

## **SESSION 9: THE END GAME**

- **Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework & LIFE Starters: 20 minutes**
- **Session #9 Teaching: The End Game: 10 minutes**

As this study draws to a close, it's important to again remind ourselves of what our end game in parenting is, whatever our parenting journey looks like. Ultimately, our goal is to point our children to God, the Ultimate Father. We have to evaluate and grow in our relationship with Him before we can model that to our children, and equip/prepare ourselves to understand the unique needs of our children. Parenting requires flexibility; while our standards for Godliness are objective and based on what God says, the application of those standards and the expectations around growth are subjective. For example, we can't expect a 12 yr old child with neurodevelopmental side effects of trauma to respond to parental directions like a 12 yr old child with who has not suffered a neurodevelopmental impact.

Many parents struggle with the feeling that their children are a reflection of their parenting. This can cause so much damage in the parent child relationship, relationships between families with different life experiences, and shame in parents and children as well. This is why "God looks at the heart." Directing our children to God and focusing on the heart issues that He addresses in the Bible- the fruit of the Spirit, the Beatitudes, the Ten Commandments, grace, etc. can lead to the behavior and spiritual depth we hope to see in our children as they grow into adults who are responsible to God for their choices. How those things play out in our children's lives is impacted greatly by their early life experiences. A child who trusts her parents to love her and protect her can often learn quickly that lying is not a healthy behavior. A child who did not trust their early life caregivers often uses lying as a defense mechanism, and could take years to move beyond that. That's not a reflection of the child's heart condition or the parent's training methods. Just as God has grace for us, we must have it for our children.

Another great quote from Dr. Purvis says, "Don't ask your kids to be anymore perfect than you are as a parent". And this is a great principle that applies to so much of our parenting- the best way to raise healthy, respectful, caring children who know the Lord is to model that for them in our own lives and relationships, and being willing to discuss and apologize for your own shortcomings. It is impossible for us to do everything perfectly- all of our kids will need therapy as adults! But in everything we do, even the things we do wrong, we can make sure that our children know that we love them unconditionally, that they are safe with us, that we are doing what we think is best for them, and that we are trusting God to be the perfect parent where we aren't.

### **Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes**

- What are your three goals or your mission statement for your parenting journey?
- What are some ways you can better "look at the heart" of your children rather than their behavior in the moment?
- Are you able to let go of anxieties about your children's futures and focus on walking in the wisdom of God in your day to day journey?
- What about this study could be improved to have MORE IMPACT?
- Was the LIFE Method of Journaling helpful and did you actually do it? Why or why not?
- Would you refer others for this class? Why or why not?
- Are you ready to participate in the NEXT Life Study?

### **Be part of this movement and give us your feedback please!**

- Write out a testimony about how this class changed your parenting.
- Shoot a short 2-minute testimony video if you feel led.
- Fill out the assessment forms (emailed tomorrow).
- Consider your involvement in the next semester classes (also emailed).

**Please take the time to give us feedback, as we want to improve these classes and have the biggest impact for God's Kingdom and generations to come!**