

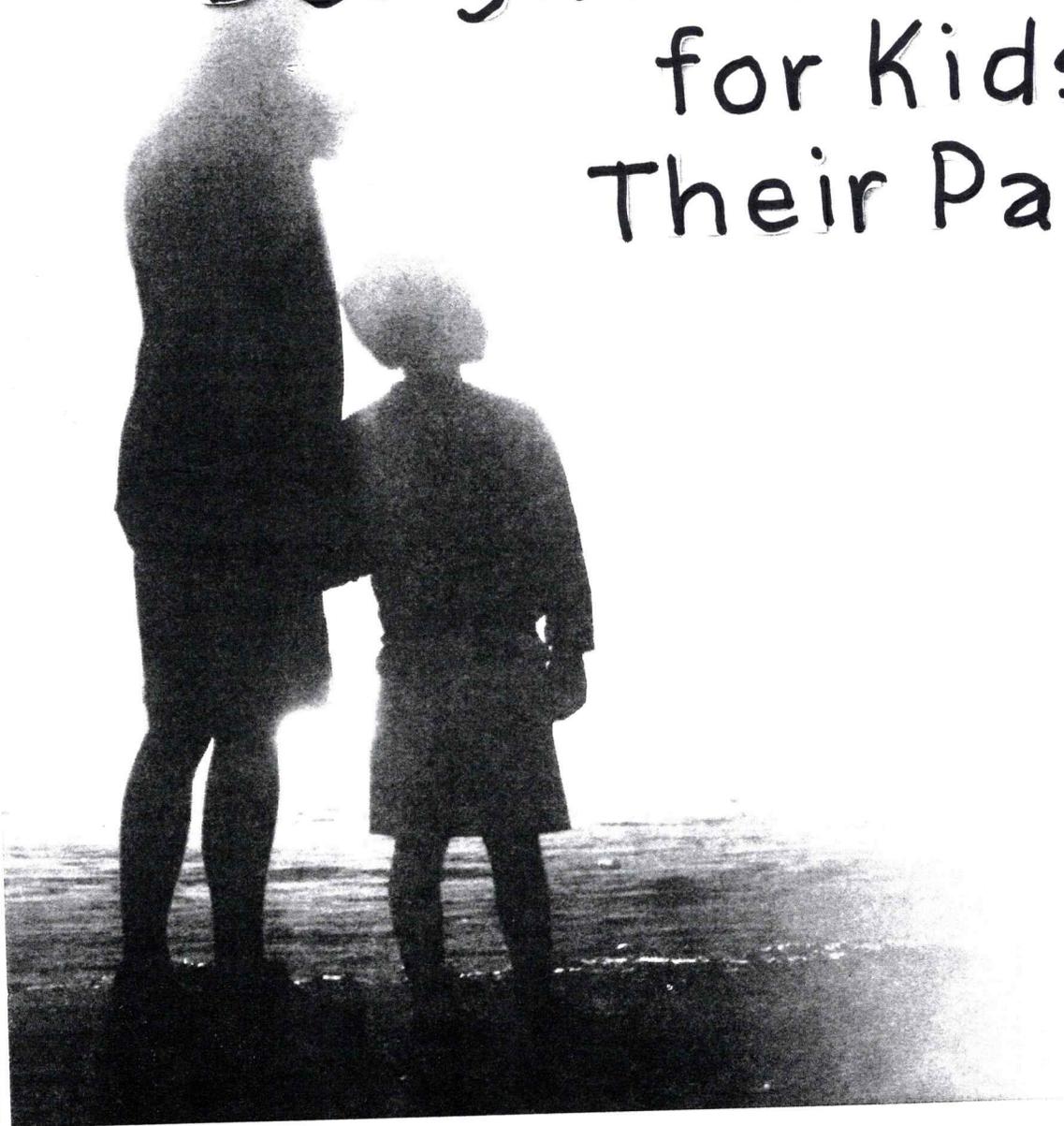
GRACE BASED parenting[®]

VIDEO SERIES

Building **Character**

Session 5

Designed Dilemmas for Kids and Their Parents



Introduction

- Character is not something that can be transferred intellectually.
- Character requires stress and testing in order for it to move from abstract platitudes in our children's heads to mettle in the core of their hearts.

I. Building character requires parents to design dilemmas that move these character traits from their children's heads to their hearts.

A. The _____ of many of today's families doesn't lend itself to the ongoing building of character.

- Abundant family incomes encourage parents to hire out services that were traditionally done by children.
- Hurried, busy schedules compete against the careful and methodical building of character into a child's heart.

B. Character building is _____ and inconvenient to parents.

- Parents must be willing to let their children take risks.
- Parents must be willing to let their children have their wishes denied.
- Parents must be willing to let their children fail.

- Parents must be willing to structure their lives around the ongoing demands of character building.

C. Designed dilemmas marry _____ with _____ and follow up lectures with laboratory experiences.

Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.
Hebrews 5:8-9

They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. Matthew 14:20-22

Sample dilemmas that build character:

1. Serve on a regular basis in a homeless shelter or the inner city.
2. Set off the fire alarms, stand outside, and see how they respond.
3. Don't interfere and try to solve conflict between them and their friends. Let them figure out how to do it.
4. Encourage them to develop friendships with people from different socio-economic, racial, and religious backgrounds.

II. Building character into children's hearts requires parents to deal with the dilemmas that naturally occur within our marriages.

A. There are many _____ that married couples face that want to intimidate them from living lives of great character.

- The giant of financial pressure
- The giant of anger and unresolved conflict
- The giant of competition and comparison
- The giant of boredom
- The giant of divorce

B. One of the best ways to build character into children's hearts is make character a _____ within your marriage.

- The habit of faith
- The habit of integrity
- The habit of poise
- The habit of disciplines
- The habit of endurance.
- The habit of courage.

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ . Colossians 2:6-8

C. We are all going to _____ as we try to model character to our kids.

1. Take responsibility, move on, and ask God for help.
2. Parents who have struggled through a marriage break-up can teach their children character by how they deal respectfully and graciously with the children's mother or father.

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32

Conclusion

- Designing dilemmas that build character into our children's hearts are difficult but necessary and worth it.
- The dilemmas that accompany marriage provide a great platform for developing and modeling great character in our kids' lives.

Making This Yours

How did you do implementing the one practical application you committed to in the previous session?

Getting It Started

1. What are some of the character building circumstances of your childhood that no longer exist for your own kids?

Designed Dilemmas for Character

2. Most people tend to take the path of least resistance. This lesson is about deliberately leading your kids down a more difficult path in order to help them achieve a greater good. Talk about a time when you learned something the hard way. If there was an easier way to learn it, which way would have made a more lasting impression and why?
3. Can you think of an area of character in your child's life that is ripe for a designed dilemma (Faith, Integrity, Poise, Disciplines, Endurance or Courage)? What might that dilemma look like? How would you debrief your child afterwards to clarify the lesson?
4. If your children could give you a grade on how you are modeling character in your closest relationships, how do you think you would do? A, B, C, D, F?

Faith _____

Disciplines _____

Integrity _____

Endurance _____

Poise _____

Courage _____

Choose one of your lower grades and share how you will bring that grade up.

Taking It Deeper

1. Read the account of Jesus feeding the five thousand and then walking on water in Matthew 14:13-33. What should the disciples have learned during the miraculous lunch that they could have applied on the stormy waters?

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

"We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

"Bring them here to me," he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

"Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Matthew 14:13-33

Can you think of a time when you failed to apply a fresh lesson to a situation that followed it shortly? What did you learn from that incident?

2. As parents and married people, we are all going to be disappointed in our children, our spouses and ourselves. What do the following scriptures tell us to do to make the most of those times?

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Ephesians 4:29 - 5:2

How does a heart of character help you to obey these commands?

Bringing It Home

1. Think about the character building going on in your children's lives.
 - Are they getting off too easy or are they being lovingly lead through character building dilemmas on a regular basis?
 - If you are the type of parent that has a tendency to over protect and shield your child from risk or consequences, what can you do to correct that over shift?
 - If you are already using designed dilemmas to raise kids who turn out right, how can you ramp it up to a more deliberate level?

2. Tim says that there are many giants that married couples face that want to intimidate them from living lives of great character – financial pressure, anger and unresolved conflict, competition and comparison, boredom, and divorce to name a few. Take the six character traits and explain how one, some or all of them can slay these giants in your marriage.
 - Faith
 - Integrity
 - Poise
 - Disciplines
 - Endurance
 - Courage

Prayer:

Lord, this is where trust comes in. Please help me to entrust my children to you and be willing to let them take risks (and even fail) as they learn to exercise faith, integrity, poise, disciplines, endurance and courage in their own lives. Help me make all of these traits a habit in my own life and come to the forefront under pressure. I pray that I would not let financial pressure, anger or comparison undermine what I am teaching my children about character and your grace. Amen

Prayer Requests:

We encourage you to read **chapters 12-14** of Tim's book, ***Raising Kids Who Turn Out Right***, in order to get the most out of the upcoming session — *Obstacles to Building Character into Our Children*.

We'd love to hear about some of the designed dilemmas you have had with your kids. To share your story, go to gracebasedparenting.com.

