

LIVING  
IT OUT



**DAILY  
BIBLE  
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

# Be Intentional - It's Just a Phase

May 17, 2021

Lauren Snyder's weekend message hit a little too close to home. I have five children, and while they each have a baby book recording their milestones, my oldest has all of her teeth lovingly recorded; whereas, my fifth child may still only have one tooth if the book is correct. She might not even be sitting up by herself. And those beautiful photo books, well, my oldest has four, my second has two, my next two have one each, and my almost 3-year-old is still begging me to make her a book too. When it comes to remembering the moments of our lives and the lives of those we love, it can be easy to think, "I'll never forget that." But when a Facebook memory from a year ago pops up, you realize that you did.

How can we capture these moments that we desperately want to remember? How can we live a life that we look back on with fondness instead of regret? While I'm a photobook failure, living with intentionality is something that I have thought long and hard about. Some might say it's one of my soapboxes or *hills to die on*. When it comes to family—winging it isn't the best approach. When you begin a trip, you have a destination in mind. If I'm headed to Columbus to visit my sister, I don't get on I-75 North. I will never get where I want to go that way.

The same goes for your family. One of my homeschooling mentors says, "When someone asks your kids about what it was like to be homeschooled, what do you want them to say?" We can all ask ourselves this question, when this phase is over, what do I want to remember? Am I looking at my goals with spiritual vision? Am I looking at what God is doing in my family and stepping into it, or am I forging my own path?

For our family, we have done several things very intentionally that we want our children to remember—foundations we want them to have in their souls so that when they leave the house, these things are part of who they are. Our primary objective is that they know and love Jesus. I can't make that choice for them, but I can present knowledge of Jesus throughout their days so they know who he is and that he loves them. I have committed to making them a prayer journal. Every month, I find a passage of scripture that speaks to me, and I pray that over them and give them my thoughts so that one day, when they need it, they will have the Word of God and the prayers of their mother to read.

Nature, music, and literature are also key foundations in our home. It is important to us that our children are given opportunities to develop an appreciation for what is beautiful. Every week, we explore a local metropark with our homeschool group. My kids love being in the world God created. We listen to beautiful music in our home. My kids love classical music, we sing hymns and folk songs together, and we also sing our fair share of Slugs and Bugs. I would be remiss if I failed to mention my deep and abiding love for literature and my desire to pass it on to my children. We read all the time. We read fun books, and we read hard books—both of which my kids love.

Through these foundations and others, I pray that we are living out Deuteronomy 6 for our children.

### **Deuteronomy 6:5-7**

*<sup>5</sup> And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. <sup>6</sup> And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. <sup>7</sup> Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.*

### **Questions:**

When you look back on this phase of your life, what do you want to remember? What do you want those you love to remember?

Do you have spiritual vision? What is one thing you can intentionally do now that will have a lasting impact?

### **Next Steps:**

Think about your current phase of life. Choose one small thing that you can consistently do that will impact the generations to come. It could be to pray for a child, spend 15 minutes outside, or listen to something beautiful. It doesn't have to be huge—just do something with intention.

Check out the [family faith plan](#) and be intentional about the phase your family is currently in. If you don't have children, share the faith plan with someone in your life who is.

**Prayer:**

*Heavenly Father, thank you for the opportunity to impact those around us for your kingdom. Give us spiritual vision to see how the things we do today will impact our lives tomorrow. Give us wisdom to act with intention and not let life just happen to us. Help us to see every day as a gift from you and use it for your glory. Thank you for using us as part of your story. Amen.*

*This post was written by Julie Mabus, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*

# La Famiglia - It's Just a Phase

May 18, 2021

This is the second week of our series, *It's Just a Phase*. Lauren Snyder spoke on "Bigger Families Are Better." She challenged us to think about the voices outside of our families that are helpful to us. Lauren shared that *Rhythm + Relationships = The Phase We Remember*. Today, we are going to focus on the rhythms of our current phase.

Our current phase is built upon the sum of our past phases. So before we can discuss our current phase, we must talk about our history. I was raised in an Italian-American, blue-collar family outside Youngstown, Ohio. That rhythm itself draws colorful images! My mother was one of ten children, my father one of six. Even though I was an only child, our family was bigger than most! La famiglia included grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, and family friends. With a large family, there was a lot of activity and it didn't always create rhythms that harmonized with the rhythm my parents really wanted! Fortunately, I had a grandmother that understood her influence, and she was intentional about creating rhythms that included God. She took me to church and read stories from the Bible.

Fast forward to my current phase—three grown children, the youngest of whom is living with my husband and me, a daughter-in-law, a son-in-law, and five grandsons. Our current pace is much slower than it was when our kids were younger, but it is still fast and fulfilling!

I've found that parenting thirty-something children is different than parenting younger ages. It's especially hard supporting them through issues that I didn't experience—like social media, a pandemic, working from home, online schooling, and a polarized nation. It's been helpful finding our rhythms and relationships. We've tried to stack habits related to faith, family, and freedom. Habits like being involved in a faith community and celebrating family milestones such as birthdays, weekly meals, and annual vacations. Habits like being involved in our community and exploring its attractions and events together. Habits that teach them about the world and country we live in and our place in making it better by sharing God's light in it.

I am thankful that the following is one of the verses my grandmother read to me. She was intentional in her time with me and stacked habits of faith in all that we did.

**Deuteronomy 6:5-7**

*<sup>5</sup> And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. <sup>6</sup> And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. <sup>7</sup> Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.*

Do you have the rhythm you really want? How can you make God part of your rhythms in the phase you are in?

**Questions:**

Do your rhythms reflect what you want for your children and grandchildren? Is God a part of your rhythms?

**Next Steps:**

Stack habits to build a rhythm that recognizes God. Fill in the blanks below with habits that recognize God throughout your day.

Morning time habit - \_\_\_\_\_

Meal time habit - \_\_\_\_\_

Drive time habit - \_\_\_\_\_

Bedtime habit - \_\_\_\_\_

Start one rhythm that will help you with your relationships, whether it's with God or your family.

**Prayer:**

*Dear heavenly Father, thank you for all that you have given us. Help us to teach future generations about you and your kingdom. Help us to strengthen America! Amen.*

*This post was written by Pam Haynam, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.*

# Helping Us See - It's Just a Phase

May 19, 2021

I learned a long time ago that my relationship with Jesus would be the most important one I would ever have. I didn't apply that knowledge to the other relationships in my life, though. Then about 15 years ago, I was in a very dark place and found myself all alone. I still had Jesus, but I had twisted that relationship, and all the others in my life, to the point where I wasn't sure if even Jesus wanted to be my friend anymore.

This weekend, Lauren Snyder asked, "What if spiritual vision influenced our relationships?" I only wish I had contemplated this question before I found myself all alone. As I started to heal and come out of the darkness, I became more intentional with my relationships. I kept thinking, "If you want to have a friend, you have to be a friend." So, I started being the friend I wanted to have, especially where my adult children and grandchildren were concerned.

Lauren Snyder shared that "bigger families are better." She explained that this isn't limited to bloodlines, and I couldn't agree more. I have several friends with whom I meet on a regular basis, just to "check in." One is with my sister-in-Christ, and we meet twice a month specifically to do a health check on our spirituality and to pray with and for one another and the people in our lives.

While a parent is the primary influence in a child's young life, a child needs multiple influences. When my daughters started turning to other women in their lives to confide in and receive guidance, I was honestly jealous and a little hurt, but God has since shown me that this is how his love works through us. I've come to value those women who love and care for my girls. I'd like to see more influential men in my son's life. Now, I keep my eyes open for opportunities to be there for the children of other women. Jesus is kind and wise, and he can use each of us to reflect a little of his mercy and grace to those we come into contact with.

Another important reason for children to have influential relationships outside of the parents is that parents don't always see the story God is writing. We see this in the story of King David. When he was young, his father, Jesse, viewed him as a shepherd boy. He didn't imagine that God had much bigger things in store. God showed those bigger things to the prophet Samuel, and it was [Samuel who told David he would one day be King.](#)

There is power when other adults speak into the lives of our children. Make a conscious effort to put trusted adults into the life of your child BEFORE they're needed, so that help will be there when IT IS needed. Be a trusted adult to a child.

**Questions:**

Is God bringing someone into your life with whom you can have a powerful Christ-like influence? Are you listening for and open to the ways that God may be calling you?

**Next Steps:**

Read [1 Samuel 16:1-12](#). If you are a parent, think about the relationships your kids have. Consider who might be a person of influence that could point them to Jesus and the adventure he has for their life.

If you are not a parent, pray and ask God where you can serve the needs of a child who needs a trusted godly person to be an influence in his/her life. Open yourself up to opportunities to serve. Be intentional about taking your next step.

**Prayer:**

*Father, I thank you for the people in my children's lives who have shown great compassion and mercy, genuine concern for their welfare, and given them guidance. I pray for each of the children and families who have yet to know you. I lift them up and ask that you send a merciful servant who can lead them into a relationship with you. Move us, Lord, toward what moves you. Give us all the strength to be your hands and your feet. I pray this in the almighty name of God, the Father, and in his Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.*

# Team Spirit - It's Just a Phase

May 20, 2021

*It's Just A Phase ... so don't miss it.* We're in the second week of learning in this series. In week one, Lead Pastor Ben Snyder gave insight into what a phase is and how important it is to make the most of it while it is in our present. In week two of the series, Lauren Snyder elaborated on ways we can make each phase more meaningful and memorable. So far this week, we have discussed rhythms and relationships, stacking a new habit with our old ones to create better rhythms, and using spiritual vision to influence those relationships. Today, we will discuss the importance of having other people in our own lives and how they can play an important role in whatever phase of life we find ourselves in.

I am a sports enthusiast and enjoy watching a variety of sports both on TV and in person. For me, the most enjoyable sports to watch are team sports. It is really satisfying to see how each individual on the team contributes in their own special way to achieve the ultimate goal of winning. No single man nor woman on any team can accomplish the goal by themselves.

Life is very similar to team sports. God places other people in our lives to pour into us, in their own special way, to help us live out the story God has written for us. Obviously, family is our first line of resources for this, and I thank God every day for the family I have been blessed with, especially my supportive wife, Michelle.

For athletes, it is important for them to work out and practice together to build strong team bonds. As Christians at CedarCreek, we have a magnificent opportunity to do the same thing through [Groups](#). This is a safe place where we can associate with others who share the same interests as ours or who may be going through or have knowledge about the phase of life we are in. It is an opportunity to be a coach to younger people (or newer Christians) who are going through phases we have already experienced. Or maybe, it's an opportunity to be coached by others who are older and/or more experienced at the phase of life we are in now.

## **Proverbs 27:17**

*Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.*

## **Matthew 18:20**

*For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.*

This summer semester, I am stepping out of my comfort zone to lead a Group, called “Grandparents for Christ,” that will be open to grandparents of all ages. We will learn about some famous grandparents in the Bible and share and discuss ways we can be a part of the best and most memorable moments of the phases we are in as grandparents. Even though I am nervous about leading this Group, I am also excited to bring new insight and positive influence into my life from my other Group members. The phase of grandparenting has already brought more joy into my life than I could possibly have imagined. It has also brought more self-examination and reflection on past phases that I either didn’t make the most of or missed.

You can’t do it alone; I encourage you to take all the steps you can to put together a strong team of people in your life to make the most memorable moments of the phase you are in right now. Don’t miss it!

**Questions:**

Do you have positive people in your life pouring into you? Are you active in a Group?

**Next Steps:**

Consider joining a CedarCreek Group. Read Psalm 78 and prayerfully ask God to place people in your life that can positively influence the phase you are in.

And for some of you, I want to encourage you to take the same step I am taking – [Lead a Group](#). Your experience and passions have equipped you to help others in the phase they are in today.

**Prayer:**

*Most gracious God, we are so thankful that you have given us everything we need to experience meaningful memories in every phase of our life. Help us to use those resources to make the most of whatever phase of life we are in. Help us to remember that even though sometimes the days may be long, the years are short. In your loving name we pray, amen.*

# Lights, Camera ... Action! - It's Just a Phase

May 21, 2021

Last weekend, Lauren Snyder discussed the importance of having a top five support net of people that can pour into the next generation (me). This may look like, coming alongside a person, caring for them, giving them your time, providing them with guidance, and sharing each other's joy. So ... who's done that for you?

## **Psalm 78:6**

*so the next generation might know them—even the children not yet born—and they in turn will teach their own children.*

I would have to consider two of my top five to be Whitehouse Campus Pastor Shawn Bellner and Whitehouse Campus Director of Arts Ray Hughley, as I have recently found myself serving in several areas in addition to writing. Shawn and Ray have both poured into me. Not only did Shawn guide me to the LIO Team, most recently he suggested I help the Production Team for the Easter service. With my spiritual gift of helping, I was all for it. I got to step into the backstage team for the first time! It was lights, camera, action, and I saw an incredible opportunity to serve.

Evidently, Ray did too. He vouched for me to continue to shadow the production team. Over time we have connected on several things – from discussions about dad jokes to Chick-fil-A and, yeah, production stuff too. Recently, he even invited me along to a conference as he continues to invest in me.

## **Psalm 78:7**

*So each generation should set its hope anew on God, not forgetting his glorious miracles and obeying his commands.*

Both Shawn and Ray have been so instrumental in filling up my tank. They graciously took in a guy who before meeting them didn't even know God's love or Jesus. I was a tatted, raunchy, crazy wrestler guy, and they came alongside me and guided me to become an instrument capable of broadcasting Jesus' love to others. That's the importance—the turnaround—and the love and worth that follows.

## **1 Samuel 16:7**

*But the Lord said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have*

*rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."*

**Questions:**

For whom in your life can you shine the light of Christ? Is there someone in the next generation you have an opportunity to invest in? What action will you take to be an instrument in God's plan for you and for those around you?

**Next Steps:**

Be intentional with the people around you, your "family" (family + friends), by checking in with them. Perhaps you're in a place where you can lead a Group with them.

**Prayer:**

*Lord, thank you for your abundance of love, your agape love. I pray that I may show compassion, goodness, kindness, and the love that is your grace to others. I pray that I remain steadfast in my prayers for my "family," that I am intentional with them. I pray that they may know, witness, love, and receive the gift of your salvation. In Jesus' name, amen!*