

Reading Group Guide

“Be Good and Do Good: A Father’s Message to His Child”

Welcome to Your Reading Group

This guide is designed for: - **Book clubs** seeking meaningful discussion - **Faith communities** exploring values and legacy - **Workplace teams** discussing leadership and integrity - **Family groups** building shared values - **Educational settings** (high school and beyond)

Recommended timeline: 6-8 weeks (1-2 chapters per week)

How to Use This Guide

Before You Begin

First Meeting Agenda: 1. **Introductions** (20 min): Why did you choose this book? What are you hoping to gain? 2. **Reading plan** (10 min): Decide pace (1 or 2 chapters per week) 3. **Group agreements** (10 min): Set discussion norms 4. **First impressions** (20 min): Discuss the title, cover, and preface

Group Discussion Norms

Create safety: - Share what you’re comfortable sharing; pass if needed - Listen without judgment; different perspectives welcome - What’s shared here, stays here (confidentiality) - One person speaks at a time

Go deeper: - Share stories and experiences, not just opinions - Ask follow-up questions: “Tell me more about that” - Make connections between responses - Be honest about struggles, not just successes

Keep it real: - Focus on application, not just theory - Admit when you don’t have answers - Hold each other accountable to commitments - Celebrate small wins

Session 1: Preface & Introduction

Theme: Foundation & Family Legacy

Opening Activity (10 minutes) Go around the circle: “Who is YOUR ‘Superman’? Describe one person who exemplified integrity in your life.”

Key Discussion Questions (45-60 minutes)

1. **First impressions:** What struck you most about the father’s story?
2. **Superman metaphor:** The author calls his father “My Superman.” What makes someone a hero in everyday life vs. comic books?
3. **Legacy observation:** The author writes, “As a son, I saw the hardship. I saw the long days. I saw the weight he carried.” What burdens have you seen your parents or mentors carry? Did you recognize them at the time?
4. **The core message:** “Be good. Do good.” What’s your initial reaction to this two-part compass? Is it too simple? Profound in its simplicity? Something else?
5. **Cultural context:** The father served in the Indian Navy and as a JAG (military lawyer). How does his military background influence his values? What values transcend culture?

6. **Personal reflection:** If you were writing a letter to your child (or younger self), what would be your one core message?

Closing Activity (10 minutes) **Silent reflection + share:** Write down three core values you will not compromise. Share one with the group.

For Next Time

- Read Chapters 1 & 2
 - Journal prompt: “What does ‘being good’ mean to me personally?”
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Session 2: Chapters 1 & 2

Theme: The Anchor & The Rudder

Opening Activity (10 minutes) **Quick check-in:** “On a scale of 1-10, how aligned did I live this week with my stated values? What caused any misalignment?”

Key Discussion Questions (45-60 minutes) Chapter 1: The Anchor - “Be Good”

1. **The anchor metaphor:** “Your inner ‘goodness’ is your hull.” How does thinking of goodness as a foundation (not a destination) change your perspective?
2. **Integrity definition:** The chapter says, “You are not trying to be good. You are remembering that you are good.” Do you agree? How does this differ from “trying to be good”?
3. **Practical application:** The “Morning Mirror Check”—looking at yourself and asking “Am I still good?” Would this practice help you? What might it reveal?
4. **Challenge discussion:** What makes it hard to stay anchored to your values? (Pressure, temptation, fear, convenience?)

Chapter 2: The Rudder - “Do Good”

5. **Action vs. being:** “You don’t have to do good to BE good, but if you ARE good, you will DO good.” Is it possible to be internally good but not act on it? Why or why not?
6. **Small moments:** The chapter emphasizes small acts over heroic ones. Share one “small moment” where you did good recently. Did anyone notice? Does it matter?
7. **The ripple effect:** “Every action creates ripples.” Can you trace a ripple effect from someone’s kindness in your life? Or from your own?
8. **Integration question:** How do the anchor (Be good) and rudder (Do good) work together? Can you have one without the other?

Group Activity (20 minutes) **Scenario practice:** Present real-life ethical dilemmas. In pairs, discuss:
- What does “Be good” require in this situation? - What does “Do good” look like in response? - Where’s the tension between them?

Example scenarios: - Your boss asks you to manipulate data to meet targets - You see a colleague being treated unfairly - A friend asks you to lie for them - You receive too much change at a store

Closing Commitment (5 minutes) Each person shares ONE specific way they’ll practice “Do good” this week.

For Next Time

- Read Chapter 3
 - Journal: “Describe a ‘storm’ you’re currently facing or have faced. What did it reveal about you?”
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Session 3: Chapter 3

Theme: Leadership in the Storm

Opening Activity (15 minutes) **Storm mapping:** On a whiteboard or large paper, create a group “storm map”: - Everyone writes their current storm on a sticky note (work stress, relationship conflict, health crisis, etc.) - Group them by theme - Discuss: What common storms are we all facing?

Key Discussion Questions (45-60 minutes)

1. **Storm revelation:** “The storm doesn’t make you who you are. It reveals who you’ve always been.” When has a crisis revealed something about your character (positive or negative)?
2. **Preparation vs. reaction:** The chapter suggests preparing for storms while it’s sunny. How do you build character in calm times? What practices help?
3. **Storm mantras:** The chapter offers four mantras:
 - “I am built for this”
 - “My anchor holds”
 - “I know my true north”
 - “This storm will pass; my character remains”

Which resonates most? Why? Which is hardest to believe?

4. **Leadership definition:** What does it mean to lead “in” the storm vs. “from” the storm? Can you think of examples of each?
5. **Your storm crew:** Who are the 3 people you’d call during a crisis? Have you told them they’re your storm crew? Why or why not?
6. **After-action review:** The chapter recommends asking: “What held? What broke? What did I learn?” Apply this to a past failure. What do you discover?
7. **Comparison to calm:** Many people perform well in calm but crack under pressure. Others thrive in chaos but struggle with routine. Which are you? What does that reveal?

Group Activity (20 minutes) **Paired practice:** In pairs, role-play: - Person A shares a current storm (3 min) - Person B listens, then asks: “What’s your anchor in this? What does ‘doing good’ look like here?” (3 min) - Switch roles - Debrief together (4 min)

Closing Commitment (5 minutes) **Two actions:** 1. Identify your storm crew (write down 3 names)
2. Tell at least one of them this week that they matter to you

For Next Time

- Read Chapter 4
 - Journal: “What legacy am I building right now, whether I intend to or not?”
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Session 4: Chapter 4

Theme: Legacy - Building What Lasts

Opening Activity (15 minutes) **The 100-year question:** - Silent reflection: “In 100 years, what will people remember about you?” - Write your ideal “tombstone epitaph” (not your resume—your character) - Share with the group

Key Discussion Questions (45-60 minutes)

1. **Legacy redefined:** “Legacy is not what you leave when you die. It’s what you build while you live.” How does this change your daily choices?
2. **Three pillars:** The chapter identifies three pillars of legacy: Humility, Loyalty, Service. Rank them in order of importance to YOU. Explain your ranking. Is one missing that should be there?
3. **Humility:** “The janitor and the president are equally valuable.” Be honest: Do you struggle with this? When? What reveals your true attitude toward “status”?
4. **Loyalty:** The author’s father was loyal to a first-grade friend decades later. Who have you been loyal to? Who has been loyal to you? What’s the cost of loyalty?
5. **Service:** The father funded siblings’ educations and weddings. What’s the difference between service and sacrifice? Between beautiful burden and toxic obligation?
6. **Inheritance question:** The father gave opportunity instead of wealth. What are you leaving to the next generation—values or valuables?
7. **Honest assessment:** “If you died tomorrow, what would people actually say at your funeral?” Be honest, not aspirational. Then ask: “What needs to change?”

Group Activity (25 minutes) **Legacy building exercise:** 1. **Individual** (10 min): Complete the “Daily Legacy Builders” worksheet - List 3 actions you took this week. For each, ask: “What legacy does this build?” - Example: “I yelled at my kid” → Legacy of impatience vs. “I apologized to my kid” → Legacy of humility

2. **Small groups** (10 min): Share your legacy audit. Ask each other:
 - “What legacy are you proud of building?”
 - “What legacy are you accidentally building that you want to stop?”
3. **Whole group** (5 min): Insights and patterns

Closing Commitment (10 minutes) **Gratitude practice:** - Write down one person who carried a burden so you could be where you are - Commit to thanking them this week (call, letter, or in person) - Share: Who are you thanking? For what?

For Next Time

- Read Chapter 5
 - Journal: “What ‘beautiful burdens’ am I carrying? What toxic burdens do I need to release?”
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Session 5: Chapter 5

Theme: The Beautiful Burden - Service & Sacrifice

Opening Activity (15 minutes) **Shoulders you stand on:** - Each person shares: “One person who sacrificed for me was [name]. They gave/carried [burden]. Because of them, I was able to [opportunity].” - Group reflection: What patterns do we see?

Key Discussion Questions (45-60 minutes)

1. **Reframing burdens:** “What you carry is not always a burden. Sometimes it’s a privilege.” What changes when you reframe a burden as a privilege?
2. **Beautiful vs. toxic:** How do you distinguish between a beautiful burden (worth carrying) and a toxic burden (draining you)? Give examples from your life.
3. **The father’s sacrifice:** The father worked far from home, carried financial responsibility for extended family, and put others’ needs before his own. Is this admirable or problematic? Where’s the line between service and self-neglect?
4. **Martyrdom vs. service:** Some people serve joyfully; others serve resentfully. What’s the difference? Have you served with resentment? What caused it?
5. **Energy audit:** The chapter suggests asking, “Where am I spending my limited energy?” Conduct a quick audit:
 - What currently drains you?
 - What fills you?
 - What aligns with your values?
 - What contradicts them?
6. **Saying no:** Can you serve well if you never say no? How do you decide what burdens to carry and which to decline?
7. **Generational burden:** The father carried so much that his son could have opportunities. What burden are you carrying for the next generation? Is anyone carrying burdens for you right now?

Group Activity (20 minutes) Burden mapping: 1. On paper, draw two columns: “Beautiful Burdens” and “Toxic Burdens” 2. List your current responsibilities, relationships, and commitments in appropriate column 3. For beautiful burdens: How can you reframe them as privileges? 4. For toxic burdens: What needs to change? What can you release? 5. Share one insight with the group

Closing Commitment (10 minutes) Two actions: 1. **Gratitude:** Send a message this week to someone who’s carrying a burden for you (parent, spouse, mentor, colleague) 2. **Release:** Identify one toxic burden you’ll stop carrying. Share your plan.

For Next Time

- Read Chapter 6
- Journal: “What parts of myself do I hide or suppress? What would ‘wholeness’ look like for me?”

Session 6: Chapter 6 & Conclusion

Theme: The Poet - Wholeness & Integration

Opening Activity (10 minutes) Integration check: “The father was a warrior AND a poet. What are YOUR two sides that seem opposite? Do you show both or hide one?”

Key Discussion Questions (45-60 minutes) Chapter 6 Discussion

1. **Warrior and poet:** Why is it significant that the father wrote thousands of poems while serving as a military lawyer? What does this integration teach?
2. **Permission to be whole:** What prevents people from showing all sides of themselves? (Gender norms, professional expectations, fear of judgment?)

3. **Strength and sensitivity:** Do you believe these can coexist? When have you seen someone embody both? What was the impact?
4. **Your expression:** The father expressed goodness through poetry. What's YOUR unique expression of "Do good"? (Teaching, creating, organizing, healing, building, etc.)
5. **Fractured living:** Where are you living as a fraction of yourself instead of your whole self? What would change if you integrated?

Conclusion & Manifesto Discussion

6. **The manifesto:** The book ends with a manifesto summarizing the principles. What would YOUR personal "Be good, Do good" manifesto say?
7. **Simplicity:** The entire book boils down to two principles: Be good. Do good. Is this profound simplicity or oversimplification?
8. **Application barriers:** What will make it hard to live this compass? What support do you need?

Group Activity (30 minutes) Write your manifesto: 1. **Individual** (15 min): Using the template, write your personal "Be good, Do good" manifesto: - I AM GOOD when I: _____ - I DO GOOD by: _____ - My non-negotiable values: _____ - When I face storms, I will: _____ - The legacy I'm building: _____

2. **Pairs** (10 min): Share manifestos. Ask each other:
 - "Does this feel true to who you are?"
 - "What's one thing you'll do this week to live this?"
3. **Whole group** (5 min): Volunteers share manifestos or key insights

Closing Reflection (15 minutes) Three questions for every book discussion: 1. "What resonated?" - One idea that stuck with you 2. "What challenged?" - One idea that made you uncomfortable 3. "What's next?" - One specific action you'll take because of this book

Session 7 (Optional): Integration & Accountability

Theme: Moving from Reading to Living

This session happens 30 days after finishing the book.

Opening Check-In (20 minutes) Go around: "Did you do what you committed to? If yes, what happened? If no, what got in the way?"

Reflection Questions (30 minutes)

1. "How has your thinking changed since reading this book?"
2. "Where have you applied 'Be good, Do good' successfully?"
3. "Where have you struggled?"
4. "What do you need to continue this practice?"

Group Activity (30 minutes) Accountability partners: - Pair up - Exchange manifestos - Set up monthly check-ins: "Are you living your manifesto?" - Share contact info

Closing Commitment (10 minutes) Next 90 days: - Will you take the 30-Day Challenge? - Will you continue meeting as a group? - Will you read another book together or shift to accountability meetings?

Additional Resources for Group Leaders

Managing Difficult Dynamics

If someone dominates discussion: - “Thank you for that. Let’s hear from someone who hasn’t spoken yet.” - Use structured activities that require everyone to speak

If discussion goes off-topic: - “That’s interesting. How does it connect to the chapter we’re discussing?” - “Let’s table that and come back to our question.”

If someone shares something very personal: - Thank them for their vulnerability - Ask: “What do you need from us right now?” - Don’t let it become therapy session—redirect if needed

If conflict arises: - “It sounds like we have different perspectives. That’s okay.” - “Can you both explain your reasoning?” - “How might ‘Be good, Do good’ guide us here?”

Time Management Tips

Typical 90-minute session: - Opening activity: 10-15 min - Discussion: 45-60 min - Group activity: 20-30 min - Closing commitment: 5-10 min

If you’re running long: - Choose 3-4 questions to focus on deeply instead of covering all - Use a timer for activities - Have co-facilitator keep track of time

If you’re running short: - Go deeper with follow-up questions - Add personal sharing time - Extend closing reflection

Engagement Strategies

For quiet participants: - Use written reflection before verbal sharing - Create small group discussions before whole group - Ask directly but gently: “Maya, what’s your take on this?”

For deep discussions: - Ask: “Can you give an example?” - Ask: “How did that feel?” - Ask: “What would you do differently now?”

For practical application: - Always end with concrete commitments - Create accountability structures - Share resources (30-Day Challenge, cards, templates)

Suggested Follow-Up Activities

After completing the book:

1. **Take the 30-Day Challenge together** - Check in weekly
 2. **Implement Weekly Compass Checks** - Meet monthly to review
 3. **Write Legacy Letters** - Share at a special gathering
 4. **Create wisdom cards** - Make a set together
 5. **Invite others** - Start a new group and co-facilitate
 6. **Read a complementary book:**
 - *Meditations* by Marcus Aurelius (Stoic philosophy)
 - *The Road to Character* by David Brooks (moral depth)
 - *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom (life lessons)
 - *Man’s Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl (purpose in suffering)
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Facilitator's Reflection Guide

After each session, reflect:

What worked well? - Which questions generated the best discussion? - What activities were most meaningful? - Where did people seem most engaged?

What needs adjustment? - Which questions fell flat? - Where did we run out of time? - Who hasn't spoken much?

Personal growth: - What did I learn from the group? - Where was I challenged? - Am I modeling "Be good, Do good"?

Next session prep: - What adjustments will I make? - What follow-up is needed? - Who needs a personal check-in?

Final Encouragement for Group Leaders

You don't have to be perfect.

You don't need to have all the answers. You don't need to be the wisest person in the room. You just need to:

- Show up consistently
- Create safe space
- Ask good questions
- Listen deeply
- Model vulnerability
- Hold people accountable with love

The book provides the content. You provide the container.

Thank you for leading this journey. The work you're doing matters. The conversations you're facilitating will ripple beyond this group in ways you'll never fully see.

Be good. Do good. Lead well.

For additional facilitator resources, discussion guides, and community support, visit: <https://github.com/sattaru>