



**STRATEGIC
IMPACT**
INTERNATIONAL



and

**CRAZY COOL
FAMILY**

LEADER INTENSIVE TRAINING®

“GROW IN THE GREAT COMMISSION”

JOURNEY TO A GODLY FAMILY

v1.2 (2024)



**STRATEGIC
IMPACT**
INTERNATIONAL

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome Letter & Manual Explanation	3
<i>STRATEGIC IMPACT</i> 1-Page Overview	5
KEY RELATIONSHIP CONCEPTS	6
KEY CULTURE CONCEPTS	7
SESSION OUTLINES	9
Session 1: The Keys to a Godly Family (Overview)	10
Session 2: Relationship 1 — Parent-to-God	13
Session 3: Relationship 2 — Marriage	15
Session 4: Relationship 3 — Parent-to-Child	18
Session 5: Relationship 4 — Child-to-Child	20
Session 6: Relationship 5 — Child-to-God	24
Session 7: Creating Culture 1 — Encouragement	27
Session 8: Creating Culture 2 — Safety	30
Session 9: Creating Culture 3 — Relational Discipline	34
Session 10: Creating Culture 4 — Unity	36
JOURNEY TO A GODLY FAMILY Summary	39
Appendix A: Seven Discipline Drivers	40-41
<i>STRATEGIC IMPACT</i> Statement of Faith	42-43

WELCOME!

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Welcome to the *STRATEGIC IMPACT LEADER INTENSIVE TRAINING (LIT)*! We are excited to partner with *CRAZY COOL FAMILY* in bringing you this excellent material to help you on your *JOURNEY TO A GODLY FAMILY*. Family is our first ministry priority and is the proving ground for Godly leadership. As 1 Timothy 3:5 states, “...for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church?”

We are excited and grateful you have come. Our team has been praying for you for months in preparation for this training! In our time together, we will step away from the daily pressures of ministry to draw closer to Jesus and to each other. We will laugh together, cry together, and learn together as we explore Biblical teachings regarding the family, learn how to build quality relationships, and discover how to create a family culture that honors God.

The strength of your family will be determined by the strength of your family relationships. Jesus was asked, “‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?’ And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets’” (Matthew 22:36-40).

What is God’s desire for family? Relationship! Just as God, our Father, created us to be in relationship with Him and to enjoy His presence, He also wants us to first make our family relationships our top priority in building our family.

Remember Jesus could have chosen any commandment as most important — and He chose LOVE! He chose relationship. He chose connection, first to God and then to each other. Why? Because (1) that is the desire of His heart and (2) He knows that when we are in right relationship, our best life and our best family will follow.

We change our family and we change our world one relationship at a time!

Thank you again for joining with us! It is our honor to be with you!

Sincerely,

The Strategic Impact and Crazy Cool Family Team

“STRATEGIC IMPACT MULTIPLIES!”

That statement declares the heart of our movement. We follow Jesus’ command to train **multiplying leaders** who make **multiplying disciples** who start **multiplying churches** — so that every person can hear about the only hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ.

The manual you hold in your hands is designed to help train and equip **you** to be a multiplier. As you participate in these sessions, your instructor will equip you to multiply disciples, leaders, and even churches. But, that is only the beginning. As you learn and live this training, **we desire that you use it to also train others to multiply.**

You will see at the beginning of each session what that particular session is designed to do. These are defined in four goals:

1. The **overall objective** of the session: The main purpose of the session.
2. What to **know**: The teaching or information that is to be learned.
3. How one should **feel**: The motivation or inspiration that participants should receive as a result of the session.
4. What to **do**: Most importantly, what applications or actions the participants should take as a result of the session.

These four goals for each session are designed for you to begin learning and living out the training from each session. These four goals are also intended to help **you multiply** by using these same goals to pass on this training to others. To help you do this, all the main teaching points and sub-points of the outline are fully included.

Our prayer is that you will absorb and implement this training in your own life, and then use it to train others so that they will also learn it, live it, and multiply it by training others to multiply until the Great Commission is fulfilled.

Sincerely,

The Strategic Impact Team

IDENTITY:

We are a movement of like-minded leaders, passionately committed to Jesus Christ and to each other for the fulfillment of His Great Commission.

VISION:

We exist to offer every person the only hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ in our lifetime, or die trying.

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." - Matthew 28:18-20

MISSION:

We prayerfully identify and train Leaders to multiply Disciples who ignite Church Planting Movements everywhere.

"...and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

- 2 Timothy 2:2

STRATEGY:

We establish Leadership Teams in Strategic Cities of the world to multiply Church Planting Movements among every people group.

"(Paul) took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord." - Acts 19:9-10

PROCESS:

VISION SEMINAR (VS)

"SEE THE GREAT COMMISSION."
A one-day introduction to STRATEGIC IMPACT.

MULTIPLYING DISCIPLER LAUNCH (MDL)

"EXPERIENCE THE GREAT COMMISSION."
A vision for and practical training in evangelism and making multiplying disciples.

LEADER LAUNCH (LL)

"LEARN THE GREAT COMMISSION."
An intensive experience in personal growth, leadership skills, and church planting.

LIFELONG JOURNEY TO REACH YOUR LOST WORLD (JOURNEY)

"LIVE, LEAD, AND LAUNCH THE GREAT COMMISSION."
A LIFELONG JOURNEY TO REACH YOUR LOST WORLD through multiplying disciples, churches, leaders, and movements.

LEADER INTENSIVE TRAININGS (LIT)

"GROW IN THE GREAT COMMISSION."
Intensive experiences for those in the JOURNEY to grow in leadership character and leadership competency for the Great Commission.

KEY RELATIONSHIP CONCEPTS

PARENT-TO-GOD

Relationship Goal: DEVOTION

- Your Spiritual Identity
- Your Spiritual Hearing
- Your Example

MARRIAGE

Relationship Goal: UNITY

- Present Your Best Self to Your Spouse
- Bring Out the Best in Your Spouse
- Forgive and Serve Your Spouse
- Parent Together with Your Spouse

PARENT-TO-CHILD

Relationship Goal: INSPIRATION

- Acceptance
- Connection
- Discipleship
- Inspiration

CHILD-TO-CHILD

Relationship Goal: INVESTMENT

- Celebrate Differences
- Inspire Older Siblings
- Inspire Younger Siblings

CHILD-TO-GOD

Relationship Goal: FAITH

- Pray
- Live
- Equip
- Validate
- Experience

KEY CULTURE CONCEPTS

ENCOURAGEMENT

Theme: Parents encourage extravagantly and correct carefully.

- You Put Identity Into Them
- You Correct Carefully
- You Avoid Anger

SAFETY

Theme: Parents create a Safe Haven in their family where everyone in the family feels heard and appreciated.

- You Are Listening Parents
- You Are Not Lecturing Parents
- You Are Patient Parents

RELATIONAL DISCIPLINE

Theme: Parents help children move from parent-control of their lives to self-control. The goal of discipline is freedom.

- Establish Controlled Obedience To Parents
- Encourage Willing Obedience To Parents
- Inspire Willing Obedience To God

UNITY

Theme: Family unity is celebrating family uniqueness as we unite under family values.

- Celebrate Uniqueness in your Children
- Celebrate Uniqueness in your Spouse
- Choose and Establish Strong Family Values
- Define the Meaning of your Family Name



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JOURNEY TO A GODLY FAMILY

SESSION OUTLINES

STRATEGIC IMPACT - LEADER INTENSIVE TRAINING: JOURNEY TO A GODLY FAMILY
SESSION 1: THE KEYS TO A GODLY FAMILY

OVERVIEW:

Objective: Instructor will provide a vision for how to lead a family to love each other and love Jesus fully.

Know: Leaders will understand the key concepts of relationships and culture in the homes of believers.

Feel: Leaders will be inspired and filled with hope in raising their own families to follow Jesus and empower other parents to do the same.

Do: Leaders will be able to draw the CCF Three Commitment House and be able to explain it to parents in their sphere of influence.

God's vision for your family

1. Everyone in your family has a relationship with Jesus.
2. Everyone in your family has great relationships with all other family members.
3. Your family is a light to the world to help you Reach Your Lost World.

Family Vision: The strength of your family will be determined by the strength of your family relationships.

Good relationships are the focus of your ministry to your family because relationships are most important to Jesus!

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And He said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.’” (Matthew 22:36-40)

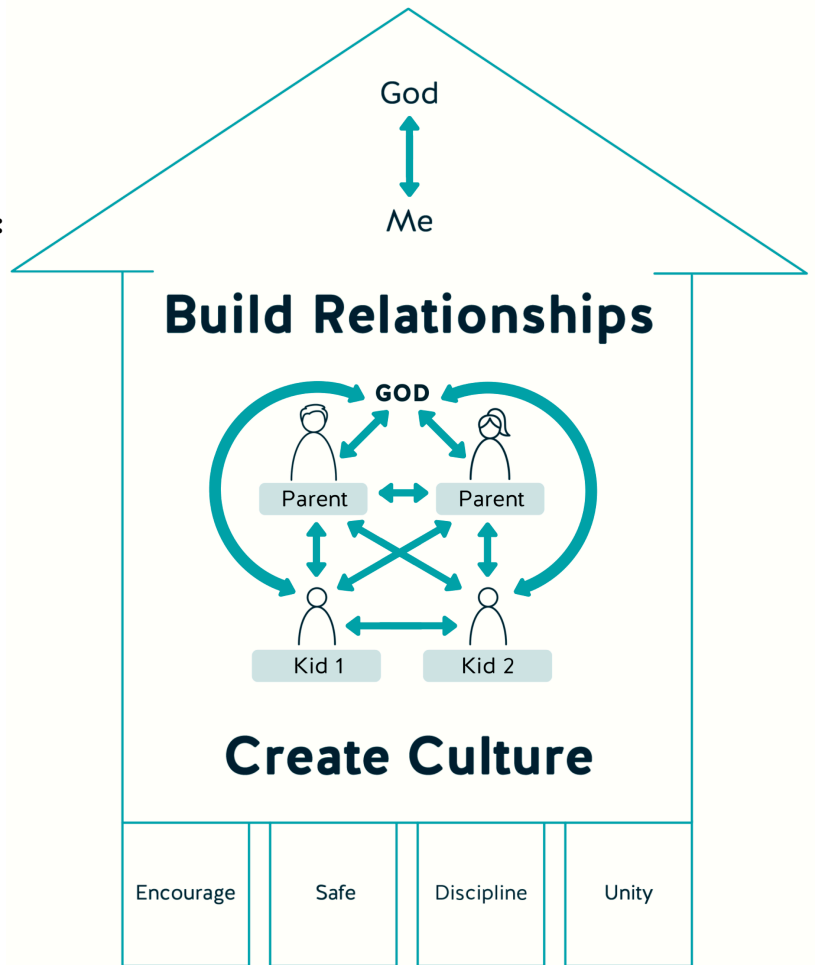
Family Mission: Your family mission should be to build a family where everyone in the family loves Jesus and loves each other deeply. The goal of family is to make every one those relationship lines strong!

You **Fulfill our Family Mission** by consistently pursuing the **Three Key Family Commitments** illustrated in the Three Commitment House.

The Three Key Family Commitments are:

5. Pursue God — You lead your family best when your relationship with God is strong.
6. Build Relationships — With your spouse, you work to build deep, connected relationships throughout your family (notice the Family Dashboard in the center of the Three Commitment House).
7. Create Culture — We work hard to instill the Four Cultural Pillars as a reality in your family.

Pursue God



The Five Types of Relationships in your family:

1. Parent-to-God
2. Marriage
3. Parent-to-Child
4. Child-to-Child
5. Child-to-God

The Four Culture Pillars (The Most Important Family Values):

The foundation of your family is the culture you build into your family. Culture is built by establishing the right family values. A **value** is something important to you.

1. **Encouragement** — You encourage extravagantly and correct carefully.
2. **Safety** — You create a Safe Haven in your family where everyone in the family feels heard and appreciated.
3. **Relational Discipline** — You help your children move from parent-control of their lives to self-control. The goal of discipline is freedom.
4. **Unity** — You celebrate the uniqueness of each person while uniting under common family values.

As you pursue the Three Key Family Commitments in your family:

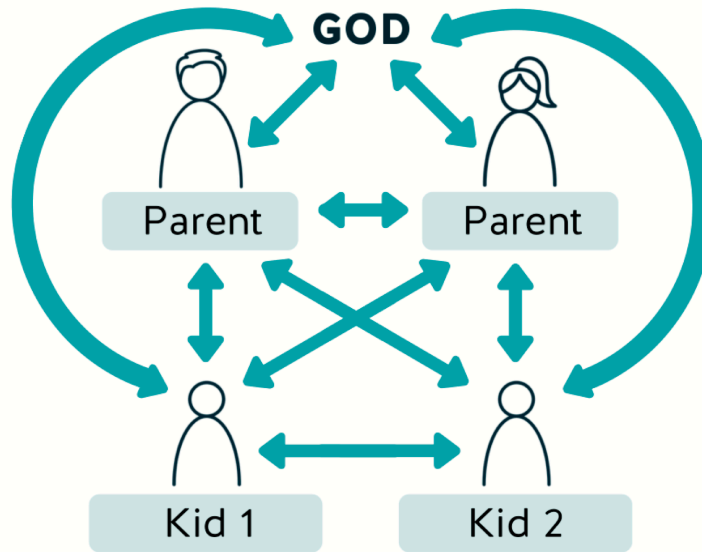
1. Each member of your family becomes a stronger disciple of Jesus, and
2. Your family becomes a blessing to everyone in the home and an example of the love of Jesus to those outside your home.

Fill in the blanks on your own House:

Pursue _____



Build _____



Create _____

_____	_____	_____	_____
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OVERVIEW:

Objective: Instructor will show leaders the extreme importance of a parent's devotion to God and the example they set in their family.

Know: Leaders will be able to understand and demonstrate how parents can hear God's voice in making wise decisions for their family.

Feel: Leaders will feel encouraged to pursue God fully and work with other family members more through modeling an example and less through commanding authority like Jesus modeled for us.

Do: Leaders will do the Parent-to-God exercises and begin to model more Christlike behavior in their home.

Introduction:

- In the next several Sessions, you will learn the Key Relationship Concepts for the Five Types of Relationships in your family. In Session 2, we will start with your relationship to God.
- This session helps us fulfill the 1st Key Commitment: **Pursue God** — You lead your family best when your relationship with God is strong.

PARENT-to-GOD

Relationship Goal: DEVOTION

The best dads and moms are **first** sons and daughters of the King! The first and best thing you can do for your family is have a strong relationship with Jesus. The *STRATEGIC IMPACT JOURNEY* courses are one of the best ways for you to develop your Parent-to-God relationship. In this session, You will see how your relationship with God directly impacts your marriage and your family.

God wants you to take the mindset of Jesus into your family. In your relationships with one another,
“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”
(Philippians 2:5-8)

The more you have the mindset of Jesus, the more you become the best spouse and best parent you can be!

Three Key Parent-to-God Relationship Concepts:

1. **Your Spiritual Identity** — You must know your own identity in Christ before you can show your children their identity in Christ.

You cannot give what you do not have. How can you give your children the love of God if that love is not inside you first? You are only able to show the love of God to your family if you are first walking in the love of God yourself.

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

When you are filled with God's love and you understand and embrace that you are His adopted child, the love in your hearts will overflow to your family! See *STAGE 1, TRAVEL GUIDE 2* in the *JOURNEY* course for further explanation of your identity in Christ.

2. **Your Spiritual Hearing** — You must learn to hear God’s voice to enable you to make wise decisions in guiding your family.

Spiritual Hearing is being able to hear what God (through the Holy Spirit, who is the Helper, the wise Counselor who lives inside of you) has to say about any specific situation, based on the truth of the Bible. It is asking the Holy Spirit for input, advice, wisdom, and perspective beyond your own wisdom, experience, or ideas regarding how to specifically apply the Bible in your present situation.

Many specific decisions you must make as a parent are not directly addressed in the Bible. Hearing God’s voice gives you direction and confidence in those situations.

Ephesians 1:17 says, “...keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know Him better.” Keep asking the Father for wisdom and revelation!

James 1:15 says, “If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.”

3. **Your Example** — Your children will follow your example much more than your instruction.

Remember in the *LEADER LAUNCH* the question “What is Christian Leadership?” It is motivating people (in this case, your children) from a foundation of godly character (your godly character) to accomplish a God-given vision (God’s plan for their lives).

If you desire your children to follow Jesus with all their hearts, you must first provide the example by following Jesus with all your heart. When they see the wonderful love of Jesus overflowing in you, they will want the love of Jesus for themselves!

“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.” (1 Corinthians 11:1)

PARENT-to-GOD EXERCISES

- Memorize Philippians 2:5-8
- On a weekly basis, ask yourself the *SPIRITUAL GROWTH QUESTIONS* in the *JOURNEY* course.
- Complete your *REST STOPS* with your *JOURNEY TEAM*.
- Ask the Lord this week about His vision for your family. The Lord wants to tell you specific insights to help each member of your family grow in relationship to Him and to the other family members. Here are some questions you can ask the Lord:
 - How can I encourage each member of my family this week?
 - What relationships in my family are struggling and need encouragement?
 - What can I do this week to bring more unity into my marriage and my family?
- Ask the Lord in prayer, then discuss with your spouse areas where you are being an example of the hope and love of Jesus and areas where you need improvement. Just like in the *JOURNEY* course, this is not an area of condemnation but an encouragement toward a deeper love of God for yourself and showing a deeper love of God to your family.

STRATEGIC IMPACT - LEADER INTENSIVE TRAINING: JOURNEY TO A GODLY FAMILY
SESSION 3: RELATIONSHIP 2 — MARRIAGE

OVERVIEW:

Objective: Instructor will explain the key aspects of how a unified marriage impacts the strength of the family.

Know: Leaders will understand how to help their spouse become their best and how to parent together even though they are different from their spouse in many ways.

Feel: Leaders will see their spouse as a gift from God and see God's vision for unity in their marriage.

Do: Leaders will do the Marriage Exercises at the end of the lesson to begin seeing more of God's incredible vision for their marriage and His vision for their spouse.

Introduction:

- The Five Types of Relationships in your family will be addressed in the next four Sessions.
- These sessions will help you fulfill the 2nd Key Commitment: **Build Relationships** — With your spouse you work to build deep, connected relationships throughout your family.

MARRIAGE

Relationship Goal: UNITY

A unified marriage helps you build a godly family. God wants a husband and a wife to become one flesh.

*“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife,
and they shall become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24)*

Five Key Marriage Concepts:

1. Present Your Best Self to Your Spouse

Unity with your spouse starts with your unity to God. Remember the First Key Family Commitment is “Pursue God.” That is why “Pursue God” is at the top of the Three Commitment House.

“...submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.” (Ephesians 5:21)

God is able to show you His vision for your marriage as you first see His vision for your life. You will be able to submit to your spouse and create unity in your marriage only when you have first submitted to Jesus.

2. Bring Out the Best in Your Spouse

The best thing you can do for your spouse is help them Pursue God.

“So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

God created your spouse different from you. Unity does not mean making your spouse like you. It means you create an environment in your marriage — a Culture (see Sessions 5-6) — where you help your spouse find God's vision for their life as you find God's vision for yours.

3. Forgive Your Spouse

Forgiveness is a powerful tool because it reconciles our relationship with our spouse. How often are you to forgive your spouse? Start with seven!

“...and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.” (Luke 17:4)

When you forgive your spouse for an offense, you reconcile that relationship. Forgiveness brings your marriage closer together. Unforgiven offenses create relationship wounds, prevent them from healing, and cause them to expand. Forgiven offenses bring relationship healing.

God is always reminding His people in the Bible to forgive others like He has forgiven us.

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.” (Ephesians 4:32)

How does God’s forgiveness make you feel? Does it make you feel loved? In the same way, your spouse will feel loved when you forgive them.

4. Serve Your Spouse

Serving is a powerful tool because it shows your spouse the special place they have in your life.

“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13)

Just as you follow God in forgiveness, you also follow God in serving. *“For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”* (Mark 10:45).

How do you serve? Consider the example of Jesus in John 13:14 which says, *“If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.”* Do the hard thing in serving. No task is beneath you. Consider what your spouse needs and how can you serve them best?

God commands you to both forgive and serve. He commands these things particularly in marriage because He loves you and knows these will bring you into great unity with your spouse.

5. Parent Together with Your Spouse

As your marriage comes together in unity, your parenting will also come together in unity, as well. You will learn how God created each of you uniquely and when the best of each of you come together in unity, together you will make a wise parenting team!

Four ways to parent together in unity:

A. Praise your spouse in front of your children.

Find things your spouse does well and make sure your children know about it. When your children see you celebrating your spouse, it makes them love and respect your spouse at a whole new level.

B. Talk about parenting differences in private.

Discuss parenting differences in private and not in the moment. Often discussions involving parenting differences can result in arguments and harsh talking. When your children see those discussions, it puts fear in them about the stability of your marriage relationship. Further, often one spouse or both will disrespect one another in the discussion. It is better to discuss these matters in private and show unity with each other and respect for one another in front of your children.

C. Allow your spouse to make parenting mistakes.

Let your spouse make parenting mistakes. Three words will help you parent in unity, “Let it go.” If your spouse is out of control, try your best to not correct them in that moment. Reduce the immediate harm as best you can and then talk about it later. Chances are your spouse knows they were not parenting well in that moment. You are not going to help by correcting them in front of the children. Give them a chance to cool off. Choose to support them, help them out of the situation, and encourage them to seek forgiveness later.

D. Frequently discuss the values you want in your home.

Unity in parenting is about shared values. A value is something important to us. As husband and wife, you are the leaders of your home. It is important you decide in unity what are the key values of your home. As you decide together what is important, when parenting issues arise, you are much more likely to be in agreement instead of being in conflict.

MARRIAGE EXERCISES

- Spend some special time with your spouse this week. Do your best to listen to their heart and simply enjoy your time with them.
- Write your spouse a note telling them something you are grateful for in them.
- Encourage your spouse in areas of their life where God is working to help them be their best. For example, you might say, “I really see you being patient with the children. I believe it is making our home much more peaceful.”
- Regularly discuss your family values with your spouse. Where is God speaking to both of you about the direction for your family? What should be most important? Where are you parenting together and where are there differences?
- Reflect on this question: How have you helped your spouse be their best this week?
- Make a point to praise your spouse in front of your children at least once this week. A wife might say, “Wow! Your father is such a great provider. He really works hard to make sure we have what we need to live.” A husband might say, “Your mom does such a great job of reminding you to treat each other with kindness and respect! She sets a wonderful example to follow in this!”

OVERVIEW:

Objective: Instructor will seek to help leaders learn to inspire their children towards following the Lord with all their heart.

Know: Leaders will understand the “Fourfold Pathway” to the heart of their child.

Feel: Leaders will feel fresh insight into the pathway to their child’s heart and empowered to teach other parents these concepts.

Do: Leaders will commit to building acceptance into the heart of their children.

Introduction:

- Remember the Five Types of Relationships in your family:
 1. Parent-to-God
 2. Marriage
 3. Parent-to-Child
 4. Child-to-Child
 5. Child-to-God
- In this session you will learn how to deepen the Parent-to-Child relationships in your family.

PARENT-to-CHILD

Relationship Goal: INSPIRATION

Here are some insights to encourage you to develop deep relationships with your children — The better you **know** your child, the better you can **parent** your child.

- Your child will only **follow** you as much as they **trust** you.
- Your children cannot be **commanded** to believe but must be **inspired** to believe.
- Your children get their identity from you **before** they get their identity from God.

God creates a special bond between a parent and a child. He instills within your heart a deep love for your family. Your role as parents is to nurture the relationship with each child. Your goal is to inspire them to have a relationship with you and, more importantly, with Jesus Christ.

“Fourfold Pathway” to the Heart of Your Child:

1. Acceptance

Look to the example of God’s interaction with Jesus to see how He wants you to interact with your children. Matthew 3:16-17 says, *“And when Jesus was baptized, immediately He went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on Him; and behold, a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’”*

Three things God spoke over His Son:

- A. I claim you.
- B. I love you.
- C. I am pleased with you.

As you show these same things to your children, you will see them grow in confidence and be more receptive to a relationship with Jesus. Remember their first picture of God comes from their picture of you. God has entrusted you with giving your children their first glimpses of the Father’s love!

2. Connection

Connection means to unite, link, and bond — to establish communication. Acceptance is the beginning of connection. The more your children feel accepted and loved by you, the more willing they will be to connect with you.

But connection goes deeper. Connection involves listening. Connection involves pursuing. Connection involves honoring your child as a individual person.

Connection does not diminish your authority as a parent. In fact, when a child feels accepted by and connected to a parent, it is actually easier for that child to follow the authority of the parent. Disconnected children either follow their parents out of fear or rebel against their parents. Connected children follow their parents out of love!

3. Discipleship

Once your child feels accepted and feels a connection with you, then they will be much more open to being disciplined by you! There is no greater joy in life than to see your children love Jesus with all their heart. Your primary role as parent to show your children the love of Jesus and encourage them to be devoted to Him. Discipleship is simply walking with your children and showing them Jesus “along the way.”

“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

The best discipleship with your children comes from them seeing you passionately devoted to Jesus and hearing you sharing your faith with them “along the way.”

4. Inspiration

One of the greatest responsibilities God gives parents is to inspire their children toward God’s vision for their lives. Inspiration means to help someone want to do something and believe they can do it. You cannot make the choice for your children to be devoted to Jesus. Only they can only make that choice. Your role as parents is to inspire them to make their own choice to follow God’s vision for their lives.

For some, this is a very different way of thinking about your children. You may have grown up in a home/community where parents focused much more on strict obedience and less on relationship, connection, and inspiration. Look at how Jesus talked about children.

“...and said, ‘Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me...’” (Matthew 18:3-5)

Jesus realized children have a certain place in the family (the “lowly position”). Children are not in authority and certainly need to be trained and instructed. However, Jesus also gives honor to children and even tells parents they can learn from children just as children learn from parents.

You will inspire your children toward loving Jesus with all their hearts when you honor them as Jesus honored them.

OVERVIEW:

Objective: Instructor will teach leaders the exciting concept of siblings as friends which can revolutionize the relationships in families.

Know: Leaders will understand why God created us all so differently in our family and how to celebrate those differences to bring harmony in the home.

Feel: Leaders will respond with a new vision for Child-to-Child relationships in their home.

Do: Leaders will review and implement the Exercises at the end of this lesson.

CHILD-to-CHILD

Relationship Goal: INVESTMENT

So often parents overlook the value of bonding siblings together. Your children have great influence on each other and you are wise parents when you understand your role in inspiring your children to invest in each other instead of fight with one another.

Three Key Child-to-Child Relationship Concepts:

- 1. Celebrate Differences** — All children are unique and so we celebrate the differences of each child. The Marriage Session explained how God made people male and female and how those unique differences affected the marriage relationship. This uniqueness of God's design goes even deeper as we consider the differences of our children.

“For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well.”
(Psalm 139:13-14)

Your children are created uniquely by God and they are all very different. Further, they all have the common trait of a sin nature which can make them selfish and demanding. The combination of common selfishness and individual differences bring about inevitable conflicts in the family. Satan's evil desire is to use these differences and conflicts to destroy your family. But God promises that He created those differences and wants to use them for the good of your family.

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

Once you see God's design in the differences in your children, you can learn how to see the differences as ways God is teaching you and your family to know each other better and to know Him better.

- 2. Inspire Older Siblings** — Older siblings are essential partners in the family.

What Parents Teach the Older Sibling:

- **Vision** — Cast vision for them. Their acceptance of their role is critical. Older siblings are your partner in raising great younger siblings.
 - Older siblings easily fit into a partnership role in overseeing and helping guide younger siblings.
 - Children want to be needed in the family. Partnership gives the older siblings purpose and helps them to see bigger picture of the family values and vision.
 - God sovereignly placed your older children in their birth order as a older sibling. To walk well in that role is to embrace God's purpose for them in the family.

- **Honor** — Honor their time and their rights.
 - Parents should instruct and guide older siblings instead of lecture them about their role.
 - Older children will need some personal space and be allowed specific time for them to play with their own friends from their own age group.
 - The goal in working with older children is to turn their hearts toward their role, not control their behavior.
- **Perspective** — Help them see the power God has given them with their younger siblings.
 - God has appointed older siblings to be bigger, stronger, and a few years more experienced than their younger siblings. The older siblings will learn through personal experience that the world will often be unkind and seek to harm to harm children. It is important to help older siblings to see that they can invest in their siblings to benefit them as an agent for good or they can join the world in bringing damage to their siblings. Encourage them to do good!
- **Acceptance** — Recognize the annoyance of younger siblings and help them work through it.
 - Help older children to see the good qualities in their younger siblings, for example: John is funny and smart.
 - Allow older children to come to you and make an appeal when things seem unjust or when a younger sibling is being excessively annoying.
 - Guide older children toward remembering what it was like when they were the younger sibling's age. Help them to see situations from the siblings perspective.

3. **Inspire Younger Siblings** — Younger siblings are blessings in the home.

What Parents Teach the Younger Sibling:

- **Vision** — Cast vision for them. The role of the younger sibling to be a blessing. *“Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward”* (Psalm 127:3).
 - Help younger children toward behaving in a way that makes them more desirable to play with to their older siblings.
 - Encourage the younger siblings to allow the older children lead the way.
 - Correct the younger children when they throw a tantrum and guide them toward a better way of communication when they do not get their way.
- **Respect** — Younger siblings need to respect their older siblings. Especially with respect to:
 - Time — Younger siblings should play with older siblings for a while but then allow them their own personal time, alone or with friends their own age.
 - Space — When in the older sibling's space or using their possessions, make sure younger siblings know to leave things in as good of or better condition than than you found them.
- **Unity** — Work out issues instead of tattling to parents every time there is conflict.
 - Younger and older siblings need to learn to work out their own disagreements in most areas of conflict.
 - There will be times when parents need to be involved. Training both young and older children how to discern between working out their disagreement or reporting to parents is important!
 - The goal is to resolve conflict and restore unity between the siblings in every situation.
- **Honor** — Younger siblings show older siblings they value them.
 - Younger siblings should feel comfortable asking advice of the older siblings.
 - Younger siblings should say good things about older siblings to others.

When your children become best friends and support one another instead of fight with each other, you build the unity of your home and your family becomes full of joy and peace instead of conflict and stress.

QUESTIONS and EXERCISES

How to Accept Your Child as an Individual:

1. Seek to Understand Your Child
 - Genuinely listen to **what** a child is saying or asking for.
 - Ask the child **why** they are saying it or asking for whatever it is.
 - It is essential to understand things from your child's perspective.
 - It is very helpful to hear the child's thoughts about things. This will give you great insight.
2. Believe the Best About Your Child
 - Ask God to reveal to you how He sees your child.
 - View your child as a gift from God which He sent into your life as a blessing. "*Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward*" (Psalm 127:3).
 - Tell your child what God reveals to you about them and how they are intended as a blessing from Him. You will see them begin to become what God has intended for them.
3. Appreciate the Uniqueness About Your Child
 - Notice the differences in each child and choose to see these differences as valuable blessings.
 - Thank the Lord for each child's uniqueness and be grateful for how these differences help you and your family to grow and mature in Christ.
 - Tell your each child how God made them uniquely amazing and how much you appreciate them.

Ways to Connect With Your Children:

1. Pursue Your Children
 - Spend time with no set agenda beyond enjoying each other's companionship.
 - Ask good questions about themselves — about their hopes, dreams, desires, and struggles.
 - Join them in their world. (Playing the games they enjoy, expressing concern for the decisions they are facing, etc.)
 - Mate opportunities for one-on-one time together. (Take them with you on errands, relax together and talk, go on a walk together, etc.)
2. Enjoy Your Children
 - See your children as delightful gifts given specifically to you by God.
 - Spend less time worrying and more time enjoying your children! Laugh more!
 - Research has shown that a nursery school-age child will laugh about 300 times per day and an adult will laugh only about 17 times per day. How much would the world improve if adults laughed and found daily enjoyment as much as children?
3. Honor Your Children
 - Treat them as real people. Let them speak, finish their sentences, and express their ideas and preferences.
 - Be attentive, not distracted. One great way to do this is to put your phone or any other distracting item away when you are giving attention to your child.

How to Discipline Your Children:

1. Be a Model for Your Children

- *“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 11:1)
- Know God intimately — Read His word, worship Him daily.
- Love God passionately — Include Him in every part of your life and then share with your children how He is working in you.
- Serve God faithfully — Go to church, serve others, and share His goodness.

2. Be a Teacher for Your Children

- *“You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”* (Deuteronomy 11:19)
- Places “along the way” to be a teacher for your children:
 - Mealtimes — As issues are brought up, ask this question: “Where is God in this situation?”
 - Bedtime — Read to them or tell them about the awesome stories of the Bible.
 - While Traveling — Encourage them to share about their day and help them see where God is working.
 - Outside — Anytime you are in creation, bring God into your conversation.

3. Celebrate God’s Greatness with Your Children

- *“Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all.”* (1 Chronicles 29:11)
- Ways to show your children the greatness of God:
 - Show them God’s wonders — in creation, the way our bodies function, the way our minds work.
 - Talk about God’s work in your own life.
 - Share the Bible with them, especially what you have been reading and how God has spoken to you through it.
 - Show them how God blesses you in your daily life. Help them to see how God is blessing them in their daily lives.

OVERVIEW:

Objective: Instructors will equip leaders with five key Child-to-God relationship concepts.

Know: Leaders will understand the importance of connecting their children to God and developing new ways to show their children God's incredible love for them.

Feel: Leaders will have renewed faith that God wants the best for their children and their family.

Do: Leaders will review and implement the Exercises at the end of this lesson.

CHILD-to-GOD

Relationship Goal: FAITH

For the Christian parent, there is no greater joy than knowing your children love Jesus. Their eternity is secure and they know the unconditional love of God. Children who love God walk with confidence and security. This makes your job as a parent so much easier. The easiest children to raise are children who love Jesus!

Children who love Jesus are much more likely to make wise decisions, to have good relationships with their siblings, and to honor you as parents. They share your Christian values and they want to let God speak into their dreams about life.

On the other hand, a child struggling with their faith creates struggles for their parents. The lack of shared values can cause difficulties in the Parent-to-Child relationship. These children tend to be more defiant, more disconnected, and less trustworthy.

You can do your best as parents to lead your children to be devoted to Jesus through the **Five Key Child-to-God Relationship Concepts:**

1. Prayer — Ask God for the hearts of your children.

Pray fervently and often for your children. Is there anything more important to you than to have your children following Jesus with all their hearts? Then you should pray as Jesus commanded in His parable in Luke 18:1-7.

“And He told them a parable to the effect that they ought always to pray and not lose heart. He said, ‘In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor respected man. And there was a widow in that city who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Give me justice against my adversary.’ For a while he refused, but afterward he said to himself, ‘Though I neither fear God nor respect man, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will give her justice, so that she will not beat me down by her continual coming.’” And the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unrighteous judge says. And will not God give justice to His elect, who cry to Him day and night? Will He delay long over them?’” (Luke 18:1-7)

How does Jesus want you to pray for your children? Every day He wants you to “bother” God with your passionate prayers for your children to be devoted to Jesus.

2. **Your Life** — Your example is more important than your instruction.

A reminder from the Parent-to-God Session:

Your children will follow your example much more than your instruction.

This does not mean you have to be a perfect parent who does everything right every time. It means your children should see you devoted to Christ on your own journey to grow in your faith. God encourages His people throughout the Bible to be authentic parents with honest issues following a real God. Your children will be inspired to follow that example.

3. **Equipping** — Impress God’s Word on their hearts “along the way.”

In the Parent-to-Child session, Deuteronomy 6:6-7 was discussed and the the phrase “along the way” was referenced.

“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise” (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

No one learns to follow Jesus in a single day. Followers of Jesus learn it a little at a time. Your children are the same. They learn a little at a time, first by your example and then by your teaching.

4. **Transparency** — Encourage questions and discussions about faith.

Transparency is encouraged because it opens the door to genuine questions so you may have influence in the answers.

Every child goes on their **own** journey with Jesus. It is a natural and necessary process for them to take ownership of their faith. You should be excited about your children’s questions because it means they trust you and want to hear from your experiences. As each child matures, their level of ownership should increase.

When they are asking honest questions and taking increased ownership of their own faith, it becomes exciting to walk with them in the journey. When handled well by parents, their journey can even ignite a parent’s own faith as they challenge your beliefs and as you challenge theirs in healthy relationship.

A key principle to remember: **Faith grows when questions are welcomed and dies when you only lecture your child.** This is not just when they are teenagers. From a very young age when children ask “Why?” about everything, to when they first encounter situations in which sin and evil are involved, to when they question why God would allow bad things to happen — You should welcome your children to share their fears and questions with you so you can help guide them toward truth. Asking questions is both normal and healthy.

Remember: You will not have to have all the answers. “I do not know” can be an honest and good answer. It is alright that there are things you do not know about your faith. In fact, it is good because it allows you to explore the answers in the Bible alongside your children. God is mysterious and your job as parents is to unlock the mystery of God for and with your children!

5. **Experience** — Create spiritual experiences for your children throughout their lives. Experiences are “encounters” or “participation in events.”

Think about some of the people that experienced God in the Bible. When they encountered God, it transformed their lives!

- Noah was commanded to build an ark. (Genesis 6)
- Moses encountered God through the burning bush. (Exodus 3)
- Abraham trusted God to provide the ram to sacrifice in the place of his son Isaac. (Genesis 22)
- Jacob wrestled with God and had his hip put out of joint. (Genesis 32)
- Solomon chose to ask for wisdom from God above riches or victories. (1 Kings 3)
- The disciples spent time with Jesus in person. (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
- Paul encountered the risen Christ on the road to Damascus. (Acts 9)

That is the God you want your children to experience! A God full of life and love and joy and power!

In your world, how do you help your children experience God? Maybe it is walk out in creation. Maybe you go to worship nights. Maybe it is taking them with you to do ministry, to share the Gospel or disciple others, or to go on a missions trip. The world offers its experiences and your children will get their fill of them. What can you do as a parent to help your child have God experiences?

QUESTIONS and EXERCISES

Ways to live for God in your family:

1. Have “God conversations” within your family.

This is one of the main reasons children will follow Jesus. “God conversations” should always be a normal part of your home. If Jesus is your best friend and He is involved in every area of your life, then it is natural that you would talk about Him frequently in conversations with your family.

Everyone talks about the things that are important to them. If you want your children to make good grades, you ask them if they have done their homework, you help them with their assignments, you communicate with their teachers. You talk about grades and how important they are. If You want your children to follow Jesus, you talk about Jesus in your daily life. “Jesus helped me in this work situation.” “Here is what I am reading in the Bible and how it is changing me.” “I am so excited about our new small group.” “Let’s go be the hands and feet of Jesus as we serve those in need.” “Look at the beauty of God’s creation.” “We are so grateful for God’s provision.” Help your children see the hand of God at work in every situation.

2. Willingly share your struggles and successes with your family.

It is so important to be vulnerable and transparent with your family. God shows up as you share your life with them! One of the best things you can say to your children is “This is what God is doing in my life...” Instead of hiding from your children and trying to appear perfect (which doesn’t work anyway), why not use the struggles and successes of life to help build the faith of your children?

Your children see when you are stressed and hurting. When they see you invite God into difficult situations to help you, they see how you handle life with God’s help. This provides for them a model of how to depend upon God in every situation.

OVERVIEW:

Objective: Instructors will review the Four Pillars of Culture introduced in Session 1 and train leaders on the first pillar encouragement.

Know: Leaders will understand more about how to encourage their children in love and be careful in their correction so that it is more effective.

Feel: Leaders will see and feel the dangers of anger in their home and see and feel how they can change the hearts of their children by changing how they interact with them.

Do: Leaders will start to practice becoming more encouraging and less domineering in their interactions with their family members.

Introduction:

- The remaining Sessions will address creating a healthy family culture.
- These sessions will help you fulfill the 3rd Key Commitment: **Create Culture** — We work hard to instill the Four Cultural Pillars as a reality in your family.

CREATE CULTURE

Strong, healthy relationships are what you want to create in your family. Your goal is to make all your family connections strong. Culture is the “how” in creating your family relationships. Culture tells you what to make important so all the relationships can flourish.

Think of culture like raising a family garden. You put plants in the garden and then provide them with the right water, temperature, fertilizer, and light to grow. Similarly, when you make the right values important in our home, you create an environment for your family relationships to grow strong and healthy.

Four Culture Pillars:

1. Encouragement
2. Safety
3. Relational Discipline
4. Unity

ENCOURAGEMENT

Theme: Parents encourage extravagantly and correct carefully.

God loves for everyone, including parents, to be encouraging, faith-filled believers.

“But encourage one another every day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” (Hebrews 3:13)

In Romans 12, Paul even elevates encouragement into a spiritual gift! When he lists the different gifts like prophecy, giving, and serving, he also includes the spiritual gift of encouragement!

“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who encourages, in his encouragement; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.” (Romans 12:6-8)

Encouragement is a gift from God used to bless your family and others!

Four Key Encouragement Concepts:

1. You put identity into them

The Parent-to-God Session began with Your Spiritual Identity. One key passage stated, “You must know your own identity in Christ before you can show your children their identity in Christ.” It is time to learn how to give your children their identity in Christ.

When your children are little, they do not understand the concept of God the way they will when they are older. In a very real sense, the way a child will view God in the future is heavily shaped and formed by the way the view their parents in the present. Just like you depend on God for all things, they depend on parents for all their needs and often believe their parents can do anything!

Remember the story from Session 3 (Parent-to-Child) about God speaking identity to Jesus at His baptism? (Matthew 3:17). As God spoke identity into Jesus at His baptism, God provided a great example of how parents are to give identity to their children. Your children need to know:

- A. You claim them.
- B. You love them.
- C. You are pleased with them.

When you fulfill your role of putting your love and your identity into your children, it will be much easier for them to receive God’s love and identity when they get older.

2. You Correct Carefully

Correction handled properly and biblically is needed and helpful in raising your children. In fact, it is essential! However, correction handled poorly is harmful to your children. Improper correction tells your children they are not worthy of God’s love.

“I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and encourage, with complete patience and careful teaching.” (2 Timothy 4:1-2)

Paul says to “reprove, rebuke and encourage” but to do it “with complete patience and careful teaching.” It is not a question of IF you correct your children or not. You should! But every parent should learn the difference between **Careful Correction** and **Careless Correction**.

Careless Correction is:

- Overused — Parents who carelessly correct often over-correct. The child feels that they are always in trouble, constantly spanked, corrected, or grounded.
- Harsh — Parents who carelessly correct usually do so out of anger and regularly yell or shout.
- Lecturing — Parents who carelessly correct will lecture more than listen. A lecture is “a dull, tedious reprimand” and is focused on the parent venting more than the child receiving correction. Listening is focused on hearing the child in order to communicate deeply with them to instruct them.

Careful Correction requires a different approach. Careful Correction is:

- Wisely Selective — Parents to carefully correct do not lecture about every wrong thing. They focus their instruction on a few things at a time. Do not be a parent who is constantly “on” your child.
- Seeks Success — Parents who carefully correct will create opportunities for their child’s success. The set up situations where the child can experience accomplishment.
- Listen, not Lecture — Again, a lecture is “a dull, tedious reprimand.” No one responds well to receiving a lecture. Replace lectures with listening in your parenting skillset. When you ask good questions and genuinely listen to your child, they will be more receptive to your instruction.
- End with Relationship — Parents who carefully correct make certain to “connect” back with their child after a correction session. If needed, carefully correcting parents seek forgiveness from their child. Even in correction, a carefully correcting parent maintains a healthy relationship.

3. You Avoid Anger

Unrestrained anger is devastating to your children. It undoes so much of the good parents seek to accomplish. Anger is a very expensive relationship withdrawal. Exercising your anger is very costly and damaging to your family relationships. It actually encourages behaviors you do not want in your child. Anger encourages:

- Fear — Children of angry parents often hide from their parent in many ways — physically and emotionally.
- Aggression — The aggressiveness of a child of angry parents may be directed toward the parent, but many times it is directed toward people whom the child has power over.
- Hesitancy — Children of angry parents tend to be afraid of making a mistake, and therefore frequently hesitate to take action.

“Refrain from anger, and forsake wrath! Fret not yourself; it tends only to evil.” (Psalm 37:8)

“A man of wrath stirs up strife, and one given to anger causes much transgression.” (Proverbs 29:22)

You must realize that your anger leads to evil things. Your anger places negative stuff into your children. Your anger invests things in your child which you do not want to be there.

“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (James 1:19-20)

How do you Correct Carefully while minimizing your anger?

- Separate **firmness** from **anger**.
 - You may think that in order to be firm you must be angry. You may associate anger with strength. But Jesus did not see things that way. Jesus did not take the role of an earthly father with physical children, but He did have the next closest thing to His own children — His disciples. Jesus even refers to them “*Little children*” in John 13:33. He was so far ahead of them in what He knew, yet Jesus was still patient with the disciples while challenging them and teaching them. Jesus said in Matthew 5:37, “*All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything else comes from the evil one.*” He did not say you had to be angry to answer, but simply answer “Yes” or “No.”
- Find **different ways to motivate**.
 - Anger is a short-term fix. It may produce immediate results but is detrimental in the long-term. It is important to think about the big picture and long-term effects. Our methods of patient instruction and encouragement may take longer than the easy, short-term action of anger, but they will be much more effective in the long-term.

OVERVIEW:

Objective: Instructors will train leaders on how to draw out the heart of their family by developing patient listening skills.

Know: Leaders will understand more about how God's "throne of grace" applies to them and how they become better leaders in their home by creating their own throne of grace for their family members.

Feel: Leaders will feel much more connected to their family members as they listen to them and learn more about each one.

Do: Leaders will actively practice listening and refrain from excessive commands in the home.

SAFETY

Theme: Parents create a Safe Haven in their family where everyone in the family feels heard and appreciated.

Your home needs to be a place where everyone is encouraged and nurtured so they can go back out and face the world. The world can be a harsh and cruel place so your home needs to be a safe place to retreat from the world. It needs to be a place filled with love and with God's presence.

To discover how to create a Safe Haven in your home, you can look to God the Father as an example.

"Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Hebrews 4:16)

When your children approach your "throne," what do they find? A throne of grace like God's example or a harsh throne of judgement?

Here are three Key Safe Haven Concepts:

1. You are listening parents.

The #1 key to creating a Safe Haven in your home is to become a **great listener**. If you learn one thing from this Session, it is to become a **great listener**. Everything discussed the rest of the way will relate back to **listening**.

"Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger." (James 1:19)

Listening is powerful at all ages! Your listening to your children when they are younger will encourage them to share with you as they get older.

Listening to your children at every age creates trust and gives your children confidence in themselves.

2. You are not lecturing parents.

A lecture is a dull, tedious reprimand. When parents lecture and reprimand too often and too harshly, the following will happen:

- Children will want to distance themselves — They do not feel safe around their parents so they avoid them. This is especially true as the children get older.
- Children will begin to lie — They do not want the disapproval of their parents, so they lie in order to avoid the lecture and disapproval.
- Children will lose confidence — They feel that they are under constant judgement and do not feel like they can do anything right in their parent's eyes.

3. You are patient parents.

Parenting is a long-term process. Just as you do not usually embrace change quickly, neither do your children. The wise parent will understand this and develop **much patience** with their children. It takes time to develop strong beliefs and strong habits in our children.

How to parent patiently instead of using anger:

- Speak softly — When children are young, there will be the need for more “moments” of immediate instruction. In these moments, make it your habit to speak very softly to them where only they can hear your words. It will become very obvious to them what is going on. This habit will help force you to remain in control of yourself and will be clear to the child that the parent is serious about the situation.
- Wait before you respond — If you feel angry or near out of control, allow yourself time to calm down. Take a deep breath and maybe go for a brief walk to give yourself the necessary time to get past your initial anger.
- Ask for forgiveness — When you become angry, ask your child for forgiveness for your anger. *“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger,”* (Ephesians 4:26). Model humility through the confession of your sin.

QUESTIONS and EXERCISES

How to listen to children at any age:

1. Young Children (“Littles”)

It is often difficult to listen to little children when they talk so much and their stories do not seem to be trivial and unimportant in comparison to adult life. But remember: If you listen to them when they are five years old, they will be much more likely to talk to you when they are fifteen years old! If you listen to them when they are talking about things which seem unimportant, they will talk to you about things which are much more important when they are older.

When your children are “Littles,” you are laying a foundation of safety you will continue to build upon as they grow older. Don Manning shared that when his daughter was a one year old, she would tell him stories. No one in the family could understand a word she was saying, but she had facial expressions and inflection and so many words! Don remembers engaging with her by responding, “Really? Tell me more.” He was building in her a feeling of security to tell her story. Today, she is an adult and is a great story-teller.

How do you listen to your Littles?:

- A. Take the time to get on eye level with them and listen to them.
- B. Do not be distracted when you choose to listen to them. You do not have to do it all the time. Sometimes it’s ok to say, “I really want to hear that, but Mommy cannot do that right now. When I am finished, I will give you my full attention.” Once you start to listen, then really give them your full attention. If you cannot give them your undivided attention immediately, tell them, ‘I really value what you have to say and want to give you my full attention, let me finish this task, and in 5 minutes, I will hear you out.’”

What you are doing by listening is showing your children that they are valuable and that you are trustworthy and safe. It has been said about small children that “They are just smaller people.”

Many times, a parent listens with more focused attention to a cashier at the market or a neighbor down the street than they listen to their own children. Just as God hears the prayers of His children, your children deserve your listening ear more than anyone else in the world! They need to feel loved and respected like “little people” and not devalued by being ignored.

2. Children who are a bit older (“Middles”)

When your children get to the “Middles” stage, you begin to see that they understand more of what is going on in life. Listening becomes a more complicated because it becomes more interactive.

At this age (and and the next age of the “Bigs”), you will likely feel that they understand more. This can lead you toward the opposite extreme from ignoring them — lecturing them.

What is a lecture and why should you avoid it? A lecture is a long, tedious reprimand. Contrast lecture with listening. Do you prefer to be listened to or lectured? Which leads you to be more open to receive instruction and guidance? Your children feel the same way!

“A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.” (Proverbs 18:2)
— also known as lecturing!

Most of the time a parent has good intentions with their lectures. But sometimes a parent will lecture because they are angry. Lecturing is the opposite of listening. The more you learn to listen and the less you will lecture. The less you lecture, the more your words will be heard and received. When you were a child and your parents lectured you, did you receive what they were saying or tune out their words? As adults, most people still tune out the speaker when they are being lectured to!

When your children are in the “Middles” phase, you can create an environment which helps them listen to you. You do this by listening to them.

Two Ways to Transition from Lecturing to Listening while still providing Good Instruction:

A. Understand before you instruct.

- Ask good questions. Proverbs 20:5 says, *“The purpose in a man’s heart is like deep water, but a man of understanding will draw it out.”* What kind of questions do you need to ask to draw out the deep waters of your children’s heart? Ask curious questions to grow your understanding of your child and the situation they are in instead of asking accusatory questions which imply guilt and wrongdoing.

B. Lead them to the right conclusion before you tell them the right conclusion.

- Your children are often just like you. They think they know a lot more than they actually know. Your job as a parent is not to tell them what to do but to help guide them to make a wise decision and do what is best for them. You do that by leading them to come to a right conclusion. Some examples of these types of questions are:
 - “What do you think was the right thing to do there?” (Instead of simply telling them what was right, ask them questions and help them work through the thought process.)
 - “What if you did this instead? What do you think would have happened?” (Help them think through the options available to them and then decide on the most wise from those options before taking action.)

By listening and leading them to their own conclusions, you are continuing to build their feelings of safety and trust as you lead them in making their own wise decisions. This moves a single parenting win to become two parenting wins!

3. Older Children (“Bigs”)

You can continue this process of listening as your children grow to become “Bigs.” A piece of good news is that as children grow, they become more interesting to have conversations with. In reality, they become more interesting and the situations they find themselves in also become more concerning at the same time!

With the “Bigs,” there is a natural and healthy tendency toward independence. As they move further in school and become teenagers, children naturally start to ask more questions, start to form their own belief systems, and start to be able to function more independently. If you have built a foundation of listening to them when they are younger, raising teenagers who will listen to you becomes much easier!

You have built a trusting environment, you help them make wise decisions, and you walk with them through the consequences of bad decisions. It is a delight to watch them develop into adults!

During the “Bigs” phase, your actions will shift slightly in your parenting.

A. You will spend more time drawing them out and building their trust.

- In some ways, your teenager will become like a toddler again. Not in intelligence — although sometimes it may seem like that — but in the way they behave. Teenagers need more sleep. Their body is going through many changes. They become fearful about various things such as gained independence and their future.
- This is also a time when parents can become scared. The common way a parent responds to being scared is to overreact and clamp down on our teenagers. These actions frequently cause the teenager to withdraw, which leads the parent to assert even more control. You should do the opposite. Overcome your fears and focus on drawing your teenager out.

B. You can still be the parent and be friends with your teenager.

- Even though you are the parent, you can still develop a growing, healthy friendship with your maturing teenagers.
- Even Jesus, the ultimate authority, calls his disciples “friends.” In John 15:15 He says, *“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”*

Remember, the goal is to create an environment where our teenagers voluntarily share with you and where they make wise decisions on their own. The more you use your authority to make them obey, the more they are making decisions because of your authority and less because of their own self-motivation. You should do all you can to shift them toward self-control. Listening instead of lecturing is one of the best ways to make that happen.

OVERVIEW:

- Objective:** Instructor will help leaders understand the concept of transitioning children from parent-control to biblical self-control at every age.
- Know:** Leaders will see God's definition of freedom and learn to empower their family members to experience God's freedom in everyday life.
- Feel:** Leaders will feel a newfound sense of purpose in directing their children toward the goal of godly freedom and self-control.
- Do:** Leaders will review the **Seven Discipline Drivers** in the Appendix so they can implement these Drivers in their own family and teach other parents how to do the same.

RELATIONAL DISCIPLINE

Theme: Parents help our children move from parent-control of their lives to self-control. The goal of discipline is freedom.

“For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”
(Galatians 5:1)

“For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” (Galatians 5:13)

Freedom is not the right to do whatever you want. Freedom does not mean your children defy you or that they are free to do whatever their heart desires.

Freedom is a strong desire to live life according to God's vision for your life. Relational Discipline means instilling in your children a desire not to do the acts of the flesh mentioned in Galatians 5:19-21: *“Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these...”*

Instead, Relational Discipline inspires your children toward true freedom by desiring the fruit of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22-23: *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.”*

You accomplish this in your family through the **Key Relational Discipline Culture Concepts**. See also Appendix A: The **Seven Discipline Drivers** to find ways to implement each Concept:

1. Establish Controlled Obedience To Parents (birth-5 years)

In your children's younger years, you have to watch them children carefully. They are exploring their world and do not have the experience or training to make wise choices. You are to watch and train them with this goal in mind: **You train them so you can trust them.**

Your goal as a parent is to train your young children so you can trust them with small responsibilities and freedoms. You are building a desire within them to obey from their hearts.

2. **Encourage Willing Obedience To Parents (5-12 years)**

As they get older, your goal becomes for them to obey willingly to your leadership. Conflict and arguments are reduced because your children **willingly** follow you, not because they are afraid of you.

You establish a culture of willing obedience by practicing Encouragement, creating a Safe Haven, and then implementing the Seven Discipline Drivers where appropriate in your interactions with your child.

3. **Inspire Willing Obedience To God (12 years and up)**

This is where you apply more fully the Child-to-God Relational Concepts. You should consistently apply these Concepts and as they become teenagers, they can begin to transition their faith from going along with your faith in God to establishing a genuine faith of their own resulting in their own desire to obey the Lord.

In this stage of parenting, your goal is to give them more freedom as they demonstrate the desire and ability to make wise decisions on their own. The time when our children move into adulthood will often come more quickly than we anticipate. By that time you want them to be equipped to live God's vision for their lives outside of your protection and guidance.

See Appendix A for the **Seven Discipline Drivers** — Seven Relational Discipline principles you can implement immediately to help you and your children have self-control!

OVERVIEW:

Objective: Instructors will equip leaders with the concept of “family values” and help leaders create and implement these values in their homes.

Know: Leaders will understand God’s design for and benefit of unity in their homes.

Feel: Leaders will be inspired to unite the different personalities in their home under common family values.

Do: Leaders will discuss “family values” with their spouses in their home and inspire other parents in their sphere of influence to have these discussions.

UNITY

Theme: Family unity is celebrating family uniqueness as we unite under family values.

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!” (Psalm 133:1)

Why does God say unity is “good and pleasant?” Because when you have unity in your home, you have:

- Peace among family members
- Understanding and agreement about God’s vision for the family
- Willingness to follow leadership in the home
- An enjoyable family experience

You do not create unity in your home through fear or attempting to make making everyone the same. You create unity in your home by celebrating the uniqueness of each family member and leading them to unite under the shared values God gives you as the leader in your home.

FOUR UNITY CULTURE CONCEPTS:

1. Celebrate Uniqueness in your Children

In the Marriage Session, bringing out the best in our spouse was discussed. As the leader in your home God wants you to bring out the best in each of your uniquely created children. His best will be different for each child because He made each of them special and unique!

Two practical ways to celebrate uniqueness in your children:

A. Do not compare your children to each other

- Comparisons are poor motivators. Comparisons may work occasionally, but they also create divisions in family relationships and lead siblings to fight with each other instead of invest in one another.
- Instead of comparing one child with another, compare how one child has improved with how they behaved in their own past. This allows everyone in the family to be involved in motivating the child without other siblings feeling threatened by their success or enjoying their struggles.

B. Help them understand God’s vision for their lives

- Implementing the Key Relational Concepts from the Parent-to-Child Session will help you understand your child and inspire them to be a valuable part of your family.

2. Celebrate Uniqueness in our Spouse

This concept was a focus throughout the Marriage Session. It would be beneficial to review this more thoroughly now. Remember that unity in your home starts with unity in your marriage. And unity in your marriage comes when both spouses see God's vision for their lives and then come together to see God's vision for the family.

3. Choose and Establish Strong Family Values

A family value defines an important priority for your family. Some examples of strong family values are:

- "Our family follows Jesus with all our hearts."
- "Our family does not lie."
- "Our family honors one another."
- "Our family takes care of each other."
- "Our family has fun together."

It is good to think about your key family values and discuss them with your spouse to create unity about the family values in your home. God will show you the right values for your home as you grow in your relationship to God and deepen your relationships with your family.

4. Your Family Name

Your Family Values are captured in your Family Name. Imagine you have a box with your Family Name on it and in the box you placed all your Family Values. For you the box is called "The ____ (*insert your family name*) ____." You want your children to identify with the box. Ultimately, they identify with being a (*insert your family name*). As your children mature, you want them to understand and adopt these family values as their own. This helps them develop their identity and to increasingly display these values in their own lives as a (*insert your family name*).

Here are some examples of what it mean to be a (*insert your family name*)? The question is based on the values in the box. Here are some example example:

- "*(insert your family name)* do not whine."
- "*(insert your family name)* treat others well."
- "*(insert your family name)* love to play with their siblings."
- "*(insert your family name)* forgive others when they are wronged."

You need to teach your children that life is about more than them. You want them to discover that their best lives are when they look to the interests of others before themselves. Looking out for others out in the world starts with looking out for others in the family.

This concept helps your children think about others but also helps them to understand they are part of a team. What better team to be on than their family? When your children go out and face the world, you want them to know they are part of your family team. They need to know they are never alone. To be on a team means someone will always stand with them.

JOURNEY TO A GODLY FAMILY — Summary

You did it! Your family has new hope and a new vision because of your investment in these ten sessions. And they are yours to keep for life! We recommend you and your spouse review this material each year to allow these God-inspired concepts to continue to deepen in your family. Each time you go back through the workbook you will:

1. See how your family is loving Jesus and loving each other more and more!
2. Allow God to speak to your heart about family in new ways with new insights!
3. Love and appreciate your family more and more!

You will be building and investing in your family for many years to come. These concepts are not something learned instantly but rather are established over time in our hearts as we learn and apply them throughout the family-building years. Let's begin where we started.

Relationships

The first key word is “relationships.” God’s vision for your family is all about relationships, first with Him and then with each other.

God’s vision for your family

1. Everyone in your family has an intimate relationship with Jesus.
2. Everyone in your family has great relationships with all other family members.
3. Your family is a light to the world to help you Reach Your Lost World.

Family Vision: The strength of your family will be determined by the strength of your family relationships.

Family Mission: Your family mission should be to build a family where everyone in the family loves Jesus intimately and loves each other deeply. The goal of family is to make every one those relationships lines strong!

Culture

The second key word is “culture.” When you create a life-giving culture in your home with strong God-inspired values, you create an environment where the relationships in your home can flourish! When your field is cultivated well, the plants can grow healthy. Your culture in your home is like that well-cultivated field but instead of plants, it is relationships which are growing healthy!

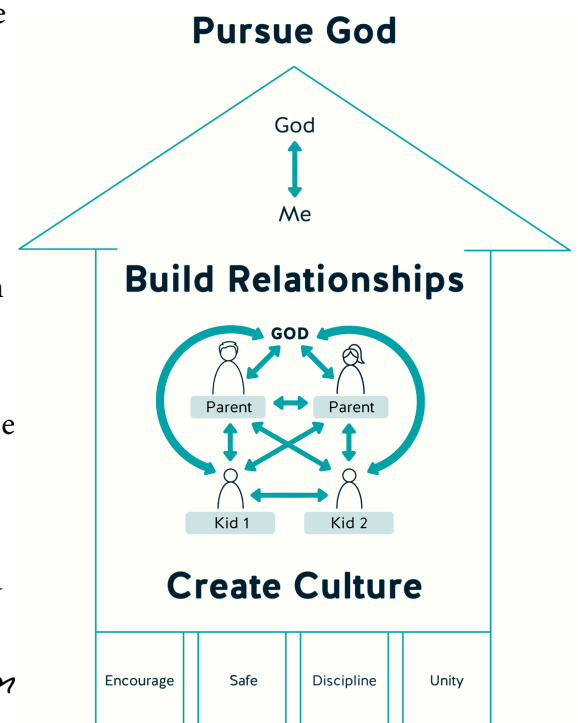
Remember Your Three Commitments House!

Everything you need to remember about this manual is right there! Remember when you drew your own family in the Build Relationships section? Get that out and review it now! Look at all the relationships in your home.

Finally, be encouraged! You have been chosen — hand-picked — by God to lead your home. He loves you, He believes in you, and He will be with you every step of the way. Have faith that God will use you in amazing ways to build a family who loves Jesus and loves each other!

May God continue to bless you as you continue your *LIFELONG JOURNEY TO REACH YOUR LOST WORLD!*

The Strategic Impact and Crazy Cool Family Team



SEVEN DISCIPLINE DRIVERS:

1. Think Before You Act
2. Ask Forgiveness
3. Act Like the Parent, Not the Child
4. See Things Through the Eyes of Your Child
5. Consider Natural Consequences
6. Life is in “The Why”
7. Let Them Make Mistakes

1. Think Before You Act (Get past your First response to get to the Best response)

- Your first reaction to a negative situation are usually negative. Learn to overcome your first response and think and pray about the best response.
- The key is to take the time necessary to get past your first response and get to the best response.

2. Ask Forgiveness (Real people make real mistakes and ask for real forgiveness)

- You want to develop in your children a soft heart toward you. Hardness of heart creates more resistance to your leadership in their lives. Having a genuine connection — their soft heart toward you and your soft heart toward them — makes leading them so much easier.
- When you confess your wrongs and find mercy with your child as the verse in Proverbs says, it softens your child’s hearts toward you. Asking forgiveness is an important gateway to their hearts.

3. Act Like the Parent, Not the Child (We need to be challenged to act like the leader)

- This Driver is about spiritual maturity. God hand-picked YOU to be the leader of your family. If you exhibit the fruit of the Spirit in your home (Galatians 5:22-23), your family will be more likely to do so as well. Remember, your **example** is more important than your **instruction**. The power of the Holy Spirit is with you to be a leader in your family!

4. See Life Through the Eyes of the Child (Seek to understand their motive)

- The world looks very different to children of all ages than it does to an adult. Children do things for a reason. You must see things from their perspective to understand their motive.

“Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 18:3-4)

- When you understand how your children think, you will be better able to lead them to obey you.

5. Consider Natural Consequences

- When your children make poor choices, there are often natural negative consequences which occur as a result of the poor choice. Instead of adding to these consequences, use the opportunities to come alongside your children and help them to see the connection between the choice they made and the negative natural consequences which occurred, then teach them how to avoid these consequences in the future.

6. Life is in “The Why” (Laying a Foundation of Life Information)

- At every age, your children are laying a foundation of life information that shapes their personal belief systems. They ask “Why?” at every age in order to gain understanding about their world. Encourage them to continue to ask “Why?” and share with them why you do things so they understand the reasons behind your actions. This should help them establish reasons for their own actions. Use these “Why?” questions to build their belief systems in the ways of God. Explaining the “Why?” equips your children to make wise choices in life.

7. Let Them Make Mistakes

- Mistakes and failures (even discipline issues like tantrums and rebellion) are a natural part of every child’s life. When you give your children freedom to make mistakes and view these mistakes as opportunities to connect with and teach them, you will build new ways of thinking in your children to help them avoid repeating these same mistakes in the future.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

GOD

Genesis 1:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; John 4:24, 10:30; 2 Corinthians 13:14

We believe that there is one true, holy God, eternally existing in three persons — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — each of whom possesses equally all the attributes of deity and the characteristics of personality. In the beginning God created out of nothing the world and all the things therein, thus manifesting the glory of His power, wisdom and goodness. By His sovereign power He continues to sustain His creation. By His providence He is operating throughout history to fulfill His redemptive purposes.

JESUS CHRIST

Matthew 20:28; Acts 4:12; Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; 1 John 2:2

Jesus Christ is the eternal second Person of the Trinity who was united forever with a true human nature by a miraculous conception and virgin birth. He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father and voluntarily atoned for (made a payment for) the sins of all by dying on the cross as their substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation and eternal life for all who trust in Him alone. He rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died. He ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Father, where He, the only Mediator between God and man, continually makes intercession for His own. He shall come again to earth, personally and visibly, to consummate history and the eternal plan of God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT and THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

John 15:26, 16:8-11

The natural accompaniment of a genuine saving relationship with Jesus Christ is a life of holiness and obedience, attained by believers as they submit to the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity. He was sent into the world by the Father and the Son to apply to mankind the saving work of Christ. He enlightens the minds of sinners, awakens in them a recognition of their need of a Savior and regenerates them (gives them new life). At the point of salvation He permanently indwells every believer to become the source of assurance, strength and wisdom, and He uniquely endows each believer with gifts for the building up of the body. The Holy Spirit guides believers in understanding and applying the Bible. His power and control are applied by faith, making it possible for the believer to lead a life of Christlike character and to bear fruit to the glory of the Father.

THE BIBLE

2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21

The sole basis of our belief is the Bible, composed of the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament. We believe that the Bible in its entirety originated with God, and that it was given through the instrumentality of chosen men. The Bible thus one and at the same time speaks with the authority of God and reflects the backgrounds, styles and vocabularies of the human authors. We hold that the Bible is infallible and without error in the original manuscripts. They are the unique, full, and final authority on all matters of faith and practice, and there are no other writings similarly inspired by God.

SALVATION

Romans 3:23; 5:8; Ephesians 2:1, 8-9

The central purpose of God's revelation in the Bible is to call all people into fellowship with Himself. Originally created to have fellowship with God, man defied God, choosing to go his independent way, and was thus alienated from God and suffered the corruption of his nature, rendering him unable to please God. The fall of man took place at the beginning of human history, and all individuals since have suffered these consequences and are thus in need of the saving grace of God. The salvation of mankind is, then, wholly a work of God's free grace, not the result, in whole or in part of human works or goodness, and must be received by faith on an individual basis. When God has begun a saving work in the heart of any person, He gives assurance in the Bible that He will continue performing it until the day of its full consummation.

HUMAN DESTINY

1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; Hebrews 9:27

Death seals the eternal destiny of each person. For all mankind, there will be a resurrection of the body into the spiritual world, and a judgment that will determine the fate of each individual. There is an eternal state of punishment for the unsaved and an eternal state of blessing for the saved. Those who have trusted Christ will be received into eternal communion with God and will be rewarded for works done in life.

THE CHURCH

Acts 2:42; Romans 12:1-6

The result of union with Jesus Christ is that all believers become members of His body, the church. There is one true church universal, comprised of all those who have trusted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. The Bible commands believers to gather together to devote themselves to worship, prayer, teaching of the Word, observance of baptism and communion as the ordinances established by Jesus Christ, fellowship, service to the body through development and use of talents and gifts, and outreach to the world. Wherever God's people meet regularly in obedience to this command, there is the local expression of the church. Under the watch care of elders and other supportive leadership, its members are to work together in love and unity, intent upon the ultimate purpose of exalting Christ for the glory of God and the fulfillment of Christ's Great Commission.

FAITH and PRACTICE

1 Corinthians 10:24, 31; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

The Bible is the final authority in all matters of faith and practice. We recognize that it cannot bind the conscience of individuals in areas where the Bible is silent. Rather, each believer is to be led in those areas by the Lord, to whom he or she alone is ultimately responsible.



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