



## Godly Parenting | Session #3

### *Who's in Control?*

**Prep: Read Chapter 3**

### **Group Kick-Off (start with any or all of these)**

#### **Break the Ice:**

- If you could control the weather OR what other people think, which would you choose and why?
- What is one takeaway that you highlighted or that stood out to you in this chapter?

#### **Set the Stage** (Review from Session #2):

Doing the right things in the right seasons aligns you with God's proven plan of sowing and reaping for parenting success.

#### **Key Verse:**

*He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.* -Proverbs 13:24

#### **BIG IDEA:**

The question is not whether or not control will be established. The question is once it is established, *who* has it?

#### **Identifying your goal:**

A child changes your life forever! No parent will deny that. But when a child enters the picture, a parent has a choice as to the lens through which they see their relationship with this child. Many parents adopt the flawed "make my child happy at all costs" mindset. Their ultimate goal becomes the happiness of their child, which leads them to seeking to please their child in every way and protecting them from the painful consequences and realities of life. This parenting approach rarely ever ends well. However, a godly parent sees parenting through a totally different lens. They do not see themselves as an agent of fulfilling their child's happiness, even though their child brings so much happiness to their life. They see their parenting as the stewardship of a life and it's eternal direction. Their goal is not protection from the realities of life, but preparation for those realities through a lifelong relationship with Jesus. This starts in the first foundational season of parenting by establishing control.

**"If we do nothing intentional, we're going to release narcissistic, entitled individuals who think the world revolves around them. We need to create in our children an others-centered view of life." -Bryan Loritts**

## The Fight for Control

In the chapter, Andrew shares a story of their fight for control with one of their children. Share a similar story of your own, funny or serious, where you were faced with the battle for control.

*“Do it right in those first few years, and you’ll have just made the next 13 years so much easier, having laid a strong foundation to build upon. Never underestimate the power of this. Sadly, many parents do just that by justifying their young child’s actions or misbehavior in these young years only to have to deal with the difficult consequences for years to come. Training up your children right in the younger years will set you up for parenting success in the older years. When parents neglect their responsibilities in those first few years, it’s not impossible to succeed, but it is a lot harder. They’ll have to play “catch-up,” possibly for years, and try to establish control in seasons not meant for that.” (pages 46-47)*

- Why is establishing control early so very important for the success of your parenting?
- The book refers to the first season (specifically ages 2-5) as “the hardest years of parenting.” Would you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
- Regardless of your child’s age, what is the #1 key to establishing control? (See the end of page 49 and page 56)... Why do you think this is also one of the most difficult aspects of parenting?
- In regards to consistency, these three things are essential for establishing control. Discuss practically what these three things could or should look like in a family:
  - Consistent boundaries and expectations
  - Consistent consequences for when those boundaries are crossed
  - Consistent follow-through of what accountability will look like
- Have you ever discussed or clarified in writing what these three areas look like in your home? (You can complete this exercise on page 50 of the book.)
- The top of page 54 says, “Toddlers have no authority over parents unless parents give it to them. Don’t give it to them.” Andrew uses the illustration of making a child wear a coat. What are some other practical examples of not giving a toddler authority?

## Two Needs of Every Child

There are two things every child needs: consistent boundaries (rules) and unconditional love (relationship).

- Which of these comes more natural for you as a parent?
  - rules-based or relationship-based?
  - enforcer or encourager?
  - too much truth (too harsh) or too much grace (too lenient)?
- Read John 1:14. Why is a proper balance of truth and grace so very important, and what can be some of the consequences of not properly balancing these two? Who is our perfect example of this?

**“If you’re not okay with your kid being angry at you, you’re not going to be a good parent.” -Bill Allison**

Discuss this common phrase: “If parents are too strict, their kids will rebel!”

- Is this necessarily, or always, true? Are too many rules the problem, or is this often the result of an imbalance of rules and relationship?

Discuss this statement, “Telling your children what you expect of them, and then consistently enforcing those expectations, does not make you the bad guy. It simply means you’re guilty of good and godly parenting.”

- What are some common ways our culture tries to shame parents for good parenting?
- How can practicing the parenting mindset of “more control now, less control later” (page 56) set you up for future parenting success?
- How do many parents often inadvertently have the opposite mindset (less control now, more control later), and what can be the negative results?

Which “Helpful How-to Heart Hack” on pages 59-60 can be one of the best practical takeaway for you from this chapter?

As time allows, finish by discussing any “Heart of the Matter” questions on page 60.

**EXTRA NOTES:**

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