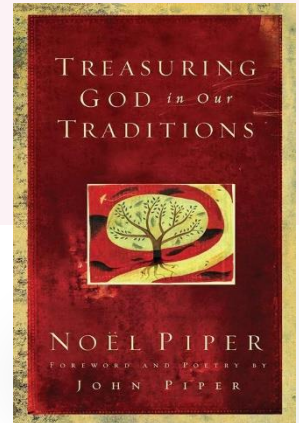




LEADER'S GUIDE

TREASURING GOD IN OUR TRADITIONS BY NOEL PIPER



"For a Christian, tradition is laying up God's words in our hearts and passing his words to the next generation."

NOEL PIPER

THEMES

Tradition

Generational Teaching

Family Habits

History

Celebration

BOOK SUMMARY

In "Treasuring God in Our Traditions", Noel Piper warmly shares the special ways in which herself and John intentionally pass along their greatest Treasure to their children and all who encounter them. By giving us a unique insight into her families "everyday" and "especially" traditions, we're encouraged to uphold the Lord and all He has done as the most significant Treasure of our lives. The knowledge and experiences we have of him, are worthy of us intentionally passing down to the next generation. Noel shows us how by doing this, we create Christ-centered habits and special celebrations that fulfil the commandments to "repeat them again and again to your children" (Deuteronomy 6:7).

"Although this book offers ideas that I hope will be helpful as examples of God-centred traditions, it is not a how-to manual. I am praying that it will inspire us to look at God with fresh eyes, to see and love and desire the Treasure that he is. And I'm praying that the traditions of our lives will be filled with the Treasure that fills our heart on "everyday" days and on "especially" days." (p16).

Noel first defines heirlooms and reminds us of passing down our greatest Treasure to future generations. She then establishes the importance of "everyday" verses "especially" traditions and offers lists and suggestions of how we can make both daily habits count, as well as having hearts focused more on Christ during special times such as Easter, Christmas and Birthdays. Noel concludes her book with notes from John on how to incorporate general family togetherness in the presence of God to create closeness, warmth and unity within the family.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & TALKING POINTS

1

Q. An heirloom can be described as "something of special value handed on from one generation to another" (p10). It's important to remember we cannot 'inherit' the Lord from other people, but we can pass along the special value He has in our hearts. How do you currently do this?

TALKING POINTS

"I was not God's granddaughter who inherited God through my mother's relationship with him. I was God's daughter who inherited God directly from God" (p18);

- We may take our children to church on Sundays.
- We may prioritise Bible study and devotionals as a family.
- We may celebrate Easter and Christmas with the correct focus of Jesus at the centre.
- We may regularly pray together as a family.
- "God can only be inherited from God" (p17); God should be the inheritance we desire for our children, family and friends.

2

Q. What is a tradition?

TALKING POINTS

Good traditions become woven into our lives so that they are also habits and customs, although not all habits are traditions;

- God is the inventor of traditions.
- Traditions are repeated.
- "A tradition is a planned habit with significance." (p26).
- Traditions pass down information, beliefs and worldviews from one generation to another through regular repetition, ceremonies or celebrations (p26).

3

Q. "Traditions are a vital way of displaying our greatest treasure, of showing what – Who – is most important to us" (18). Do your current traditions reflect your greatest Treasure?

TALKING POINTS

"Our traditions are displaying the Treasure of our lives" (p18);

- Can our circle of family and friends see Jesus as our greatest Treasure?
- Do our traditions focus more on worldly things?
- Does where we spend our time reflect our greatest Treasure?
- When others think of us, would they think immediately of our love for Jesus?

4

Q. What makes tradition important, and why are we commanded to teach them?

TALKING POINTS

God's purpose for traditions are;

- So that his people remember what he has done for them.
- So he can be honoured for all he has done.
- So what he has done can be passed from generation to generation.
- Traditions proclaim that God is the great "I AM".

5

Q. "What are we teaching our children during our "everyday" habits?"

TALKING POINTS

Our children will eventually learn about God through their own experiences of him; however, while little, our traditions will help them learn who he is to us. We teach traditions to children so that they;

- Learn to put their hope in God.
- Learn to put their trust in God.
- Learn to live well and keep his commandments.
- Ultimately so that they may make him the Treasure of their lives.

We can proclaim our great Treasure daily through;

- Leaning on and showing our dependence on God.
- Turning to God for protection and help.
- Demonstrating daily Bible reading habits.
- Talking about God regularly.
- Praying openly in front of our children as well as with them.

6

Q. On page 45, we see a brief picture of how the Piper family encourage their children to connect with God on a daily basis. Was there a habit which you would like to incorporate within your own family?

TALKING POINTS

Piper family habits for connecting with God (these can also be applied to those who are single and married without children as they are all healthy habits) ;

- Structured, repetitive and regular prayers (nighttime, meal times and so on) which the children can learn, repeat and expect daily,
- Prayer throughout the day in all circumstances.
- Daily quiet Bible time.
- Personal Devotion times.
- Role modelling the importance of prayer as a married couple.

7

Q. Do you practise hospitality often? It may be the opening of your home or sharing food, resources, and time with others.

TALKING POINTS

Hospitality is indeed a special gift, yet we can all in our own unique way bless others through avenues of hospitality;

- We can prepare a meal to share with others or deliver a meal to a suffering friend.
- We may not be able to cook well, but we could share our resources and gift take-away, store-bought sweets or fresh fruit and vegetables to those in need.
- Role-modelling hospitality is very important for our children to understand that everything we have first belongs to the Lord. This role models our Christian faith through trust in God's provision and kindness and love to others.

8

Q. As we prepare our hearts for the "Especially Traditions" (such as birthdays, Easter and Christmas time), we can often get caught up in doing *all the things* instead of focusing on Christ. Discuss the dot points on page 87 and how they can help us keep our hearts correctly focused during these special occasions.

TALKING POINTS

While preparing our hearts for special occasions, we can consider the following (p87) ;

- Am I my Father's child? Do I resemble him in my generosity?
- Am I focusing on God's gift so that my appreciation of him grows?
- Can others see why I am celebrating?
- Am I celebrating Christ?

9

Q. What is one new tradition you would like to start this Easter?

TALKING POINTS

Suggested Easter Traditions from the Piper Family;

- Lent (sober and realistic reflection of our lives) p93
- Fasting (p93)
- Lenten Candles (p94)
- Resurrection Tree (p94)
- Holy Week (p95)
- Making an "Easter Mountain" (p96)
- Music, Books, Videos
- Church Services
- Last Supper and feet washing ceremony.

10

Q. What is one new tradition you would like to start this Christmas?

TALKING POINTS

Suggested Christmas Traditions from the Piper Family;

- Advent activities (these begin four Sundays before Christmas day) such as candles, calendars, and books.
- Manger scene (p82).

- Symbols to represent the life of Jesus, history, and prophecy (p83).
- Christmas dress-up box.
- Gift to Jesus (p86).
- Shepard's Pouch (p86).
- Jesse Tree & Decorations.

It may also be valuable to consider the presence of Santa within your family home.



ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR LEADERS

The author provides questions throughout the book for personal reflection. You may like to encourage your Book club sisters to keep a journal while reading the text and answer these questions, and as the month progresses, discuss these through your group's online platform (a Facebook group/messenger or what's app chat group etc.) to keep connected and engaged throughout the month.

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