

SAMPLE



The
TWO-
MINUTE Drill
to **PARENTING**

MOLDING YOUR SON INTO A MAN

JOHN
CROYLE

FOUNDER OF BIG OAK RANCH

 **LifeWay**
Biblical Solutions for Life

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Croyle, founder and executive director of Big Oak Ranch, was a defensive end for the University of Alabama's 1973 National Championship football team, playing for the legendary Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant. At age 19, John felt he had been given a gift to work with young people. His dream was to have the best children's home in America. On the advice of Coach Bryant, John declined opportunities to play professional football and instead chose to pursue his dream of helping children in need.

John established Big Oak Boys' Ranch in 1974. Today Big Oak Ranch, Inc. has grown to include Big Oak Girls' Ranch and Westbrook Christian School. John and his wife Tee have helped raise nearly 2,000 children through Big Oak Ranch as well as their biological son Brodie, a former NFL quarterback, and daughter Reagan, a former basketball player at the University of Alabama.

John's philosophy can be summed up in this statement: "A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove ... but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child" (Forest E. Witcraft).

The cornerstone and even the name of Big Oak Ranch is fundamentally rooted in Isaiah 61:3, "They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor" (NIV).

Today John, wife Tee, and children Brodie and Reagan, along with the Big Oak Ranch staff, continue to meet the needs of hundreds of children by giving them a solid Christian home and a chance to fulfill God's plan for their lives.

A MESSAGE FROM JOHN

Welcome to *The Two-Minute Drill to Parenting!* I know what it feels like to play under a good coach. He has a game plan, and he is focused. When he steps onto the field, he wants to lead his team to victory. It's that simple. Winning the game is reward enough for all the long hours of practice. The drills, the heat, the pace, the intensity—week after week, coaches lead their teams in practice until they are ready for game day, until they are ready to win.

As parents, we want our boys to grow up and be men, but we need to have a game plan as well. It won't happen by accident. We need to be focused and ready to lead and launch our sons into authentic manhood. If we can see the big picture, develop a strategy, count the cost, remain consistent, and live it out at home, our sons will be ready to step onto the field of manhood.

But it all starts with us.

In football, the two-minute drill prepares the team to be focused and ready for the final minutes. If executed correctly, it can make or break a team. As parents, we need to ask ourselves a very important question: *What strategies are we going to develop and execute at home so that our boys can step into manhood and make it?* It's crucial that we answer this question to give our sons the best shot at succeeding as men.

In my time at Big Oak Ranch, I've watched boys turn into men right before my eyes. Big Oak Ranch is a living testimony of God's goodness and faithfulness. It represents nearly 40 years of experience raising abused and neglected boys. I've seen first-hand the positive effects of having a path to manhood and leading boys to embrace it. I know the importance of keeping your eye on the clock because time is ticking.

I want to thank you for allowing me to share my experience with you. Consider this resource your coaching guide—from one coach to another. I hope it helps you keep your eye on the clock, too, as you lead your son down his path to manhood.



John Croyle

Founder of Big Oak Ranch

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

We're glad you have chosen to study *The Two-Minute Drill to Parenting*! As this study guides you through a game plan to help ensure your son is ready for authentic manhood, it is our prayer that you will not only feel empowered to become a more godly influence in the life of your son but you will also experience a closer relationship with him as you share this journey together. Before you get started, here is some helpful information about the different elements you'll encounter within the study.

Week Introduction

Each session begins with an overview of the week's topic. This material is designed to introduce you to the content you will study that week. Reading the introduction before your group meets will help you better understand the topic and the context for your time together.

Huddle Up: Review

This time is designed to provide you with an opportunity to talk about what God has been revealing to you or what insights have resulted from your personal time during the week.

Huddle Up: Preview

This section provides questions or discussion starters designed to help you get familiar with the specific theme of the session and become more comfortable with discussion.

Video Discussion

This section provides an overview of what you will experience through the video message as well as discussion questions related to its content. This is an opportunity for the group to discuss specific aspects of the message, what you heard, and how you were affected.

Small-Group Discussion

This portion of your weekly group meeting will not only reinforce the video content but also take you deeper into the truth of the Scriptures. This segment of the study also gives you an opportunity to integrate these truths into your own parenting.

Highlights

This section serves as a conclusion to the group time and summarizes key points from your small-group meeting each week.

Execute the Play

At the end of each session you will find a suggested activity to complete during the week. This activity is an opportunity to take what you've learned during your small-group meeting and apply it. You may be asked to involve your son or to complete an activity in preparation for a future conversation with him. During your next group meeting you will have time to share some of what you've learned with your group.

Know that as we prepared this study we were praying for you. It is our hope that God will truly bless you on your journey to better prepare your son for the game of life.

SESSION 1

THE GAME PLAN

WHAT COULD BE MORE REWARDING than knowing you have launched your children into the world prepared and ready? Just think about the personal satisfaction of leading them through the practice fields of adolescence and young adulthood before they venture off. Like a confident coach getting his team suited up for the big game, you will witness your boys preparing and suiting up for life.

As your boys grow into full adulthood, you will move more and more into a coaching role. But you need to see yourself as the coach who is preparing them for life even now. You have a God-given sphere of influence over your children. And since God trusts you with their lives, you need to know the steps, the drills, and the game plan. I know a lot about football, parenting, and boys! I know firsthand the kind of diligence necessary for preparing boys for manhood. I understand the sense of urgency you may be feeling—especially as you see your young boys grow up, hit puberty, start driving, start dating, ... Whoa, stop!

Actually, you can't stop, and that's the point. The clock is ticking and your boys need you more than ever. It is up to you. No one else knows your boys like you do. No one else has a sphere of influence over them like you do. From one parent to another, consider this series my personal invitation to you. And for this first session, let's talk about who you are and how you can fashion a game plan for the young men in your life.

HUDDLE UP

PREVIEW

- *Use the following questions to kick off your small-group meeting. Start thinking now about what it means to have a game plan for your son as he begins to enter manhood.*

“Practice does not make perfect.
Only perfect practice makes perfect.”

VINCE LOMBARDI

What do you think Coach Lombardi meant by this statement?

What point do you think he was trying to make as it relates to preparation and winning?



Your home is the best practice field for your boys before you send them off to the big game of life. To what degree have you considered this truth? How intentional have you been in creating a “practice field” mentality at home for your son?

On a scale from 1 to 10, describe the *sense of urgency* you feel to do this parenting thing right.

1

5

10

Not at all

Very much so



KICKOFF

VIDEO DISCUSSION

In this week's video you will get a glimpse into what having a game plan for taking your son from boyhood to manhood looks like. I'll be talking a little about what a parent is and what a parent is not. But you'll also hear from Eathan and hear about his experience at the ranch. My wife, Tee, will address areas of discipline and how to parent every minute of every day. We want you to get a good idea of how to create an effective game plan before we move into the heart of our group experience.

■ **Play Video 1: The Game Plan (10:53)**

- *If your group is large, break into smaller groups of three or four to discuss the next two questions. Encourage group members to write down their personal takeaways as others share insights, stories, struggles, or victories.*

Throughout the video, Tee talks about the necessary decision to parent every minute of every day, even though you may grow tired and weary. What are some of the consequences of not sticking to God's minute-to-minute game plan?

The statement was made in the video, "Parenting is not the same as being a friend." Why do you think Tee would feel compelled to make this statement?

- *Bring everyone back together as a large group to continue your discussion.*

Think about my two-minute drill concept for parenting. You practice, practice, practice, so when it's game time everyone knows the plan by heart. What do you consider your biggest obstacle to preparing your boys with this kind of parenting approach?

You're going to see that this study has a very hands-on approach to preparing your son for manhood. My experience at Big Oak Ranch has taught me a lot about boys. But my experience with God through His Word has taught me a lot about life. It doesn't matter how many obstacles you think you have in your way, you can develop a plan that's right for your son. As we turn to God's Word, let's look at what it's going to take to prepare our boys for the real world.

SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

There is a stark contrast between what you want your children to experience and what you know your children will experience when they leave home. This presents you with an unmistakable fork in the road for your boys. They will need to know the clear-cut path toward true manhood while navigating through a godless culture. Think about the reality check your son is going to experience when he leaves home and enters the real world for the first time.

Read 2 Timothy 3:1-5. This passage comes from Paul as he writes to young Timothy one last time. There's a special kind of character needed when we live for God in a godless culture.

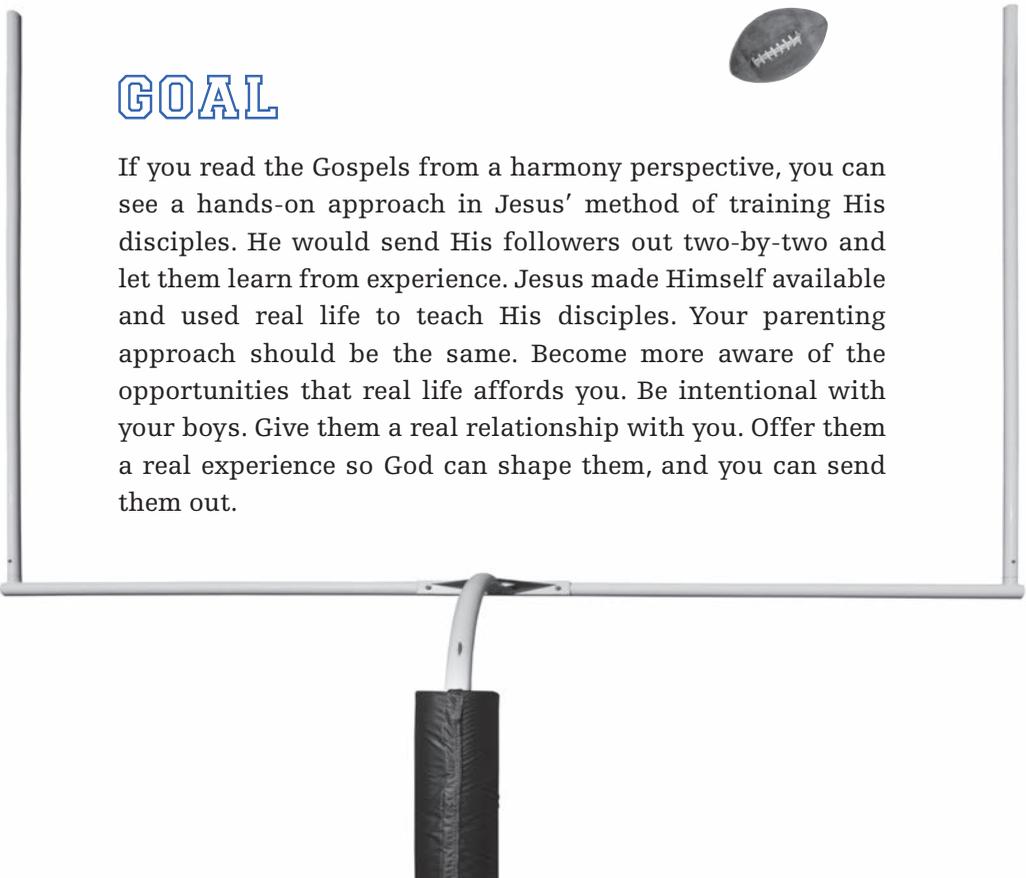
In your own words, describe the kind of culture about which Paul warned Timothy. What do you think is at the heart of Paul's warning to Timothy?

How has your family been confronted with this sort of influence from the world?

Why do you think Paul's warning might be uniquely important to a boy who will someday be a man?

Throughout his ministry, Paul exemplified a very unique life. He related to people in different ways for different reasons. At one time he saw himself as a loving, nursing mother (see Galatians 4:19), and at other times he felt like he was a spiritual father (see 1 Corinthians 4:14-17). His motto was, "I have become all things to all people, so that I may by every possible means save some. ... I do all this because of the gospel" (see 1 Corinthians 9:22-23). As a parent, you have the freedom to:

- Be yourself. Don't try to be someone else.
- Be who your son needs you to be. Don't give up as you swap hats and are stretched in every direction.
- Do whatever it takes to climb into your son's world. As your son changes, you change right along with him.



GOAL

If you read the Gospels from a harmony perspective, you can see a hands-on approach in Jesus' method of training His disciples. He would send His followers out two-by-two and let them learn from experience. Jesus made Himself available and used real life to teach His disciples. Your parenting approach should be the same. Become more aware of the opportunities that real life affords you. Be intentional with your boys. Give them a real relationship with you. Offer them a real experience so God can shape them, and you can send them out.

Now read 2 Timothy 3:10-17. Regardless of the culture, Paul seems to be somewhat optimistic that Timothy is equipped to live out his godly manhood with a good example.

Paul knows that Timothy has experienced something different. Based on 2 Timothy 3:10-17, what do you think has given Paul hope that Timothy would be able to live as a “man of God” in such a culture?

The operative pronoun in this passage is *my*. Paul says to Timothy, “You have followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, and endurance, along with the persecutions and sufferings” (v. 10-11). Paul had a game plan for discipling Timothy. What is your game plan for using your life experiences to disciple your son?

Paul very pointedly refers to the Scriptures in these verses. What can you do in the next six months of your son’s life to make the Scriptures more a part of his story?

“As parents, we must know who we are, what we are, and why we’re here. Those are three bedrocks of parenting. They are just like the three sides of a pyramid or three legs of a stool. If two sides are the same length and the third is different, we will always be out of balance.”

THE TWO-MINUTE DRILL TO MANHOOD

Highlights

- Your son needs you parenting him “every minute of every day.”
- You cannot forget your identity and ultimate purpose as a parent.
- Your son needs an intentional relationship that allows him to experience you.
- Remember, you are not his friend. You are his parent.

EXECUTE THE PLAY

PLAN A TRANSITION TRIP

When the whole M.A.N.H.O.O.D. concept was taking shape, I was planning a “transition trip” with my son Brodie. I wanted a special time where I could talk to him, one on one, about what it means to be a man. And God provided a way for us to go to Alaska on my shoestring budget. That was a great experience. Not just the destination itself, but the entire journey—how we got there and what we experienced together.

Parents, you need to start thinking about a transition trip of your own. Don’t talk with your son yet. Instead, sit down on your own and start thinking about it. When the time comes for you to have a discussion with him, he will definitely have some ideas of his own. But if you do some homework first, you will be prepared and ready to have this conversation. You will already have some ideas and options and will be ready to steer the conversation with some wisdom and “directed discovery” already in play.

These two pages will guide you through the logistics. Fill in each area as best you can. Be ready to discuss and share with your group the next time you meet. Sharing ideas and listening to the wisdom of others will help you as well.

What is your objective for the trip?

What are some possible/potential destinations?

Local Options:

Intermediate Options (drivable distance—up to 500 miles):

Extensive Options (requiring air travel):

What is a realistic budget?

• **Travel**

Gas

Airfare

Hotel

Food

- Entertainment

Gear

Excursions

Reservations

Guides

Throughout the remainder of this study, fill in some key thoughts or ideas that you would like to communicate to your son on your transition trip.

- Master
- Ask and Listen
- Never Compromise
- Handle Your Business
- One Purpose
- One Body
- Don't Ever, Ever, Ever Give Up

Game On!

At some point all parents realize that their time of daily influence is growing short and wonder if their sons are ready to be men.

In football, the last two minutes of the game are crucial; those moments can determine the final outcome. But those two minutes don't diminish the rest of the game. In fact, the rest of the game builds to these final few moments. If you are a parent to a son still living at home, you are in the "two-minute drill" of your time as the primary influence in his life.

Based on John Croyle's life and experience parenting more than 1,800 troubled, abused, and neglected boys and girls on the Big Oak Ranch, as well as parenting his two biological children, *The Two-Minute Drill to Parenting* small-group Bible study is John's game plan to help you make sure your son is ready for authentic manhood.

It's important to have a good game plan. To be diligent in planning, preparation, and practice. To stay focused. And when you finish the game and your son leaves you to go out on his own, you will be able to rest assured you have done your best, your son will respect you, and you will know that you prepared him for the game of life.

"Instruct them to do what is good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, willing to share, storing up for themselves a good reserve for the age to come, so that they may take hold of life that is real." 1 TIMOTHY 6:18-19



JOHN CROYLE was an All-American defensive end at the University of Alabama during head coach Paul "Bear" Bryant's legendary tenure. Faced with the decision to play professional football or to start a home for abused and neglected children, John established Big Oak Ranch in 1974. Today the outreach also includes a girls ranch and Christian school.

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