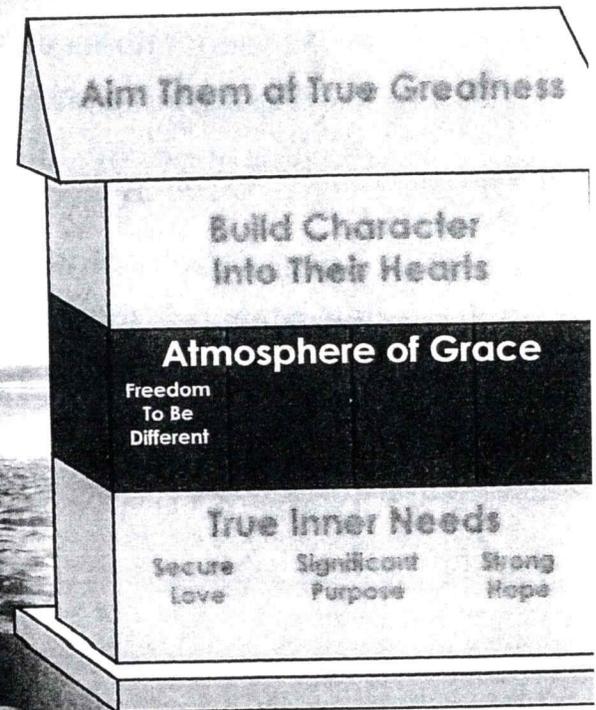


GRACE BASED parenting

Session 7

The Freedom To Be Different



Introduction

Children are far more inclined to align their lives with God if they are raised within an _____ that reflects the heart of His grace.

- A. A grace-based home consistently communicates a love that isn't determined by a child's behavior.

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him...As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust...But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children. Psalm 103:11,13-14,17

- B. An atmosphere of grace in our home encourages parents to:

- Listen more and lecture less.
- Respond more and react less.
- Engage more and dismiss less.
- Pray more and judge less.

- C. A grace-based home doesn't _____ minor issues or elevate non-essentials out of proportion.

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I. **The first way parents can create an atmosphere of grace is to give children the freedom to be _____.**

A. "Different" in this context refers to attitudes and actions that are weird, bizarre, strange, goofy, or quirky but not necessarily _____.

1. Legalistic patterns of parenting emphasize the symbols of Christian behavior over the _____ of Christian living.
2. Fear-based parenting grants more power and influence to the external forces of the world system than it does to the _____ power and presence of God.

Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

1 John 4:4, NASB

B. It is very easy to react to our children's "different" behavior because:

- It annoys us.
- It embarrasses us.
- We jump to the conclusion that what they are doing is wrong.

II. **Grace-based parents are careful not to make arbitrary standards and expectations _____ issues.**

A. Grace-based parents avoid the trap of using the _____ to justify their personal preferences.

- B. When a parent uses the Bible to speak out against a child that is “different” but not necessarily doing anything biblically wrong, that parent may be using the Lord’s name in vain.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. Exodus 20:7

- C. Children are more inclined to respect and respond to a parent’s rules when they are:

- Established in an atmosphere of grace.
- Reasonable and logical.

III. Some “different” behavior might have its source in a genuine problem within the child’s _____.

- A. Some “different” behavior is simply a child’s strength pushed to an extreme.
- Grace-based parenting focusing on tempering the behavior without condemning or squelching it.

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B. Some "different" behavior is an outward expression of an inward _____ with sin, anger, or shame.

- Grace-based parents focus their attention on connecting with the heart of the child rather than attacking the external manifestation of their internal problems.
- When the internal problem is corrected, the outside tends to take care of itself.

Conclusion

Giving children the freedom to be different sets them up to harness so much more of their God-given _____.

- Grace gives children the freedom to be unique.
- Giving children the freedom to be different communicates an unconditional love and an intrinsic worth that is at the heart of God's amazing grace.

Making This Yours

How did you do on implementing the one practical application you committed to doing this week based on the previous session?

Getting It Started

1. What sort of things (not evil or sinful) did you do as a teenager that annoyed your parents? How did they react?

2. What are some of the ways that your child(ren) are different, quirky, bizarre, or unique? Have you been annoyed or embarrassed by these?

Taking It Deeper

1. As you look at the verses below that tell us how we are to love each other, which of these qualities of love makes it easier to give our child(ren) the freedom to be different?

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.
1 Corinthians 13:4-7

2. How does the verse below change the way you view the external forces of the world system? Does it encourage fear or faith?

You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 1 John 4:4

Bringing It Home

1. The next time your child(ren) wants to follow a fad, what are you going to do?
A few hints: Is it a biblical or moral issue? Is it a practical or financial issue? Is it a personal issue with you or them?
2. How can we come alongside other parents who are struggling with their child(ren) and be an asset rather than a detractor?
3. How has this session challenged your perceptions and/or assumptions about parenting?
4. As you commit to being a grace-based parent, what is one thing you are going to do this week to put into practice what you learned in this session?

Bonus Section for Single Parents, Blended Families, and Other Unique Family Configurations

1. Am I doing what I can to remove residue from the past that is distracting me from carrying out the principles of this session? What am I going to do about this?
2. When it comes to applying the principles of this session, how am I going to deal with the unique difficulties in my family that are brought on by:
 - Fatigue
 - Finances
 - Guilt
 - Anger
 - Regret
 - Children's suffering
3. Regarding this session, who can I count on to come alongside of me with encouragement and assistance? How am I going to communicate my needs?