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Take Back Your Family Handbook

*A 52-Week Game Plan
to Create a Flourishing Family*

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

Take Back Your Family Handbook

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Family Summit

FAMILY MISSION STATEMENT:

CORE FAMILY VALUES/PILLARS:

REVIEW OF LAST YEAR—BIG PICTURE QUESTIONS:

1. How and when did we live up to our mission statement?
2. Which core values did we achieve?
3. Which value was the strongest?

STORY OF THE YEAR

If you were to retell the story of the year in five minutes, what would you say? Each of you pretend you are talking to a friend whom you haven't seen in the last year. You're holding your coffees, and your friend says, "Catch me up on how you've been. What has God been doing in your life, and what have you been up to?"

IMPORTANT: Do this exercise separately first, then come together to share. After you've all shared, ask these questions:

1. What did your family members include that you didn't?
2. Whose story felt happier than the others?

3. What had you forgotten that another family member reminded you of?

4. Was your story of the last year one you were pleased or proud to tell? Why or why not?

LOSSES FROM LAST YEAR

Write down a few of the losses your family experienced during the last year. Reminder: Losses can be any area in which you've grieved, any area that seemed difficult for a long season, anything you miss that hasn't come back, and so on. Mark an *X* next to any losses that still feel like a loss, and mark with a *+* any losses that were hard but that—through new perspective—have begun to feel like redemption. This is basically a section to talk about the hard things in a free-flowing way. Adjust the questions to your children's capacity. You may want to keep some of the following discussions between parents.

Questions to ask each team member:

- 1. What would you say was the hardest moment of this year?
Why?
- 2. What did you learn from the losses, or did the losses change you in any way?
- 3. Where did you see God showing up the most this year?
- 4. Look for patterns. Was God teaching you or nudging you toward a particular theme of growth?
- 5. What is one area in which you saw the most growth and that you are proud of?
- 6. What is something new you did or implemented that seemed to work? What is something you are glad you did? (Examples: date night once a month, no phones in bedrooms, etc.)
- 7. Where did God surprise you?
- 8. What did you do this year that will benefit you fifty years from now?

WINS FROM LAST YEAR

Write down the wins, both small and big.

Questions to ask each team member:

- 1. What would you say is the biggest win from this past year?

2. What's one thing that was hard but that ended well? Are you glad or thankful for that hard thing?
3. What are five things you are thankful for this year?
4. What's something that happened this year that you never would've expected?
5. What was your favorite date as a married couple this year?
6. What is the best memory you made this year as a couple?

FINANCES

1. What is the worst financial decision we made this year? Why?
2. What's one way we can change how we see, spend, or use finances next year?
3. What was the best "fun" purchase we made this year?
4. What was our most memorable moment of generosity and stewardship this year?
5. How did God take care of us this year financially? How did he provide?

TRAVEL

1. At a glance: What travel do we have planned this coming year?
2. Which trip are we most excited about?
3. What do we hope for with the travel?
4. How can we set ourselves up for success in our travels?
5. Which trips will be family trips, dad-only trips, dad-with-a-kid trips, mom-only trips, mom-with-a-kid trips, etc.?

CHILDREN

1. Take a look back at your scouting report. What still rings true about our team?
2. How would you update your scouting report?
3. What is one word to describe how our parent/child relationships went this past year?
4. How are our kids excelling as individuals?
5. With what does each kid need some extra help?
6. How can we call out their true identity in the Lord more in the next year?
7. What was the best thing we instituted with the kids that blessed our family this year (new traditions, training tools, etc.)?

FAVORITES

FAVORITE	ANSWER
Memory	
Date	
Moment with kids	
Movie we watched	
Meal	
Moment with friends	
New thing we did	
Place of growth	
New habit	
Praise in our community	
Book	

RHYTHM AND FORMATION DIAGNOSTIC

Remember: rhythms are not routines. Routines are what you do to make sure life goes on as needed (tie your shoes every morning, go to work, etc.). But rhythms are voluntary choices we make throughout the day and week and year to fill our days and moments with life-giving activities. Another way to put it is, rhythms are the formational choices we make every day to be a certain type of person or family. Repetitive practices that turn our hearts and minds toward the “north star” of the family we want to be. And that can be something fun, serious, long, short, and so on! But easily one of the best ways to grow at rhythms is to make sure you are consistently taking stock of how it’s going and how they are doing—rhythms are meant to be tweaked and adapted and evolve for years and years as we slowly refine them into better and better practices!

What daily, weekly, and yearly rhythms are shaping your family?

Daily rhythms include starting the day with a mantra or question, sharing a thankful list at the dinner table, or praying before bedtime. Weekly rhythms might mean sharing a special family meal on the Sabbath or finding other ways to make the Sabbath a day of rest and delight. Or various family members might establish weekly rhythms that include sibling one-on-ones, date nights, or business meetings. Your family might also choose to embrace yearly rhythms. This Family Summit is one of them. But you might also consider marking meaningful anniversaries or biblical holidays with a big party. Take note of the ways your family is currently embracing life-giving rhythms together.

DAILY	WEEKLY	YEARLY

Rhythm Reflection

- 1. Which rhythm gave us the most life this year? Which rhythm could we not have lived without?
- 2. Which rhythm needs more work or tweaking to inspire optimal results?
- 3. Are there new rhythms we want to add?
- 4. Any rhythms we want to change?
- 5. Any rhythms we want to take away?

FOR MARRIAGE PARTNERS

Sin and Battle

- 1. Where do you feel like sin patterns most entered into our marriage or our individual lives this year?
- 2. How do you think your sin affected our marriage and family?
- 3. What did God reveal to you about yourself this year, or how did he help you resist temptation, the devil, the flesh, and the world?

4. What is the most helpful thing I do as a spouse when your sin patterns begin to show?
5. What is the least helpful thing I do as a spouse when it comes to those areas?
6. Where did you see God triumph over sin in your life, marriage, and family this year? Be specific. Count the blessings and moments of victory. What about in areas of weakness, hurt, pain, or any type of serious spiritual battle that doesn't include sin?

Thankfulness Section

List twenty things you are thankful for this past year. Big or small. Fun or serious.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____

16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____

Ceremony and Altar

Build some type of altar or curate some type of moment to close this activity and year. Moments and seasons have to be marked. Do something that breaks the script from your normal day or routine. Go to a nice restaurant to celebrate God's faithfulness; craft something that represents what you talk about and hang it up on the fridge as a reminder throughout the year; or plant a flower or tree in the backyard to represent the past year and God's goodness and blessing.

1. How will we choose to mark this year?
2. How will we choose to remember this year?
3. Fifty years from now, what do we want our kids to remember about this year? How can we commemorate for them the blessings of this year?