



# Better Dads, Stronger Sons

How **Fathers** Can Guide **Boys** to Become  
**Men of Character**



By Rick Johnson

An 8-Week **Leaders' Guide**

Thank you for volunteering to lead a study of *Better Dads, Stronger Sons*. By agreeing to facilitate a group, you've already made a big step toward changing the lives of possibly hundreds of people.

Many of the men who purchase this book were either not raised by a father or had a poor role model for a father-figure. But there is help and hope: as your group enters this study, each man will discover that, with God's help, they can stand up to be a good man regardless of their background, fears, or insecurities. Remember, too, that this book and the associated study guide questions are not just for men with sons. Much of the material is applicable for fathers with daughters, stepfathers, grandfathers, or men mentoring boys unrelated to them.

Always keep the goal of the study in mind: to help men raise boys to become men of character. As you progress, participants will not only understand their sons better, they will also develop a greater understanding of themselves as men. Let's get started!

## Preparation

### Begin with prayer

Prayer is your most powerful tool—so make it a point to pray before you form a group, before each meeting convenes, and during the week for each of the participants.

## Develop relationships

Next, remember to show support to your group members. I suggest contacting each man in the group at least twice during the study to encourage them. You can do this by telephone, by email, or in person. Take advantage of the extra time in the first and last weeks to build relationships; you should also consider having a family potluck or guys' night out at the end of the study.

## Have a humble attitude

One word I try to avoid when leading groups is "should." I try to use phrases that are less threatening, such as, "I would like to encourage you to do this." When men answer questions or make comments, try to affirm and thank them. Discussion during this study may at times cause strong emotions to surface (especially during the "Coming to Terms with the Past" chapter), so make sure you are ready to respond with compassion and understanding. And remember, if you are open, other group members will also be willing to be more vulnerable.

# Group Meetings

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## The First Meeting

The first meeting serves as a "get acquainted" meeting. Pass out copies of *Better Dads, Stronger Sons* to each member. Provide refreshments and ask each man to share as much about himself as he is comfortable. Important information to know will include: how many children (ages and genders), marital status, family background, and occupation. This also provides information for members to use to pray for each other over the course of the weekly program.

I also encourage you to read the rules of the group aloud at the beginning of the first meeting, and then touch on them briefly throughout the duration of the study. For instance, you may want to remind the group several times that the information shared during meetings is confidential.

## General Meetings

Begin each meeting with a short prayer and ask a different member to lead the prayer each week. At the end of each meeting, I encourage you to pray as a group over one individual member. I have yet to find anyone, even non-Christians, who objected to being prayed over. I allow non-Christians to abstain from participating in the group prayer if they so choose, but again, I have not yet found anyone who did. Nothing brings people together faster than praying together.

Each week, begin by asking everyone what point in the book stood out for them and why. After giving each person a chance to respond, proceed by reading and answering each of the chapter-end questions one at a time. One approach is to have a different man read each question aloud, and then give each dad an opportunity to answer. As leader, feel free to expound on questions or encourage others to ask questions not listed in the book. The only bad question is one not asked.

# 8-Week Study Outline

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- Week 1:** Group Introductions, Review Group Rules, Group Prayer  
Icebreaker questions: Why are you here tonight? What do you hope to accomplish through this study?
- Week 2:** Introduction, Chapter 1, and Chapter 2  
Answer questions at the ends of chapters 1 and 2.
- Week 3:** Chapter 3  
Answer questions at the end of chapter 3.
- Week 4:** Chapter 4 and Chapter 5  
Answer questions at the ends of chapters 4 and 5.
- Week 5:** Chapter 7 and Chapter 8  
Answer questions at the ends of chapters 7 and 8.
- Week 6:** Chapter 9 and Chapter 10  
Answer questions at the ends of chapters 9 and 10.
- Week 7:** Chapter 11 and Chapter 12  
End of meeting question: What is the most important thing you've learned from this study?  
Now review answers from Week 1 regarding what participants hoped to accomplish through this study.  
Were they successful ?  
Answer questions at the ends of chapters 11 and 12.
- Week 8:** Family Potluck or Guys' Night Out!

Remember, God has chosen you as a mighty warrior to change the world! May God bless you and your families.

This Leaders' Study Guide courtesy of Rick Johnson, author of *Better Dads Stronger Sons: How Fathers Can Guide Boys to Become Men of Character*, Revell Publishing.

Visit Rick's Better Dads ministry website at [www.betterdads.net](http://www.betterdads.net). Sign up to receive encouraging and inspirational newsletters at [rick@betterdads.net](mailto:rick@betterdads.net).