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H A B I T S
of a
C H I L D ' S
H E A R T

RAISING YOUR KIDS
with the SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

VALERIE E. HESS *and*
MARTI WATSON GARLETT, PH.D.



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To John, for modeling this book to me for twenty-eight years.

— VALERIE

To my first-ever daughter, Yan, and to the prospect of my second daughter, Carrie: I love both of you dearly and bless the day you each came into our family. You have enlarged it in very special ways and made all of us more complete.

— MARTI

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Our lives are never lived in isolation. One person's action can change the whole course of our lives. For that reason, I'd like to thank Jean Fuller, who gave my husband, John, *Celebration of Discipline* years ago. I can still picture the vacation condo living room where John said to me, "You might be interested in reading this." His hunches have blessed me for many years now.

I also want to thank the numerous Sunday school class members, workshop participants, and local Renovaré groups who have shared with me their stories of learning to be better disciples of Jesus Christ. They have sharpened my thinking on the disciplines with hard questions and public accountability. It is because of their desire to know how to share these truths with their children that this book was conceived.

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who have modeled discipleship to me throughout my life. God knows what role each of them has played in my faith formation and will reward them well for it.

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MARTI:

No book is written without support. My support team begins with my husband, Fred, to whom I've been married for thirty-eight years and counting. You allow me to be who I am, never trying to change me, and instead you unfailingly, unselfishly encourage me in all my personal and professional challenges and gladly take on many burdens so that I may have protected time to work and reflect. I will love you eternally.

Almost everything I've learned about parenting—and life—that is truly profound is because I was taught it firsthand throughout the thirty-six-plus years of raising Marc and Kyle, the lights of my life, the two souls etched everlastingly onto my heart. Words cannot express what each of you means to me and how much I owe you for all that you have brought into my life. Because of you, I am the person I am today. I love you fiercely, as perhaps only a mother can.

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INTRODUCTION

This is what the LORD says:
“Stand at the crossroads and look;
ask for the ancient paths,
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,
and you will find rest for your souls.”

J E R E M I A H 6 : 1 6

All of us—young or old, new Christians or mature in the faith—can benefit from the strengths and freedoms the spiritual disciplines bring. We know, because the two of us have experienced firsthand their value in nurturing spiritual maturity and deepening connection with God.

Our prayer is that this book you hold in your hands will inspire you to begin practicing the disciplines in your own life, if you aren't already doing so, and then show you how to cultivate the life-affirming possibilities of the spiritual disciplines—or “holy habits,” as they're sometimes known—in your children.

Please don't be put off by the word *discipline*. While the word certainly involves correction, it does not involve punishment. It comes directly from the Latin *disciplina*, which connotes “giving instruction to a disciple.” When we personally practice the disciplines, we are inviting God to change us, to make us more like his Son, and to

“correct” how we live our lives in community with others, God, and the world. When we teach children the spiritual disciplines, we are giving spiritual instruction to young disciples, people who will grow up to imitate much more of what we *do* than what we *say*.

Start praying now about introducing the disciplines into your family's life. Keep a journal of family activities for a week. What issues do your children struggle with? What issues do *you* struggle with? What are the issues behind those issues? If your kids are cranky at night, are they picking up your stress? Where do things run smoothly? What would you change about yourself and your family rhythms if you could? Why? By posing prayerfully asked questions and keeping track of observations, each of us can find a beginning point.

Nondiscipleship costs abiding peace, a life penetrated throughout by love, faith that sees everything in the light of God's governance for good, hope that stands firm in the most discouraging of circumstances, power to do what is right and withstand the forces of evil.

*In short it costs exactly that abundance of life
Jesus said he came to bring (John 10:10).*

DALLAS WILLARD

How to Use This Book

While this book is a joint venture, Marti wrote the odd-numbered chapters, and Valerie wrote the even-numbered chapters and the appendix.

As you begin, rest assured that there's no right or wrong way to work through these materials. Remain open to the Holy Spirit. Start with a discipline that you are somewhat familiar with; you don't need to work through this book sequentially, although it certainly can be read that way. There's nothing sacred about a discipline's positioning. Each one relates closely to the others; they're supportive and complementary. Keep in mind that each discipline eventually must be acted upon individually to achieve spiritual balance, which means we can't skip those that seem difficult or uncomfortable.

Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading so that you don't allow the spiritual disciplines to become "one more activity" in your family life—along with soccer, ballet, and piano lessons. If they lead to legalism or a "holier-than-thou" pride, discontinue their use immediately. We don't gain heavenly points for knowing how to "do" the disciplines correctly. As a parent, your job is to bring sanity to all aspects of family life so that walking the talk—or as Scripture puts it, seeking first the kingdom of God—can actually happen.

That's why we've started each chapter with two sections specifically for adults: "Understanding the Discipline" and "Practicing the Discipline." These sections are intended to help ground you in the discipline and begin practicing it before you move to the final section of the chapter, "Teaching the Discipline." There we've outlined age-specific ideas and exercises you can do with your children to help them grasp the concepts. The section is organized into Early Childhood (ages 4–7), Middle Childhood

(ages 8–11), and Adolescence (ages 12–15). However, because there's a variation in abilities and maturity levels in kids, use parental discretion. Scan all activities suggested and use only what you think would work in your situation. Also, our suggestions are not exhaustive. There's plenty of room for creativity. Allow your children as much input as possible.

The most effective way we can teach our kids is in the context of our daily lives, and this is certainly true of the disciplines. As Deuteronomy 6:6-9 tells us, "These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates." The spiritual disciplines are meant to become a significant part of our lives and not some exotic add-on. We wrote this book to help you find ways to incorporate them into your lives and conversations.

The goal of the disciplines is to place us in a position where the Holy Spirit can do God's transforming work in us. Pursue them as a means to bring about significant change in your inner and outer lives and to model them for your children. Build them into your life and into your children's lives until you have covered all twelve disciplines—and then start over. We never master the spiritual disciplines; they are holy habits to last a lifetime.

Welcome to life on the frontiers of the faith!

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me.

I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think that I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing.

I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.

And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

THOMAS MERTON

THE DISCIPLINE OF MEDITATION

I meditate on your precepts
and consider your ways.
I delight in your decrees;
I will not neglect your word.

PSALM 119:15-16

UNDERSTANDING THE DISCIPLINE

The Discipline of Meditation helps us focus on hearing God's voice. Meditation teaches us to become like tea bags, soaking deeply and quietly in God and his Word so that we can better hear him speak to our hearts and minds. And, as a gentleman named Earl learned, sometimes we stumble upon this knowledge serendipitously.

In California's San Gabriel Mountains, there is a path known to locals as the Garcia Trail. It rises 866 vertical feet per mile above the valley floor and offers stunning views at its summit. When Earl reached his fiftieth birthday, he decided he would hike the Garcia Trail fifty times during the year in an effort to stretch the physical limits of his aging body and regain, at least in part, the stamina of his youth. He reached his goal with an additional serendipity—a quiet, meditative time each week alone with God.

On Saturday at dawn, he left his house while his family still slept, packed a breakfast burrito and a palm-sized Bible, and

ascended into the Angeles National Forest. Flat rocks at the crest gave Earl both a bench and a table for eating his simple breakfast and contemplating a small but significant portion of the creation given to him by the Lord of the universe. He also read Scripture and prayed.

The quiet permeating Earl's mountaintop morning brought him closer to God, from the stilling of the beat of his exercised heart to deliberate focus on the taste of each morsel of his breakfast to intentional honoring of each muscle's slow cooldown as amazing organic gifts from his Maker. Earl often wondered at his corporeal body, how it worked and flexed, how the senses God built into it combined to allow him existence as a human being but also enriched his physical life with sensation. In contemplating his own physiology, Earl learned more about the One who had fashioned it, and his own bodily workings struck him with as much awe and majesty as the mountain did.

Most mornings, Earl settled in like this for an hour or more, reluctant to leave what had now become a much-anticipated time alone in God's company. As a result of this time spent in meditation, Earl attained a new and surprising intimacy with his Creator.

*Meditation sends us into our ordinary world
with greater perspective and balance.*

RICHARD FOSTER

Transcending Life Circumstances

Through meditation, we center ourselves on God. This discipline enables us to locate, and more rapidly return to, an internal core within ourselves where we know God will be waiting. As we center our thoughts on God, we allow him to comfort us and invite us to trust him in the dark.

He did this for me (Marti) on a starless night shortly after our then-teenaged son Kyle was diagnosed with the form of lymphatic cancer called Hodgkin's disease. I found myself wandering sleeplessly through our still house, trapped in a wretched state of mind. I had no idea how I could get through this fearsome diagnosis for Kyle and all its horrific implications. The future I was so certain was laid out for my talented son suddenly contained an abyss with an unfathomable and frightening potential ending. No human being could help me or bring me the comfort I craved—not my husband, not my pastor, not my dearest friends. No, my soul had to face its long night of suffering alone—except, of course, for the presence of God.

But as I faced down those cold hours of darkness, tears spilling down my face, no prayers would come—only deep internal groanings. So I did the one thing I knew to do: I picked up my Bible, felt its heft in my hand, took in the reassuring scent of its leather binding, and began reading through Psalms. I found verses penned by similarly tortured hearts, and, in their open acknowledgment of foreboding and despair and their pleas for mercy and victory, an odd sort of comfort seeped into my soul.

As if I had no time to waste, I hurriedly began writing down

verses on three-by-five-inch index cards that spoke to, simultaneously, fear of enemies and trust in God. I then went all over the house taping the cards on mirrors, walls, door posts, and even (in the bathroom Kyle used) under the toilet seat lid. As I meditated on those words, God soothed my anxious heart. Finally, I found myself able to crawl back in bed beside my husband and sleep.

Spending Satisfied Time Alone with God

Meditation insists on taking focused time—lots of it—to listen to what God has to say to us personally. There is no express-lane version of this discipline, no microwave edition of finding and spending quiet time with him. Instead, meditation slow-cooks like a Crock-Pot, requiring deep reflection on a biblical word, phrase, or concept.

Several years ago I spent three months in Korea, teaching English to college-aged young women and Korean military officers. God was my only companion on this trip, and I spent countless hours with him. I spoke aloud to him in my apartment and intensely felt his ever-present nearness. He was my guard against loneliness, which at every turn threatened to overpower me. Those were, without a doubt, some of the most satisfying months I ever spent with my Creator. Upon my return to American life, I realized how easy it is for me to let Western clamor invade my 24/7 cherished relationship with God. I have had to work fiercely to guard against the seduction of stateside culture and protect my hard-won intimacy with God.

In the Discipline of Meditation, we slow down and focus on God—and we gain increasing ability to hear God's holy voice through his manifold methods of communication.

God Speaks in Various Ways

Meditation requires us to remain creatively open to how God may speak to us. True learning requires uninhibited awe and wonder, much like that of a child. Each of us is ever a small child as we continually, throughout all the days of our lives, attempt to learn more and more about God.

Among the communication tools in God's hamper are nature, art, music, books, and even, on occasion, current events. When we intentionally and deliberately learn from these things, God can use them to speak to us personally. Often this leads toward self-selected fields of formal study, which we will cover in more detail in chapter 4, "The Discipline of Study."

Valerie lives in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains above Boulder, Colorado, and has daily opportunities for nature walks that help her turn her focus away from busyness, toward God and God alone. During her walks, she asks God to speak to her through the created splendor of her surroundings. One time in particular stands out in her mind.

After a slight from a friend, Valerie paid no attention to her environs, walking wearily with her head down. Unheralded, she walked into a field of wildflowers that had not been blooming the last time she had taken this particular trail. Now they were a stunningly gorgeous bouquet practically placed in her lap, flowers that would hardly be seen by human eyes in this remote area, flowers that were doing what they were created to do—radiantly blossom for the glory of God and no one else. She realized that was the message God intended for her to receive—that like those flowers, she

was created to do and be wholly herself, no matter whether others noticed or nodded approvingly.

*Unless we change our direction, we are likely to
end up where we are headed.*

CHINESE PROVERB

Growth of a Peaceful Center

When we hear God speaking to us, we are better able to discern his will, which helps us become less frantic and more likely to access the solid, calm center that Jesus manifested. In the Discipline of Meditation, we seek to hear God's voice directly. If all we ever do is listen to someone else interpret God's Word for us—and there certainly are many times when that is appropriate—then we will never encounter the living God ourselves.

Nothing in our lives will keep us healthier than learning how to develop and hold on to a peaceful center. If we can do this—and we can—we are no longer helpless victims to life's ups and downs. To be sure, some things we don't want to happen will, and some things we wish would happen won't. But the calm center provided through meditation instills in us an ability to respond appropriately to whatever comes our way and greet it with God's eyes and perspective.

If you long to have a deeper relationship with God, then find a quiet spot and a small portion of Scripture and spend time with those words every day for several days. Have a cup of tea to help you remember to steep in this deliberately carved-out, contemplative moment.

*Where there is peace and meditation,
there is neither anxiety nor doubt.*

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

PRACTICING THE DISCIPLINE

When we quiet our hearts and slow down to meditate, we are more apt to hear God's voice. God can work on, with, and for you during any of the activities that follow. Before you bring your children into the mix, we strongly urge you to strengthen your own inward ability to meditate.

1. Take a verse of Scripture or even just a phrase from a verse.

When you read the verse, do so with intentionality and deliberateness. Don't rush. Reflect on the verse a while. Ask yourself questions such as: *How does this verse read when I insert my own name into it as if God were speaking directly to me and no one else? What is the context for this verse? How does it fit with those that surround it?* Write the verse on index cards and tape them in your kitchen, car, and office. Spend a week listening for what God may be saying through those words about him, you, or your life circumstances. Replace this concentrated meditation the next week by selecting a different verse.

2. Meditate on the local and international events of our world and listen to what God may be saying in and through them. Is the media representing a biblical viewpoint? Is American culture

synonymous with God's preferred lifestyle? Why are there so many different cultures represented on earth throughout the millennia since God's creation? What does that say about God's love of diversity? Are American interests abroad synchronized with God's leading? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you God's heart and perspective on local, national, and global issues. Think about what you would do in a certain situation if you were in charge.

3. Practice the ancient Israelite art of *lectio divina*. In *lectio divina* we listen for the still, small voice of God, that "gentle whisper" (1 Kings 19:12) that is God's Word for us, God's voice touching our hearts. This tender listening is an attunement to the presence of God in Scripture. We try to imitate the prophet Elijah, knowing that we must "hear" the voice of God, which often speaks very softly. In order to hear someone speaking softly, we must learn to love silence. If we are constantly speaking or if we are surrounded with noise, we cannot hear gentle sounds. The practice of *lectio divina*, therefore, requires that we first quiet down in order to hear God's Word to us. This is the first step of *lectio divina*, appropriately called *lectio*, or "reading."

In *lectio* we read slowly and attentively, gently listening to hear a word or phrase that is God's Word for us this day.

Once we have found a word or passage in the Scriptures that speaks to us in a personal way, we must take it in and ruminate on it. The image of an animal quietly chewing its cud was used in antiquity as a symbol of the believer pondering the Word of God.

4. Carve out quiet time for yourself every single day, even if it is

only ten minutes. Sit somewhere apart from others that can become, for those ten minutes, your space. Deliberately and intentionally work to still the beating of your heart, the rapid thoughts and to-do lists running through your mind. If possible, plug in a small environmental fountain nearby and allow your ears to cease listening to external noise. Breathe deeply; close your eyes; will your body to relax. Then put into your mind a mental image of Christ soothing your brow, of his strong carpenter hands kneading the back of your neck and the tops of your shoulders. Over one or two weeks' time, notice how much you look forward to these few minutes of respite from a wearying day and how refreshed you feel afterward. Know that God has been with you.

TEACHING THE DISCIPLINE

Once you are comfortable with your own meditative abilities, begin teaching the Discipline of Meditation to your children. What follow are several ideas, a menu of choices that are developmentally organized according to children's ages and maturity levels.

EARLY CHILDHOOD (*ages 4–7*):

1. Take a nature walk with your children. Go to a nearby park and study the plants and flowers. See how many small creatures you can find. Keep a numerical tally. Ask your children to proceed on this walk very quietly, with their ears and eyes open but not their mouths. Then go to a bench or picnic table—or a cloth on the ground—and talk about what you've

seen, including that God is the Creator of it all. Ask your kids to thank God for his creation by writing him a thank-you letter. Write down your children's words exactly as they say them to you. This will help them not only own the experience but also enrich their reading vocabulary. Save this thank-you card in a special place, such as a bookshelf, so that you and your children can reread it on occasion.

2. Buy some bubble bath, tape a picture of Jesus and a phrase like "Jesus loves you" on the wall above the tub, and have your child soak in both. Help your child imagine he or she is soaking in God.
3. Play music your children know and love, but this time, instead of singing with the music, ask them to stay perfectly still and listen to the words. Ask them not to move or talk but to just listen quietly. Follow up by asking them to describe what they were thinking about while the music played.
4. Seat your kids in a safe place, such as a high stool away from the stovetop, and let them watch you cook pasta. Show them how hard the noodles are before going into the water. Pull out a couple after three minutes and, with a fork, let your children see how the noodles are beginning to soften. As you eat the pasta, talk about how meditating on the things of God softens our hearts like the pasta being softened in the boiling water.

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (*ages 8–11*):

You can expand on any of the ideas found in the Early Childhood section. In addition:

1. Get eight heat-proof cups and two black tea bags. Fill all the cups with boiling water. (Obviously, the younger the child, the greater the need to supervise this exercise.) Put one tea bag in one of the cups. Use the other tea bag to make tea out of the remaining seven cups of water. Set a timer for one minute. During that time, one tea bag will be steeping quietly in the water. The other tea bag will have to be dunked in seven cups in order to make tea in them all. When the timer goes off, take the tea bags out and compare the darkness of the tea in each cup. One should be much darker than the other seven. Talk about why that may be. Then discuss how we can be like the first tea bag when we are reading from God's Word.

Another way to look at this exercise is to think of us as being the hot water and the Word of God the tea bag. Again, the longer the tea bag soaks in us, the more we become stained with the likeness of God. Paste a picture of a tea bag on the inside of your child's Bible, or provide an actual tea bag to use as a bookmark. Scatter some loose tea leaves among the pages. Review with your children the symbolism of the tea and how it can remind them to read their Bible slowly.

2. Kids in this age group are not too young to learn the ancient tradition called *lectio divina*. Train your children to use their imagination while they listen to you read passages from Scripture. Because *lectio divina* is a slow and measured reading, choose an active story from the Bible, such as Daniel and the lions' den. Read the story aloud in a hushed and reverential

way. Ask your children what stands out, providing adequate think-time. Children must be helped to approach the Bible this way; it doesn't come naturally to any of us. And remember, there are no right or wrong answers.

After all have had a chance to respond, read the story aloud again. This time ask what the setting looked like, what the lions sounded like, what the expression on Daniel's face was when he was thrown in the den, what the king and his court looked like, and so on. Do not allow anyone to belittle another's comments. Finally, read the story aloud one additional time, and then give everyone a chance to share what he or she heard as a personal message from the story. One person may hear the need for courage, while another may hear the need to trust God in the face of death.

3. Scripture memorization is important in the Discipline of Meditation. Try to select age-appropriate verses, especially verses that can be recalled when negative peer pressure or fear of the dark intrudes. Proverbs and Isaiah are filled with them. One example is Isaiah 2:5: "Come, O house of [insert your last name here], let us walk in the light of the LORD." Other examples are the first line of Isaiah 41:10, "Do not fear, for I [God] am with you," or this line from Proverbs 17:17: "A friend loves at all times." After your children memorize the verse, encourage them to spend several days thinking about how it applies to their lives today. Discuss how God uses the Bible to shape our thoughts, words, and deeds.

ADOLESCENCE (*ages 12–15*):

Children entering puberty are likely to be uninterested in participating in any of the “Middle Childhood” activities with their younger siblings unless you ask them to lead the activity. Young teens and those edging toward and through adolescence need protected time with you that they don’t have to share with younger siblings.

1. Take each of your adolescent youngsters on an overnight camping trip, if at all possible. The best way to do this is with one adult taking one child, but, of course, this isn’t always possible; sometimes even an overnight isn’t possible. Make it an early morning or late evening trip to the park, if that works better, or camp in your very own backyard. Listen to sounds together, sitting quietly and conversing in low voices, and contemplate the dawn’s colors or the evening stars.

An afternoon fishing excursion can substitute, as can an afternoon picnic or cookout. Find a quiet place, one where your kids do not normally hang out with their friends. (They are likely to be reluctant to have their friends see them with you.) The point of this outing is to observe the smallest details of the world around you and quietly contemplate each element, calling each other’s attention to minute observations—the stamen or pistil of a flower, the veins in one leaf that are similar to, yet always different from, the veins in another. What does such mystery and beauty, not to mention originality, say about the mind of its Creator?

2. Parents are their children’s first connection to God. Through us

they learn to bond to him. Our teachings help instill his. And our kids will listen to us best if we form bonds with them that are individualized to each youngster, away from a collective group, especially when they have reached adolescence. Thus, we must all try to schedule regular alone times with each of our young teens.

When I was in graduate school and often taking evening classes, I had a standing lunch date with each of my two sons during the week. I made arrangements ahead of time with the school office to pick up one of my sons from school during lunch, and then I would take my other son on a different day. I often packed a sack lunch so that we could find a nearby park and eat together, and other times we would just sit on the hood of our car in a parking lot.

These were not long breaks, but they helped build strong connections from which thoughtful interactions could occur and continue to occur now that both of my sons are grown. Sometimes I introduced a concept or troubling issue from local, national, or world news for us to discuss and contemplate. Sometimes we talked about disturbing issues at school and pondered why a person might behave the way she or he had.

We chewed on these kinds of questions: What values had been exhibited? Were those values found in the Garlett home? Why, or why not? In what ways do our moral standards represent God's? How do we know? What can we do to be sure we are exemplifying for others God's principles for living? Such questions can help set up future research that we will do

together, such as finding words in a Bible concordance and then reading the verses we are referred to.

3. Ask your adolescents to join you in a reading club. Commit to a schedule and read a book rich in Christian symbolism, such as C. S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, part of a seven-book series collectively known as THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA. Aslan, the Lion, is the Christ character, the Lion of Judah found in Revelation 5:5: "Behold, the *Lion* of the Tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed" (KJV, emphasis added). After reading the first book, you might want to continue your reading club commitment to include the next book in the series, then the next, and eventually all of them.

Together you can explore Internet links such as www.narnia.com or <http://cslewis.drzeus.net>, a site designated "Into the Wardrobe," hosted by Lewis's stepson. Sometimes websites change their Internet addresses without warning. If the ones listed here are not accessible, do a Web search for the word *Narnia*, and lots of new and different sites will be found for you.

4. Encourage your teens to read through a chapter of the Bible at a slow, soaking pace. Remember, we are dealing with the story of God's working among people and not conducting a speed-reading course. Be sensitive to your teens' needs in this regard. Children of all ages have lots of questions about the Bible, especially if they are reading from the Bible itself and not from a Bible storybook.

God's Word contains some weird, brutal, and troubling incidents that baffle adults who have pondered them for years.

Instead of insisting the chapter be finished because of some arbitrary timetable, let the questions come. So what if only one verse or phrase is read and discussed? Our kids will remember it far longer and at a deeper level than if we insist on finishing a chapter for the sake of finishing a chapter. Too often we encourage productivity rather than fruitfulness in our kids. We push them to read the whole Bible within a certain period of time so they can win the award at Sunday school when we should be using the Bible to mold future thoughts and actions.

While it's good to read large sections of Scripture in one sitting for overall content, too many of us stop there. We read so that we can check it off our to-do list for the day. Instead, we might do better to soak in the vast expanses of God's Word from which we will always gather a rich harvest of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (see Galatians 5:22-23). Allow your older children to seek deeper meaning in the conflicted feelings many Bible passages arouse in all of us. Encourage them to read Scripture while prayerfully asking God what he wants to say to them through his Word.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The Discipline of Meditation can help you and your children find your way to a new and surprising intimacy with God. That is its essential purpose and the result promised to you for your faithful practice of the discipline.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

VALERIE E. HESS is a pastor's wife, mother, teacher, retreat speaker, and musician. Her husband of twenty-eight years, John, is an associate pastor at First Presbyterian Church in Boulder, Colorado. They have two grown daughters.

Valerie has been actively involved with Renovaré. She brought the program to First Presbyterian Church, wrote a monthly newsletter for it for several years, and organized a regional Renovaré conference in Boulder. She has taught yearlong adult Sunday school classes, workshops, and retreats on the spiritual disciplines.

Valerie also is on the national board for the Leadership Program for Musicians Serving Small Congregations (LPM), a continuing education program for "undertrained" church musicians. She received her master's in church music and organ from Valparaiso University, has a bachelor's in music and psychology from Metropolitan State College in Denver, and is currently the coordinator of music ministries and the organist for Trinity Lutheran Church in Boulder.



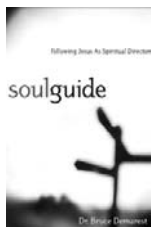
MARTI WATSON GARLETT, Ph.D., is dean of the Teachers College at Western Governors University, where she has developed the first

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Marti began her career as a pre-K–8 classroom teacher and taught in public schools in urban, suburban, and rural settings. She also served for a decade as the television teacher “Miss Marti” on the syndicated children’s program *Romper Room*. In addition, she is a citizen of the world, having taught on five continents and traveled extensively through twenty-eight countries. She has written two other books, *Who Will Be My Teacher?* and *Kids with Character*, and speaks at national meetings throughout the United States. Her master’s degree is from Peabody College of Vanderbilt University and her doctorate from Claremont Graduate University.

Marti and her husband make their home in Los Angeles, California. They are parents to two grown sons who both live nearby with their own burgeoning families.

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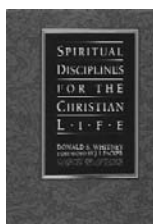
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