

THE VIEW FROM THE *Rocking Chair*

Group Study Guide

Chapter 1

1. At what point in time have you had the clearest vision for what you will care about most at the end of your life?
2. Who would you say is “your joy and crown”? What are you most tempted to put before them?
3. Remember the example of the intentional living of the professional football player. When have you experienced that kind of intentional living? How did that feel?
4. When have you witnessed a painful, nearsighted decision like the one described in the girl’s letter to her dad?
5. Sharing your Rocking Chair responses with others can deepen your relationship with them and help clarify the vision of others for their own life. Consider sharing some of your answers with your family, a close friend, or your small group.

Chapter 2

1. Think of a time when you experienced the importance of having a reliable instrument to help you get to the right destination.
2. Recall a time when you observed a person you admired drift off course. Who was affected? How did you feel?
3. What have you been using as your primary instrument(s) to make decisions in your life? Why do you believe this to be trustworthy?
4. What course corrections have you made in the past that you are grateful for today?
5. What course corrections have you been contemplating but not yet made? What is holding you back?

Chapter 3

1. Reread Viktor Frankl's quote. On a scale from 1 to 10, how much do you agree that we can choose our attitude and actions even in the most difficult set of circumstances?
2. What is the best example you have seen of a parent's choices having a lasting effect on their children? On their children's children?
3. Are there any biblical examples that come to mind that highlight God's desire for us to understand the importance of our choices?
4. Remember the example of carefully following the doctor's every instruction during the birth of our child. Can you think of a time you were completely dependent on someone else because you knew what was at stake?
5. Do you think highlighting the significance of our choices will make you more or less dependent upon God each day? Why?

Chapter 4

1. What were your favorite answers from the Rocking Chair exercise shared by others? Did you add any of these to your own exercise?
2. When has clear long-term vision helped you make a challenging decision? Think of a specific experience.
3. How do you feel when you get to the end of a day in which you have made many choices based on what will matter most at the end of your life?
4. How often have you experienced the feeling that there will be an unlimited number of opportunities and “we can get around to that later”?
5. Has there been a time when you have been forced to remember the truth of the hourglass? How has this affected your life?

Chapter 5

1. In what settings have you observed questions being used most effectively?
2. Review the four points about the value of questions. Which of these is the most significant to you?
3. Look back at the rules of engagement for the Quaker clearness committee. What can we learn from these guidelines?
4. Do you have a favorite question that God or one of the writers of Scripture asks in the Bible? Why do you like it?
5. What is the best question you have ever been asked? Why was it valuable to you?

Chapter 6

1. Which comparisons from the Busy vs. Full exercise were most significant to you? Why?
2. Which one of your relationships do you think has been most affected by busyness in the last year? What have been the consequences of busyness?
3. Which of the four points about technology do you think is the most important for you to remember? Why?
4. Of the Five Revealing Differences we considered, which one provides the greatest motivation to live the full life?
5. We discussed how the phrases “There’s not enough time,” “Quality versus quantity time,” and “It’s only a season” represent traps. Which of these are you most familiar with?

Chapter 7

1. In this chapter, we talked about how people treat busyness in their lives like a pet golden retriever rather than a cobra. Have you seen this happen in someone else’s life? How about on your own?
2. Look back over the letter from the former pastor about his dis-integrated marriage. Which statement in his letter do you find most surprising? Why?
3. Can you think of a season in your life when busyness has contributed to “soul disease”—hurting the health of your walk with the Lord?
4. Dr. Richard Swenson stated that many children are being “run over” by the pace of life in their home. How prevalent is this phenomenon today? What do you think is the first step toward addressing the situation?
5. The father in “Cat’s in the Cradle” neglected his relationship with his son because of his job and pursuit of wealth. What pulls you away from the kind of relationship you want with your children (or loved ones)?

Chapter 8

1. How would you describe the pace of life Jesus modeled for us in the Gospels?
2. What are some stories or passages in the Bible that show God highly values relationship?
3. As discussed in the chapter, many people focus more on providing nice homes, cars, and clothes for their loved ones than on developing strong relationships with them. What is most important for you to provide for your spouse and children (or loved ones)?
4. What are your non-negotiables?
5. Which of the “Seven Steps to Aim for Full” do you think would be most difficult for you? Which step could be most helpful to you?

Chapter 9

1. Which of the statistics at the beginning of the chapter are most striking to you?
2. Which of the “Six Contrasting Aimpoints” between good and godly have you observed most clearly?
3. When you read about King David’s family life, what do you find most surprising?
4. Which of the four logical reasons we “outsource” do you find the most prevalent?
5. What can be the negatives when a culture counts on the “professionals” to do the heavy lifting in terms of teaching our children about God and His ways?

Chapter 10

1. How familiar are you with the thought that the health of the marriage relationship is significant to the spiritual health of the children?
2. Which of the seven ideas to pursue oneness in marriage do you think would be most valuable?
3. The Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4–9) encourages us to make a deep impression on our children through example, instruction, and reminders of God's truth. Which of these is the easiest to accomplish? Which is the most difficult?
4. How would you compare the way Jesus made disciples to the ways we make disciples today?
5. Consider parents you know who are examples of effectively teaching their children about God and His ways. What lessons have you learned from them?

Chapter 11

1. What difference do you think it would make for you to regularly study the Bible together with your family (or loved ones)? What is the greatest obstacle to you doing this?
2. When have you prayed with your family or a group of people for a specific request and seen a compelling answer from God? What effect did that experience have on the relationships in the family/group?
3. As mentioned, each of us grew up in homes with different norms for how love was expressed. How did your family express love when you were growing up? What are you aiming to replicate and what are you aiming to change?
4. Which one of the nine practical ideas, consistently lived out, would have the greatest impact on your view from the rocking chair?
5. Which principle of implementation at the end of the chapter is most important to you as you consider new practical steps for your family (or your closest people)?

Chapter 12

1. How accurate is this depiction of what you sense to be the current American Dream?
2. Sociologists have found the culture we live in affects all of the inhabitants to some degree. In what way(s) do you feel most influenced by the American Dream (as we have defined it)?
3. Which of the Kingdom distinctives are the most sought after for the people around you?
4. Which of the four points about the covenant love of the Kingdom do you find most moving? Is there a specific relationship in your life that needs to experience this element?
5. Have you witnessed in your own life or someone else's some of the thinking found in the parable of the Mexican fisherman?

Chapter 13

1. Which of the quotes from those who have lived the American Dream is most striking to you? Why?
2. What is your best takeaway from Solomon's life?
3. Which of the quotes from those who have lived in the Kingdom of God is most compelling to you?
4. What are your thoughts about Paul's teaching that contentment is a secret that must be learned in the course of life?
5. How do you assess Frankl's remarks about not pursuing happiness? How well does this match what you see in the world around you?

Chapter 14

1. Which of the Kingdom vision stories shared in this chapter did you find most compelling?
2. Whose life has provided Kingdom vision that you would like to emulate?
3. Look back at the section discussing the arrival of the Kingdom “in our hearts.” Which of the four practices to guard and enrich our lives has been most valuable for you? Which one would you like to grow?
4. What is or could be your “one thing” as defined in this chapter?
5. In which of the five circles do you sense the greatest desire for God’s Kingdom to arrive in greater ways?

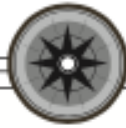
Chapter 15

1. The story of KAL Flight 007 provided some important reminders. Which one is most significant to you at this point in your journey?
2. Which one of the tools do you think will be most significant in your next six months of life?
3. Where do you plan to keep the tools so they are appropriately visible and accessible?
4. Which of your Compass Check questions do you think is the most important as you reach the end of this book?
5. In addition to sharing the content of your tools with your closest people, selecting a trusted friend to check up with you once a month for the first six months will dramatically increase the probability that you will successfully integrate these tools as part of your life. Which friend(s) would be best to fill this role?

The Tools

HELPING YOU NAVIGATE THROUGH LIFE

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Tool #1—Your View from the Rocking Chair

At the end of my life, my spouse will say . . .

At the end of my life, my children will say . . .

At the end of my life, my friends will say . . .

At the end of my life, my God will say . . .

Tool #2—Your What Matters Most Calendar

The priority appointments to invest in my non-negotiables.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
<i>Morning</i>			
<i>Afternoon</i>			
<i>Evening</i>			

TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS,
THAT WE MAY GAIN A HEART OF WISDOM.

Psalm 90:12

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

Tool #3—Your Tech and Attention Game Plan

Considerations for an Individual Tech and Attention Game Plan Goal:

What is my goal? Why is this important to me?

1. What will I look at first when I wake up in the morning? Do I want a morning routine that limits my phone use? Will my phone have a bedtime each day? Do I want to end my day on my phone?
2. Will my phone be with me all the time or have another “home base” when I’m at home?
3. How will I use my technology when I am driving?
4. Will I take calls/answer messages in the middle of a conversation?
5. Will I be always available on my phone or have some “off-time”?
6. Do I want to protect what I look at online with a filter/software? Do I want a trusted friend to provide healthy accountability on my phone use?
7. Do I want time limits on any apps or my total phone time?
8. Will my phone use be the same each day of the week (considering a day/period of rest each week)?
9. How often will I do an honest evaluation of the place of tech in my life?

Sample Family Tech and Attention Game Plan

Goal: *We aim to manage our technology instead of “being managed.” We intend to be disciplined with technology so it is a gift and not a thief. We will update this plan annually and when we see a chance to improve it.*

1. We will aim our attention carefully and recognize it is one of the greatest gifts we can give. *We will prioritize focusing our attention on those in our presence over those at a distance.*
2. Our phones and computers will all have a “home.” When not specifically in use, they should be in that home. While in our house, we will not carry our phones around with us unless it is an exceptional situation.
3. Our tech items will be carefully managed! We will use them:
 - a. NOT while you are engaged in communicating with others.
 - b. NOT in our bedrooms. Tech items will only be used in common areas.
 - c. NOT during “class” periods, except when required by your teacher.
 - d. NOT when driving—except for talking on the phone.
 - e. WITH the minimum possible use of notifications for all apps.
4. We will use old school alarm clocks and normally not touch our phones for the first 30 minutes of the day. We will plan to set aside all technology between 6 to 9 pm unless we are using it for a family activity.
5. Everyone will, AT ALL TIMES, expect and welcome Dad and Mom to full and open access to all emails, texts, pictures, etc. Hiding content or secret conversations is prohibited and will result in confiscation of the device.
6. We will not touch another person’s tech items without permission. We will not play games, browse picture libraries, or surf the internet on another person’s computer or phone without parental permission.
7. To protect all of us, we will use protective software at all times and let Dad know immediately if there are any problems with that software. (Bark / Net- nanny / Accountable2You)
8. Failure to live by this game plan will result in healthy consequences.

Name
Dad
Mom
Child A
Child B
Child C

Signature

Your Tech and Attention Game Plan

Goal:

Specific Points:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

Name

Signature

Tool #4—Your Priority Pentagon

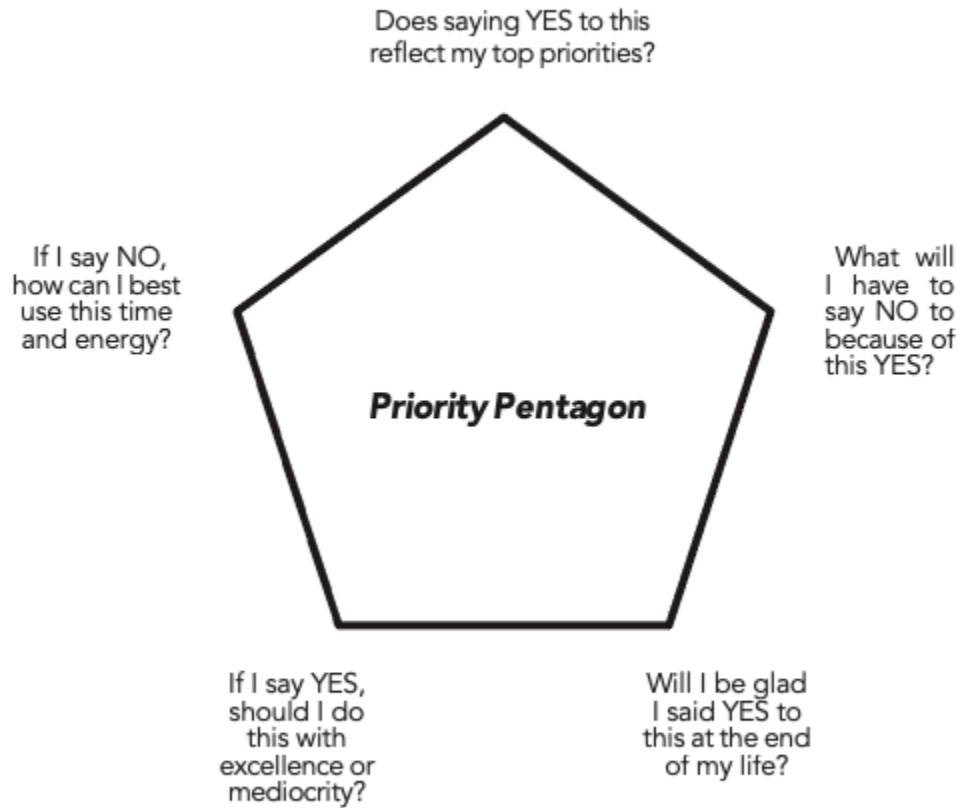
(Reference step 6 in chapter 8)

Here are some questions you might find helpful in vetting invitations, requests, opportunities, and expectations.

- Does saying YES to this reflect my top priorities?
- What would this activity actually cost us?
- Why are we doing this?
- Would saying YES to this force me/us to sacrifice one of our/my non-negotiables?
- Would saying YES to this fragment our marriage/family or bring us together?
- What will I have to say NO to because of this YES?
- Am I answering this out of FOMO or JOMO?
- Will I be glad I said YES to this at the end of my life?
- If I say YES, should I do this with excellence or mediocrity?
- If I say NO, how can we best use this time and energy?
- Have I checked with my spouse before saying YES to this?
- Does this opportunity/activity line up with the Word of God?
- Does this match what God cares about most?
- Does this activity/book/movie/song bring us closer to God?
- Would doing this lead us more toward the American Dream or the Kingdom of God?
- Would I say YES to this more to please people or God?

Sample Priority Pentagon

Five questions to help you vet new opportunities in light of what matters most.



Your Priority Pentagon

Five questions to help you vet new opportunities in light of what matters most.

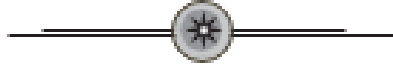


Tool #5—Your Compass Check

Compass Check Worksheet

Brainstorming questions to help you stay on course.

Example: In the last week, have we been experiencing busy or full?



Compass Check Questions Others Have Found Valuable

- In the last week, have I/we been experiencing busy or full?
- Are sports, kids' activities, or screens causing us to drift off course?
- Am I living fully present with God and others or distracted and hurried?
- If I replicate the amount of time I spent with my kids last week, what will they say about our relationship when I am in the rocking chair?
- Am I/Are we scheduling the things that matter most before we schedule everything else?
- Have I been giving those I care about most my best or my leftovers?
- How consistently did I "show up" last week for the appointments on my What Matters Most calendar?
- Am I nourishing my spouse with:
 - one-on-one time?
 - affectionate touch?
 - dates/getaways?
 - prayer?
- In the last week, have we been aiming for good kids or godly kids?
- How is our "oneness" as a couple?
- Are we consistently taking the steps to be our children's primary teachers about God and His Word?
- In the last week, have I/we played, laughed, and learned about God with my/our kids?

Valuable Questions Continued . . .

- Am I using my priority pentagon regularly for new invitations and requests?
- Have I been using my tongue to bring life or death in my key relationships?
- In the last week, have I been focused more on inputs or outcomes with my children?
- In the last week, have we been aiming for the American Dream or the Kingdom of God?
- In the last week, have we been focused on the hurting, the lost, and the poor?
- Are we keeping our YES “under glass” when we face new invitations and opportunities?
- If I look at our calendar and checkbook, what have we been seeking first?
- Am I maintaining life-giving boundaries on technology:
 - at home?
 - in the car?
 - at work?
- Am I living at the right pace and directing my attention thoughtfully each moment?
- Am I asking excellent questions in my time with my closest people?
- Is there anything that is pulling me off course right now? How am I combatting this?

Your Compass Check – Version 1.0

Five to seven questions you will answer weekly to help you stay on course

