the gospel to their children, and to pray earnestly that God will open their hearts to receive it.

Our children need the gospel more than anything else. Notice I didn't say they *only* need the gospel, as though they don't need anything else. They do need to learn academics, a good work ethic, biblical morals, social skills, and the list goes on. But they need the gospel *more than* they need anything else because only the gospel saves them and changes them from the inside out.

Jesus—The Wisdom of God

Saying our children need the gospel is saying they need Christ. *Work and Rest God's Way* and the accompanying *Family Guide* are meant to help you point your children toward Christ by giving them wisdom. Giving your children biblical wisdom is giving them Jesus because Jesus is wisdom incarnate. In Luke 11:49, Jesus called Himself "the wisdom of God," and Paul wrote, "Christ the power of God and *the*

wisdom of God...Christ Jesus, who became to us *wisdom from God*...in [Christ] are hidden *all the treasures of wisdom* and knowledge” (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30, Colossians 3:23). Christ is the wisdom of God, from God; notice, it doesn’t say *some* of the treasures of wisdom are hidden in Him; it says *all the treasures of wisdom* are hidden in Him.

When God became a Man in the Person of Jesus Christ, it was as though wisdom itself became a man; wisdom was incarnated. John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” This refers to Jesus, and then John 1:14 says, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” The Greek word for word is *logos*, which captures the Greek idea of divine reason or the mind of God.^{xviii} When the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, the wisdom of God became flesh and dwelt among us. Since the wisdom of God became flesh in the Person of Jesus Christ, we see wisdom manifested in Jesus’ life.

It’s easier to appreciate Jesus’ wisdom if it’s contrasted with the wisdom of others. There were wise men in the Old Testament, such as Joseph and Daniel, but it doesn’t mean much to say Jesus was wiser than they were because they were not considered the wisest men in the Old Testament. That title belongs to Solomon, a man whose very name is associated with wisdom as much as Job’s name is associated with suffering. God told him, “I have given you a wise and understanding heart, so that there has not been anyone like you before you, nor shall any like you arise after you” (1 Kings 3:12). There had never been anyone as wise as Solomon, and there would never be anyone as wise as Solomon. “Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the men of the East and all the wisdom of Egypt” (1 Kings 4:30). Solomon went on to write most of Proverbs, which is the book of wisdom. When you’re the human author of the Book of Wisdom, you’re wise, but Jesus said: “The queen of the South

will rise up in judgment against this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a *greater than Solomon* is here” (Matthew 12:42). If God told Solomon “nor shall any like you arise after you,” how can Jesus say He’s greater than Solomon? Jesus is in a class by Himself. While Solomon was wise, Jesus *is* wisdom.

Jesus’ wisdom manifested itself at a young age. There’s almost nothing recorded about His early life. Following His birth, we only have one story about Him when He was in the temple with the teachers (Luke 2:41–51). This account is about—of all things—His wisdom. Two verses serve as bookends:

- Luke 2:40—The Child grew and became strong in spirit, *filled with wisdom*.
- Luke 2:52—Jesus *increased in wisdom* and stature, and in favor with God and men.

In between these verses is the only account in the Bible from His childhood. Part of it reads:

After three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him *were astonished at His understanding and answers* (Luke 2:46–47).

When Jesus was twelve-years-old, He was engaged in a theological dialogue with the teachers of the Law. These men, the wise men of the day, were amazed by what Jesus said. They recognized His wisdom. As Jesus grew, His wisdom continued to be manifested through His teaching: “They were astonished at His teaching...He began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing Him were astonished, saying, ‘Where did this Man get these things? And *what wisdom is this which is given to Him?*’” (Mark 1:22, 6:2). Jesus’

wisdom was also manifested through His life. Seeing Jesus' life is seeing wisdom on display. Jesus' actions were wisdom lived out.

The Book of Proverbs is written as a father speaking to his son: "My son, hear the instruction of your father" (Proverbs 1:8).² We also repeatedly read, "A wise son makes a glad father" (Proverbs 10:1, 15:20, and 29:3). Jesus was the perfectly Wise Son who makes His Father glad. Think of Jesus' baptism: "A voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:17).

Since Proverbs is the book of wisdom, and Jesus is the source of all wisdom, teaching our children the Book of Proverbs is teaching them about Jesus. For our children to know the wisdom of proverbs is for them to know Jesus. The fourth paragraph of Chapter 3 of *Work and Rest God's Way*, reads:

In John 8:23, Jesus said, "I am from above." James 3:17 says, "The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." Jesus is the embodiment of the wisdom from above, and only in looking to Him in the Proverbs can the sluggard's life be remedied.

Work and Rest God's Way draws heavily on the Book of Proverbs and, in doing so, points readers to Christ. Colossians 2:6–7 says, "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving." This is a good prayer for our children. As they receive Christ Jesus the Lord, they should walk in Him, referring to having a relationship with Him. They should be rooted and built up in Him, which is to say they

² Twenty-three other verses contain something similar. For example, in just the first three chapters, there's also Proverbs 1:10, 15, 2:1, 3:1, and 3:11.

Work and Rest God's Way—Sample Chapters

should have roots that go down deep and produce growth in Him. As parents, our responsibility is to teach our children, so they're established in the faith, having a firm foundation for the future. Children have the responsibility to remember that teaching, abounding in it with thanksgiving for Christ and what He's done.

Questions for Chapter Two

1. List some advantages and disadvantages of sheltering your child?
2. List the ways God showed mercy in the story of Joash.
3. What are some intentional things you can do to instill kindness in your child's heart?
4. Write a prayer to the Lord for each of your children.

Work and Rest God's Way—Sample Chapters

5. What does it mean to “embrace the gospel” and live a godly life? Do you sense the Lord is convicting you about anything ungodly in your life?

6. How does the story of Joash motivate you to do things differently as a family?

Jesus—The Wisdom of God

7. Look up wisdom in a dictionary and write it below. If you also have a Bible dictionary, look it up there and record it as well.

8. Explain what it means to you that *all the treasures of wisdom* are hidden in Jesus.

Work and Rest God's Way—Sample Chapters

9. Describe a time God allowed you to act in wisdom.

10. Describe a time you forsook wisdom.

11. How has God used your children to demonstrate wisdom to you? If you don't have children, can you think of a time when God used a child? If you are a child or teen, can you think of a time someone younger than you had wisdom about something?

12. Find three verses from the book of Proverbs about wisdom that especially stuck out to you and write them down.

13. How can you help grow and cultivate deep roots in your child to have a relationship with Jesus? How would you explain to your child what having a relationship with Jesus means?

14. What additional things can you do so your children will be established in the faith?

Application: Go back and look at your definitions for wisdom. Find additional biblical examples of wisdom. Read those Proverbs you wrote down from question #11. List ways you will seek wisdom in your life and put it into practice.

About the Author

Scott is the senior pastor of Woodland Christian Church in Woodland, Washington, and a conference speaker. He and his wife, Katie, grew up together in northern California, and God has blessed them with eight children.

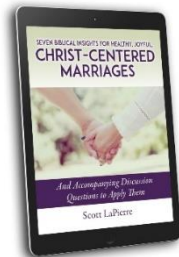


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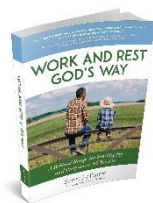
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- Determine the balance between work and rest for your busy life
- Read together as a family to help your children value work and responsibility

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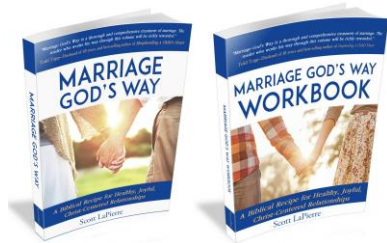
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- Explanations of the roles and responsibilities God has given husbands and wives
- Answers to common questions about godly love and how to show it, headship and submission, intimacy, and establishing an indestructible foundation for your relationship

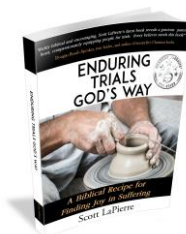
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Scott Brown—Founder of The National Center for Family-Integrated Churches and author of *A Theology of the Family*

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Trials are part of life on this side of heaven, and God wants to use them for your good! Learn scriptural principles that give you the encouragement you need when suffering. Every chapter concludes with questions that help you apply what you are reading.



- Develop the spiritual perspective to embrace trials
- Appreciate the maturity trials produce
- Understand the rewards for enduring trials
- Recognize God is still compassionate and gracious during trials

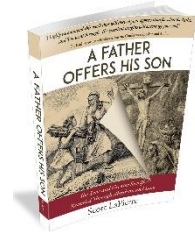
Enduring Trials God's Way has been endorsed by well-known ministry leaders:

- “Richly biblical and encouraging, Scott LaPierre’s latest book reveals a gracious pastor’s heart, compassionately equipping people for trials. Every believer needs this book!”
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- “As a jeweler holds a gemstone and examines each priceless, shining facet, Pastor Scott holds high this picture of heaven’s sacrificial love and examines every detail.”
Cary Green—Senior pastor, missionary, and church planter

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