

Group Leader's Guide and Conversation Questions

The 20 Hardest Questions Every Mom Faces: Praying Your Way To Realistic, Biblical Answers

From Dannah Gresh

*I am excited that you are sitting down with friends to talk about the message in The 20 Hardest Questions Every Mom Faces: Praying Your Way To Realistic, Biblical Answers. May the “Mommy Wars” end and may you be an incredible encouragement to a mom who prays her way to answers that are different than the answers God has for you. This is not a fancy leader’s guide. (It’s also free.) Consider this a raw and real memo from me to you as we work together to foster prayer and unity in the Body of Christ. Think of it as getting together for coffee as we plan your next gathering with girlfriends!
(I’ll have a café au lait, please.)*



If you really want to get the most out of any book, the best thing to do is to read it with someone who will talk it all through with you. This discussion guide has been created to cover all twenty-three chapters in *The 20 Hardest Questions Every Mom Faces* over the course of 10 weeks. Just read the chapters assigned each week (usually two or three); then meet together to talk through the conversation questions. It’s that easy! Here are a few tips you may or may not embrace.

- 1.) Allow one hour firm for your sharing and prayer time. (I find that keeping it succinct helps to keep people committed over the long haul.)
- 2.) Thirty minutes of your time should be spent in prayer. Thirty in sharing. (If you follow the prompts, this will happen naturally.)
- 3.) You’ll be using the four steps at the end of each chapter, so if you’d rather take 23 weeks and move through this more slowly all you have to do is use the prompts to share and pray together at the end of chapters 2-23. (Chapter 1 does not have these, so you might want to read chapter 1 and 2 together.)

For this ten-week plan, you’ll want to read through chapter 1 and 2 prior to your first meeting. You could distribute the books a week or two ahead of time to get started.

Be sure to visit me at my Dannah Gresh page on Facebook to let me know how your group reading is going or to ask any questions you might have! I also adore photos!

WEEK 1: SOUL-BREAKING QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Read chapters 1 and 2.

Discuss (for 15 minutes) Talk about the Four Steps To Soul-Healing Answers. Specifically share which of these steps is more difficult for you.

Pray (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 1 and 2* by pouring out the insecurities and complaints of your soul and specifically give each child to God by name as prompted on page 23.

Tell Someone (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 3* by further sharing how your friends can pray for you and your specific journey through this book over the next ten weeks.

Pray (for 15 minutes) Use the scripture provided on page 24 to prepare for *Step 4*, the long work of waiting for God to give you answers to your soul-healing questions. You may open up to this passage of scripture and pray more of the verses back to God as a prayer.

Close with the assignment to read Chapters 3 and 4 for the next meeting.

WEEK 2: HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT MYSELF

Read chapters 3 and 4.

Discuss (for 15 minutes) Talk about the two questions in these chapters, beginning with “Who do you think you are?” Has that question ever popped up in your heart and mind? How? When? “Are you messing up your kids?” How and why did you think you wouldn’t? (Smile.)

Pray (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 1 and 2* by pouring out the insecurities and complaints of your soul and specifically give each child to God by name as prompted on pages 33 and 43.

Tell Someone (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 3* by further sharing how your friends can pray for you as you struggle with these two questions.

Pray (for 15 minutes) Use the scripture provided on pages 35 and 44 to prepare for *Step 4*, the long work of waiting for God to give you answers to your soul-healing questions. You may open up to these passages of scripture and pray more of the verses back to God as a prayer.

Close with the assignment to read Chapters 5 and 6 for the next meeting.

WEEK 3: HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT TRUSTING GOD

Read chapters 5 and 6.

Discuss (for 15 minutes) Talk about the two questions in these chapters. “How many kids should you have?” Is this a question you’ve ever prayed through? Do you think God deserves to speak into it? Are you allowing him? “Should you work or stay at home?” Is this a question you’ve found peace about, or are you still struggling? How did you come to your answer?

Pray (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 1 and 2* by pouring out the insecurities and complaints of your soul and specifically give each child to God by name as prompted on pages 53 and 62.

Tell Someone (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 3* by further sharing how your friends can pray for you as you wrestle through these two questions.

Pray (for 15 minutes) Use the scripture provided on pages 54 and 63 to prepare for *Step 4*, the long work of waiting for God to give you answers to your soul-healing questions. You may open up to these passages of scripture and pray more of the verses back to God as a prayer.

Close with the assignment to read Chapters 7 and 8 for the next meeting.

WEEK 3: HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT MY CHILD’S DEVELOPMENT

Read chapters 7 and 8.

Discuss (for 15 minutes) Talk about the two questions in these chapters. “Soccer, ballet, piano...or family time?” Have you found the right balance for your family? Are you

overscheduled right now? “Homeschool, public school, or private Christian school?” How did you come to the conclusion you have at this point in parenting? How can you encourage other moms as they struggle through the questions? (Be sure to limit this conversation to 15 minutes and start praying, no matter where you are in the complexity of the conversation.)

Pray (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 1 and 2* by pouring out the insecurities and complaints of your soul and specifically give each child to God by name as prompted on pages 71 and 82.

Tell Someone (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 3* by further sharing how your friends can pray for you as you wrestle through these two questions.

Pray (for 15 minutes) Use the scripture provided on pages 72 and 83 to prepare for *Step 4*, the long work of waiting for God to give you answers to your soul-healing questions. You may open up to these passages of scripture and pray more of the verses back to God as a prayer.

Close with the assignment to read Chapter 9 for the next meeting.

WEEK 4: HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT MY CHILD’S FATHER

Read chapter 9. (Special note: both married and single moms need to take special care to focus on this chapter, so I suggest you let it have a week all its own. If you have single moms in your group, or are one, consider how your relationship with your child’s father is important.)

Discuss (for 15 minutes) “Who comes first—your husband or your kids?” What kind of honor do you need to give your children’s father whether he is your husband or not? How does the way you interact with your husband/the father of your children teach them? Are you submitting to God in this area?

Pray (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 1 and 2* by pouring out the insecurities and complaints of your soul and specifically give your husband or the father of your children to God by name as prompted on page 91.

Tell Someone (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 3* by further sharing how your friends can pray for you as you wrestle through your marital and/or parental roles.

Pray (for 15 minutes) Use the scripture provided on page 92 to prepare for *Step 4*, the long work of waiting for God to give you answers to your soul-healing questions. You may open up to this passage of scripture and pray more of the verses back to God as a prayer.

Close with the assignment to read Chapters 10, 11, and 12 for the next meeting.

WEEK 5: HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT RANDOM THINGS

Read chapters 10, 11, and 12.

Discuss (for 15 minutes) Talk about the three questions in these chapters. “Is it OK for your kids to say ‘Darn’ or ‘Shut up?’” “Should we do sleepovers?” “How should we talk to our kids about bullies?” If there is one question where you find more energy, focus on that one. Keep in mind that you’ll find differences of opinion and learn from each other.

Pray (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 1 and 2* by pouring out the insecurities and complaints of your soul and specifically give each child to God by name as prompted on pages 100, 109, and 117.

Tell Someone (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 3* by further sharing how your friends can pray for you as you wrestle through these three questions.

Pray (for 15 minutes) Use the scripture provided on pages 101, 110 and 119 to prepare for *Step 4*, the long work of waiting for God to give you answers to your soul-healing questions. You may open up to these passages of scripture and pray more of the verses back to God as a prayer.

Close with the assignment to read Chapters 13 and 14 for the next meeting.

WEEK 6: HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT FAITH

Read chapters 13 and 14.

Discuss (for 15 minutes) Talk about the two questions in these chapters. “Is my child ready to make a decision for Christ?” Have your children already made that decision? Are you still

waiting? “How do I keep my kids from walking away from the faith?” Is that a fear? A reality? What steps do you feel help avoid that? Can you avoid it?

Pray (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 1 and 2* by pouring out the insecurities and complaints of your soul and specifically give each child to God by name as prompted on pages 127 and 138. Spend extra time on children who have not yet decided to walk with Christ and/or who have fallen away from the faith. Press in with your sisters on these two big areas of prayer!!!

Tell Someone (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 3* by further sharing how your friends can pray for you as you wrestle through these two questions.

Pray (for 15 minutes) Use the scripture provided on pages 128 and 138 to prepare for *Step 4*, the long work of waiting for God to give you answers to your soul-healing questions. You may open up to these passages of scripture and pray more of the verses back to God as a prayer.

Close with the assignment to read Chapters 15 and 16 for the next meeting.

WEEK 7: HARD QUESTIONS KIDS ASK

Read chapters 15 and 16.

Discuss (for 15 minutes) Talk about the two questions in these chapters that kids tend to ask us. “Why? Why? Why?” And “What’s for dinner?” Are you ever annoyed at these questions? What did you learn from the reading that helped you to be more patient with them? Do you have any tips to share?

Pray (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 1 and 2* by pouring out the insecurities and complaints of your soul and specifically give each child to God by name as prompted on pages 143 and 150.

Tell Someone (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 3* by further sharing how your friends can pray for you as you wrestle through these two questions.

Pray (for 15 minutes) Use the scripture provided on pages 144 and 150 to prepare for *Step 4*, the long work of waiting for God to give you answers to your soul-healing questions. You may open up to these passages of scripture and pray more of the verses back to God as a prayer.

Close with the assignment to read Chapters 17 and 18 for the next meeting.

WEEK 7: HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT HARD DECISIONS

Read chapters 17 and 18.

Discuss (for 15 minutes) Talk about the two questions in these chapters. “To Vaccinate or not to vaccinate?” And “Is it harmful to teach modesty to my children?” These are both controversial topics and have a wide range for moms to decide where to land. Be careful to direct the conversation to neutral and factual exchanges and to limit it to fifteen minutes. A good question to use for directing the conversation is: “What did you learn in the reading that gave you a different perspective?” Or “Can you see why other moms come to another conclusion?”

Pray (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 1 and 2* by pouring out the insecurities and complaints of your soul and specifically give each child to God by name as prompted on pages 160 and 170.

Tell Someone (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 3* by further sharing how your friends can pray for you as you wrestle through these two questions.

Pray (for 15 minutes) Use the scripture provided on pages 161 and 170 to prepare for *Step 4*, the long work of waiting for God to give you answers to your soul-healing questions. You may open up to these passages of scripture and pray more of the verses back to God as a prayer.

Close with the assignment to read Chapters 19 and 20 for the next meeting.

WEEK 8: HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT SEXUAL & GENDER DEVELOPMENT

Read chapters 19 and 20.

Discuss (for 15 minutes) Today's questions are "What do I do if my child might be gay?" And "Does intersexuality legitimize transgenderism?" Start by asking, "What observations did you make when reading these chapters?" Be very careful to direct today's conversation to a grace-filled place, keeping in mind that many moms have deep wounds, questions, and differences of opinion. Guide the conversation back to God's Word as the Source of Wisdom with questions like, "How do you find that God's Word speaks to this?" and "How did your time in the Bible direct you to that answer?" Be clear as you begin the conversation that you'll move into prayer promptly at fifteen minutes. God can do so much more when we're talking to him than when we are talking to each other!

Pray (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 1 and 2* by pouring out the insecurities and complaints of your soul and specifically give each child to God by name as prompted on pages 182 and 190.

Tell Someone (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 3* by further sharing how your friends can pray for you as you wrestle through these two questions.

Pray (for 15 minutes) Use the scripture provided on pages 182 and 191 to prepare for *Step 4*, the long work of waiting for God to give you answers to your soul-healing questions. You may open up to these passages of scripture and pray more of the verses back to God as a prayer.

Close with the assignment to read Chapters 21 and 22 for the next meeting.

WEEK 9: HARD QUESTIONS ABOUT GROWING UP

Read chapters 21 and 22.

Discuss (for 15 minutes) Talk about the two questions in these chapters. "Should my child have a cell phone?" Does your child have one? What factors helped you decide it was time? How do you keep them safe with software and boundaries? "At what age should we have 'the talk'? And should I tell them about my past?" That second question often informs the first. Should it? What kind of healing do you need to do or have you done to answer these two questions well? Is it time to talk to your child? When will you do it? How?

Pray (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 1 and 2* by pouring out the insecurities and complaints of your soul and specifically give each child to God by name as prompted on pages 200 and 208.

Tell Someone (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 3* by further sharing how your friends can pray for you as you wrestle through these two questions.

Pray (for 15 minutes) Use the scripture provided on pages 200 and 208 to prepare for *Step 4*, the long work of waiting for God to give you answers to your soul-healing questions. You may open up to these passages of scripture and pray more of the verses back to God as a prayer.

Close with the assignment to read Chapter 23 for the next meeting.

WEEK 10: SOUL-HEALING PRAISE

Read chapter 23. (Provide some praise and worship music for today's prayer times.)

Discuss (for 15 minutes) Do you take time to praise God when he answers a prayer? How did Tim Keller's story about the jewelry impact your heart?

Praise (for 15 minutes) Take time during today's prayer time to simply praise God. Thank him for answers to soul-bending questions discovered during this ten weeks. Praise him in advance for answers yet to come. Be specific. Even if you're feeling like you're facing a lot of trials. James 1 teaches us to "count it all joy when we face trials." The literal Greek encouraged readers to actually count the reasons we can be joyful in hardship. Write a list and praise your God.

Tell Someone (for 15 minutes) Do *Step 3* by further sharing how your friends can praising helps your spirit and what challenges you're facing as you attempt to be joyful and thankful.

Pray (for 15 minutes) Use the scripture provided on page 211 to praise God even as you continue in *Step 4*, the long work of waiting for God to give you answers to your soul-healing questions. You may open up to this passage of scripture and pray more of the verses back to God as a prayer.

This is your last week, but if you enjoyed it I have two other books for moms that help foster prayer. They are called *Six Ways To Keep The Little In Your Girl* and *Six Ways To Keep The Good In Your Boy*. And there may be a new one available because I keep writing books! It's what I do. So visit me at dannahgresh.com