A BIBLE STUDY FOR MOTHERS OF TEENS

your GIRL

VICKI COURTNEY
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About Vicki Courtney

Vicki Courtney is the founder of Virtuous Reality Ministries® which reaches over 150,000 girls and mothers each year. A mother of three teens, she seeks to provide teens and their parents with the tools necessary to navigate today’s culture. Her online magazine for teen girls, virtuousreality.com, has attracted visitors from all 50 states and 30+ countries. She has also developed virtuealert.com as a parent’s resource tool to understanding today’s rapidly changing teen culture. She is a national speaker and the best-selling author of several books including, Your Girl: Raising a Godly Daughter in an Ungodly World and its counterpart, Your Boy: Raising a Godly Son in an Ungodly World, as well as magabooks for teen girls, TeenVirtue: Real Issues, Real Life…A Teen Girl’s Survival Guide and TeenVirtue 2: A Teen Girl’s Guide to Relationships. Vicki is also the author of several popular Bible studies including, The Virtuous Woman, and Get A Life. More information about Vicki can be found at www.VickiCourtney.com.

How to Use This Resource

Bible Study
Each chapter contains a Bible study. This study is not intended as five days of homework or study each week. You probably can complete the work in one 30- to 45-minute time frame. You can do the Bible study all in one sitting, or you can choose to complete a section at a time. However, if you choose this route, you may need to do some rereading each day so you know where you were when you left off. Like a good book, you don’t want to lose the plot when you put it down for a while.

Talking Points
Throughout this Bible study, we’ve provided “talking points” for you and your daughter. These are intended to help engage your daughter in conversation about the topics. You may want to sit down with your daughter at a specific time to talk with her about these battles she’s facing. However, you might find it more productive to “slip in” these discussions within
everyday conversation, such as a trip in the car to soccer practice or while setting the table. Sometimes talking with your daughter about these issues will be easy; other times, it will be difficult. The nature of the topic may dictate how you approach the subject. Whenever you choose to initiate a dialogue, strive for honesty and vulnerability. It’s OK to share times you’ve made mistakes. It’s also OK to say, “I don’t know” when your daughter asks a question you can’t answer. You’re not perfect, and your daughter knows that. Just be real. If you’ve never really engaged your daughter in conversations like these, that’s OK. This is a good starting point. Don’t feel like you are supposed to be perfect. You’re building a relationship with your daughter, and that takes time.

**Small-Group Study Plans**

In the back of this book are suggestions for leading a small group of mothers through this study. You may learn a great deal from reading this book, doing the Bible study for each week, and listening to the material on the audio CD. However, meeting weekly with other women can be a source of great encouragement, support, and accountability that would be lacking in doing this Bible study solo. You probably know other women who would benefit from this study—women in your Sunday School class, mothers of your teen’s friends, coworkers, women in your carpool, and others.

Each week’s small-group study plan contains several elements including a Bible study, reflection on the material in this member book, and discussion based on the DVD. Your group may find that an hour is not enough time to cover all the material. If you need to spend two weeks on one topic, that is OK. The goal is not finishing the study within the eight weeks. The goal is to help prepare, challenge, and encourage moms as they strive to grow a godly daughter in an amoral culture.

**Audio CD**

Inserted in the back of this book is an audio CD. On it you will hear segments of the trade book *Your Girl: Raising a Godly Daughter in an Ungodly World*, read by the author Vicki Courtney. This CD does not contain the book in its entirety. Rather, it features parts from the book that are not contained in either this Bible study or the DVD segments.
Introduction

The drama surrounding the birth of my second child should have been my clue that life would never be the same. On a Saturday afternoon, several days before my due date, I mentioned to my husband, Keith, that I was experiencing scattered contractions. He dismissed it as false labor and discouraged me from calling my doctor. We had made several unnecessary trips to the hospital before. Keith, no doubt, was having flashbacks of our last hospital visit where he got to sleep upright in a metal chair while they monitored my false contractions throughout the night.

By Saturday evening my contractions were coming more regularly, at a safe six minutes apart. Once again Keith discouraged me from calling my doctor. As the contractions continued to close in, I trusted my instincts and called my doctor. Keith, still doubting, begrudgingly got into the car. After dropping off our two-year-old son at a friend’s house, we began the 30-minute drive to the hospital. The contractions were coming at a regular three minutes apart and had taken on a level of pain that was somewhat reminiscent of the final stages of labor with my first child. I made a note to self: banish husband to couch for remainder of marriage. By the time we neared the hospital, Keith had turned on the hazard lights and was running every red light. I’m not sure if the petrified look on his face was due to fear of my coming wrath or fear of delivering our second child on the highway.

Finally, my husband squealed into the emergency entrance of the hospital, and I was immediately whisked away in a wheelchair. Keith raced to park the car. I knew it was serious when the nurse bypassed the station where I was to fill out the obligatory mounds of paperwork and screamed, “I need to get her into a room!” No sooner had the nurse put me in a bed, my water broke; and my contractions were coming one on top of another. At that point I was consumed with only one thought. I wish I could say it was a thought concerning the fact that my husband might miss the birth of our second child while parking the car, but instead it boiled down to this: epidural! I want my epidural!

Normally I am one tough woman, but when it comes to natural childbirth and being an “earth woman,” forget it. The epidural I had received
prior to the birth of my first child had left me extolling the virtues of modern medicine. Now, during my second delivery, Keith finally made it into the room as the nurse was calmly reassuring me that both my doctor and the anesthesiologist were just down the hall with another patient. “You are next on their list. Don’t worry, there is plenty of time for an epidural.” Just as she finished her last sentence, she glanced over to check my progress and screamed, “Oh no! The baby is crowning!” With that, she looked at my husband (who was wiping his brow, still shaken from the car ride) and screamed, “Quick! Go find me a doctor!” Now I don’t know about you, but a panicked nurse who is relying on a panicked father to find a doctor is not reassuring.

I could hear my husband in the hallway stammering, “Uh, we need a doctor. My wife . . .” Before he could finish his sentence, in rushed a man wearing blue jeans and a button-down-collar shirt. Great, I thought. He’s recruited a father out of the waiting room to deliver our child. I sure hope he’s seen enough episodes of ER to pull this off. The stranger barely had time to put on the sterile gloves before I made the final push. With that, he held my baby up, and I heard my husband say, “It’s a girl! We have a daughter!” I could hardly contain my joy as a smile covered my face.

The stranger in street clothes asked Keith to cut the cord, and I vaguely remember thinking, If these two amateurs leave my beautiful princess with a three-inch outie, I’ll never forgive them. Sensing my panic, the stranger informed me that he was an obstetrician and had stopped by the hospital to check on patients before going out to dinner. After cutting the cord (leaving a beautiful innie, by the way), he handed my daughter over to the nurse, who wrapped her tightly in a blanket and laid her on my chest. Of course, my first thought was that she was the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. In truth, she looked more like a little blue Smurf, due to her fast trip through the birth canal. All the same I counted 10 fingers and 10 toes and winced at the piercing set of lungs that left no doubt as to who was in charge. After inspecting my princess, I looked up at Keith and said, “We have a daughter. I got my girl.” Drama over, right? Wrong. It was only just beginning.

In that first year I would often stand over her crib and watch her while she slept. I would talk to God and plead with Him to spare her from some
of the painful mistakes I had made during my growing up years. Would she love me? Would she even like me? Would we become lifelong friends? Would she come to love the God I serve? Sure, I had many of the same questions with the birth of my son, Ryan; but somehow, this was different. It would be Keith’s responsibility to model to Ryan, as well as to our third child, Hayden, what it means to be a godly man. It would be my responsibility to model to Paige what it means to be a godly woman. Could I do it? Was I up for the task?

I Am Mother, Hear Me Roar!

Today’s culture makes it difficult to raise a godly daughter. In fact, today’s culture leaves me furious. I can’t take it any longer. If I continue to be subjected to the lewd subtitles on the covers of women’s fashion magazines every time I stand in the grocery store checkout line, I just may give up eating. “Whispers, Oohs or Yahoos—Wouldn’t You Like to Know What He Thinks about Your Lovemaking Noise Level?” How about, “Make Him Lust for You—the Most Erotic Way to Unhook Your Bra and More Tantalize-Him Tricks” or “Sex on the Brain—What the Guys in Your Office Are Really Thinking,” “His 126 Secret Sex Thoughts—the Dastardly Details Racing through His Mind Right Now!” and “G-Spots, C-Spots, and Now, V-Spots.” What’s left? Have we made it through the alphabet yet? Have women become nothing more than sex-starved junkies looking for a fix? The focus of these articles is always the same: use your “lust-abilities” to get your man. Don’t expect him to look your way unless you can belly dance in the bedroom or tantalize him with the latest snag-a-man technique.

Teen fashion magazines, which are targeted to young impressionable 13- to 17-year-old girls, are not much better. Examples of subtitles are: “Be a Guy Magnet,” “Make the First Move . . . P.S. He’s Waiting,” “Get That Guy! How to Give the ‘Look of Love’ Plus Three Other Tricks That’ll Have Him Dying to Get Close to You,” “Twenty-two Jeans That Scream ‘Nice Butt!’” Or how about these: “Swimsuits That’ll Make Him Say, ‘Hello!” or “Kiss Him! How to Make the First Move.” Another one is, “Best Bottoms for Your Butt: Tops That Tease and Please.” No doubt the magazines are a dream come true for every teenage boy in America with raging hormones. Suffice it to say, I’m fed up with the negative influences of our
culture on women. The magazines, however, are only part of the problem. Add television, movies, and music; and our daughters are bombarded with smut from the moment they wake up to the moment they go to bed. As someone who is in the trenches of ministry to preteen and teen girls, not to mention their mothers, I am witnessing firsthand the devastating consequences our provocative culture is having on women both young and old.

I recall one devastated mother at a conference at which I spoke. She sobbed on my shoulder as she shared about a sleepover her middle-school daughter had attended. The popular group of boys had called the girls in the middle of the night. Nothing different from the middle-school sleepovers of my day, I initially thought. Unfortunately, these boys had been surfing porn sites prior to calling the girls, and they wanted to try out their new knowledge of “phone sex.” Not your average sleepover from my day. One at a time the boys described in graphic detail what they would do to each girl, if ever given the opportunity. Don’t think something like this cannot happen to your daughter. These were “church kids.”

For those of us who are committed to raising our daughters to be godly young women, we have a daunting task before us. My generation was subjected to its share of negative messages but nothing that compares to the constant barrage of negative messages our daughters endure today at the hands of television, movies, music, magazines, and the Internet. The negative messages in my day tended to come at the hands of a few groups that constituted the minority voice. Unfortunately, many of the groups that once had a minority voice have now become the popular voice of the day.

The good news is that Christians are the majority in this country. The bad news is that we have apparently lost our voice because we have become the silent majority. If something is not done to counteract the negative influences in our culture, I fear we could lose an entire generation of young women to the ways of the world. Let’s not fool ourselves into thinking the damage will only be short-term. If we don’t find our voice and use it to speak out against the negative influences of our culture, our daughters will be molded by the voice of the day. The resulting damage will produce fallout that will carry over into our daughters’ marriages and into their motherhood, thus impacting generations to come.
What Are “the Times”?

Why is it important for us to take an active role in raising our daughters to be godly women? That a quick glance at our world today. Once you’ve read the following, that question will have been answered.

ISSUES FACING TODAY’S FAMILIES

- Born-again Christians are just as likely to have been divorced as are non-born-again adults. More than 90 percent of such born-again Christians experienced their divorce after becoming born-again.¹
- In 2000, 33 percent of all babies were born to unmarried women, compared to 3.8 percent in 1940.²
- Sex is the number one searched for term on the Internet today.³
- Adult bookstores now outnumber McDonald’s restaurants in the U.S. by a ratio of 3:1.⁴
- Two out of every three shows on TV contain sexual content.⁵

ISSUES DIRECTLY FACING OUR DAUGHTERS

- The number one wish for girls ages 11 to 17 is to be thinner.⁶
- One study of Saturday morning toy commercials found that 50 percent of commercials aimed at girls spoke about physical attractiveness while none of the commercials aimed at boys referred to appearance.⁷
- Thirty percent of high school seniors reported having at least five drinks in a row in the previous two weeks.⁸
- Nationwide, 46 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 have had sex.⁹
- Nearly 35 percent of all young women in the U.S. become pregnant at least once before reaching the age of 20—almost 850,000 each year.¹⁰
- Eighty-three percent of teens say that moral truth depends on the situation.¹¹
- Dating on college campuses is all but obsolete, having been replaced by a hookup culture, where a guy and a girl get together for some form of physical encounter (ranging from kissing to having sex) with no expectation of anything further.¹²

Do these statistics frighten you? Or has the world we live in numbed you to the reality of the dark world through which our daughters must navigate? Unfortunately, most of us have been lulled to sleep gradually to the
point that the previous statistics don’t shock, scare, or worry us. Over time
the world’s influence has slowly seeped into our thinking, shifting our
mind-sets and weakening our resolve. However, as Christian mothers, we
must awaken from our slumber, equip ourselves for battle, and refuse to
allow the world to take our girls by the hand and lead them through life.
If we don’t take action, be assured, our daughters will be indoctrinated
into the popular thinking of the day.

As I see the landscape before me, I am convinced of my role to counter
the culture’s influence and take a stand for my daughter’s sake. While our
culture teaches that a person’s soul can be full and whole by indulging
in everything from carnal pleasures to intellectual prowess, I will teach
my daughter that all people have a huge, gaping hole within their heart
that can only be satisfied by the perfect love of Jesus Christ. While culture
teaches girls to take charge of their lives, their bodies, and their futures,
she will be reminded that Jesus liberated all women more than two thou-
sand years ago when He died on the cross for our sins. His movement
never has been and never will be quenched as it continues to spread to
every corner of the world. As a leader, Jesus is credible, is reliable, and
has a glowing list of references that attest to His life-changing power. He
doesn’t change the rules to match the times. He is the same yesterday,
today, and forever. My daughter will be encouraged to keep these truths
in mind as she encounters other young ladies who have fallen prey to the
negative influences of the culture and have attempted to fill the huge
holes in their hearts with everything but the unfailing love of God.

Our girls are in desperate need of new direction. Our culture has
failed them. They long for rest in their souls. We have the answer. It’s time
for you and me to stop relegating the spiritual and moral development of
our daughters to a culture that is neither godly nor moral. For the sake of
our daughters, let’s not rest until we see it happen.

**Take the Challenge**
Over the next eight weeks, you will be confronted with six major issues
teen girls face: conformity, self-esteem, modesty, purity, boys, and girl pol-
itics. As you learn about how these issues impact your daughter, you will
be challenged to evaluate how these issues impact your own life. While
these issues will manifest themselves differently in the various arenas in your life (your daughter is tempted to go with the crowd at a party; you’re tempted to follow the crowd at the office, for example), the root issues will be remarkably applicable for you even as an adult.

You need to be honest with yourself and with God as you read, journal, pray, and talk to other women. If you are to take seriously your role as a spiritual leader for your daughter, you must make sure you are providing a Christlike model for her to follow. I’m not asking you to be perfect; I’m asking you to evaluate your life honestly to see how you might need to grow in each of these areas yourself. As God works in and through your life to better reflect His character and design for your life, you’ll be better equipped to help your own daughter.

A Mother’s Prayer

On a recent evening I stood again over her bed and watched my now 15-year-old princess sleep. Her crib has long since been replaced with a contemporary cast-iron daybed. Gone was the little girl with the soft curls. Lying before me that evening was a teenager with a wispy blonde ponytail, notes from her friends pasted on the wall above her headboard, and her cell phone, iPod®, and driver’s permit resting on the nightstand. Many of the questions I had petitioned to God while standing over her crib in earlier years had been answered. Yes, she loves me. She even likes me and will, on occasion, even hug me and tell me so. Yes, she loves Jesus … for now. But what about tomorrow? And the next day? And the days to come? Could she continue to stand firm in a culture absent of virtue? In the end, would I succeed in my call to raise my daughter to be a godly woman?

As I glanced around her room, most everything was different, yet a few things remained the same. Lying near my 10th-grade princess was “Nanny Beth,” her stuffed bear from infancy, and her mother still prayed. That evening my prayers took on a more urgent tone as I realized that the time remaining in the nest would soon expire. She was slowly getting her wings, and she would soon take flight. Once again I was overwhelmed with the magnitude of the responsibility I had been given. With that thought, I knelt beside her bed and prayed over my daughter “Thank you, Lord, for trusting me with this priceless treasure. May I be a model of strength
and godliness to her as she grows more and more in Your likeness. May she come to love You more than life itself.” Quietly, I got up and kissed her softly on the cheek and whispered one final plea: “Father, help me raise my daughter to be Your girl.” May that be your prayer as well.

IT IS MY CONVICTION that many mothers will occupy a higher position in God’s kingdom than many prominent Christian leaders whom we might expect to find in places of greater honor. Think of some of the great men of the Bible like Moses, Samuel, and Timothy. Where would they have been had it not been for their praying, Spirit-led mothers? Think of Augustine, John Newton, and the zealous Wesleys; their names may never have lighted the pages of history had it not been for the blessed influence of godly mothers!

Think of some of the great men of the Bible like Moses, Samuel, and Timothy. Where would they have been had it not been for their praying, Spirit-led mothers?

The simple prayers from our infant lips were but echoes from our mother’s heart. Can we ever forget the soft caresses of those hands of blessing on our heads as we knelt by our beds? Can we fail to remember her night vigils, her seasons of intercession, her well-marked Bible, and her words of admonition? Her actions spoke eloquently of Him who taught us of the greater love of God.

What a tragedy to neglect the counsel of a godly mother! What eternal consequences to reject her God. . . . ‘Do not forsake the law of your mother’ (Prov. 1:8).—Henry G. Bosch

President John Quincy Adams once said, “From all that I had read of history and government of human life and manners, I had drawn this conclusion, that the manners of women were the most infallible barometer to ascertain the degree of morality and virtue of a nation.”
This is certainly a humbling thought, given the current absence of virtue in our culture. Yet, rather than resolve ourselves to the times with an attitude that says, “It’s too little too late,” I suggest we rise up to the challenge and give it everything we’ve got. If President Adams was right and the manners of women have a direct impact on the morality and virtue of a nation, then as mothers of daughters, we have received a high calling.

God has placed a task before us as mothers to impact the next generation of women, starting with our daughters. In a culture that esteems success, wealth, knowledge, and power for women, motherhood fails even to make the ballot when it comes to noteworthy aspirations. This is in spite of the fact that no greater influence exists than that of a mother to her child. If we are to raise godly seed for the next generation, we must devote ourselves to this high calling with purpose and determination. We cannot abdicate the spiritual training of our children to the church, a private Christian school, or any other well-meaning organization. Unfortunately, many mothers today think that if they drop their children off at Sunday School or pray over the meal at Thanksgiving and Christmas, they have done their duty in instilling a godly foundation. However, the primary place where children are to learn about God is not in a private school, a parachurch organization, or even the local church. God has given that responsibility to parents, and it is to take place in the home.

Read Deuteronomy 4:1-10. Focus on verses 9-10.

What command is given in this passage?

What is the word of warning?

How might spiritual instruction in the home guard against this problem?
How is this model of Christian education similar to or different from what you experienced as a child?

How is this model of spiritual formation different from what is practiced in your family right now?

In this passage, God commanded the people to live by the decrees and laws He had set forth. God also warned the people not to forget His laws or His miraculous works, and to teach these principles and accounts to the next generation. Throughout Scripture, God commanded parents to instruct their children in the ways of God (Deut. 6:4-12; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4). God’s design has always been for parents to be the primary educators of biblical truth. And as a mother, you have the unique opportunity to impart God’s truths to your teen girl. You have the ability to impart a wealth of faith to your daughter. Scripture even gives us an indication of how the spiritual instruction of a family (or the lack thereof) can impact a whole family. In the story below, you’ll see how one young boy changed his legacy despite the example that was set forth for him. His behavior provides an example to follow in making a difference in the lives of our daughters.

The Boy Who Became King
Scripture leaves us a record of the kings that ruled over the Israelites. The majority left a legacy of doing “what was evil in the Lord’s sight.” Occasionally, a king would come along and buck the negative trend by doing “what was right in the Lord’s sight.” One king in particular, King Josiah, was especially commendable. Josiah became king at the young age of eight and changed the culture and direction of the nation.


How do these verses describe Josiah?
How long did Josiah reign?

What was unusual about his godly behavior?

Verse 2 notes that “he did what was right in the Lord’s sight . . . and did not turn to the right or to the left.” Now, I don’t know if you’ve been around a typical bunch of eight-year-old boys lately, but doing “what was right in the Lord’s sight” does not come naturally unless Mom is threatening to withdraw Nintendo privileges. In fact, the typical résumé of the average eight-year-old boy might include such noteworthy achievements as the ability to belch to the tune of many songs, completely ruin six new pairs of socks in a two-week period, and make a fort in the backyard that includes cacti from the neighbor’s professionally landscaped yard. How do I know this? My son, Hayden, managed to pull off each of the above feats by the tender age of eight. Definitely not “king” material.

Notice that Josiah “did what was right in the Lord’s sight” despite his religious heritage. In fact, his father and grandfather had enough dysfunction to make the average guest on “The Jerry Springer Show” look normal. Let’s look at his family lineage.


What was Josiah’s father’s name?

How does Scripture describe him?

What did he do while king of Israel?

His father, King Amon, did “what was evil in the Lord’s sight” (2 Kings 21:20), reigned only two years, and was conspired against by his own officials and assassinated in the palace. Not exactly a great role model for a young king to follow. Maybe that’s because King Amon’s father set a horrible example as well.
Read 2 Kings 21:1-6,16.

What was Josiah’s grandfather’s name?

How does Scripture describe him?

What evil practices did this king engage in while on the throne?

Josiah’s grandfather, King Manasseh, did “what was evil in the Lord’s sight” (2 Kings 21:2), reigned 55 years, and “shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem with it from one end to another” (2 Kings 21:16). He erected altars to Baal, bowed down and worshiped the starry hosts, sacrificed his son in the fire, practiced sorcery and divination, and consulted mediums and spiritists. Not exactly a positive role model for his grandson, Josiah.

Given the example provided by King Amon and Manasseh, I can’t help but wonder if Josiah did what was “right in the Lord’s sight” because he had a mother who was committed to raising her children to do “what was right in the Lord’s sight.” Call it speculation, but someone was steering the boy in the right direction.

In the 8th year of Josiah’s reign, when he was approximately 16 years old, Scripture notes that Josiah began to “seek the God of his ancestor David.” In the 12th year of his reign, when he was approximately 20 years old, he began to “cleanse Judah and Jerusalem,” destroying all the pagan shrines, the Asherah poles, and the carved idols and cast images (2 Chron. 34:3).

Perhaps the most defining moment for Josiah came six years later, in the 18th year of his reign. After purifying the land and the temple, he ordered that repairs begin on the “temple of the Lord his God” (2 Chron. 34:8). One day he sent his secretary, Shaphan, to the temple to inform Hilkiah, the high priest, to pay out the workers who were repairing the temple. While performing this task, Hilkiah informed Shaphan that he had found the Book of the Law in the temple of the Lord. Shaphan returned with the