



Godly Parenting | Session #8

Making Your Child's Heart Your Goal

Prep: Read Chapter 8

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

Break the Ice:

- Share a moment in time you remember when one of your parents truly connected with your heart?
- What is one takeaway that you highlighted or that stood out to you in this chapter?

Set the Stage: (Review from Session #7):

Words left unsaid and conversations never had can be damaging to a parent-child relationship. Silence is not always golden. But openness, transparency, and a level of vulnerability can go a long way. Because kids would rather have a parent who's always real than one who's always right.

Key Verse:

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. -2 Peter 3:18

BIG IDEA:

The ultimate goal of our parenting is to shape and direct the heart of our child, preparing them for God's grace, both now and for a lifetime.

Identifying your goal:

If the goal of godly parenting is just to raise well-behaved children, then focusing on the rules is enough. If the goal of godly parenting is just to raise good, moral, and relational humans, then focusing on relationships is enough. But if the goal of godly parenting is to reach the heart, not just the head... and if the goal is to balance both rules and relationship... and if the goal is to ultimately help our kids become more like Jesus... this requires both truth *and* grace, rules *and* relationship, and capturing the heart *and* the head. As grace-based, heart-driven parents, it is important for us to clarify our purpose—we are not striving to raise rule-followers, but Christ-followers. This can only happen in the heart.

"You can force your kids to follow your rules, but you can't force your kids to follow your faith."

Things That Are Different Are Not the Same

Read Ephesians 6:4, Proverbs 23:26, and John 1:14

- In your own words, how is grace-based parenting (relationship based) different than traditional Christian parenting (rules based)?

Discuss what these differences can practically look like in a home:

- Raising good kids vs. godly kids
- Reaching a child's heart vs. their head
- Emphasis on rules vs. emphasis on relationship
- Compliant attitudes vs. transformed hearts

How is a proper balance between rules and relationship, or truth and grace, so key to reaching your child's heart?

We Are Shepherds Not Creators

According to Proverbs 22:6, God has already created our child with "a way." They have already been given naturally bends and strengths by their Creator that are not for us to choose. However, we are commanded to be intentional with training (shepherding) their heart in the way it should go.

About 20 years ago, doctors noticed a worrying trend: more and more parents obsessing over their kids' athletic careers. Statistically, 26% of U.S. parents whose children play sports in high school hope their child will make it to the pros someday. And among families with incomes under \$50k annually, that number rises to 39%.

- What are some ways parents often try to take on the role of creator rather than shepherd?
- What problems can this cause when parents fail to train and shape their child's God-given heart/way?
- What are some benefits for your child when you focus on their heart and God-given bends rather than just your own desires for them?

Want to borrow a heart hack?

"Your family's culture doesn't have to be left to chance. Your culture is either the one you've intentionally chosen to create or the one you've inadvertently allowed to create a life of its own."

Discuss each of these practical things our family did (pages 184-198) to help produce a grace-filled environment at home.

1. **Grace-filled Responses.** Grace is a gift. Grace is a choice. Grace is a place. And hopefully that place is your home... How have you made your home a place filled with grace?

2. **Core Family Values.** What are the things that we value most and why? And in what ways can we practically live these things out?
3. **Open Door Questions Policy.** Any question. Anytime. About anything.
4. **Say What You Want to See.** You always get more of what you criticize, and you always get more of what you affirm. Which comes more naturally for you?
5. **A High Priority On God's Word.** How are we making the Word of God central to everything we do as a family?
6. **All of Life Is Worship Motto.** Everything we do in every aspect of life is meant to bring God glory.

“The way we eat, play, and sleep is an act of worship. The way we do relationships, work, and day-to-day life is an act of worship. The way we do school, church, and home is an act of worship.”

7. **A Proper Balance of Grace and Truth.** Jesus was all grace and all truth all at the same time. In what ways can we strike the balance of truth and grace... rules and relationship... the head and the heart?

Ask and answer:

- Which of these do we already practice in our home, or need to implement?
- What others not listed do we practice in our home to produce a grace-filled environment?
- What are the multi-generational blessings or consequences of growing up in, or failing to grow up in, a grace-filled environment?
- How can focusing on any or all of these things prepare your child's heart for a life of grace?

Which “Helpful How-to Heart Hack” on page 199 is the best practical takeaway for you from this chapter?

As time allows, finish by discussing any “Heart of the Matter” questions on page 199-200.

EXTRA NOTES:
