

Dear Moms,

I'm especially excited about this Mom to Mom series. I think that's because it has grown out of a lot of listening—and watching. For the last couple of years I've been asking moms all over the country: "What are your biggest struggles as a mom? toughest issues? hardest challenges?" And I've listened as they've shared from their hearts. Much of what they've told me has found its way into the curriculum you are about to begin. In my own family I've had the opportunity to watch our two daughters-in-law and then our daughter begin their mom lives. I've been blessed to see the godly way in which they, along with our two sons and our son-in-law, are beginning to raise the next generation—our precious grandchildren. I've also been reminded how tough this mom job can be!

Being a mom gets harder all the time. At least that's how it seems to me. Every time I turn on the news, leaf through a women's magazine, or overhear mom-talk at the supermarket, I am amazed at how much our culture expects of us—more importantly, how much we expect of ourselves. No wonder we're so tired! No wonder we constantly struggle with the question "Am I a good enough mom?" Our "To Do" lists are killing us. It doesn't have to be that way. That's what *Inside Out Parenting* is about. Parenting is much more about who we are than what we do. Good parenting happens from the inside out.

Inside Out Parenting has a two-tiered meaning. I am convinced that parenting first shapes us at the heart and soul level; then it shapes our kids. More accurately, *God* transforms our hearts and shapes our souls as moms. As we are changed from the inside out, we are equipped to escort our children into God's changing room, where He can begin to penetrate their hearts and nurture their souls. It's an inside-out job. It's also a job in which what happens on the *inside* of our homes profoundly affects what happens on the *outside*. The values we hold, the relationships we build, the character we model—all of these influence how our children relate to the world outside our doors, who they become, what direction they head.

Ultimately, of course, this is God's work. But He has chosen us to be a part of His mission. That's why knowing our mission as moms—what it is and what it isn't—is so important. In *Inside Out Parenting*, we will take a look at what God's Word has to say about our mission as moms—and what that looks like for 21st-century moms. As we explore God's Word together, we will gain godly mom-confidence in a confused world, learn to create contagious Christian community amidst a chaotic culture, and grow in our ability to build Christlike character in our kids.

Confidence. Community. Character. All part of our mission as moms. All rooted in God's Word for our world. All possible only by His grace. All made easier—and more fun!—as we share our journey at Mom to Mom. What could be better than participating in God's plans and purposes as He changes us—and our kids—from the inside out!

May our loving God use *Inside Out Parenting* to equip you, energize you, encourage you—and transform you more and more "into his likeness with ever-increasing glory" (2 Corinthians 3:18, NIV).

Linda



Beginning at the End: Legacy Living from Day One

Today's Focus: What we do today as moms will impact all our tomorrows. Not only our tomorrows but those of our kids—and grandkids. So we begin our time together by “thinking backward,” as we consider what legacy living looks like, what we can learn from those who’ve gone before, and why mission matters.

I. Legacy Living: Good Questions to Ask

What legacy do you want to *leave*? What legacy do you want to live?

What do you want your kids to *remember*?

Who do you want them to *be*?

Whom do you want them to *serve*?

II. Parenting Backward: Why Begin at the End?

A. Dangers if we don't have the end goal in mind:

- We parent by comparison.
- We parent by replication or reaction.
- We parent by fear.
- We parent by “the tyranny of the urgent.”

B. How Mom to Mom can help facilitate parenting backward:

- Look at God's plan for families.





- Observe others further along the way—and learn from them.
- Practice “mono vision” (one eye on today, the other on tomorrow).
- Be intentional—and directional!

III. Legacy Living: Start Now!

A. God’s plan for families: Pass it on! (Psalm 78:3-7)

B. A biblical example: Joshua’s parting words to his people in Joshua 23–24

- Share HIS story.
- Help your kids get their own “God-glimpses.”
- Listen to Joshua: Hold fast/ Love/ Obey.
- Be strong—See Joshua 1:8-9.

C. Some observations about legacy living:

- It all starts with you!
- In order for your children to listen to you, they must feel loved by you.
- In order to leave a legacy, you must first live it!

IV. A Personal Perspective: A Few Things I Wish I’d Known

A. Being a good mom is more about who you *are* than what you *do*.

B. Parenting reveals more about your core values than anything else in your life.





C. Mothering will reshape not only your body and mind—but your soul.

D. Mistakes are inevitable; forgiveness is always available.

E. Tough times are the best teachers—for you and for them!

F. Being a mom is the best thing, the hardest thing, and the most important thing you'll ever do. But you cannot do it alone. We need each other—and God!

V. Mission Matters!

A. Be a “missional mom!” “*Choose . . . this day*” (Joshua 24:15).

B. Moms *really do* make a difference: What you do today shapes tomorrow—yours and theirs.



Discussion Questions

Beginning at the End: Legacy Living from Day One

Report Time: Spend some time getting acquainted. Introduce yourselves around the table and share a bit about yourself—the age of your children, where you live, whether you’ve been in Mom to Mom before or are here for the first time, how you learned about Mom to Mom, and anything else you’d like the group to know. What are you most hoping to get out of our time together as moms?

1. We talked today about “parenting backward.” Share with your group *one thing* you’ve learned from your parenting thus far—whether you’ve been a mom two weeks, two years, twelve years—or more. What’s been your biggest surprise?
2. In today’s session, Linda said: “Being a mom is the hardest thing you’ll ever do.” What’s been the *hardest* thing so far for you?
3. Linda also said, “Being a mom is the *best* thing you’ll ever do.” What’s been the *best* thing for you so far about being a mom?
4. Have you ever thought about “legacy living”? What word or words come to mind when you think about what you’d most like your kids to remember about you?
5. Knowing your “mission” as a mom may seem like “mission impossible” to you on this particular day in your life. (You may be thinking one word: Survival!) We’ll be working together on this in the weeks to come. Close in prayer for your group as we embark together on this mission.

For Next Week: Do some thinking about your mission as a mom. Begin jotting down words that come to mind. Come ready to share some things that are important to you as a mom as you think about “parenting backward” and “legacy living.”

Reflections 1

Beginning at the End

The Big Question: What legacy do you want to leave?
What legacy do you want to live?

Ask Yourself:

- What do you want your kids to remember?
- Who do you want them to be?
- Whom do you want them to serve?

Remember:

- Parenting is more about right relationships than *getting it right*.
- Practice “mono vision”: Live in the moment—but look ahead!
- Be intentional—and directional. Point your children Godward.
- In order for your children to listen to you, they must feel loved by you.
- You really do make a difference. What you’re doing each day IS worth it!
- Mistakes are inevitable. They’re how we learn. And children—and God—are very forgiving.
- We can’t secure every plane on which our children will fly or control the weather. We can know the “pilot.” And that will make all the difference!

A legacy worth living: *“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve . . . as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD”* (Joshua 24:15, NIV).

Read and Grow: *Read over Joshua 23 and 24 and reflect on the legacy Joshua left his people at the end of his life. What things were most important to him? How might these words about what matters most affect your mission as a mom?*

For Next Week: *Do some thinking about your mission as a mom. Begin jotting down words that come to mind. Come ready to share some things that are important to you as a mom as you think about “parenting backward” and “legacy living.”*

