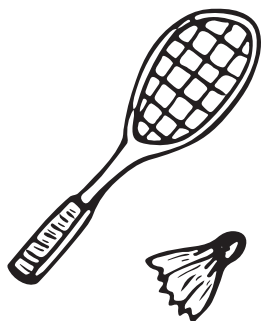


A companion book to *Lies Boys Believe*. Join the fight against lies using this guide, packed with encouragement and biblical insight. Written by two experienced parents with hearts to raise up a generation of Truth-seekers, you'll be empowered to talk with your son and push back against the Deceiver.

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Lies Parents Believe 105



I could have no greater joy than to hear
that my children are following the truth.

3 John 4

CHAPTER 1: Getting Started

To help you keep pace with your son, each chapter in this Parent's Guide corresponds with the specific section your boys should be reading in the *Lies Boys Believe* book. For instance, this chapter (Chapter 1: Getting Started) will equip you to discuss your child's reading of "Meet Your Guides" in the book.

What Your Son Is Reading in *Lies Boys Believe*:

Meet Your Guides!

Sometimes, a near death experience is the best way to get your son's attention. Let us explain.

Before we do, we should probably introduce ourselves.

We're Jason and Erin Davis, high school sweethearts who boomeranged back to our hometown when it was time to raise a family of our own. In our case, that meant we had to give up the perks of city life—like good restaurants, a wide variety of educational options, drive-thru coffee, and even a Walmart—to live in a tiny town of about 4,000 people, most of whom are fond of telling us, “I’ve known you since you were knee high to a grasshopper.” We live in a fifty-year-old farmhouse built by my (Jason’s) grandfather. We eat eggs from our coop, butcher our own beef, and can always tell when the blackberries are ripe because our children start walking around with deep purple stains on their teeth.

Farm livin’ may not be the life for you, but we’re confident that you want the same things for your son(s) that we want for ours: *deep roots*. Speaking of sons . . . we have four of them. Every time we went to the delivery room we heard a doctor say the same remarkable sentence:

“It’s a boy!”

“It’s a boy!”

“It’s a boy!”

“It’s . . . another . . . boy!”

Those boys aren’t swaddled in soft blankets or playing peek-a-boo anymore. As we write these words, our oldest son, Eli, is learning to drive. Our second son, Noble, recently blew out thirteen candles on his birthday cake. Judah is nine and our

resident comedian; and our youngest son, Ezra, is still a little guy. Always eager to do what his big brothers do, he doesn't seem to know that he's only four.

While we are grateful to watch our children play on the same red metal slide we loved as kids and spend their summers catching crawdads with their cousins, proximity to family and embracing small town life aren't the kind of roots we most want to see developed in our boys. We long for them to have deep *spiritual roots*, the kind that draw strength from the aquifer of living water that Jesus described in John 7:38:

“Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, ‘Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.’”

We wrote this book because the *deep roots of faith* are the ones boys need most desperately to keep them firmly grounded in the Truth as they grow from boys to men.

Rooted in God's Love

Listen to the words the apostle Paul wrote to his spiritual children at the church in Ephesus:

When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. *Then*

Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. (Ephesians 3:14–19)

It was a very parental kind of prayer, wasn't it? Paul's desire to see the baby Christians he was writing to live tethered to God's Truth drove him to his knees. He was saying, essentially, "Choose Jesus! He will keep you from being swept away by the lies of this world. He loves you so much and I do too!"

Our boys are growing up in a deceived world. So many of the things that our parents were able to shield us from, including gender-bending social norms, scary information funneled through social media, and ideals about masculinity and femininity that are completely foreign to God's Word are in the air our sons are breathing. *Sooner rather than later they are going to encounter lies.* They'll need the right tools to choose Truth. Here's hope: *you can equip your son to stand firm.*

Though Scripture has promised that you have everything you need for life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3), *Lies Boys Believe* and this companion Parent's Guide are tools you can add to the resources God has given you as you choose Truth as a family.

We will never claim to have raising boys all figured out. I (Erin) am fond of saying that I'm just a cracked pot, raising cracked pots. We're *all* broken by sin and in desperate need of God's grace. But we're thrilled to be your guides on this journey to teach your son to know and love God's Truth. What an adventure it will be!

Which takes us back to the near death experience . . .

Face the Hard Stuff Head-On

When our oldest son, Eli, turned thirteen, we promised him a father-son road trip. No girls. No siblings. No rules. Just me (Jason) and my son, lots of gas station snacks, and ten days packed with new memories. It's a rite of passage we repeated with our second son, Noble, when he turned thirteen, and plan to repeat again with the other two.

Eli and I packed up our family's big white van and headed west. Eli had never seen the mountains before, and I'd spent years dreaming of the day when I could watch his eyes grow wide with wonder as he took in the Rockies for the first time. The moment was everything I'd hoped it would be, one of many times I've savored the blessing of watching one of my sons experience God's goodness through the remarkable world He has made.

As part of that trip, we decided to take our twelve-passenger, rear-wheel-drive van up a trail that was definitely *not* made for vehicles like ours. I didn't tell Eli at the time (I was too busy trying to avoid plummeting off of the side of the mountain!), but I wasn't sure how we were going to make it. With God's help, we did. We have laughed about that excursion many times since. I wouldn't do it again, even if you offered me a big juicy steak with a side of crispy fries when we made it back down, but I wouldn't trade that memory either. My son and I faced something challenging head-on. Together, we held on to what was true:

- I know how to drive in difficult situations.
- The brakes worked.
- There was no need to rush.
- Jesus was with us. He would help us.

There is a parenting parallel at play here. While we understand the temptation to adopt a head-in-the-sand posture when it comes to the lies our children are facing, that won't protect them from being deceived. We've got to face this head-on, side by side, grounded in the Truth and confident that *God is with us. He will help us.*

Your Family Is a Spiritual Formation Machine

If there is one constant in parenting, it is feeling under-equipped. We will never forget what it felt like to be discharged from the hospital after Eli was born. Still in our twenties, no book or class could prepare us for the reality that we were now in charge of this tiny person twenty-four hours a day. We looked at each other and looked at our six-pound, six-ounce teeny-weeny baby boy and knew that with God's help, we'd figure it out. A similar scenario has played out many times in our parenting journey.

- When we didn't know how to buy groceries with one boy outside the cart, one boy inside the cart in a punkin' seat, and one boy in a baby carrier, God helped and we figured it out.
- When we didn't know how to cope when everyone, including us, got the flu at the same time, God helped and we figured it out.
- When we didn't know how to handle our boys' new preteen mood swings, God helped and we figured it out.
- When one of our sons was exposed to pornography on a friend's phone and we didn't know how to help him understand the seriousness without shaming him, God helped and we figured it out.

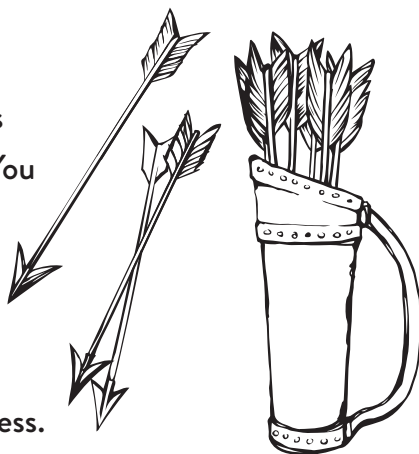
And when you don't know what lies your son is believing or how to keep him grounded in the Truth, God will help and you will figure it out. **You are the one God has chosen for the job of discipling your son in this stage of life.**

Let us have the privilege of challenging you to set the parenting bar higher than just raising good kids. (Which is a daunting task on its own!) Your children didn't come into the world knowing God. They weren't born reaching for His Word. In partnership with the Holy Spirit those are things that must be taught, preferably at a young age. That makes our homes ground zero for spiritual formation.

Forming your son into a man who can recognize a lie, resist it, and replace it with Truth won't just happen, but it's a skill he can learn when you live intentionally in the incubator of your family life.

Returning Fire

We're going to talk a lot about God's enemy, Satan, in the next chapter. You will probably think a lot about him and the ways he targets your son with lies as you work through this guide. It may make you feel angry, but it ought not make you feel helpless.



In *Lies Men Believe*, Robert Wolgemuth wrote:

Don't let fear keep you from the battle, but trust in our Commander. Don't settle for a clean stable and an unfurrowed field if He wants to give you an abundant harvest. Remember that, because of our children, we are changing the world, one child—one diaper—at a time.

The Truth: Children are a gift from the Lord; He wants to use them to spread the gospel in our messed-up world. When I embrace children as a gift, I partner with God in changing that world.¹

Robert was repeating the gist of something King David wrote.

Children are a gift from the LORD;
 they are a reward from him.
 Children born to a young man
 are like arrows in a warrior's hands.
 How joyful is the man whose quiver is full of them!
 He will not be put to shame when he confronts his
 accusers at the city gates.
 (Psalm 127:3–5)

Through His Word, God calls you to fight for the hearts of your children and to fight alongside your children in the battle for Truth.

1. Robert Wolgemuth, *Lies Men Believe: And the Truth That Sets Them Free* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2018), 178.

May you often be struck by the realities of missionary Jim Elliot's famous words:

Remember how the Psalmist described children? He said that they were as an heritage from the Lord, and that every man should be happy who had his quiver full of them. And what is a quiver full of but arrows? And what are arrows for but to shoot? **So, with the strong arms of prayer, draw the bowstring back and let the arrows fly—all of them, straight at the Enemy's hosts.**²

How to Use This Book

We chose to write *Lies Boys Believe* as a work of fiction because our sons love graphic novels. Your son's book follows a dad and his two sons, Lenny and Thomas, on an exciting cross-country adventure a lot like the one Eli and I took as his rite of passage into the teenage years. Though we pulled from many of the characteristics of ourselves and our kids, *the book is a work of fiction*.

Each chapter also features a **Tag, You're It!** section. These are opportunities for your son to digest what he's learning through Bible reading and engaging activities. While we hope your boy is gripped by the story element and can't wait to discover

2. As quoted by J. D. Greear, "A Letter from Jim Elliot to His Parents," January 8, 2014, <https://jdgreear.com/a-letter-from-jim-elliott-to-his-parents/>. Emphasis added.

what happens next, encourage him not to skip the interactive segments. There's gold in them thar hills!

You have already taken an important step toward helping your son live free from lies by getting a copy of *Lies Boys Believe* for him and digging into this companion guide for yourself. We know that resources are precious, and we're confident that the investment of time and money you're making will matter. Here's how to get the most out of it.

Read *A Parent's Guide to Lies Boys Believe* at the same time or pace that your son reads *Lies Boys Believe*. Because the format of *Lies Boys Believe* is fiction and interactive, we'd suggest that you make it a part of your family reading routine. Other siblings will get a lot out of it too, even if they're much older or younger than the boy you had in mind for this journey. (If you have girls, we highly recommend *Lies Girls Believe* written by our dear friend Dannah Gresh).

Parameters for what your son should be reading are indicated as **What Your Son Is Reading** at the beginning of each chapter of this guide.

Pray for your son daily. As parents, prayer is our primary work. Of course, we need to teach our sons how to brush their teeth, help them with their math homework, aim their hearts in the right direction, and discipline them. All of that is a necessary part of life with kids. But while prayer can often feel

like a nonessential in a day with many demands, it's the most important thing you can do for your son. *Prayer changes things!* Scripture reveals that God is attentive to the prayers offered up by parents on their children's behalf. Since prayer is one parent (you) talking to another parent (your heavenly Father), prayer prompts throughout this book will look like this.

PARENT PARENT

In Isaiah 61:3 God describes the children of Israel this way:

In their righteousness, they will be like great oaks
that the LORD has planted for his own glory.

Pray for your son to:

- Pursue righteous (holy) living
- Grow into a mighty man of God, strong and secure
- Have deep roots that keep him from being tossed by the lies of the world
- Glorify God with his life


Commit to pray for your son every day as you journey through this resource. We will provide prayer ideas in each chapter. In response to what you're learning, what your child is sharing,

and what the Holy Spirit is stirring in your heart, simply talk to God about what you want to see Him do in your son's life.

Talk about lies and Truth—often!

As we've written these books, we've prayed that they would lead to meaningful and transformative conversations between a boy and his parents. And yet, we know from experience that parents don't get to choose if and when their child opens up. As a mom, I (Erin) have noticed the signal when my love for conversation has overwhelmed my sons. A telltale look of confusion mixed with boredom comes over their eyes. Kids don't want to be rude, but they have reached the limit of how many words they can absorb. (As the only woman in a house full of men, you can imagine how verbose I can be!) I've also learned that the moment they hop in the van with me after school is not the best time to drill them with questions about their day. Every child is different. Some of ours will talk your ear clean off. Some are so quiet we have to make sure they're in the car when we leave home. Some are early birds. Others can't seem to form a coherent sentence before noon. The point is: don't force it.

We'll offer some open-ended questions for each chapter to help start conversations with your son. They'll look like this.



TALK
ABOUT IT
TOGETHER

Living out God's Truth is a lifelong pursuit. Don't feel like you must talk about everything right now. Remember: your first and most important role in your son's journey toward freedom is to pray. Aren't you glad you can trust the Holy Spirit to do the heavy lifting of transformation? We are too!

Take the time to write out a prayer asking God to work in your son's heart (and in your own) throughout this journey. Consider giving him that prayer along with a short note about why you're proud of him for choosing to take on the challenge of understanding lies and replacing them with God's Truth.

Dear Son,

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

Lined writing area with 20 horizontal lines.

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