

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

This study guide for *Raising Grateful Kids in an Entitled World* will help you go deeper in personally applying the message of how to cultivate gratitude in your kids. Invite others to join you—your spouse, other parents, or a church group—or use this guide on your own for individual reflection. While it is structured as a four-week study, feel free to adapt it for a shorter or longer time to suit your needs. For more resources, visit [www.raisinggratefulkids.com](http://www.raisinggratefulkids.com).

### WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION AND LAUNCH

#### *Introduction*

1. What made the cowboy boot incident so impactful for Kristen? What did she learn about herself and her child? What do you think the child learned?
2. What memories of hard work do you have from your own childhood? What qualities do these memories reveal about yourself, your family's priorities, and the way your personal work ethic developed?

3. Would you agree with Kristen that our culture is “obsessed” with happiness? How so? What elements of wanting your children to be happy do you consider positive or negative?
4. How do you see God working in your family? How do you think faith might guide your choices as you seek to cultivate a spirit of gratitude in your home?
5. Kristen reminds us that “anytime we step out of the mainstream and try to turn our lives (or homes) around and dare to go upstream, it’s hard.” What challenges do you face as a parent as you try to cultivate a more grateful family? What hopes, goals, and promises will you keep in mind to encourage yourself to hang in there when it gets tough?

### *Chapter 1: Wants vs. Needs*

1. How would you complete the sentence: “What I want most for my kids is \_\_\_\_\_”?
2. Kristen confesses a time when she wanted something she couldn’t yet have. Can you relate? What are some of your own personal wants? How are they different from your needs?
3. Think of a time when you as a child were truly grateful for a gift or a special event, or when your hard work earned a reward or a compliment. What happened and how did it make you feel? Is there a way that experience has influenced you as a parent?

4. What do your kids own (iPods, toys, computers) that are beyond what you had at their age? How do you see these possessions influencing your kids, for better or for worse?

*Chapter 2: Times Have Certainly Changed*

1. We can't ultimately control everything our kids are exposed to as they're growing up. Have you ever felt in over your head when your kids ask about something questionable they've seen on the news or in magazines, or heard in school? How do you respond?
2. "I knew if we allowed [our daughter] to struggle with her questions and gave her freedom to ask them, she would become stronger in her beliefs in the end," Kristen says. Why was she initially afraid for her daughter to ask the hard questions? What is a question you and your family have struggled with, and what have you learned about each other as you've worked through it?
3. "God often uses mistakes, wayward choices, and brokenness to bring redemption." How have you seen this to be true in your own family? Do you find it difficult to trust that it would be true for your children too?

**WEEK 2: UNDERTOW**

*Chapter 3: Seven Ways We Parents Miss the Boat  
(and How to Get on Board)*

1. What do you think of the comment that kids "don't question that they will receive a smartphone or a car someday; they believe it is a right of childhood"? Have you seen that to be true in your own community? Do you

believe that any “rights of childhood” exist, and if so, what are they? How might your kids answer the same question?

2. Which of the “things parents do [that] they know they shouldn’t” in this chapter do you resonate with most? What are some of the reasons you have said no to your kids’ “wants”? What was the result?
3. Describe a time when “fitting in” seemed to be all that mattered to you or your kids. What does it mean to you to “fit in?” Why do you think it is so important to us? What are some things you would say are even more important and why?
4. Although it is so hard to see our children struggle, what might they lose long-term by always being rescued and never experiencing failure or setbacks? Think of some of your own best character qualities—perhaps they include kindness, resilience, patience, or humor. How were those qualities shaped or formed partly by the hard times in your life?

#### *Chapter 4: The Selfie Society*

1. Describe a time when you felt special because you sensed your parents were truly proud of you. Then think of a time when you felt proud in the same way about your own child’s character or decisions. Do the two experiences have anything in common?
2. What is something you do even though you may not be the best at it? What do you love about it? What do you hope your kids learn from watching you do it?

3. What does it mean to you to have a “child-centered home”? How have Kristen’s opinions on this topic changed and why, and what happened in her family as a result? What would you say is at the center of your own home?

### *Chapter 5: Making Smart Choices about Technology*

1. How much access do your own kids have to technology? Is it different from what their peers have? What platform would you say is most important to your kids (TV, smartphone, computer, social media) and how do you feel about the amount of time they spend on it?
2. How can you be proactive in this area as your kids continue to grow?
3. Why do you think Kristen says that the most important thing we can teach our kids is self-control?

## **WEEK 3: RESISTING THE CURRENT**

### *Chapter 6: Cultivating Obedience*

1. Kristen believes that once we decide on and communicate a consequence to our kids, we do more harm than good if we back down. Have you found this to be true in your own family? What are some of the hardest things about standing firm? What are the benefits to doing it anyway? Are there any risks or pitfalls?
2. How does your love and care for your children help you to better understand God’s love and care for us?
3. How do you teach your kids about money? How do you approach allowances, paying for chores, and instructing

your kids in saving and spending? Do you see any ways you could use such moments to intentionally instill values like hard work and sacrifice?

4. Do you agree with the statement: “It’s okay for our kids not to be rewarded all the time”? Why or why not?

### *Chapter 7: Living Out God’s Love in Your Home*

1. “Checking church off the list,” Kristen says, “or having a Christian channel as a radio preset, or hanging a cross in our home doesn’t make us followers of Jesus.” How would you define a follower of Jesus? How does faith play a role in your family life?
2. “Parents say much more to their kids by their lives than by their words.” What do you see your life saying to your children?
3. Describe a time when you let a child make his or her own choice about whether to participate in an activity. What happened? How did you and the child ultimately feel about the decision? What did the experience teach you both?

### **WEEK 4: WHITE WATER**

#### *Chapter 8: Gratitude Is a Choice*

1. What are some of the things you are most grateful for in your own life? How might you say thank you to God and others for those things today?
2. Do you feel your children understand the plight of others around the world who have so much less than families do in the West? What are some ways your family can bless

others through serving and giving together? (For ideas to get you started, see Appendix C in this book or visit [www.raisinggratefulkids.com](http://www.raisinggratefulkids.com).) How could teaching your children about helping others simultaneously cultivate a grateful spirit?

### *Chapter 9: Where the Rubber Meets the Road*

1. Can you identify an area in your own home right now that needs some hard work and elbow grease? How might you work together as a family to accomplish it? In what parts could you invite a child to take charge and own a leadership role?
2. How would you score on the “marshmallow test?” What about your kids? What does this reveal about each of you?
3. Why do you think working for a goal makes the earned reward even more special?
4. When do you see your family at its absolute best? What do you appreciate about your family in those moments?
5. Kristen believes we were all created to ask the question, *What can I do that matters?* After reading this book, how would you answer that question on behalf of yourself and your family?

### *Chapter 10: Dear Parents*

1. What kind of atmosphere do you want to create and cultivate in your home? What do you want your kids’ memories of growing up to be? What qualities do you

want your children to have as adults, and what are you doing now to help them develop those?

2. “When you decide to push against a cultural norm,” Kristen says, “there will be people in your life and community, even your church, who will question you.” From where do you anticipate pushback in your quest to cultivate different values in your home? What will encourage you and help you to stand strong?
3. What do you see as the key differences between times when you *give in to your kids* vs. times when you *choose relationship over rules*?
4. Kristen shares her dream for a grateful family in these words:

I would love for my kids to say one day they are grateful for their lives because their dad and I were grateful for ours. I want them to have memories of me thanking God for all He’s done. I want them to catch me writing thank-you notes and being generous with my time and money because God has been generous with me. But most of all, I want my children to know that we wanted them to resist the current of our culture and choose a lifestyle of gratitude because we love them deeply and completely.

As you finish reading this book, what are your biggest hopes and prayers for your own? How has the countercultural message of *Raising Grateful Kids in an Entitled World* inspired, challenged, or emboldened you for the journey?