

# SESSION 7: PARENTING

**Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework: 15 minutes**

**Review #7 Teaching BEFORE Session: 10 minutes**

## **Traits of Effective Parenting**

Parents may excel in some of these areas and fall short in others, but each trait can transform your parenting, filling your children's hearts and minds with God's truth and bringing wisdom into your homes:

### **Love**

John the apostle tells us that we learn love by looking at the love God has shown us. God's love came first and it is a truly sacrificial love. "In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10).

**Do you know what you love?** Look at the people, activities and things you're attached to. Look at the sacrifices you make to see those people, do those activities or use those things. These are the areas of your life where you love. Children can see where your priorities are, where your love is directed.

God's love helps parents counteract our natural selfishness. His love reveals itself in His commitment to us and His sacrifice for us, long after our emotions have faded away. Children learn God's love through the sacrificial commitments we make to them and teach them to make.

### **Respect**

The apostle Paul writes that we should think like Christ and treat others as more important than ourselves (Philippians 2:3). Respect recognizes the best in people. It is more than acknowledging a child's accomplishments. Children and teens are worthy of respect because God created them and loves them.

Respect teaches us not to treat others as unimportant. Nothing hurts a child more than being treated as if he is useless, and almost nothing encourages him more than being respected and valued.

One way to show respect to your family is to watch your language. Refuse to use cruel language — whether directed toward family members in your home or outsiders. Our language habits really do influence our ability to model respect to our children.

### **Intentionality**

Being intentional means talking about and living out our Biblical core-values and priorities before allowing other influences into our home. This trait nurtures a consistency in family life that reinforces the other traits. When parents are intentional, they grow in wisdom and are able to keep their focus on how they act as believing parents (Colossians 1:10).

It is easy to be passive and let media and other influences set our family's priorities, but it's more effective to pay careful attention to how we live our lives. This is intentionality: making decisions as parents about how we will own the spiritual atmosphere in our homes.

### **Boundaries and Limits**

Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend, authors of the "Boundaries" book series, write that the purpose of boundaries in parenting to "let good things in and keep bad things out." Hebrews 12:1 says that in order to run our race well, we need to shake off the things that keep us from reaching our goal. Ordering our home with healthy boundaries for kids and adults helps us do that.

Being deliberate about boundaries — for media, behavior, relationships, godly living and a vibrant faith — means we do not let culture determine what is healthy for our family. Proverbs tells us, “Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge” (14:7). If we don’t set our own boundaries in our families, other influences — culture, extended family or trends — will set our children’s moral boundaries, and we may become surprised and dismayed by what they have learned.

## **Gratitude**

As Paul begins his letter to the Philippians, he tells them how thankful he is every time he thinks of them (1:3-4). Gratitude is not just a polite reaction to something good. It is a cultivated habit and a vital part of healthy relationships.

When we practice gratitude in our families, it helps children and parents fight selfishness, which causes division among families and friends. When gratitude is expressed on a regular basis and in deliberate ways, it helps our children learn to see all the good God does in our lives. A natural outcome of this is that we learn to naturally praise Him, regardless of how we feel in the moment.

## **Grace and Forgiveness**

Grace and forgiveness shock us. God forgave us while we were still sinners. He shows grace to imperfect people and continues to involve them in His plan.

Parents need to be willing to model forgiveness and grace to their children, regardless of the personal cost. Human nature prevents us from easily giving grace and forgiveness, yet we learn from God’s Word that we need to give both or we can’t expect to be forgiven (Matthew 6:14-15).

## **Adaptability**

While he was in prison, Paul said something amazing: “I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content” (Philippians 4:11). Paul learned to find peace in Christ, despite his situation. His personal happiness was not attached to his position, how well he was doing or what he was doing.

Teaching adaptability helps our children find peace — a deep peace that is stronger than the stresses and trials of life. Peace counteracts the unproductive worry that causes us to lose our trust in God. This flexibility and resilience, grown in difficult circumstances, allows a family to face both hardships and joys together, as they grow deeper in their faith.

## **Good Traits, Good Decisions**

God’s wisdom gives us direction for not only recognizing our mistakes, but also correcting them. In parenting, it is no different. God’s way of life is the abundant life (John 10:10), and this life gives parents the opportunity to watch their children grow up making good decisions and avoiding decisions they may later regret. And learning how to live out these traits in our parenting gives our children a model for living out His abundant life.

## **Small Group Discussion: 20 minutes**

•**From the information about the Traits of Effective Parenting:**

•**Rate yourself on how you live out these traits now and discuss.**

- How can YOU improve in each area?

- Plan to make specific commitments on how YOU need to change to be a more effective parent.

***Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes***

*•What were the biggest take-aways and action items from your small group time?*

***Discuss This Week's Homework: 5 minutes***

*•Review Session #8 and start the Family Values Exercise.*

# SESSION 7: Weekly Devotional: Day 1

## Read 1 John 4:7-21

God's love came first and it is a truly sacrificial love. Journal about how YOU show your family love.

**L=Listen:** In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses..

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**I = Investigate:** the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: Bible Study Tools, or Easy English Bible

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**F=Focus:** to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

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**E = Engage:** God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

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# SESSION 7: Weekly Devotional: Day 2

## Read Philippians 1:3-11

Are YOU living a life defined by LOVE?

**L=Listen:** In your journal, write the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, listen to the Holy Spirit and focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal. Writing helps you remember the verses..

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**I = Investigate:** the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary:

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# SESSION 7: Weekly Devotional: Day 3

## Read Proverbs 14

Are you raising kids to be wise or foolish?

**L=Listen:** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal .....

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**I = Investigate** the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary:

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# SESSION 7: Weekly Devotional: Day 4

## Read Matthew 6:5-14

Parents need to be willing to model forgiveness and grace to their children, regardless of the personal cost.

**L=Listen:** in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal .....

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**I = Investigate** the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary:

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