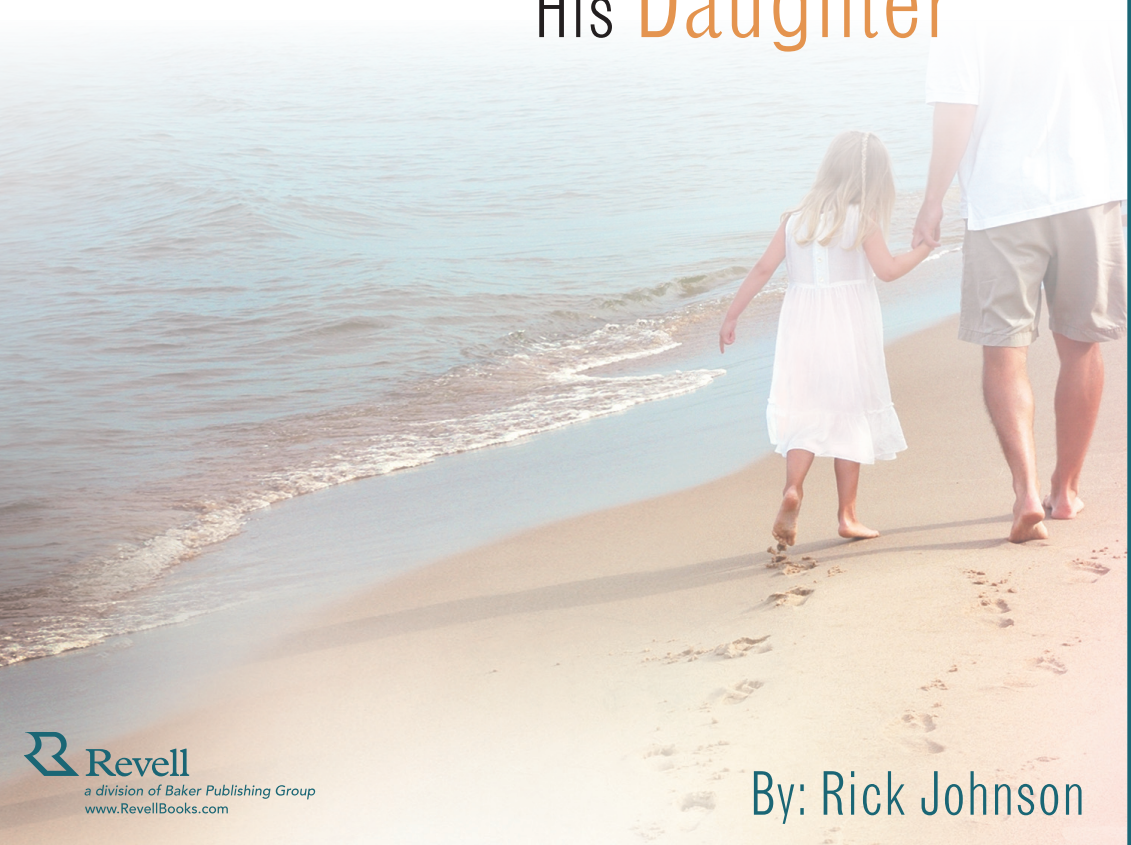


That's My Girl



How a **Father's** Love
Protects and Empowers
His **Daughter**

6 WEEK LEADER'S STUDY GUIDE



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By: Rick Johnson

A Six-Week Leader's Guide



Thank you for volunteering to lead a study of *That's My Girl*. Your desire to positively influence the heart and life of your daughter inspires me—and I'm equally grateful that you would like to encourage other men to do the same. Unfortunately, we as men don't have many opportunities to talk about how we can offer our daughters the love and protection they desperately need. That's why your confidential small group study will be a welcome beacon of hope to dads who desperately want to offer their strength on their daughter's behalf.

Our goal? To help fathers raise daughters to be confident, healthy women who will choose wisely. Of course, daughters will grow up to be women no matter what we do. *But what a difference it makes when our girls know they can count on our unconditional father-love and approval.* As we give our daughters what their hearts long for, they can't help but find wings to soar.

Both single fathers and married fathers will discover vital information in this study that will equip them to father their daughters to the best of their abilities. So I encourage you to invite dads in any situation to attend, and to remember that men from all walks of life can support each other as they discover how to apply the principles in this book. Let's dig in!

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 men.

Develop Relationships

Next, remember to cheer on each of your group members. I suggest contacting each dad in the group at least twice during the study to encourage them and to build relationships with them. You can do this by telephone or text, by writing a note on paper or online, or in person. Consider asking someone to help you with light refreshments at your meetings, and don't underestimate the power of a nice steak dinner out as a warm way to end the study.

Have a Humble and Caring Attitude

When someone answers a question, make an encouraging or affirming comment. Instead of using the word "should," try "I *would* like to encourage you to do this . . ." Discussion during this study may cause strong emotions to surface, so be ready with a strong supply of understanding and compassion. *Finally, have positive expectations that everyone in the group will be significantly impacted by what they experience through this study.*

Group Rules: Creating a Safe Environment

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the most important rule. Shared personal information should not be taken outside the group, even under the pretext of asking someone outside the group to pray for group members. Review this rule weekly and men will be much more likely to share.

Group Member Responsibilities

Everyone in the group must read the designated chapters each week. Remind group members that they will get out of the study only what they put into it. Additionally, each member should commit to attend at least three-quarters of the meetings. Since some dads may need child care, you might consider providing this as a service through your church or consider hiring a teen girl to provide childcare each week.

Group Dynamics

Since your meetings will be no more than two hours in length, consider keeping the group size to a minimum. I suggest no more than five to seven men. This leaves enough time for everyone to express something they would like to discuss from the readings. As leader, one of your challenges will be to not let one specific individual dominate the discussion and to make sure that everyone is included.

Finally, reach an agreement with group members that the purpose of this study is not to “fix” anyone or to serve as a counseling service. Keep advice general and refrain from giving advice to specific individuals. As you form your group, pray with others from your faith community about inviting friends or neighbors of all faiths, beliefs, and cultures. This group will be a safe place for all to learn more about protecting their daughters and empowering them to become all they can be.

Group Meetings

The First Meeting

The first meeting serves as a “get acquainted” meeting. Make sure each group member has the book prior to the meeting so they can read the Introduction and Chapter 1. Provide refreshments and ask each dad to share as much about himself as he is comfortable with. 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 group.

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. (If they say “no thanks,” say OK and lead the prayer yourself.) 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 prayers for them. 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.

As you begin your discussion time, 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 allowing discussion of each of the questions indicated for your current week’s reading. One approach is to have a different dad read each question aloud, and then give each participant an opportunity to answer. *As a leader, feel free to expound on questions, to skip a question in order to spend more time on another one, or to encourage others to ask questions not listed in the book.* The only bad question is one not asked.

Six-Week Study Outline



WEEK 1

Group Introductions, Review Group Rules, Group Prayer,
Introduction and Chapter 1

Icebreaker questions:

Why did you decide to join the group? What do you hope to learn from this study? Fill in the blank, starting with the leader: "I feel _____ as I begin this study." [Examples: nervous, excited, hopeful, overwhelmed, etc.] What is the one thing that drives you crazy about your daughter?

Chapter 1 What Are Little Girls Made Of?

- Establish habits with your daughter when she is young, and this will serve your relationship well later in life—habits such as spending time with her, listening to her, and communicating effectively. What are some activities you can do together as part of “your” time that can become part of your relationship legacy? What are some ways you can be intentional about listening to and talking with her on a daily basis?
- To prepare for the physical, psychological, and emotional changes that will take place in your daughter during puberty, familiarize yourself with the biological changes and the effects that hormones have on your daughter’s body. Develop a “game plan” or strategy before she enters puberty so that you are prepared for those changes and challenges.

WEEK 2

Chapter 2 and Chapter 3

Icebreaker question:

What is the funniest memory you have with your daughter?

Chapter 2 Her Father’s Influence

- In what ways does a father have influence in his daughter’s life?
- What effect do your words and actions play in the way she looks at herself and other men?
- Were you aware of those influences prior to reading this chapter?
- How will you use the power God has given you to be intentional in impacting your daughter’s life? Remember—you will impact it significantly, whether you want to or not.
- Ask other men about examples of the influence they have had in their daughters’ lives.

Chapter 3 Communicating with the Female Species

Discuss the following reflection, brainstorming together creative way you will use words of affirmation with your daughter this next week:

Six-Week Study Outline



- Words, especially her father’s words, speak directly to a girl’s heart. Remember, she needs to hear words of affirmation daily in order to internalize them. Your words offset much of the garbage the world yells at her every day. Write your daughter a letter telling her all the things you love about her. If you are so inclined, text her messages each day telling her you love her. Develop a strategy with other dads to be intentional about speaking to your daughters each day.

WEEK 3

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5

Icebreaker question:

What is one thing you’ve done for your daughter that you never dreamed you’d do?

Chapter 4 Bonding with Girls

- What is the most valuable and important gift we can give our daughters? (Hint: It starts with the letter “T.”)
- Why is healthy physical affection from her father so important in a girl’s life?
- Have you ever found yourself unintentionally hurting your daughter’s feelings with your words? What did that look like?

Chapter 5 What a Girl Needs from Her Father

- Why is it so important that a daughter respect her father? In what ways do we earn her respect?
- Fathers give their daughters a great gift by speaking truth into their lives. What are some fundamental truths you think are important for your daughter to know? Make a list and develop ways to speak those truths into your daughter’s heart on a consistent basis.

WEEK 4

Chapter 6 and Chapter 7

Icebreaker question:

What’s the one best way you’ve found to communicate with females?

Chapter 6 “Danger, Will Robinson!”

- The world is a dangerous place for girls. How can you strategically help your daughter have a healthy self-esteem and self-image?
- The other side of the coin is, how do you help your daughter not become a self-centered “princess” who thinks the world owes her everything?

Six-Week Study Outline



- What will you do if your daughter does develop an eating disorder, or begins to exhibit signs of self-harm?
- Ask other fathers how they have dealt with these situations. Develop a plan for actively addressing these issues should they surface. Better to be educated and prepared and not need it, than to need it and not be prepared.

Chapter 7 Protecting Her

- A father's very presence in his daughter's life protects her in many ways. In what ways does a father protect his daughter?
- What does that look like in your life?
- What if a father does not live with his daughter? How can he still provide protection for her?

WEEK 5

Chapter 8 and Chapter 9

Icebreaker question:

What is one thing about your "baby girl" you find hard to believe?

Chapter 8 The Truth about Boys

- Dads have a great deal of wisdom about boys that can be beneficial to their daughters. But not if they don't share it! What is a good age to start talking to your daughter about boys? (Hint: When she enters puberty is probably long past the time.)
- Why do girls need to understand what drives males and some of the differences between males and females, especially as boys enter puberty?
- How can we best teach our daughters how a male should treat her?
- What are some ways to model that lesson for her?
- Have you prepared your daughter for dating?
- What rules and guidelines will you set in place?

Chapter 9 Uh-Oh! She's Becoming a Woman!

- Are you prepared for the physical and emotional changes your darling baby girl is going to go through in puberty? I know you *think* you are, but ask some fathers of older daughters what the most challenging aspects to that season of life were.
- Why are boundaries important in a girl's life, and why is it important that her father hold firm to those boundaries?
- How do you as a father influence your daughter's sexuality and her sexual decision-making process?

Six-Week Study Outline



- Make a commitment with other men to all interview your daughters' dates before they go out with them—it's important! What do you think that encounter will be like? Probably a bit uncomfortable for you—but even more so for the young man.

WEEK 6

Chapter 10 and Chapter 11

Icebreaker question:

What is the one thing you'd most like your daughter to know? Keep each other accountable to share that thing with her before your Father/Daughter Date Night (see below).

Chapter 10 Character Training

- If it's true that what we do speaks louder than what we say, what are some behaviors you need to change in your life so that you model good character for your daughter?
- What are some character traits you want to come to mind when someone mentions your daughter's name? How can you intentionally instill those traits into your daughter?
- Why is it important that a father allow his daughter to suffer? And why is it so hard to do?

Chapter 11 The Father Blessing

- In what ways does an earthly father represent the heavenly Father in his daughter's life?
- Have you decided on a strategy to intentionally bless your daughter by giving her a "father's blessing"? This is too important to put off, guys. By yourself—or better, with some other fathers with daughters—develop a plan to look for and create opportunities to bless your daughter. She needs this throughout her life, not just as a onetime event.

Follow-up Celebration: Father/Daughter Group Date Night!

I strongly recommend that you take your daughters out for dinner as a group to celebrate them and show them how a man treats a lady. Encourage them to dress up for the occasion or plan a more low-key event like a potluck and bowling. This is a night you want your girls to remember for years to come!

May God bless you and the daughters you love.

This Leader's Guide courtesy of Rick Johnson, author of *That's My Girl: How a Father's Love Protects and Empowers His Daughter*, Revell © 2012.

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