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# Developing Parental Leadership through Biblical Love as Expressed in Presence, Communication, and Discipline in the Homes at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, Shelby, North Carolina

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DEVELOPING PARENTAL LEADERSHIP THROUGH BIBLICAL LOVE AS  
EXPRESSED IN PRESENCE, COMMUNICATION, AND DISCIPLINE IN THE  
HOMES AT MT. CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, SHELBY, NORTH CAROLINA

A PROJECT

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY  
OF THE M. CHRISTOPHER WHITE SCHOOL OF DIVINITY  
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BOILING SPRINGS, NORTH CAROLINA

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY  
M. LAMONT LITTLEJOHN JR.

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APPROVAL FORM

DEVELOPING PARENTAL LEADERSHIP THROUGH BIBLICAL LOVE AS  
EXPRESSED IN PRESENCE, COMMUNICATION, AND DISCIPLINE IN THE  
HOMES AT MT. CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH, SHELBY, NORTH CAROLINA

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## ABSTRACT

A Christian education curriculum was established at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church in Shelby, North Carolina, to develop parental leadership centered on biblical love. The goal was to train parents to model biblical love in their homes. Relying upon scripture affirming parental leadership in the home, parents were enlisted and participated in a six-week study. Surveys measured experience, involvement, practice, and understanding of biblical knowledge. There was no significant statistical difference between the control group and focus group quantitatively; however, the focus group was also assessed qualitatively by means of theological reflection, presence, communication, and discipline application activities. Final reviews indicated that biblical love is a crucial component in developing parental leadership when understood and practiced. Participants in both groups recommend this curriculum be expanded and integrated as a part of the Christian education ministry of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I give all honor and glory to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This Doctor of Ministry project is truly the result of God's grace and mercy. I dedicate this work to both my wife Nikki and our two children L'Mia and Lamont III. They are my first ministry and without them life would not be same. They have been a tremendous blessing to my personal growth and pastoral ministry.

To my parents, Marion and Jeanette Littlejohn, who are true models of Christian parenting. I thank both of them for investing their time and energy in me. They sacrifice so that my sister and I could have the best that life could offer. I would not be who I am with their Christian influence and guidance.

I am grateful for the congregation at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church. Thank you for your love and support for the past twelve and a half years. It brings joy to my heart to look from where we came and to look forward to the wonderful place God is directing us. I will never take for granted that you are God's people and I have been charged with the responsibility to serve you faithfully.

I am grateful for the passion and wisdom shared from my advisor Dr. Sophia Steibel, my field supervisor Dr. Guy Sayles, the D. Min. Director Dr. Danny West, the Dean of the School of Divinity Dr. Robert Canoy and the faculty of the M. Christopher



White School of Divinity. Thank all of you for challenging me to pursue excellence as a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I will always treasure the valuable lessons learned throughout my journey of theological education.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Do we as the church turn and look the other way? How do we reach parents who have lost their way? Social workers, mentors, counselors, and others are scrambling every day to fill voids in a relationship with children that were vacated by parents who neglected their responsibility. Parents who are absent from their children's life for some reason or another, as well as parents who are present but are not fulfilling their leadership responsibility need this conversation of parental leadership based on biblical love in the home

Parental leadership is a crucial component during a person's childhood experience. Christian parenting is especially crucial because they are responsible for forming the faith of their children (Proverbs 22:6). Parents should be the primary source for their children when it comes to demonstrating love, establishing nurture, providing protection, and offering guidance. Maria Harris reminds us, "All of them are holy acts, religious acts, sacramental acts, and when we engage in them, God dwells in us, and we dwell in God."<sup>1</sup> This ministry project proceeded on the conviction that love is the foundation of nurture, protection, and guidance. It is difficult for me to be certain that parents can effectively nurture, protect, and guide children they have not first loved. Marjorie Thompson suggests, "Our childhood experience of intimate relationships within the family circle has an enormous impact later in life, not only on our capacity for intimacy with others but also with God."<sup>2</sup> During this project, I led a group of parents at

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<sup>1</sup> Maria Harris, *The Faith of Parents* (Mahwah: Paulist Press 1991), 43.

<sup>2</sup> Marjorie J. Thompson, *Family: The Forming Center* (Nashville: Upper Room Books 1996), 23.

Mt. Calvary Baptist Church of Shelby, NC, consisting of married parents and single parents, to develop ways to strengthen their parental leadership through the means of biblical love as expressed in presence, communication, and discipline.

Love is clearly stated in the Bible as the greatest gift a person can have (1 Corinthians 13:13). God's love for us allows us to be called his children (1 John 3:1). The greatest gift parents can share with their children is God's love. To not express God's love to a child is among the worst things a parent can do to a child.

When biblical love is expressed in presence, parents spend quantity and quality time with their children. Regardless if it is at home, church, a sporting event, a dance recital, or on vacation, children need to know they are a priority in their parents' life. Often, because of hectic schedules, living arrangements, personal activities, and church ministry, parents find it difficult to be present in their children's life. I recall a few years ago I had planned to be at a church event in Charlotte, N.C.; however, my son had a flag football game that evening. As I was driving him to the game, he said, "I thought you were going to church tonight." I responded, "I changed my plans because you are more important." His face lit up followed by a simple smile; these gestures confirmed I had made the right decision to be present with him instead of going to another church event. I agree with Kenneth and Elizabeth Gangel's statement, "Christian parents need to learn to live with, not in spite of, or even for, their children; family togetherness needs to be planned and not just allowed to happen."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Kenneth O. and Elizabeth Gangel, *Between Christian Parent and Child* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House 1974), 72.

When biblical love is expressed in communication, parents speak words of encouragement. This kind of communication should be consistent, constructive and common among the parent and child. It is vital for parents to actually talk to and not at their children. Likewise, not only is it vital for parents to talk to or with their children, but it is equally vital for parents to be able to listen to their children.

When biblical love is expressed in discipline, parents train their children in a loving manner to obey the directions and doctrines that are best for the specific child. When parents fail to discipline their child in the right and responsible way, they may jeopardize the child's present and future. One of the objectives of this project was to test whether or not children's behaving in an undisciplined manner is the result of parents not taking the initiative to show them the right way to behave. Chester Swor insightfully states, "Parents do not have the right to bring children into a world of confused and conflicting values without giving them the right of parental time in order that they may learn life's rules."<sup>4</sup> In addition, Swor says, "Some aspects of wholesome discipline are: authority, clarity and adequacy of instruction, consistency, fair thinking and acting, respect for the child, forgiveness, parental example, responsibility, and love."<sup>5</sup>

The mission statement of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church of Shelby is "to equip the body, the heart, the mind, and the soul of all people to reach their full potential in Christ Jesus through Christian Education, Worship, Service, and Outreach." The practice of equipping parents, through the means of Christian Education, to model the leadership role

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<sup>4</sup> Chester E. Swor, *The Parent Slant* (Nashville: Broadman Press 1971), 82.

<sup>5</sup> Swor, 80-87.

in the home through biblical love as expressed in presence, communication, and discipline defined the scope of this ministry project.

### **Ministry Setting**

Mt. Calvary Baptist Church is located in the city of Shelby, North Carolina. Shelby is in the southwestern section of North Carolina. Shelby has been called the “gateway” between Asheville and Charlotte. Shelby was founded in 1843 and is the county seat of Cleveland County. It is the largest city in the county with a population over 21,000. Shelby was mainly known for its textile industries but since the collapse of the economy in late 2007, education, healthcare, and technology have emerged as the leading focal points of the city.

The Cleveland County School system and the Carolinas Healthcare Cleveland are two of the major employers in Shelby. The historic 1907 courthouse has become a museum to celebrate the legacy of Bluegrass Banjo pioneer and Shelby native Earl Scruggs. Just around the block is the world acclaimed Don Gibson Theatre with a full calendar of music and entertainment opportunities to enjoy. Shelby is also home to the annual American Legion Baseball World Series. Legion ball players from all over the United States travel to Shelby and the final games are televised nationally on ESPN networks.

The community which surrounds the church consists of a majority of African American citizens, low to middle class income, majority democrat, and recently experienced a community revitalization effort through a government initiative called “Weed and Seed.” This initiative gave police a greater insight on how to “weed-out” the

poor qualities of the community such as drugs, prostitution, gangs, etc. In exchange the initiative provided funding to help sow those “seeds” of high-quality projects to assist in the growth and revival of the community.

Mt. Calvary Baptist Church was organized in the month of March of the year 1926 in the home of Fess and Flora Young on Orange Street in Shelby. It is significant for the purpose of this Doctor in Ministry Project that Mt. Calvary was organized in a home. The initial worship services, Sunday school lessons, singing of hymns, and Baptist training union (BTU) were held in a home. Fess and Flora Young were joined by nine others who became the original members of Mt. Calvary. Training and educating the congregation in various areas of Christian living have always been a part of the legacy at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church. A new church facility was completed in February 1928 at the present address of 422 Carolina Ave. In 1972 that facility just mentioned was removed to make room for the present facility that is comprised of three building phases of which the last was completed in 1985.

Over the years the church has seen its share of ebbs and flows. For eighty-nine years the church membership has consistently been made-up of middle-class families. There is a mixture of former textile workers, educators, small-business owners, entrepreneurs, and domestic workers that make up the majority segment of our congregation. Currently the average worship attendance is 325 in Sunday morning worship with a total church membership over 600.

I have served Mt. Calvary Baptist Church as servant pastor/teacher since September 1, 2003, and I have been in ministry for twenty years. Currently I am the only full-time paid staff member. Part time paid staff includes a coordinating pastor, a minister



of students, a minister of worship and music, a lead musician, an office manager, a business administrator, finance secretary, and a custodian. We have an excellent support staff of volunteers who are eager to serve the congregation and community.

Presently there is a good spirit operating throughout the church. The mood is positive, and the mindset of the church is at the place of being open to the guidance and working of the Holy Spirit. As a congregation we are confident that God is doing amazing things in the midst of us but we are cautious of complacency. It is wonderful to celebrate our past and present, but it is also critical to be concerned about the future. The future starts now by equipping parents to develop and maintain a healthy relationship with their children. If we are hopeful for a stronger legacy, we must start with the congregation touching the community and, within the congregation, a collective segment of parents touching their children in ways that will guide them to build a relationship with God and build relationships with others.

### **Ministry Question**

One Sunday after service some years ago, a single mother in the congregation came to me and asked, “Will you pray for my son?” I asked, “Where is he?” She replied, “At home because he did not feel like coming to church today, and I did not feel like arguing with him, so I left him at home in the bed!” I was disturbed especially due to her son’s age, i.e., fourteen. I asked, “Why did you not tell him to get up and get dressed because it was time to go to worship?” Then I reminded her, “You are the parent and it is your responsibility to lead!” My frustration with situations like this, parents not taking the initiative to lead in the home, is what led me to this project. The aim was to test the thesis

that training for appropriate parental leadership will result in parents taking the initiative to lead by means of biblical love through presence, communication, and discipline.

There is no question that our society is dysfunctional in more ways than one. This project proceeded on the assumption that much of the dysfunction of society hinges upon the challenges within the home. Once upon a time there was a saying, “Home-training,” that was used to describe parental leadership in the home. Home-training meant parents taught moral values to their children who in turn would demonstrate those moral values in the community. Marjorie J. Thompson describes the dysfunction of family life:

The family is under siege in today’s society... some attacks are direct and self-evident, such as those associated with drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy, and the accompanying threat of sexually transmitted disease... poverty and low social status... cultural messages of materialism, individualism, and competition... we live in an era filled with new forms of darkness that can make the prospect of parenting especially frightening.<sup>6</sup>

When I look at society along with my church and community, I believe the zeal of “home-training” has been lost. Instead of parents demonstrating leadership in the home, the majority of children are being trained and led by television, social media, video games, or their peers. I have come to the conclusion that parents know how to buy things, how to be friends, how to make demands, how to make mistakes, but maybe parents do not know how to exercise the responsibility of positive parental leadership. Mark Holmen says, “Many parents stray (from responsibility) simply because they know no other way.”<sup>7</sup> Either parents will engage in leading their children according to God’s word or the ungodly culture surrounding them will do so.

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<sup>6</sup> Thompson, 45-46.

<sup>7</sup> Mark Holmen, *Faith Begins At Home* (Ventura: Regal Books 2005), 45.

Yet, on the other hand, if a parent before this project would have come to me as pastor and asked, “Does the ministry offer any resources to train a parent on how to be one?” Unfortunately my answer would have been no. We, as a Christian congregation at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, did not have a specific class in our Christian education curriculum geared to equipping parents on how to exercise parental leadership according to God’s word in the home. It has been said that this is a lost generation, but I wondered if this generation is simply a product of a lost generation. Children are experiential learners and what they experience in the home, chances are, positive or negative, they will duplicate it. Likewise, it has been assumed that since a mother or a father has the title parent, he or she automatically knows how to function in the leadership role of parent.

The question which framed the inspiration of this project is “What should the role of parental leadership look like in Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, which would lead to parents taking the initiative to train their children in the home?” As pastor, I desired to grow in the knowledge of how to equip the parents within the congregation to reach their full potential as leaders in forming the faith of their children in the home. I understood that parental leadership is not only important to the health of the individual families but also to the health of the church, because the church is made up of collective individual families. As we built relationships one soul at a time, this ministry project was essential to the health of our congregation and community. My desire was to see the parental leadership as described in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 resulted in a stronger congregation and community in which God’s love would be visible.

Developing parental leadership in the homes of Mt. Calvary Baptist began through biblical love as expressed in presence, communication, and discipline. Parents

could not effectively train their children concerning spiritual and moral values in the home if the essence and explanation of biblical love were not present in their lives. The overarching aim was for parents to learn to model biblical love in their homes.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

For this Doctor of Ministry Project I focused on the area of developing parental leadership through biblical love as expressed in presence, communication, and discipline. Parental leadership should be rooted in the biblical love of God. Children, no matter their race, gender, or socio-culture should be loved unconditionally. That love should begin in the home and parents are responsible to lead in this manner.

The majority of parents at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church primarily consist of married fathers and mothers who live in the same household; and single fathers or mothers who live in separate households. Parents, married and single from our Faith Formation classes, were randomly selected by volunteering and were invited to be a part of the focus group. This focus group agreed upon the objectives and goals for this project and signed a consent letter concerning their responsibilities to this assignment (see Appendix A, p. 73). The focus group answered interview questions (see Appendix B, p.74). The interview questions were conducted by an anonymous social worker, who was from outside of our congregation and community. The reason for an anonymous social worker was to assure personal confidentiality to each parent, and to provide a safe place for each parent to give open and honest answers to the interview questions. From my personal experience, I have known people to be more open and honest with people they do not know personally. I did not know the identity of the parents who had given the answers; the anonymous social worker reported the facts of this part of the qualitative results through a number system to our office manager. The purpose of this interview prior to the instruction of the six week project was to inform me of any generational

parenting practices, problems, or passiveness that had been adopted by the selected parents in this project research. As shown later, the results of these questions provided greater insight concerning the parental styles each parent had chosen to adopt or reject.

This focus group joined the control group in the Wednesday evening Bible study class. The Wednesday evening Bible study class was the control group. Both the control group and the focus group responded to a pre- and post- project survey (see Appendix B, p. 75) in order to measure their awareness of parental leadership, biblical love, and biblical love expressed in presence, communication, and discipline.

The project was assessed at multiple levels. First, as mentioned previously, all participants responded to a pre- and post- survey. The focus group, in addition, responded to the following levels: class evaluations (see Appendix B, pp. 76-81); theological reflections (see Appendix B, p. 82-84); pre- and post- lesson surveys (see Appendix B, pp. 85-87); proposed activities for each lesson (see Appendix B, p. 88-90); and evaluation of accountability partners (see Appendix B, p. 91).

The control group and focus group engaged in lessons regarding developing parental leadership through the means of biblical love. They met for six weeks on Wednesday evenings at 7 p.m. The first three weeks discovered the meaning of biblical love. The goal of these lessons provided both a theological and biblical meaning of love as taught in the Old and New Testament scriptures; and to also know what it means to have a love for God and a love for one another. The next three weeks explored the ways biblical love is expressed in presence, communication, and discipline. The goal of these lessons was to equip the parents to see that love expressed in “presence” opens the door to “communication,” which offers the opportunity for effective “discipline.”

Discovering the meaning of biblical love explored texts such as Deuteronomy 7:7-8, Hosea 11:1-3, John 3:16-17, and 1 John 4:8 (see Appendix C, pp. 92-93). Discerning what it means to love God explored texts such as Deuteronomy 6:4-5, John 14:15 and Matthew 22:37-38 (see Appendix C, pp. 98-99). Determining what it means to love one another explored texts such as Matthew 22:39, John 13:14, 34-35; John 15:13; Philippians 2:5-7 (see Appendix C, pp. 107-108). Biblical love expressed in presence explored texts such as Isaiah 49:15-16 and John 14:15-21; 15:1-9 (see Appendix C, pp. 116-117). Biblical love expressed in communication explored texts such as Colossians 3:8-9a, Ephesians 4:29 and James 1:19 (see Appendix C, pp. 125-126). Biblical love expressed in discipline explored texts such as Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Ephesians 6:4 and Hebrews 12:5-8 (see Appendix C, pp. 134-135). I taught all six lessons.

### **Project Goal**

The goal of this project was not to develop a guide to becoming perfect parents, nor was it a guide to producing perfect children. The Apostle Paul tells the church at Corinth that we have this treasure in clay jars (2 Corinthians 4:7). There are no perfect parents and there are no perfect children because we are fragile beings made of clay, yet the hope is to equip parents to recognize the power which can form them into better leaders in the home. God who is eternal, perfect, holy, love, wise, merciful, righteous, and powerful is infinite in his being, and transcendent above the world as its Creator. He is the One that sustains not only now but throughout eternity. At the end of the six weeks, data showed parents had gained an appreciation of parental leadership in the home by:

1. Examining the scriptures to understand the meaning of biblical love.

2. Discovering what it means to love God and to love one another.
3. Identifying ways to set a biblical example in the presence of their children.
4. Identifying ways to be present with their children in daily routines. (i.e., home, school, sports, library, park, etc.).
5. Practicing saying “I love you” to their children at least three times each day.
6. Practicing communicating and listening to their children at least thirty minutes concerning daily activities (i.e. school, friends, work, church, sports, etc.).
7. Teaching and discussing a biblical lesson each day with their children.
8. Establishing one rule that needs to be acknowledged in their home and followed by their children. (i.e. no T.V., no cellphone, no video games, wash dishes, take out the trash, etc.).

## **Project Resources**

### Literature

There were several resources which shaped my thinking about a theology of parental leadership in the home through the means of biblical love as expressed in presence, communication, and discipline. A complete list of literature reviews which have guided the direction of this ministry project is included in the bibliography. I was captivated by books such as: *Testaments of Love* by Leon Morris and *Love Commands in the New Testament* by PHEME Perkins. These two books are the core which shaped my thinking concerning “Developing Parental Leadership through biblical Love.” Morris



assisted me in understanding the core idea of love as set forth in both Old and New Testaments. Morris argues there is so much said about the term love, but less is said concerning what the Bible says about the term. Perkins exposed and analyzed both the ethics and commands of love in the New Testament.

*Family the Forming Center* by Marjorie J. Thompson provided a core theology behind the understanding of family especially in the area of the parent-child relationship. Thompson stresses the basic formation of a child's character and development of personality that occurs within the home, e.g., physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual.<sup>8</sup> Thompson also stresses that home is the child's first classroom, and children quite unconsciously reflect their parents' feelings, values, beliefs, and living patterns – absorbing them with uncanny rapidity.<sup>9</sup> This reflection assisted in shaping my thinking concerning the importance of home and the impact home has on society.

*Little Lamb who made thee* by Walter Wangerin Jr. is a collection of stories concerning the relationships between children and their parents. Wangerin takes this collection of stories to paint a picture of the relationship between God and us as his children. The author confirmed my conclusion concerning parental leadership being rooted in the love of God through his collection of stories between children and parents. As parents we should strive to demonstrate the same love for our children as God loves us as his children. It is the love of God which guides parents to shape and impact the character of their children.

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<sup>8</sup> Thompson, 20.

<sup>9</sup> Thompson, 22.

*The Parent Slant* by Chester E. Swor also informed my concept of parental leadership being rooted in love. If the parent as a person is strong, consistent, winsome, loving, and lovable in character, his or her example will be the greatest single factor in validating parental teaching, discipline, and companionship.<sup>10</sup> Swor helped guide my thinking concerning the effects of a loving character being able to crack open the doors of communication and discipline between the parent and children relationship. God's love makes it possible to have a positive communication and effective discipline. Both communication and discipline should eventually become used as methods of instruction.

*Faith begins at Home* by Mark Holmen dealt with the theology of faith being the central part of the family's home life from generation to generation. Holmen stresses that teachers and coaches play a significant role in teaching our children, but parents play the primary role in reinforcing that instruction in the home.<sup>11</sup> Holmen also stresses that the question is not are parents passing things on to their children, but what are parents passing on to their children?<sup>12</sup> I engaged the parental focus and control groups by asking, "What are we passing on to our children through our presence, communication, and methods of discipline?"

### Human

The parents both married and single, selected from our Faith Formation classes, made up the focus group. They agreed with the goals of this project and were fully

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<sup>10</sup> Swor, 27.

<sup>11</sup> Holmen, 41.

<sup>12</sup> Holmen, 41.

cooperative with the process of reflection and evaluation. They were required to attend the six weeks of lessons regarding ways to model parental leadership through biblical love. The congregational Bible study control group participated in six weeks of lessons and reflections, but they were not required to be there.

The church's office manager sent a personal invitation to the parents selected to participate in the research group. The office manager followed-up with phone calls concerning upcoming sessions and to those who were absent. My wife personally assisted me throughout this process. She was my prayer partner and note taker during the six weeks of lessons. Traci Gillespie, LED Testing Coordinating for Cleveland County Schools, assisted me with the statistical data for this project.

### Physical

All meetings and instruction took place at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church. The primary teaching for six weeks took place in the fellowship room. This room provided adequate space for breakout sessions and other group activities. There were other rooms located both on the ground level and upstairs for additional needs of this project (e.g. interview questioning).

### **Detailed Project Summary**

On September 6, at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church I met with the focus group which consisted of seventeen parents randomly selected by volunteering from our Faith Formation classes. The purpose of this meeting was to introduce my Doctoral project by way of description and goals, to explain our roles and weekly assignments/surveys, and

to receive their consent and commitment to participate in this project over the course of six weeks. Following the description of my project and goals, and the explanation of our roles, every parent consented and signed the commitment agreement (see Appendix A, p.79). Those consent forms were collected by our church's office manager. The focus group was also informed of the interview questions (see Appendix B, p.82) that would be conducted by an anonymous social worker in order to provide addition information concerning their current parental styles based on (if any) positive and/or negative parental styles of their parents and/or guardians. During this time, each parent was also assigned an accountability partner for the purpose of "walking alongside" one another during this project, because parents needed someone they could turn to and be accountable throughout this process.

Having secured the consent and commitment of the focus group (see Appendix A p. 79), each parent of the focus group was contacted by our church's office manager and given a time to be interviewed by the social worker. On September 9, at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, the anonymous social worker was assigned a room and the interviewing process begun. Only thirteen of the seventeen parents were present for the interview on this day; so another time was arranged in order to interview the other four parents. Once the social worker and office manager agreed with a date and time, the other four parents were contacted and given the time to be interviewed by the social worker. Only three out of the four parents were present for the next interview session. So a total of sixteen out of seventeen parents were successfully interviewed for this project.

While the interviews, on September 9, were being conducted in another room on our church campus, I conducted an orientation of my Doctoral project to the Bible study

class by way of description and goals. I explained to the Bible Study class its role as the control group for six weeks. I explained to them that only randomly selected individuals known as the focus group would have additional assignments. This class was open to the entire congregation and consisted of a pre- and post- survey (see Appendix B, p. 83). I encouraged participation during the 6 weeks of lessons and assured the class their responses on the surveys would remain anonymous. During this time the class completed a pre-survey (see Appendix B, p.83).

Every Wednesday for six weeks, I stood in the hallway as the class participants were coming in and greeted them with a smile, a handshake or either a hug. As the class participants proceeded in the classroom, which is known as our fellowship room, they saw upon the overhead screen the title of the class and a picture of a family with parents and children holding hands and walking in a forward motion (see Appendix C, p. 103). Every class started with an opening devotion followed by praise reports and prayer requests.

On Wednesday, September 16, the lesson was on “Discovering the meaning of Biblical love” (see Appendix C, pp. 101-102). As a way of introduction, I asked questions such as: Where does a parent begin when it comes to their leadership role? What is the most effective way for parents to lead in their home? These basic questions were asked in order to gauge the class participants’ thoughts concerning the basis of parental leadership in the home. The purpose of the questions was to: (1) Talk about parent’s responsibility in leading their home, (2) Offer reasons positive leadership is important, and (3) Differentiate effective ways for parent’s to lead in the their home. The hope was to guide a discussion in order to shift the class participants’ focus in the

direction to biblical love as the most effective way for parents to lead in their home.

Some of the parental participants gave various expressions:

1. One parent said love is the starting point and without it everything we do is meaningless especially the task of leading our homes as parents.
2. One parent said he tried to lead his home by being tough and being loud, but that only led to a greater divide between his family and himself; so he concluded that love is the best way to lead his family.
3. A parent suggested that simply buying gifts was not a real expression of love because anyone can buy gifts but effective parents do not need gifts to love their children unconditionally.
4. A parent said she cannot love in her own strength, but it must be God loving through her.

These responses proved to be a positive motivation for the class discussions. I focused intentionally upon biblical love versus the world's idea of love. I discussed the distinctiveness of biblical love, and pointed out biblical love is from God and is the very essence of God. Ideally, it would be for parents to have greater fulfillment of leading in their home, if they would start with God and upon the foundation of his love. Also, I acknowledged that regardless if the parents did all the right things and led their homes through biblical love, children could still make bad decisions and go in the opposite direction of the parents' leadership.

We explored Deuteronomy 7:7-8, Hosea 11:1-3, John 3:16-17, and 1 John 4:8. The purpose behind these texts was two-fold. First, the emphasis upon God's choice of Israel, e.g., it was not based upon Israel's actions but upon God's love for Israel. Even when Israel was disobedient God's *hesed* remained upon Israel. Secondly, we were to discover the core of God's love and to know that love does not define God but God defines love.

Following the lesson the class was asked to write a definition describing the meaning of biblical love in their own words and how parents could model this love. The focus group was directed to pick up the class evaluation survey (see Appendix B, p.84). Once the evaluation surveys were completed, they were returned in the folder at the designated area and they retrieved the theological reflection (see Appendix B, p. 90) to take home and return the following week.

On Wednesday, September 23, the class subject was “Discovering what it means to love God” (see Appendix C, pp. 107-108). To introduce the lesson, we had a brainstorming activity that asked the class members to write down the first word that came to mind when they heard the phrase: “A responsible parent.” The responses varied:

1. Some parents said values, dedication, maturity, sacrifice, role model, selflessness, prayer warrior and trust.
2. Other parents said discipline, love, provider, forgiving, stability, dependable, and being strong.

Then I showed on the overhead different images of something missing (see Appendix C, p. 110). Images included: a puzzle with a missing piece, a bicycle with missing wheels, a jockey with a missing horse, a rowing team with a missing canoe, and a tug-of-war team with a missing rope. The point of the brainstorming activity and the images on the overhead was to show the impossibility, according to Deuteronomy 6:4-9, for parents to lead and teach their children concerning the things of God (Deut. 6:6-9) without first having a love for God (Deut. 6:5).

We explored Deuteronomy 6:4. I explained this verse was the *Shema* of Israel. The *Shema* is a prayer that states the core beliefs of Judaism. The *Shema* is central to the life of Israel because Israel is a monotheistic faith. As we continued by exploring

Deuteronomy 6:5, I made a point to say that parents cannot lead their children to “*who*” they do not love themselves. “*You shall love*” is more than saying “*I love God*,” but it seeks to know “*how*” to love God. Our whole self is required when seeking to know how to love God. We discussed David Payne’s insight on Deuteronomy 6:5 as intellect, emotions, and will-power. Our intellect, emotions, and will-power make up our whole self. The point was made if we do not give our whole self to God it is not possible to give our whole self: attention, time, commitment to our children.

We discussed what comes to one’s mind when hearing the phrase “*undivided loyalty?*”

1. Some parents said trust, obedience, and commitment.
2. Other parents said honesty, unending, focus, and consistency.

This discussion led us to perceive that undivided loyalty is a condition of “*if*” and “*then*” based upon John 14:15. The suggestion was made: “If my child is disobedient to me, then in what part of my life was I not obedient to God?” Another suggestion: “If I do not obey my parent (God), then why do I expect my child to obey me?” Based on Matthew 22:37-38, parents must put their whole self at God’s disposal and this first command is followed by a second command, but the second command is based on the first command. The point was made that we as parents cannot love our children without loving God and allowing God’s *hesed* to teach us to love ourselves.

Following the lesson the class was asked to write a definition describing what it means to love God in their own words and how parents could model this love. The focus group was directed to pick up the class evaluation survey (see Appendix B, p. 85). Once the evaluation surveys were completed they were returned in the folder at the designated



area and then retrieved the theological reflection (see Appendix B, p. 91) to take home and return the following week.

On Wednesday, September 30, the lesson was on “Discovering what it means to love one another” (see Appendix C, pp. 116-117). As a way to introduce this lesson I began by asking, “What does the word ‘automatic’ mean?” The class participants were instructed to give the first thoughts that came to mind as answers. Responses varied such as: unforced, instinctive, spontaneous, impromptu, improvised, random, quick, and suddenly. I showed an image of an automatic gear shift engine versus a manual shift engine on the overhead (see Appendix C, p. 119). I described the difference between the two gear shift engines. The one thing I wanted the class to catch was the fact a manual shift engine requires the use of a clutch pedal normally depressed by the driver of the vehicle, whereas the automatic shift engine does not require the need of the driver depressing the clutch. The point is that we cannot manually shift ourselves to love another person, but it happens automatically when we love God. God’s *hesed* automatically flows through us to love our neighbor when we love God.

We explored Leviticus 19:18. This particular verse concentrated upon the boundaries of the Jewish community. Although “*our neighbor*” can be understood in a vague sense, Leviticus 19:18 places it within a specific community. For the purpose of this rationale I related the specific community to the individual home, and proceeded by saying before we can attempt to love the neighbor outside the specific community (*home*), we must first begin by loving the neighbor (child) inside of the specific community (*home*).

We explored Matthew 22:39. This particular verse allowed us to recognize that our love for God (*the desire to be in an intimate relationship*) transforms us to share in the significance of this command. I expressed to the class, “Once we are connected to God through relationship, we allow God’s *hesed* to flow through us automatically to our neighbor.”

We explored John 13:34-35. We discussed this gospel’s section known as the *Farewell Discourse*. I pointed out “Love one another” is at the core of the moral and spiritual legacy which is presented in the *Farewell Discourse*. We discussed in depth the layers of the *Farewell Discourse*: a model concerning how to love another person. To love another person reveals the relationship we have with God’s *hesed*.

We explored John 15:13 and Philippians 2:6-7. I connected these two texts to show the removal of self in order to love another person. John 15:13 focuses upon self-denying or others-oriented service. Philippians 2:6-7 focuses upon God being revealed through self-emptying and humiliation. We discussed the reality of selfishness as a cause of not loving another person the way God loves that person. It is crucial we see ourselves in God and allow ourselves to be used as an instrument by which God’s *hesed* flows through to reach another person.

Following the lesson the class was asked to write a definition describing what it means to love one another in their own words and how parents could model this love. The focus group was directed to pick up the class evaluation survey (see Appendix B, p. 86). Once the evaluation surveys were completed they were returned in the folder at the designated area and then retrieved the theological reflection (see Appendix B, p.92) to take home and return the following week.

On Wednesday, October 7, the focus group was directed to arrive early in order to retrieve and complete the pre- presence survey (see Appendix B, p. 93). Tonight's lesson was on "Love expressed in presence" (see Appendix C, pp.125-126). As a way of introducing this lesson we discussed three quotes on the overhead (see Appendix C, pp. 127-128). A rich and fulfilling discussion ensued. One parent said, "You are valuable as a parent and our presence is needed the most." We discussed the impact of a father's presence. Some male parent's responses were: should offer security in the home, order, hope, leadership, support, and stability. We discussed the impact of a mother's presence. Some female parent's responses were: love, passion, making sure the stomach's fed, strength, enduring, caring, and intuition. Out of this discussion the class came to agree that the presence of both parents is very important in the child's life; however, if only one is available, this parent is equally equipped to provide the needed presence.

It was suggested that single parents should find someone (hopefully another single parent) to be accountable to. I made the point that parents are only instruments to be used by God. I concluded and said the next three lessons will focus on the expression of the parent's connection to God and the flowing of God's *hesed* through that connection. I used an example of a saxophone, i.e., as long as the saxophone is connected to the mouth of the musician then the musician is able to blow through the saxophone and out comes an expression of the music being played. If parents are connected to God through a relationship with him then God's *hesed* is able to flow from God through the parent and God's *hesed* is expressed through presence, communication, and discipline.

We explored Isaiah 49:15-16. It was discovered that to be present with someone is an action motivated by God's *hesed*. We discussed the "Daughter of Zion" (referring to

Jerusalem) and the unthinkable of a mother forgetting or neglecting her children, but even if human mothers do so, God will never forget because his *hesed* is always present. From this the point was made: “If God’s love is always present, then the parent who is connected to God will ultimately express that presence of God’s love.”

We explored John 14:15-21. Connections were made to John 1:1, 14 and John 3:16. God’s reason for being present with his creation was based and grounded in his love for the world and creation. Even when Jesus’ physical presence shifted to heaven his spiritual presence remained upon the earth. This shows us that God’s presence is permanent because of his love for us.

We explored John 15:1-7. Here the vine is being present with the branches; however, the core of this subject was motivated by love. The command is simply stated: remain or abide in “me” (Christ). To remain in the presence of Christ can only be successful when one remains or abides in God’s love. The choice is up to the parent to remain connected so the children can see God’s presence through their parent’s physical presence. Then it becomes the children’s choice to remain connected to God’s presence.

Following the lesson the class was asked to write a definition describing love expressed through presence in their own words and how parents could model this love. The focus group was directed to pick up the class evaluation surveys (see Appendix B, p. 87). Once the evaluation surveys were completed they were returned in the folder at the designated area and then retrieved the presence application activity (see Appendix B, p. 96) to take home and return the following week.

On Wednesday, October 14, at 6:50 p.m., the focus group was directed to arrive early in order to retrieve and complete the post- presence survey (see Appendix B, p. 93);

and retrieve and complete the pre- communication survey (see Appendix B, p. 94) prior to the beginning of class. Tonight's lesson was on "Love expressed in communication" (see Appendix C, pp. 134-135). As a way of introducing this lesson I ask for two male parents and two female parents to come forward and write on the chart as many words of affirmation they could think of in one minute. The words of affirmation they wrote:

1. One parent stated beautiful, wonderful, great, made in the image of God, blessed, fearful, love, outstanding, graced, awesome, healed, covered, protected, delivered, lively, mighty, gifted, and our future.
2. One parent stated patience, loving, loyal, caring, appreciate, faithful, beautiful, encourage, positive, devoted, kind, cherish, spirited, forgiving, and unselfish.
3. One parent stated special, appreciative, living smart, wonderful, living, fearful, overcomer, powerful, leader, powerful, conqueror, resourceful, stand out, be different, and go against the grain.
4. One parent stated no matter what one says or does, a parent is still a worthy person; so never quit, remain focus, strive for success, you are a child of God, love conquers all, and live life to the fullest.

These responses generated a healthy discussion that focused the class on the importance of communication.

We read Mark 1:11, Luke 3:22b, Matthew 3:17. Mark's and Luke's account of this baptism narrative declared Jesus as the Son of God in a private matter; whereas Matthew's account affirms Jesus as the Son of God in a public matter. The point is when communication is motivated by God's love it is both a private and a public matter. When parents are connected to God's love, then God's love should be expressed through communication. One female parent added, "The more we as parents speak to our children the more our children should be hearing the voice of God; but that only happens if we as parents are connected to God's love."

We turned to Colossians 3:8-9. From these two verses it was discovered that when communication is motivated by God's love it teaches us how to communicate. I asked the question, "Why is it important to know how to communicate to your children?" The rapid responses were as follows: words are powerful and have a lasting impact, so that children will not be afraid to open up and discuss the touchy issues; to be able to affirm our children and not discourage them, and to set the example for them to know how to communicate to others.

After reading Ephesians 4:29, I asked, "In what ways do we build up our children? Parents' responses were:

1. A parent said he tried daily to speak words of encouragement to his son.
2. A parent said she was raising a fifteen year old boy, and she tried to build him up by not being so critical all the time.
3. A parent said she made it a habit to always speak positive things to her daughter.
4. A parent said children should expect their parents to say positive things about their lives.
5. A parent said she brags on the areas that her children would not expect for her to notice.

From this healthy discussion the class turned its attention to avoiding destructive words and concentrating on using constructive words. Chances of using constructive words are greater when parents are connected to God's love and allow God's *hesed* to be expressed through communication.

We looked at James 1:19. I said, "Communication is not always speaking to others but also listening to others." I asked, "What hinders us from listening to our children?" Parents rapidly responded by saying: too busy, priorities are in the wrong place, our pride, and we do not like to talk. I asked, "What are the ways we can practice

in order to listen to our children?” Parents responded by saying: learn how to pay attention to our children, know our children’s non-verbal actions, and learn to have an attitude of acceptance – once we accept what our children are saying then we can learn to deal with the issue appropriately.

Following the lesson the class was asked to write a definition describing love expressed through communication in their own words along with how parents could model this love. The focus group was directed to pick up the class evaluation surveys (see Appendix B, p. 88). Once the evaluation surveys were completed they were returned in the folder at the designated area and then retrieved the communication application activity (see Appendix B, p. 97) to take home and return the following week.

On Wednesday, October 21, at 6:50 p.m., the focus group was directed to retrieve and complete the post- communication survey (see Appendix B, p. 94), and retrieve and complete the pre- discipline survey (see Appendix B, p. 95) prior to the beginning of class. The lesson was on “Love expressed in discipline” (see Appendix C, pp. 143-144). As a way to introduce this lesson I asked the class to write as many words related to discipline, and do so in one minute. After time had elapsed, we discussed orally the words the class had written. The class responses were:

1. A parent said direction, guidance, love, concern, leadership, correction, punishment, praise, listening, time, and trust.
2. A parent said maturity, love, strength, no, hard work, training, honesty, focus, a belt, instruction, and order.
3. A parent said govern, motivate, train, and to redirect.
4. A parent said consistent, respect of authority, obedience, strong, self-control, and accountability.

5. A parent said patience, structure, hope, a spanking, correction, punishment, instruction, and love.

We read Deuteronomy 6:6-9. In order to reconnect and bring the project to a full circle, I asked the class, “What grabs your attention concerning God’s choice of Israel?” “Is there anything special about Israel?” Responses varied such as: love, *Shema*, *hesed*, and nothing was special about Israel except God’s *hesed* toward them. After the responses, I said, “Discipline is motivated by God’s *hesed*. To say the word ‘no’, to correct, to train, and to guide in the right direction are not expired methods and procedures.” Following my statement, questions and discussions were such as:

1. A parent asked how she could avoid getting into a power struggle with her children.
2. A parent said she had to start early and remain consistent.
3. A parent said he started being consistent with teenagers and, even though it was difficult at first, it was never too late to start.

After reading Hebrews 12:5-8, we discussed discipline as being proof of love and *Sonship*. I inquired of the class, “Why is it crucial to discipline our children?” Answers varied such as:

1. A parent said children want to be disciplined.
2. A parent said parents need to teach them how to act in general.
3. A parent said a child without the correct discipline is a child who is on a path toward destruction.
4. A parent said she remains focused on the principles of God’s word, and it starts at home with God’s love.
5. A parent said scripture teaches us to discipline our children and to do so in love.

The focus of Ephesians 6:4 was on the requirement of parents educating their children. I pointed out that this verse in Ephesians is more concerned about the positive



responsibility for instruction than upon the negative aspects of discipline. The term “fathers” is to be understood in the sense of father and mother rather than a specific gender. We discussed the two terms “disciple” and “instruction.” Disciple means appropriate disciplines for younger children and older adolescents; and instruction refers to a verbal correction or education. I asked, “Explain how Ephesians 6:4 reconnects and confirm the instruction formed in Deuteronomy 6:7-8?” Answers varied such as:

1. A parent said it tells us to teach (educate), talk and walk (model) and repeat it (be consistent).
2. A parent said it tells us to teach them in the home and do so on a regular basis.
3. A parent said it confirms it by instructing the parent to teach our children.
4. A parent said it reconnects and confirms the model for the home, and that parents are responsible to instruct/discipline their children at home.

Following the lesson the class was asked to write a definition that described love expressed through discipline in their own words in addition to how parents could model this love. The focus group was directed to pick up the class evaluation surveys (see Appendix B, p. 89). Once the evaluation surveys were completed, they were returned in the folder at the designated area and then retrieved the disciple application activity (see Appendix B, p.98) to take home and return the following week.

#### Project Calendar

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|----------------------|--|
| 1. August 2015       | Received Proposal Approval                                     |
| 2. August 2015       | Selected and welcomed research group of parents                |
| 3. September 2015    | Interview sessions with the parents and Social worker          |
| 4. September 9, 2015 | Pre-project survey/ project overview to the Bible study class. |

5. September 16, 2015    Week 1: “Discovering the meaning of Biblical love.”  
Deuteronomy 7:7-8, Hosea 11:1-3  
John 3:16-17, 1 John 4:8
6. September 23, 2015    Week 2: “Discovering what it means to love God”  
Deuteronomy 6:4-5, John 14:15, Matthew  
22:37-38
7. September 30, 2015    Week 3: “Discovering what it means to love one another”  
Matthew 22:39, John 13:14, 34-35, John  
15:13
8. October 7, 2015        Week 4: “Love expressed in presence”  
Isaiah 49:15-16, John 14:15-21; 15:1-7
9. October 14, 2015       Week 5: “Love expressed in communication”  
Colossians 3:8-9a, Ephesians 4:29, James  
1:19
10. October 21, 2015      Week 6: “Love expressed in discipline”  
Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Ephesians 6:4, Hebrews  
12:5-8
11. March 7, 2016         Submitted Report and Analysis
12. March 16, 2016       Oral Defense
13. May 6, 2016           Completion of Doctor of Ministry/Graduation

## CHAPTER 3

### THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

As pastor for eleven years, I have seen my share of parent and children relationships go in a negative direction. Sunday after Sunday we have wonderful worship services, but I often wonder if the experience of worship inside of the sanctuary is transferring into the homes of Mt. Calvary. I have had countless conversations with both parents and children who are unhappy in their home. Most parents are apprehensive about whether or not their children view them as *good* or *bad* parents. Children (mostly pre-teens to teenagers) are concerned whether or not something is wrong with them, because their parents spend little time and barely communicate with them. The biggest complaints from the children I have spoken with are: their parents are either too busy or too tired and stressed out.

If the parents have not fully embraced their role as parental leaders, can we place the total blame on their children for making poor decisions? How does the church assist in making sure parents know their role as leaders in the home? Where does a parent begin when it comes to their leadership role? What is the most effective way for parents to lead in their home?

Perhaps parents would have greater fulfillment of leading in their home if they would start with God and upon the foundation of his love. If parents do not experience God's love, they will be unable to lead their home in the love of God. What is the love of God? What is biblical love?

## Love in the Old Testament

Self-sacrificial love did not start in the New Testament but has its foundation in the Old Testament. The most frequent words translated “love” in the Old Testament are *'ahav* and *khesedh*.<sup>13</sup> The only time in the Old Testament God’s love (*'ahav*) is mentioned as directed to an individual is in 2 Samuel 12:24.<sup>14</sup> More typically, God’s love is directed toward Israel as a community.<sup>15</sup> In the eyes of God, Israel was his child and he loved Israel with his whole being. God’s choice of Israel is based in God’s love, a love that is not caused by any quality inherent in Israel (Deut. 7:7-8).<sup>16</sup> Walter Brueggemann submits:

YHWH “set his heart” (קָצַף) on Israel. The verb bespeaks a strong emotional attachment that runs beyond any reasonable, explicable act. YHWH made a leap of love in committing to Israel. YHWH’s inscrutable act is (a) rooted in YHWH’s own love – willingness to enter into a sustained and abiding covenant commitment, and (b) based on the ancient oath to the family of Abraham in the book of Genesis... Israel is rooted in commitments that YHWH remembers and honors, even when Israel itself is given to amnesia. YHWH does not forget!<sup>17</sup>

Even as God initially chose Israel because of love, not because of Israel’s deserving, so Isaiah of the exile declares that God will remember that love for a people that are “precious in God’s sight” and redeem Israel from its captivity in Babylon (Isa. 43:4).<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, “Love in the OT,” *The New Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* Vol. 3 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2009), 713.

<sup>14</sup> Sakenfeld, “Love in the OT,” 716.

<sup>15</sup> Sakenfeld, “Love in the OT,” 716.

<sup>16</sup> Sakenfeld, “Love in the OT,” 716..

<sup>17</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*. Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries (Nashville: Abingdon Press 2001), 96.

<sup>18</sup> Sakenfeld, “Love in the OT,” 716.

Brueggemann suggests, “It is clear that we are not intended to follow the metaphor (v.3-4) to its extreme and logical conclusion, but to take it only for the single feature of treasuring Israel in an extreme way.”<sup>19</sup> The proposal of Israel’s “homecoming” is apparent because Israel is not only a community whom God loves, but Israel is a family whom God loves.

In the book of Hosea the theme of family is understood as God portrayed as a loving husband to an unfaithful wife and as a loving parent to “hard-headed” children. In both depictions God’s love relationship is to Israel. Daniel J. Simundson points out, “As far as can be known, Hosea is the earliest instance in the Old Testament where Yahweh’s relation to Israel is based on love.”<sup>20</sup> Hosea pictures a parent (whether a mother or father is not stated) who lovingly feeds and carries the child, teaches the child to walk, and tries to guide the child; yet the child seems set on rejecting the parent (Hos. 11:1-3).<sup>21</sup> In addition, Douglas Stuart points out, “The fault of Israel’s disobedience was in no way Yahweh’s... his loving care had gone for nought.”<sup>22</sup> God understands what it means to be a parent who consistently shows love, not only to children who obey, but to the same children who disobey his commands. Simundson also reminds us, “God’s pain is not the result of a parental ego... but it is sorrow for the fate that Israel has brought upon itself... a good parent never enjoys saying ‘I told you so’ when the defiant offspring has reaped

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<sup>19</sup> Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40-66. Westminster Bible Companion* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press 1998), 54.

<sup>20</sup> Daniel J. Simundson, *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah*. AOTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press 2005), 85.

<sup>21</sup> Sakenfeld, “Love in the OT,” 717.

<sup>22</sup> Douglas Stuart, *Hosea-Jonah*. WBC (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers 1987), 178-179.

the awful consequences of unheeded warnings.”<sup>23</sup> James Nogalski points out, “YHWH articulates the need to punish this people for their disrespect (Hos. 11:5-7), but then YHWH decides to remove the punishment (Hos. 11:8-11).”<sup>24</sup> Here the depth of God’s love for Israel is set forth: God’s way as parent, God’s very way of being, is beyond human ways; even though a human parent might give up, God will not, indeed cannot, abandon Israel.<sup>25</sup> It is God’s *khesedh* that makes it impossible for him to give up on the community and family of Israel. In the Old Testament, biblical love (God’s love) is self-sacrificial and steadfast. When speaking in terms of *khesedh* or *hesed* (חֶסֶד), Sakenfeld prefers the noun “loyalty,” because greater attention to the specific types of relationships and circumstances are required in which חֶסֶד is done.<sup>26</sup> Sakenfeld also points out:

There is no English equivalent that easily covers the connotations of this theological concept... and when used of God, חֶסֶד lifts up the foundational commitment God has made in covenant to the Israelite community and to the Davidic line of kingship... חֶסֶד not only meets human need for deliverance from various disaster; but it also overflows into forgiveness, as an ultimate expression of rescue from distress so that a relationship can be preserved.<sup>27</sup>

### Love for God

From research it appears that Deuteronomy 6:6-9 is the primary passage for describing the parents’ responsibility to their children in the home. Verses 6-9 are a part of the *Shema* which begins in verses 4-5. The *Shema* is a prayer (Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21;

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<sup>23</sup> Simundson, *Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah*. AOTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press 2005), 86.

<sup>24</sup> Jim Nogalski, *The Book of the Twelve: Hosea-Jonah*. Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary (Macon: Smyth & Helwys 2011), 155.

<sup>25</sup> Sakenfeld, “Love in the OT,” 717.

<sup>26</sup> Katherine D. Sakenfeld, “Love (OT),” *ABD* 4:377.

<sup>27</sup> Sakenfeld, “Khesed,” 495-96.

Num. 15:37-41) that states the core beliefs of Judaism, primarily monotheistic faith:

“Hear (שמע), O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord alone.”<sup>28</sup> Brueggemann suggests,

“This key phrase may be rendered as ‘YHWH is one,’ in order to stress the unity of YHWH who cannot be divided or parceled out; or it may be translated ‘YHWH alone,’ in order to accent YHWH’s demand for exclusive, uncompromising loyalty from Israel.”<sup>29</sup>

Thomas Mann points out, “The *Shema* has two primary foci: first, the confession that only Yahweh can be Israel’s God (rather than that Yahweh is the only God), and secondly, that this confession carries with it the demand to love Yahweh (hence the continuation of the imperative mood in vs.5).<sup>30</sup> In addition, Holly Allen says, “The *Shema* was central to the life of the Israelite people, and in this Old Testament passage specific instructions were given to parents to teach their children about the wonders and provisions of their Heavenly Father; the parents were to teach in such a way that the word of God would be a part of the very fabric of their lives.”<sup>31</sup>

Yet it would be impossible, according to Deuteronomy 6:4-9, for parents to lead and teach their children (Deut. 6:6-9) without first having a love for God (Deut. 6:5). Prior to (Deut. 6:6-9) the writer says, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deut. 6:5 NRSV).<sup>32</sup> It is the love

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<sup>28</sup> Lawrence H. Schiffman, “Shema,” *NIDB* 5:224.

<sup>29</sup> Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*. AOTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press 2001), 83.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas W. Mann, *The Book of the Torah: The Narrative Integrity of the Pentateuch* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1988), 150.

<sup>31</sup> Holly Catterton Allen, *Nurturing Children’s Spirituality: Christian Perspectives and Best Practices* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2008), 253.

<sup>32</sup> All Scripture quoted are from NRSV translation unless otherwise indicated.

for God that causes parents to follow his command of teaching and leading their children in the home. In order for parents to lead their homes through God's love they must first desire a love for God. The command "You shall love" is more than saying "I love God," but it seeks to know how to love God. The act of loving God requires a person's whole self being committed to God and willing to constantly spend time with God.

Brueggemann recommends, "One must not romanticize the Deuteronomic use of the term 'love,' as though it was primarily a 'feeling' or even an aptitude; rather it concerns practical acts of obedience in every sphere of daily life..."<sup>33</sup> In addition, David Payne says:

No half-hearted sentiment is good enough. Nothing could be more emphatic than the second half of the verse: "with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might"... perhaps we should paraphrase "heart", "soul" and "might" in Deuteronomy 6:5 as *intellect, emotions and will-power*. Our love for God (as for wives, children or parents) must *first* be practicable and intelligent; love that does not show itself forethought and sensible actions is worth very little. Our love for God must *second* stir our emotions. The God who loved us and gave his Son for us asks for a genuinely loving response. Our love for God must *thirdly* exercise our will-power. To fulfill the promises we have made to love afterward the heat of an emotion is the reality of our love being tested.<sup>34</sup>

Terence Fretheim proposes, "To love with heart, soul, and might engages the entire person in a decisive, passionate, and intense fidelity to this God and to no other."<sup>35</sup> If Israel truly loved God with their whole being, emotions, without any limitations, then that love would be demonstrated by their obedience of teaching their children the words of God. Mann reminds us, "Love here (Deut.6:5) is in no sense sentimental; although it

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<sup>33</sup> Brueggemann, *Deuteronomy*. AOTC (Nashville: Abingdon Press 2001), 84.

<sup>34</sup> David F. Payne, *Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1985), 48.

<sup>35</sup> Terence E. Fretheim, *The Pentateuch* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 156.



connotes endearment, it is also technical treaty language for loyalty...undivided loyalty to Yahweh.”<sup>36</sup> Peter Vogt agrees with Mann: “In this context, love is the terminology used to express total loyalty and devotion.”<sup>37</sup> Jesus says to his disciples, “If you love me you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Jesus makes it clear the importance of this command by saying, “The greatest and first commandment is that you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37a). Gene Outka points out, “Love for God refers to the active element in this response, the placing of the self at God’s disposal.”<sup>38</sup> Yet, the love for God does not remain between God and the one who seeks to love God; the love for God extends beyond the one seeking to love God in order to love others. Outka reminds us, “Love for God thus implies conformity in loving what He loves...”<sup>39</sup>

### **Love in the Gospel of John and the Johannine Letters**

Love in the Gospel of John is used to characterize the particular relationship that exists between the Father and the Son and to explain the special characteristics and abilities of the Son that flow from this relationship.<sup>40</sup> So the love of the Father impacts the character and behavior of the Son. The noun *αγαπε* appears seven times in the

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<sup>36</sup> Mann, *The Book of the Torah: The Narrative Integrity of the Pentateuch*, 150.

<sup>37</sup> Peter T. Vogt, *Deuteronomic Theology and the Significance of Torah: A Reappraisal* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 156.

<sup>38</sup> Gene Outka, *Agape: An Ethical Analysis* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1972), 51.

<sup>39</sup> Outka, 44.

<sup>40</sup> John S. Kloppenborg, “Love in the NT,” *NIDB* 3:707.

Gospel of John, but the verb αγαπαο appears thirty-seven times in the same Gospel.<sup>41</sup>

Love in the Gospel of John is not an emotional reaction but an action of living for others.<sup>42</sup>

Living for others kindles God's love to give to others. Perhaps the most quoted scripture in the world is John 3:16. Gail O'Day reminds us, "John 3:16 is the only place in the Fourth Gospel that says God 'gave' his Son to the world."<sup>43</sup> The core of God's love is to give. Morris elaborates on this thought by adding, "It is not a love given to the worthy or to those God charitably assumes to be worthy; it is lavished on sinners."<sup>44</sup> Only those who believe in the gift of the Son will receive God's love which leads to eternal life (John 3:16-17). It is God's self-giving love which shapes and impacts the life of the one who receives it. The Gospel of John in chapters 13-17 describes the impact of receiving God's love by reproducing it through the means of "loving one another." The love theme from the Gospel of John continues into the Johannine letters. The noun αγαπε appears thirty-one times in the Johannine letters, but the verb αγαπαο appears thirty times in these letters.<sup>45</sup> It's important to note that the love discussion in the Johannine letters is mostly restricted to the members of the Johannine community.<sup>46</sup> John's discussion on

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<sup>41</sup> Kloppenborg, "Love in the NT," 707.

<sup>42</sup> Kloppenborg, 707.

<sup>43</sup> Gail R. O'Day, "Gospel of John," *The New Interpreter's Bible*. Vol. IX (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1995), 552.

<sup>44</sup> Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 131.

<sup>45</sup> Kloppenborg, "Love in the NT," 707.

<sup>46</sup> Kloppenborg, 708.

love among the members of the Johannine community points to loyalty and solidarity.<sup>47</sup> “God is love” (1 John 4:8) is the statement that holds this Johannine community together. Clifton Black unpacks this statement by noting, “The elder is not saying that love defines God; he is careful to say that God is love or love is of God... God’s self-giving, definitive mercy is the express source and presupposition of human love.”<sup>48</sup> To know that God is love impacts one to conduct his or her self in the love of God. In the New Testament, especially in the Gospel of John and the Johannine letters, biblical love (God’s love) is self-giving and unconditional.

### **Love for One Another**

The writer of Matthew’s gospel says, “And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matt. 22:39). A person’s love for God (the desire to be in an intimate relationship) transforms the person to share in the seriousness of that divine command. PHEME PERKINS reminds us, the “love of neighbor” command in the New Testament comes from the command in Leviticus 19:18 that was often used to reinforce the boundaries of the Jewish community.<sup>49</sup> Although “our neighbor” can be understood in a broader perspective, Leviticus 19:18 places it within a specific community. For the purpose of this rationale I will relate the specific community to the individual home, and proceed by saying before we can attempt to love the neighbor outside of the specific community or home, we must first begin by loving the neighbor inside of the specific

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<sup>47</sup> Kloppenborg, 708.

<sup>48</sup> C. Clifton Black, “First, Second, and Third Letters of John,” NIB XII (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1985), 429-430.

<sup>49</sup> PHEME PERKINS, *Love Command in the New Testament* (Ramsey: Paulist Press, 1982), 12.

community or home. Outka proposes, “If one loves God one is not free to decide whether to love the neighbor or not.”<sup>50</sup>

The writer of John’s gospel echoes the message to “love your neighbor” by saying, “love one another.” This phrase is found in the “Farewell Discourses” in John chapters 13-17. Victor Furnish reminds us, “The Johannine commandments to ‘love one another’ are at the very center of the moral and spiritual legacy which is presented in the Farewell Discourses.”<sup>51</sup> As found in the Gospel of John, “A new commandment I give to you that you love one another; even as I have loved you, you must also love one another” (John 13:34a). O’Day points out, “Jesus’ love for his disciples provided them with the model of how they are to relate to one another.”<sup>52</sup> Kloppenborg suggests, “The newness of this command of reciprocal love is not that such a command is qualitatively or chronologically new – Leviticus 19:18 is much older – but that it is grounded in Jesus’ love for his disciples as God’s revealer.”<sup>53</sup> Perkins advises this love command is absorbed as the basis of three relationships. He suggests, “(A) it defines relationships between members of the community; (B) those relationships in turn are founded on the special relationship of presence that the community enjoys with God/Jesus and Spirit; (C) it must also be reflected in Jesus’ commissioning his followers to represent him before a hostile world.”<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Outka, *Agape: An Ethical Analysis*, 44.

<sup>51</sup> Victor Paul Furnish, *The Love Command in the New Testament* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 135.

<sup>52</sup> O’Day, NIB IX, 732.

<sup>53</sup> Kloppenborg, *Love in the NT*, 708.

<sup>54</sup> Perkins, *Love Commands in the New Testament*, 107.

The command to love one another does not discriminate. While emotions are included, the love described is far more than an emotional expression. There must be concrete action supporting it. It is not a passive, non-active affection. It is not a “going through the motions” gesture that is shown to others; instead, to love one another prompts a person to act or to demonstrate in some way that reveals the relationship the person has with God’s love. “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35). It is intriguing that before Jesus gives this command he demonstrates the command through the action of washing his disciples’ feet (John 13:1ff). Then Jesus tells Peter, “Unless I wash you, you have no share with me” (John 13:8b). Then Jesus tells his disciples, “If I your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet” (John 13:14). Andreas Kostenberger points out, “Before Jesus asks his disciples to do anything, he first performs on them a humble act of service, which was prompted and motivated by love.”<sup>55</sup> In addition, Kostenberger says, “The love of Jesus, which found its expression in the footwashing, is further elaborated in Jesus’ statement in 15:13: ‘Greater love has not one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.’”<sup>56</sup> To lay down one’s life for one’s friends is not always meant to die but it can also mean the sense of self-denying or others-oriented service.<sup>57</sup> O’Day suggests, “The English noun ‘friend’ does not fully convey the presence of love that undergirds the Johannine notion of friendship... verse 14 makes it even clearer that

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<sup>55</sup> Andreas J. Kostenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters: Biblical Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 518.

<sup>56</sup> Kostenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters: Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, 519.

<sup>57</sup> Kostenberger, 519.

Jesus is not simply appealing to the noble ideal of friendship in v.13, but to an understanding of friendship wholly grounded in Jesus' particular love."<sup>58</sup>

The English language uses one term to describe the various meanings of love. The Greek language, on the other hand, uses various terms to describe the meanings of love. *Στοργή* means something like "natural love or family."<sup>59</sup> C. S. Lewis describes this term, "As an affectionate love, especially of parents to offspring; but also of offspring to parents."<sup>60</sup> On the other hand, Leon Morris stresses, "The danger of this love is that it is not automatic, and we may expect others to love us in this way when they do not."<sup>61</sup> When this occurs it may lead to distractions in the relationship. In addition, Morris says, "It is all the more interesting that the term is never used in the New Testament."<sup>62</sup> However, *στεργειν*, appears in the NT only in the compound word *πηλοστοργος*.<sup>63</sup>

The term *πηλία* means the love of friendship. Yet in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is there any such thing as true friendship? C. S. Lewis points out, "We do not seem to make as much of friendship these days as did the ancients, when Aristotle could classify it as one of the virtues and when Cicero could write a book about it."<sup>64</sup> Although *πηλία* is important and valuable, it is also limited. Morris refers to this term, "As only being used once in the

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<sup>58</sup> O'Day, NIB IX, 758.

<sup>59</sup> Leon Morris, *Testaments of Love* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company 1981), 114.

<sup>60</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers 1960), 53.

<sup>61</sup> Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 116.

<sup>62</sup> Morris, 116.

<sup>63</sup> W. Thimme, "Love (NT and Early Jewish)," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* Vol. 4. (New York: Doubleday Publishing), 385.

<sup>64</sup> Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 88.

New Testament, when James tells us that ‘the friendship of the world is enmity against God’ (James 4:4).<sup>65</sup> Luke Johnson’s explanation of “friends with the world” implies hypocrisy. He suggests, “To be ‘friends of the world’ means that one chooses to live by the logic of envy, rivalry, competition, violence, and murder... while at trying to live by God’s measure but simultaneously acting according to the world’s measure.”<sup>66</sup> In addition, Lewis reminds us, “This love of friendship arises out of mere companionship when two or more of the companions discover that they have in common some insight or interest or even taste... each believed to be his own unique treasure (or burden).”<sup>67</sup> This love of affection has its strength among those who are equal.

*Ερως* is romantic love, sexual love.<sup>68</sup> Two things are especially characteristic of *ερως*: it is the love of the worthy, and it is a love that desires to possess.<sup>69</sup> This term, like *στοργη*, is not found in the New Testament. W. Thimme points out, “It is debated whether the concept of *ερως* appears in the New Testament.”<sup>70</sup> Paul Tillich suggests, “The fact that the New Testament could not use the word is because of its predominantly sexual connotations.”<sup>71</sup> Although *ερως* is not necessarily evil, in some ways being a thing of beauty, yet it seeks to gratify self. Lewis says, “A person cannot of himself be what,

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<sup>65</sup> Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 119.

<sup>66</sup> Luke T. Johnson, NIB XII (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1995), 211-212.

<sup>67</sup> Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 96.

<sup>68</sup> Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 120.

<sup>69</sup> Morris, 120.

<sup>70</sup> W. Thimme, “Love (NT and Early Jewish),” *ABD* 4:385.

<sup>71</sup> Paul Tillich, *Love, Power and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Application* (London: Oxford University Press 1954), 117.

nevertheless, he must be if he is to remain in *ἔρως*, he needs help – therefore needs to be ruled.”<sup>72</sup> Morris points out, “When Christians speak of love, *ἔρως* is not what they have in mind because the essence of Christianity is to be seen not in man’s ascent to God, but in God’s coming down to man.”<sup>73</sup>

One more term used in the Greek language to describe love is *ἀγάπε* (as mentioned above). According to Morris, *ἀγάπε* is a love given quite irrespective of merit, and it is a love that seeks to give.<sup>74</sup> This love is the love parents should function in when leading their home. It is the Christian love that gives of itself without expectation of anything in return. It is an unconditional love; one that overcomes the barriers of love. Tillich reminds us, “*ἀγάπε* cuts through the separation of equals and unequals, of sympathy and antipathy, of friendship and indifference, of desire and disgust; it needs no sympathy in order to love.”<sup>75</sup> I believe it is the truest description of “tough love” because the emphasis is not upon one’s self but upon others – others who may not offer love in return. Gedde MacGregor points out, “*ἀγάπε* is God’s creative act of self-limitation, self-emptying, and self-abnegation.”<sup>76</sup> Morna Hooker offers a wonderful explanation concerning the “self-emptying” of Christ. Hooker says, “In Philippians 2:6-7, Christ did not cease to be ‘in the form of God’ when he took the form of a slave, any more than he ceased to be the ‘Son of God’ when he was sent into the world; on the contrary, it is in

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<sup>72</sup> Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 160.

<sup>73</sup> Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 123.

<sup>74</sup> Morris, 128.

<sup>75</sup> Tillich, *Love, Power and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Application*, 119.

<sup>76</sup> Gedde MacGregor, *He Who Lets Us Be: A Theology of Love* (New York: The Seabury Press 1975), 18.



*his self-emptying and his humiliation that he reveals what God is like*, and it is through his taking the form of a slave that we see ‘the form of God.’”<sup>77</sup> Yet, it is interesting to note there are more connections than distinctions between the Greek words mentioned above. For example, W. Thimme proposed:

That in the New Testament there is a synthesis of *ερως* and *αγαπε* and that in particular *ερως* is based on *αγαπε* plays a significant role. He say *ερως* in the adoration of the miracle of the incarnation, in the love commandment itself, which assume that love can be achieved, in the moral teaching based on union with Christ and in the longing of the earthly pilgrim to arrive in glory. If ecstasy is at the center of the idea of eros, then surely there is not true agape without it; a God who does not care whether people respond is hardly the God portrayed in Hosea or in the NT image of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem.<sup>78</sup>

It is important to note *ἡ ἀγάπη* is defined by self-investing. *Αγαπε* is defined by self-giving. For this project, *ἡ ἀγάπη* is assessed as the foundation on which parental leadership is established. From this foundation of *ἡ ἀγάπη*, *αγαπε* is experienced in presence, communication, and discipline.

### **Love Expressed in Presence**

Presence with someone is an action motivated by God’s love. From the beginning of creation God has desired to be present with his creation. The reason God desired to be present with his creation is because he “so loved the world” (John 3:16a). According to Kostenberger, “The Word – the same Word that was in the beginning with God and was God; the same Word that served as the exclusive agent of God’s creation – the Word was made flesh and ‘made his dwelling’ (lit., ‘pitched his tent’ [*σκεινοο*]) among ‘us,’ and

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<sup>77</sup> Morna Hooker, NIB XI (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1995), 508.

<sup>78</sup> Thimme, “Love (NT and Early Jewish),” *ABD* 4:385.

‘we’ have seen his glory (John 1:14).”<sup>79</sup> Kostenberger continues to say, “Thus the language here shifts from the safe distance of an observer and reporter of news, as it were, to that of a participant observer whose life was affected by the Word-made-flesh.”<sup>80</sup>

In the beginning section of John’s Gospel chapter fifteen the subject is concerning the vine being present with the branches; however, the core of this subject is motivated by love. The command is clearly stated as “remain or abide in me” (John 15:4). John Calvin suggests, “Christ has no other purpose in mind than to keep us as a hen keeps her chicks under her wings, lest we be carried away by our indifference and fly to our destruction.”<sup>81</sup> To remain or abide in the presence of Jesus can only be successful when one remains or abides in God’s love (John 15:9). O’Day points out, “The ground of the community’s abiding with Jesus is the love that God and Jesus share with each other and that the community is called to enact.”<sup>82</sup>

### **Love Expressed in Communication**

John McIntyre reminds us, “Communication is one of the forms which the love of God takes in His manifold dealings with us.”<sup>83</sup> An excellent example of communication

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<sup>79</sup> Kostenberger, *A Theology of John’s Gospel and Letters: Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, 185.

<sup>80</sup> Kostenberger, 185.

<sup>81</sup> John Calvin, *The Crossway Classic Commentaries: John* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994), 354.

<sup>82</sup> O’Day, NIB IX, 758.

<sup>83</sup> John McIntyre, *On the Love of God* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1962), 101.

being motivated by the love of God is witnessed at the baptism of Jesus. The account of the baptism of Jesus is found in all four Gospels (Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:29-34). However, I will discuss the accounts found in the synoptic Gospels only. My intention will be focused on “the voice” within the account of the baptism of Jesus.

According to Mark’s Gospel: “And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased’” (Mark 1:11). William Lane offers this reflection, “In the voice from heaven God addresses Jesus as his unique Son, the object of his elective love.”<sup>84</sup> In addition, Lane says:

The declaration provides a unique appraisal of Jesus. The designation “Son” is enriched by the concept of the Servant of the Lord of Isa. 42:1, but the primary emphasis is upon Sonship. In this context “Son” is not a messianic title, but is to be understood in the highest sense, transcending Messiahship. It signifies the unique relationship which Jesus sustains to the Father, which exists apart from any thought of official function in history: Jesus is God’s unique Son.<sup>85</sup>

According to Luke’s Gospel: “And a voice came from heaven, ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased’” (Luke 3:22b). Alan Culpepper points out, “Luke follows Mark in interpreting the voice as something that only Jesus may have heard: ‘You are my Son.’”<sup>86</sup> Culpepper also notes, “The affirmation of Jesus as God’s Son resonates with declarations of Sonship throughout Israel’s history i.e. Isaac was the

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<sup>84</sup> William L. Lane, *The New International Commentary of the New Testament: The Gospel of Mark* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), 57.

<sup>85</sup> Lane, 57-58.

<sup>86</sup> R. Alan Culpepper, *NIB IX* (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1995), 91.

promised child of the covenant, the son who Abraham loved (Gen 22:2).”<sup>87</sup> Both Mark and Luke affirm the Father’s relationship to the Son through “a voice.”

According to Matthew’s Gospel: “And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased’” (Matthew 3:17). Donald Hagner points out, “While Mark and Luke have this sentence as a direct statement to Jesus – ‘You are my son’ – Matthew has it in the third person, thereby objectifying it and making it more suitable as catechetical material for the church.”<sup>88</sup> Whereas, Mark and Luke affirm Jesus as the Son God in a “more private” matter, Matthew affirms Jesus as the Son of God in a “public matter.” In addition, Eugene Boring states, “In Matthew the announcement is addressed to a wider circle – at least John, more likely the bystander public in general, since in chaps. 1—2 Jesus’ identity is already a matter of family and public knowledge.”<sup>89</sup> When communication is motivated by God’s love it is both a private and public matter.

When communication is motivated by God’s love it teaches one how to communicate. The Apostle Paul explains this by saying, “But now you must get rid of all such things... abusive language from your mouth... and do not lie to one another” (Colossians 3:8b-9a). F.F. Bruce affirms, “It is crucial to not allow your mouths be polluted with the scurrilous and filthy language that used to flow readily from them, or with lying either.”<sup>90</sup> As Ephesians 4:29 states, “Let no evil talk come out of your mouths,

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<sup>87</sup> Culpepper, NIB IX, 91.

<sup>88</sup> Donald A. Hagner, WBC 33a (Dallas: Word Books Publisher, 1993), 58.

<sup>89</sup> M. Eugene Boring, NIB VIII (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1995), 160.

<sup>90</sup> F.F. Bruce, *Ephesians and Colossians*. NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company 1968), 271.

but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.” Andrew Lincoln suggests, “The focus is on the destructive power of words and the harm they can produce in communal life... what is required instead is the use of words in a constructive fashion – that which is good for building.”<sup>91</sup> The Apostle James also says, “You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger” (James 1:19). Communication is not always speaking but also listening. Frances Gench concludes, “James values listening, temperate speech, and humility in all areas of life... therefore, Christians must listen carefully and patiently to God before they presume to speak and act in God’s name.”<sup>92</sup> Thus parents can effectively speak truth and listen to their children; they must first listen carefully to God.

### **Love Expressed in Discipline**

Discipline is motivated by God’s love. To say no, to correct, to train, and to guide in the right direction are not expired methods and procedures. Tony Evans affirms, “Discipline is proof of two very important things: first love (Heb. 12:6) and Sonship (Heb. 12:7-8).”<sup>93</sup> In addition, Morris says:

God sometimes let men suffer because he loves them. For example, the writer of the Hebrews quotes Proverbs 3:11-12 to emphasize the thought that God actively chastens his people: “For whom the Lord loves he disciplines and he scourges every son whom he welcomes” (Heb. 12:6). Those saved by the cross see

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<sup>91</sup> Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*. WBC (Dallas: Word Books Publisher 1990), 305.

<sup>92</sup> Frances Taylor Gench, *Hebrews and James*. WBC (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 96.

<sup>93</sup> Tony Evans, *The Kingdom Agenda: Life Under God* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2013), 287.

suffering in a new light, because it has brought them the greatest good. They see meaning in their own suffering, interpreting it as God's discipline at work. It is not evidence that God does not love them; it is precisely because he loves them that he goes to the trouble of disciplining them.<sup>94</sup>

Fred Craddock insightfully suggests, "In Hebrews, it is very important that the congregation understand their experiences in the context of the parent-child relationship; the wisdom tradition was full of advice for parents and children in the family and larger community relationships, but much less frequently dealt with God as a parent disciplining children."<sup>95</sup> Thomas Long concludes, "Good parents (including God) discipline their children because they want their children to grow up to be like them, to share their values, commitments, and way of life."<sup>96</sup>

The Apostle Paul instructs the church in Ephesus, "And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Evans notes, "Discipline includes instruction: making sure they are being taught in the way of the Lord."<sup>97</sup> Perkins reminds us:

Ephesians 6:4 focuses on the requirement that parents educate their children... Ephesians is less interested in the negative aspects of discipline than in the positive responsibility for instruction. The term "disciple" (παίδεια) spans the range between appropriate disciplines for young children to the philosophical instruction of the old adolescent. The second term "instruction" (νουθεσια), refers to verbal correction or education. Thus Ephesians indicates that Christian fathers will be devoted to training their children in virtuous behavior.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Morris, *Testaments of Love*, 135.

<sup>95</sup> Fred B. Craddock, NIB XII (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1998), 151

<sup>96</sup> Thomas Long, "Hebrews" *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1997), 133.

<sup>97</sup> Evans, *The Kingdom Agenda: Life Under God*, 289.

<sup>98</sup> PHEME PERKINS, NIB XI (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1995), 452-53

Ephesians 6:4 in essence reconnects and confirms the command of Deuteronomy 6:7-9 and endorses the wisdom of Proverbs 22:6.

### **Summary**

From the Old Testament to the New Testament, the terms  $\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho$  and  $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\epsilon$  paint a clear picture of God's love in the Bible. Biblical love is the foundation on which parental leadership becomes the most effective way of leading children in homes. From this foundation  $\pi\alpha\tau\epsilon\rho$  is revealed through  $\alpha\gamma\alpha\pi\epsilon$  as the expressed action experienced in presence, communication, and discipline. Experiencing God's love allows parents' the freedom to lead their home in the love of God.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CRITICAL EVALUATION**

This project was evaluated by pre- and post- surveys, questionnaires, and evaluations. Surveys utilized a Lickert scale to determine the quantitative results. The results were measured by the method of mean and standard deviation. The mean is the average where the variables converge. The standard deviation is the measure of how much the variation is from the mean. The open-ended questions, (i.e., the overall survey questions, interview questions, theological reflections, application activities, and class evaluations), were used to determine the qualitative results. The results of the accountability partners' survey were measured and displayed by a bar graph (see Appendix D, pp. 175-176).

#### **Quantitative Results**

The data measured quantitatively used pre- and post- surveys. The control group's pre- and post- surveys assessed three areas: status, gender, and age. For this project, the term status refers to the parent's marital status. When referring to the parents as married means there are two parents in the home. When referring to the parent as single means there is one parent in the home.

#### **Control Group Pre- and Post- Survey Results**

There were a total of fifty-six people from the control group who responded to the pre-survey. Out of the total of fifty-six people, twenty-nine were married and twenty-seven were single (see Appendix D, pp. 150-151). Fifty-six percent of the married parents



answered favorably to the survey questions out of two hundred and ninety observations. The total scale mean was 4.082, and the standard deviation was 1.194 with a 0.070 standard error. Fifty-four percent of the single parents answered favorably to the survey questions out of two hundred and seventy observations. The total scale mean was 4.033, and the standard deviation was 1.300 with a 0.079 standard error. There is no significant statistically difference between the married and single parents. As you will see later this will be the normal pattern throughout the quantitative data scores.

Concerning gender, out of the total of fifty-six people who responded to the pre-survey, fifteen were male and forty-one were female (see Appendix D, pp. 154-155). Fifty-nine percent of the male parents answered favorably to the survey questions out of one hundred and fifty observations. The total scale mean was 4.186, and the standard deviation was 1.131 with a 0.092 standard error. Fifty-six percent of the female parents answered favorably to the survey questions out of four hundred and ten observations. The total scale mean was 4.012, and the standard deviation was 1.282 with a 0.063 standard error.

The age category was labeled as either younger or older. The younger group of parents was between the ages of eighteen and fifty-five. The older group of parents was age fifty-six and above. Out of the total of fifty-six people, thirty-four were younger and twenty-two were older (see Appendix D, pp. 158-159). Sixty-six percent of the younger parents answered favorably to the survey questions out of three hundred and forty observations. The total scale mean was 4.208, and the standard deviation was 1.134 with a 0.269 standard error. Fifty-nine percent of the older parents answered favorably to the

survey questions out of two hundred and twenty observations. The total scale mean was 4.013, and the standard deviation was 1.290 with a 0.087 standard error.

There were a total of fifty-four people from the control group who responded to the post-survey. Out of the total of fifty-four people, thirty were married and twenty-four were single (see Appendix D, pp. 150-151). Sixty-six percent of the married parents answered favorably to the survey questions out of three hundred observations. The total scale mean was 4.453, and the standard deviation was 0.933 with a 0.053 standard error. Seventy-seven percent of the single parents answered favorably to the survey questions out of two hundred and forty observations. The total scale mean was 4.495, and the standard deviation was 1.030 with a 0.066 standard error. The post-survey indicated the married parents' total mean score increased from 4.082 to 4.453 and the single parents' total mean score increased from 4.033 to 4.495.

Concerning gender, twenty-one were male and thirty-three were female (see Appendix D, pp. 154-155). Sixty-seven percent of the male parents answered favorably to the survey questions out of two hundred and ten observations. The total scale mean was 4.457, and the standard deviation was 0.948 with a 0.065 standard error. Seventy-three percent of the female parents answered favorably to the survey questions out of three hundred and thirty observations. The total scale mean was 4.481, and the standard deviation was 0.996 with a 0.054 standard error. From the pre-survey to the post-survey, the males' total mean score increased from 4.186 to 4.457 and the females' total mean score increased from 4.012 to 4.481.

Concerning age, thirty-two were younger and twenty-two were older (see Appendix D, pp. 158-159). Eighty-two percent of the younger parents answered

favorably to the survey questions out of three hundred and twenty observations. The total scale mean was 4.637, and the standard deviation was 0.775 with a 0.043 standard error. Seventy-seven percent of the older parents answered favorably to the survey questions out of two hundred and twenty observations. The total scale mean was 4.463, and the standard deviation was 1.132 with a 0.076 standard error. The post- survey showed the younger parents' total mean score increased from 4.208 to 4.637 and the older parents' total mean score increased from 4.013 to 4.463.

Recapitulating, the quantitative data showed no statistically significant difference among all pre- and post- surveys. It is worth pointing out the pre- and post- surveys for the control group: status, gender, and age showed the most movement in only two areas. The first area that showed the most scale movement from negative to positive between pre- and post- survey was the statement, "I have an understanding of the meaning of God's *hesed*" (see Appendix B, p.83). The post- survey answers were more favorably than the pre- survey answers (see Appendix D, pp. 150-161); and that is to be understood since *hesed* was a new term being introduced to the majority of the parents attending the class.

The second area that showed the most diverse scale movement was the statement, "I find it difficult to communicate with my children" (see Appendix B, p. 83). The status breakdown between married and single parent homes both varied with their responses that ranged from "not true at all" to "typically true" with a very slim majority in the "not true at all" category. Yet, in the married post- survey, when the categories, "sometimes true" and "typically true" are combine they are greater than the combined categories, "not at all true" and "hardly ever true" (see Appendix D, p. 149). However, in the single post-

survey (see Appendix D, p. 151) the opposite is true; indicating that communication seemed to be the main struggle within married parent homes than it is in single parent homes. The gender breakdown between male and female parents both varied with their responses ranging from “not true at all” to “typically true.” However, the data showed via post- survey results, females seemed to have more difficulty of communicating with their children (see Appendix D, pp. 154-155). The age breakdown between younger and older parents both varied with their responses ranging from “not true at all” to “typically true.” The data clearly showed via results of the pre- survey (see Appendix D, pp. 158-159) that the younger parents had the most trouble communicating with their children. Yet, the younger parents’ post- survey (see Appendix D, pp. 158, 160-161) results showed more of a positive trend toward the category “hardly ever true,” which indicated growth in a positive direction for the younger parents’ communication with their children.

#### Focus Group Pre- and Post- Survey Results

There were a total of seventeen people who volunteered to participate in the focus group. Out of seventeen, eleven were married and six were single. The focus group’s pre- and post- surveys assessed three areas: presence, communication, and discipline. Due to the small size of the focus group, the assessment focused on the status of the parent. There was an additional assessment taken of accountability partners. The members of focus group were assigned a partner within the group to consult with concerning progress and challenges during the course of this project.

The pre- presence survey was completed by eight married parents (see Appendix D, p. 162). Fifty-two percent answered favorably to the survey questions out of a total of

fifty-six observations. The total scale mean was 3.517, and the standard deviation was 1.321 with a 0.176 standard error. The post- presence survey was completed by seven married parents (see Appendix D, pp. 162-163). Forty-seven answered favorably to the survey questions out of a total of forty-nine observations. The total scale mean was 3.387, and the standard deviation was 1.304 with a 0.186 standard error. The post- survey indicated a decrease in the total scale mean score. This is attributed to the effect of the activities. I view the decrease as a success and growth because the parents acknowledged their need to be present in the child's life.

The pre- presence survey was completed by five single parents (see Appendix D, p. 164). Fifty-one percent answered favorably to the survey questions out of a total of thirty-five observations. The total scale mean was 3.4, and the standard deviation was 1.264 with a 0.213 standard error. The post- presence survey was completed by six singles (see Appendix D, pp. 164-165). Sixty-four percent answered favorably to the survey questions out of a total of forty-two observations. The total scale mean was 3.309, and the standard deviation was 1.584 with a 0.244 standard error. The same is true for the single parents as was for the married parents. There was a recognition concerning the need to be present more in their child's life.

The pre- communication survey was completed by eight married parents (see Appendix D, p. 166). Forty-three percent answered favorably to the survey questions out of a total of fifty-six observations. The total scale mean was 3.125, and the standard deviation was 1.389 with a 0.185 standard error. The post- communication survey was completed by five married parents (see Appendix D, pp. 166-167). Fifty-one percent answered favorably to the survey questions out of a total of sixty-three observations. The

total scale mean was 3.190, and the standard deviation was 1.389 with a 0.175 standard error. As indicated in the control group, communication seemed to be the biggest challenge within the focus group as well.

The pre- communication survey was completed by four single parents (see Appendix D, p.168). Fifty-seven percent answered favorably to the survey questions out of a total of twenty-eight observations. The total scale mean was 2.821, and the standard deviation was 1.467 with a 0.277 standard error. The post- communication survey was completed by five single parents (see Appendix D, pp. 168-169). Sixty-nine percent answered favorably to the survey questions out of a total of thirty-five observations. The total scale mean was 3.114, and the standard deviation was 1.586 with a 0.268 standard error. It is interesting the single parents' total mean score showed a greater increase than the married parents' total mean score.

The pre- discipline survey was completed by eleven married parents (see Appendix D, p. 170). Sixty-eight percent answered favorably to the survey questions out of a total of seventy-seven observations. The total scale mean was 4.519, and the standard deviation was 0.699 with a 0.079 standard error. The post- discipline survey was completed by eleven married parents (see Appendix D, pp. 170-171). Eighty-one percent answered favorably to the survey questions out of a total of seventy-seven observations. The total scale mean was 4.766, and the standard deviation was 0.483 with a 0.055 standard error.

The pre- discipline survey was completed by six single parents (see Appendix D, p.172). Sixty-seven percent answered favorably to the survey questions out of a total of forty-two observations. The total scale mean was 4.523, and the standard deviation was

0.706 with a 0.109 standard error. The post- discipline survey was completed by six single parents (see Appendix D, pp. 172-173). Sixty-four percent answered favorably to the survey questions out of a total of forty-two observations. The total scale mean was 4.428, and the standard deviation was 0.667 with a 0.103 standard error.

Overall, the quantitative data of the control group and focus group showed communication to be the major challenge in homes of married parents. Acknowledging the importance of presence, as indicated by post- surveys in focus group of married and single parents, may have contributed to the challenge of communication. Parents and children cannot communicate effectively when physical presence is absent. There was no significant statistically difference between the control group and focus group. The overall total mean score showed a slim increased between pre- and post- surveys in the control group areas: status, gender, and age. The overall total mean score showed both slim increases and decreases between pre- and post- surveys in the focus group areas: presence, communication, and discipline. I believe the reason for the “slim differences” was because the focus group and control group were in the same setting, receiving the same lesson, and therefore causing similar results. Further research is needed to strengthen these possible conclusions.

#### Focus Group Accountability Partners Results

The accountability partners were divided between parents who were married and parents who were single (see Appendix D, p. 174). Within the married accountability partners, groups ranged from two people to four people. Within the single accountability

partners, three groups of two were formed. Two of the three groups were made up of a male and a female, and the third group was made up of two females.

The majority of the married parent accountability partners answered each question favorably (see Appendix D, p.174). The majority of the married parent accountability partners communicated every day, and stated they shared their successes and failures on a routine basis. Only one parent strongly disagreed that having an accountability partner was encouraging. Yet, a great majority recognized and agreed that having an accountability partner motivated them to accomplish the activity assignments.

The single parent accountability partners showed more diversity in their answers (see Appendix D, p.174). It is interesting to point out the two groups made up of a male and a female answered more favorably on questions than the group made up of two females. The two females both indicated they never made a real connection with each other. Both either disagreed or strongly disagreed on the majority of the questions. Many assumptions can be made, but it is interesting that two single parent females could not make a connection; both groups made up of a male and a female made a connection. However, I view this assessment as a success.

### **Qualitative Results**

The data measured qualitatively focused on open-ended questions. The open-ended questions were mainly measured within the focus group. The areas of concentration were: interview questions, theological questions, application activities, and class evaluations. Only three open-ended questions were asked of the control group on the overall project pre and post survey. The goal of the open-ended questions was to gain



deeper feedback from the parents in the focus group that was not collected or revealed through the quantitative results.

#### Control Group Data

There were fifty-six parents who responded to the three questions on the pre-survey, and fifty-four parents who responded to the three questions on the post-survey (see Appendix B, p.83). The majority of the parents said, “They understood their parental role to teach and train their children in a way pleasing to God.” The majority of the parents said, “The ways they practiced a lifestyle that honored God in the home was by living a lifestyle of respect, obedience and moral values.” The majority of the parents said, “Everything would change for the best if they would lead their home through the means of biblical love; their children would respect them more and hopefully would grow up to be decent and godly people.” There was not a significant difference in the way the parents answered between pre- and post-surveys.

#### Focus Group Interview Questions Data

There were sixteen out of seventeen parents interviewed within the research group: four married males, six married females, two single males, and four single females. There were a total of ten questions asked during the interview process (see Appendix B, p.82). All parents who were interviewed were under the age of fifty-six.

The interview questions revealed five (one married male, two married females, one single male and one single female) out of sixteen parents were not reared in a Christian home. When asked to describe their childhood experience at home, ten out of

sixteen parents described their experience as great, happy, peaceful, or disciplined. These “ten” came from homes in which they were either raised by a single parent, two-parents, grandparents, or an aunt. All negative experiences (six out of sixteen) described their experiences as lonely, troublesome, sad, confusing, abusive, anger, and never communicated. Out of all six none had a father present, they were either raised by single mother, single parent foster home, or female relative such as grandmother or aunt; and each of the six described the painful experience of an absent father in their lives as a result of the father dying, being a rolling stone, never knowing him because he left and never came back, or knew him but never develop a relationship. This has serious implications for our church setting. After hearing these responses one has to wonder could it be the reason some men are reluctant to serve in a leadership role and some women view men as non-authoritative and uncommitted.

A closer look at the ten out of sixteen positive responses to childhood experience at home revealed that mostly all had single mothers or grandmothers who raised them. It was noted that they demonstrated love, were present in the home, and had good communication and strict discipline; however, when it came to teaching the word in the home or praying together in the home, the ten out of sixteen positive responses to childhood experience stated, “It was not consistent.” Interesting responses included the father being physically present but never saying *I love you*; the father was present but was all about working and paying the bills; father was in the home but never communicated unless it was something serious; grandfather was like a father and he was simply the best at demonstrating love, communication, teaching and living the word, and praying with the family.

A closer look at the six out of sixteen negative responses to childhood experience at home revealed that mostly all were told to do right but did not see the parent or guardian living the same righteous lifestyle. Some indicated that the punishment was more like abuse i.e. the parent taking anger out on them rather than actually teaching them through the method of discipline. One married male said his father never once told him, “I love you,” and they did not pray together but his mother would recite the Lord’s Prayer with him before going to sleep at night. Others said they would go to church with someone else or be drop off by the parent, but the parent did not attend worship service with them. Others stated they mainly learned about God at the church house but not at home. The implication from these responses tells that corporate worship and Bible study are valuable resources because not everyone receives biblical teaching and corporate fellowship at home.

Ten out of sixteen mostly said their parental experience would be patterned after the way their parents raised them. However, some said they would be more consistent in communication, teaching the word, and prayer. Six out of sixteen mostly said their parental experience would be nothing like the way their parents raised them. Most responses indicated they would be present more with their child, pray more with their child, bring their child with them to worship, not allow their child to get away with wrong, be involved in their child’s education, and say *I love you* on a consistent basis. One single male said he does not want to simply be present but to make a positive impact in his son’s life.

The responses from the interview questions indicated that all sixteen parents who were interviewed would commit to building off of their childhood of experiences, (e.g.,

both positive and negative), to ensure their parental leadership style would provide a greater significance in the lives of their children. It was interesting that all six parents, who had negative childhood experiences, told of how they would use the negative experiences as a guide to make them better parents. Even though their experiences were considered negative, the outcome turned in a positive direction of parental leadership in the home.

#### Focus Group Theological Reflections Data

The purpose was to guide each parent to recall the Bible study experience and reflect on questions from selected scriptures following the first three classes. I wanted to make sure each of them *caught* the concept of each lesson. The following is a summary of responses giving by some parents from each of the first three lessons.

##### *Lesson One: “Biblical Love” Theological Reflections (see Appendix B, p. 90)*

A parent said the Lord is described as a faithful, keeper of His word (oath); a redeemer and God loves her. God’s love in the Old Testament is known as *hesed*. The benefit of God’s love is to have eternal life. Through the love of God she had been transformed with the ability to understand the grace given to her which allowed her to extend grace more freely to others. She could not remain the same and must apply these scriptures to her life in order to continue to live a transformed life.

A parent said the Lord God is a promise keeper and as a parent she must demonstrate the essence of love that will not resemble falsehood but keep promises; regardless how her children behave she must never break her promise to lead and guide

them to the truths about God as reveal in scripture. The term *hesed* really taught her a lot because it is a term that speaks of loyalty and giving of herself. God set his heart on Israel because he loved them immeasurability and she was seeking to do the same for her children.

A parent said God is love and God is faithful to us even when we are not faithful to him. The love of God is not conditional upon our behavior. An example is when Israel was disobedient to God; God's love did not sway or lack for them, although they reaped the consequences of their behavior. When he thought of love in the Bible he thought of God keeping his promises.

A parent said God's heart was set upon Israel simply because of his love for Israel. God's love often known as *hesed* in the Old Testament speaks of God's intentional loyalty to his creation. That is exactly what biblical love is, God's intentional loyalty to his creation. God will never fail us, leave us, or turn his back on us, not because of who we are, but because of the loyalty of his love. As a parent he must practice this love in his home before his children in order to demonstrate to them his intentional loyalty and promise to train them in the way of the Lord our God.

*Lesson Two: "Love God" Theological Reflections (see Appendix B, p. 91)*

A parent said the *Shema*, which is a prayer that states the core beliefs of Judaism as primarily a monotheistic faith, describes the Lord our God as One. He is God alone. She was challenged to love God and commit her whole self to Him because as a parent she could not effectively lead her home without putting herself at God's disposal. She must love God before she could love her child.

A parent said after this lesson he was challenged more than ever to love God with everything with his whole heart, because he had allowed other things and people to fill the places where the love for God was supposed to be filling. In short, he understood he had one God (*Shema*) and starting at this point he would focus his love on one God and be committed to his ways so that he could effectively transmit God's love to others. He did not want to hurt any more people the way he was hurt. He realized that loving the one God would help him to love others and not hurt them.

A parent said God is described as *One* which means he is God alone, as expressed in the *Shema*. As a parent, who is a child of God, she must first know, understand, and love God alone. Her love could not be divided but it should be submitted totally to God alone. She must seek God for herself and allow God's love to be a true example to her children and to others. To love God means to have a lifestyle that depends totally upon God.

A parent said he was challenged to love God by growing in relationship with him and by sacrificing his desires to love other people and/or things more than he loved God. The only way he could love himself and others was by first learning to love God. He realized that he must be consistent in the study of God's love in order to maintain his love for God.

*Lesson Three: "Love One Another" Theological Reflections (see Appendix B, p.92)*

A parent said she was challenged by Matt. 22:39 to love unconditionally, and love for real. The main connection between loving her neighbor as she loved herself was to love her neighbor enough to keep her neighbors' best interest at heart. She wanted the

best for her neighbor, to pray and desire God's will for her neighbor as she did for herself.

A parent said she was challenged by Matt. 22:39 to allow the love of God to flow through her in order to reach others. She admitted this could be challenging because she would have to first love herself and put her flesh under submission of the Spirit of God. The connection between loving her neighbor as she loved herself demonstrated her own love value. She realized that to be loved by God is to demonstrate that same love for others, and do so automatic, regardless if she thought they deserve it or not.

A parent said he was challenged by Matt. 22:39 to know that not understanding the greatness of God's love will in fact hinder his love toward himself and for others. The connection between his understanding of loving his neighbor and loving himself was to love God by loving God one automatically learns to have as love for others as God intends.

A parent said Matt. 22:39 was personally difficult for him because he had been hurt by others many times in the past. He allowed the past hurts to keep him distant from others, (e.g., like family and friends); yet, he realized he was wrong and had to submit to God's love for himself. He learned how to love himself by accepting that God loved him, and how to honestly love others in his life regardless of past hurts and regrets. His understanding of loving his neighbor and loving himself forced him to acknowledge if God can love him, he needed to learn how to love others who have wronged him.

The purpose of the application activities was to allow the parents to relate and record their experiences during daily routines to communicate in an affirming and loving manner, and to demonstrate their best intentions in the area of discipline. Parents were assigned to plan an activity of their choice in order to promote *spending quality time* with their children. They were also assigned to select a Bible lesson of their choice and teach it to their children. Finally they have to choose and establish a rule that needed to be implanted in their home (e.g. no T.V., no cellphone, no video games during certain hours or for the week, wash dishes, take out the trash, etc.). The following examples will demonstrate the level of application in the lives of parents and children.

*Lesson Four: Presence Application Activity (see Appendix B, p. 96)*

The application was to plan an activity with their child(ren). The activity could range from spending time at the park or a family night at home. Parents were to describe the activity and answer the questions.

A parent said the most helpful thing for her was it allowed her daughter and herself to laugh and talk about things they probably would not have normally shared. Her daughter actually enjoyed their intimate time, (e.g., no malls, no one in the house), simply just sitting and having conversations about anything; her daughter like the closeness with no interruptions. She did not regret her decision to spend time with her daughter and would continue to do so on a regular basis because she knew her daughter enjoyed the intimate time.

A parent said as he spent time with his daughter, he learned that he had to allow her to develop on her own. The one thing that made him uncomfortable was the truth he



needed to step back and not be so “hands on” and controlling. As a father he acknowledged he had to trust that she would make the right decisions, and if not, he would still be there to encourage her. He worked a lot and sometimes allowed his work to take away from his child, but through this activity he realized his daughter should be his top priority.

A parent said the most helpful thing for him was seeing that each one of his children were different and needed his personal time and attention. The one thing that made him feel uncomfortable was the situation when it appeared that he was playing favoritism. He saw that he had to do better in that area and not allow anyone, including himself, to keep him from focusing on “all” of his children. He would continue to spend quality time with all of his children as often as he could.

A parent said she learned, if she allowed her son a chance to express himself, she would be more aware of what is on his mind and what concerns him. The portion that made her uncomfortable was when her son apologized for expressing himself. Her response to him made him feel like he was in the wrong for something and he really was not. She had to examine her responses and disposition for a productive outing. She would absolutely continue to do activities with her son that would allow them to spend time and to share with each other. She understood the value of her son’s opinions.

*Lesson Five: Communication Application Activity (see Appendix B, p. 97)*

The application included two activities. The first was to say, “I love you” to your child(ren) at least three times each day of the week. The second was to communicate and

listen to your child(ren) at least thirty minutes concerning daily activities (i.e., school, friends, work, church, sports, etc.).

For the first activity a parent said he learned that his son likes it when he talked to him and said “I love you.” Throughout the week his son started imitating the father. He realized that telling his son “I love you” was somewhat uncomfortable for both of them at first, because he was not doing it on a consistent basis. He hoped and prayed his son received it truthfully. Concerning the second activity this parent said he discovered in thirty minutes that his son has a lot to say and he needed to spend more time talking to him instead of just fussing about this and that. The one thing that made him feel uncomfortable was that as his son was talking he realized how little knowledge he had of his son as a person.

For the first activity a parent said she realized she did not say “I love you” enough. She was uncomfortable how it had affected her children that week. She thought she was a loving mother, but never expressed it on a consistent basis. Concerning the second activity this parent said she never took time to actually communicate and listen to her children. As she talked to her children, she scrambled to find ways to answer their questions, but really did not have the answer to their simple yet difficult questions. So she just listened as they talked and realized they were not looking for her to answer them, but simply take time to listen to them. She admitted it was a process but a priceless investment.

For the first activity a parent said this activity was what he needed. It was uncomfortable for him because his parents did not tell him they loved him. This activity helped him to experience a breakthrough. He admitted that he had said “I love you” to his

children more in one week than he had in their entire lives. Concerning the second activity this parent said his children would talk to him about anything. The one thing that made him uncomfortable was taking time to actually sit down for thirty minutes to communicate and listen to them. He realized he must do it more.

For the first activity a parent said she was uncomfortable with listening more than allowing her son to speak without interrupting and causing him to shut down. She would absolutely use activities like this one to help both her son and herself to express love through words. Concerning the second activity this parent said she learned to allow her son to express himself. She learned how to listen and take more time to communicate with her son. She acknowledged she needed this communication skill more than her son.

*Lesson Six: Discipline Application Activity (see Appendix B, p. 98)*

The application included two activities. The first was to select a Bible lesson of one's choice and teach it to their child(ren). The second was to choose and establish one rule that needs to be implemented in their home and followed by their child(ren).

For the first activity a parent said he actually learned more of the lesson from his children because they were familiar with the story and recalled some things of which he was not aware. He was thankful for the student ministry at church for teaching his children, but he was uncomfortable because he realized it should have started with him teaching them in the home. From this point on he would start doing a lesson from the Bible each week, because this activity challenged him to become better at teaching his children the word of God. Concerning the second activity this parent said the most

helpful thing for him was actually setting the rules and being consistent with it. He would continue to do this because it set a standard and would help his children in life.

For the first activity a parent said he was empowered by telling his son about God's word. He was uncomfortable because as he was instructing his son, he saw how his own negative traits mirrored in his son. From this, he was motivated to continue to teach God's word to his son weekly. Concerning the second activity, the rule was showing respect by saying, "Yes sir, no sir, yes mam, no mam." He would continue to set rules and guidelines for his son, because it would not only help him to stay out of trouble but also help him to grow as a child of God in Jesus Christ.

For the first activity a parent said this lesson helped her acknowledge children feel that honoring their parents can be difficult, especially if parents cannot admit their mistakes and do not affirm their children. She became uncomfortable when her child started opening up concerning the reason he does not honor her at times. He told her she acted like she was "perfect" and "not normal." The Bible study and devotion expanded her understanding of how her child feels about "God and me." Concerning the second activity the guideline allowed them to talk about the reasons for the rule and the reasons the child did not like it. She plans to continue to set guidelines to ensure better communication.

For the first activity a parent said through this lesson she learned that her daughter is very responsive in one-on-one Bible study time. Yet, she actually felt comfortable during the entire time, even when her daughter wanted to play the role of teaching her a thing or two concerning the lesson. On the second activity it allowed her to evaluate what

was already in place by looking into the structure and balance and seeing if some things needed improvement or scratching.

### Focus Group Class Evaluations

The class evaluation surveys were used to gain insight of the parents' knowledge of the lessons, and to assess my effectiveness as facilitator. Overall, the class evaluation surveys indicated that parents found each lesson to be significant and supportive to their comprehensive development as parental leaders. The majority of parents suggested this curriculum be integrated as part of the Christian education ministry of Mt. Calvary Baptist Church. As a facilitator, the majority of evaluations revealed my strengths as being prompt, efficient, courteous, and informative. Yet, some indicated areas for growth are prompt and efficient. Likewise, the evaluations revealed the parents commitment to lead their home in biblical love.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

The intent of this project was not to produce perfect parents in an imperfect world. There are numerous researches filled with data that shows why parenting is not working, but I wanted to discover what would work. The goal of this project was simply to offer parents the possibility of experiencing greater fulfillment of leading their homes by starting with God and upon the foundation of his love. It is also important to note that providing leadership through biblical love would not 100% guarantee that the children would always make the right choices and would always go in the right direction. Yet through my analysis I recognize the strength of parental collaboration and commitment to growing as leaders in their home. Parents in the control and focus groups were excited about our six week journey. It was evident to me all parents experienced some of the same uncertainties and unrest, as they tried to deal with the responsibilities and challenges posed by the twenty-first century. Many of our class discussions centered on *what* and *how*. What is my role as a parent? How do I fulfill that role? I was both shocked and satisfied with some comments and cries from our parents.

Our class discussions on examining the scriptures to understand the meaning of biblical love proved to be a major shift in this project. When the class learned about *hesed* it totally transformed the way they viewed God's love. It was as though the light bulb came on in the expression of "*ah!*" This led to discovering what it means to love God and to love one another in a unique way that some had not grasped before. Also, they identified distinctive ways to set a biblical example for their children.

As stated in the critical evaluation I believe the “slim” movement in the quantitative data between the focus group and the control group was due to both groups participating in the same session and receiving identical information. However, the opposite was true for the focus group in the qualitative data. The parental focus group expressed their minds and hearts in a transparent way. This allowed me to see the transformation this project made in the lives of the parents and their children. I saw many areas of growth from the parents. Many of them were able to see the change for themselves, and acknowledge corrections or make adjustments that were needed to better relate to their children.

The theological reflections showed the seriousness of each parent desiring to know more concerning the concept of biblical love, loving God, and loving one another. Their responses were written in a way that one knew they were carefully thought-out and not simply words written down on a blank sheet of paper in order to complete an assignment. The parents were engaged in their thinking both theologically and biblically. It appears their responses showed they *caught* the concept of the lesson.

The major evolution in the qualitative data came during the application activity assignments. Parents were intentional and discovered something of personal value within each activity as demonstrated by the critical evaluation chapter.

This project added significant value to my life, both as a parent and as pastor. It has both deepened my theological insight and stretched my biblical intuition. As the Apostle Paul reminds Timothy, his son in the ministry, concerning qualifications of the one who oversees God’s people: “He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful in every way – for if someone does not know how to

manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?" (1 Timothy 3:4-5). This project tested and developed greater balance in my ministry. Throughout the course of this project I have kept the promise to my wife and children that the ministry will not come before them. I did not miss a date night with my wife or the opportunity to get away for a couple of days. I did not miss time to go over homework with my children, or miss one of their ball games. I even found time to do extra things with the family which allowed us to grow even closer. I improved my parental leadership through biblical love as expressed in presence, communication, and discipline. Through this project I drew closer to God's *hesed*, and became a better servant pastor who loves God's people as God loves them.

A parent said, "During this project, my daughter and I are relating and communicating on a greater level." This same parent continued by saying, "When this project is over I am afraid it will go back to the way it was before I experience this project." I responded by saying, "No it will not, not if you continue to put into practice the teachings and activities learned throughout this process." Yet, this confirmed to me this curriculum must be continued throughout our congregation because six weeks were not long enough.

Although the quantitative data did not reveal statistical significant difference, I believe it reinforces the need for integrating the subject of parental leadership in our Christian education curriculum. Plans are presently underway to include this curriculum in our "Building Relationships Conference" offered during the summer months. In the future, the curriculum of developing parental leadership will be taught as one of our Faith Formation classes. I foresee the goal of such classes to develop parents who will be able



to teach and offer other parents guidance on spiritual formation and spiritual direction. The expectation from this curriculum will birth small groups comprised of parents meeting on a regular basis to discuss the successes and failures of parenting. This idea was proved helpful through the accountability partner's activity. Parents need parents.

However, there are three things I would do differently. First, I would engaged parents more in the area of teaching their children the importance of decision making. Second, I would make an intentional effort to engage the thoughts and feedback of the children involved in the process. Third, I would say more about the issue of abuse when addressing discipline, since the "church" in some ways has become the place where many are empowered to abuse children.

As time passes by, my hope is for evident parental leadership growth that is visible in our homes and community. I pray the congregation as a whole will continue to benefit from this project. As parents grow stronger, families will hopefully grow stronger, and the congregation will ultimately grow stronger in their love for God and for one another. The key is parents understanding they are only instruments being used by God. As long as the instrument is connected to God on one end, God can blow *hesed* through the instrument in order to make a wonderful expression on the other end. Parents are not in control of the *hesed* that is blown through them, only to be used so that the *hesed* can reach their children through presence, communication, and discipline!

APPENDIX A  
LETTER AND CONSENT FORM

Dear \_\_\_\_\_.

I am inviting you to participate in my Doctorate of Ministry project this fall. Let me start by saying this is a voluntary commitment on your part. This project will hopefully become a great asset to our church. I am asking you to commit to being part of a regular Wednesday evening Bible study class for six weeks beginning September 16, 2015. Also, there will be an interview conducted by an anonymous social worker.

In addition, I will administer a Pre- and Post- Survey to evaluate the understanding of each participant, to compare the difference between where we started and where we ended. Following each lesson, participants will be asked to complete a lesson evaluative survey. During the course of the first three lessons, each participant will complete a take-home theological reflection survey. During the course of the last three lessons, each participant will also be asked to participate in an application assignment. Accountability partners will also be assigned.

It is recognized that emergencies may cause conflicts with schedules; however, it is important that I count on you being present during this project. Thank you for your consideration in assisting me to complete this portion of the project. I cannot do it without your cooperation and support. Please sign below to indicate your commitment/consent to agree to this covenant.

By His Grace

M. Lamont Littlejohn  
Servant Pastor/Teacher

I, \_\_\_\_\_ offer my commitment to and agree with the components of this covenant. I also give my consent for information I provide to be used for Lamont to collect necessary data and analysis.

## APPENDIX B

### PARTICIPANT SURVEYS, EVALUATIONS, AND REFLECTIONS

## PROJECT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Demographic Information:

**I am:**

**Age:**

\_\_\_ **Male**

\_\_\_ **18-25**

\_\_\_ **Female**

\_\_\_ **26-32**

\_\_\_ **Married**

\_\_\_ **33-40**

\_\_\_ **Single**

\_\_\_ **41-47**

\_\_\_ **48-55**

\_\_\_ **56+**

1. Were you reared in a Christian home?
2. How would you describe your childhood at home?
3. How did your parents demonstrate love towards you?
4. How were your parents present in the home?
5. How did your parents communicate with you at home? How consistent?
6. How did your parents discipline you at home? How consistent?
7. How did your parents pray with you at home? How consistent?
8. How did your parents teach you the Word of God at home? How consistent?
9. What ways is your parental leadership in the home similar to that of your parents?
10. What ways is your parental leadership in the home different from that of your parents?

## (PRE-) (POST-) PROJECT SURVEY

**Demographic Information:****I am:**

\_\_\_ **Male**                      \_\_\_ **Female**                      \_\_\_ **Married**                      \_\_\_ **Single**

**Age:**

\_\_\_ **18-25**      \_\_\_ **26-32**      \_\_\_ **33-40**      \_\_\_ **41-47**      \_\_\_ **48-55**      \_\_\_ **56+**

**Directions:** Please answer the following questions.

1. What do I understand my parental role to be?
2. In what ways do I practice a lifestyle that honors God in my home?
3. What would change about your life if you would lead your home through the means biblical love? What kind of reaction would you receive from those within your home?

**Directions:** Read each statement and determine how true each statement is for you.

The scale is read as follows:

1= not true at all; 2= hardly ever true; 3= sometimes true; 4= typically true; 5= always true

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. As a parent I am confident being a leader in my home.                | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. I have an understanding of the meaning of God's <i>hesed</i> .       | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. I know what it means to love God with heart, soul, and might.        | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. I know what it requires to love another person.                      | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. As a priority, I practice being present with my child(ren).          | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. I find it difficult to communicate with my child(ren).               | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. I understand what it means to discipline and instruct my child(ren). | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. As a parent I feel my pastor is approachable and genuine.            | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. As a parent I can trust my pastor's leadership and guidance.         | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. Mt. Calvary provides a ministry/teaching in guiding me as a parent  | 1 2 3 4 5 |

## LESSON ONE

## “BIBLICAL LOVE” EVALUATION

**Directions:** Please answer the following questions.

1. I am:    ☐ Male            ☐ Female
2. I am:    ☐ Married    ☐ Single
3. What instruction of this lesson did you find most meaningful?
4. What have you learned about the concept of God’s *hesed*?
5. How can this lesson help you as a parent?
6. How can we apply these principles learned at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church?
7. The facilitator was prompt and efficient:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐
8. The facilitator was courteous and informative:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐
9. I will commit to lead my home in biblical love:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐

## LESSON TWO

## “LOVE GOD” EVALUATION

**Directions:** Please answer the following questions.

1. I am:    ☐ Male            ☐ Female
2. I am:    ☐ Married    ☐ Single
3. What instruction of this lesson did you find most meaningful?
4. What have you learned about the concept of God’s *hesed*?
5. How can this lesson help you as a parent?
6. How can we apply these principles learned at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church?
7. The facilitator was prompt and efficient:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐
8. The facilitator was courteous and informative:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐
9. I will commit to lead my home in biblical love:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐



## LESSON THREE

## “LOVE ONE ANOTHER” EVALUATION

**Directions:** Please answer the following questions.

1. I am:    ☐ Male            ☐ Female
2. I am:    ☐ Married    ☐ Single
3. What instruction of this lesson did you find most meaningful?
4. What have you learned about the concept of God’s *hesed*?
5. How can this lesson help you as a parent?
6. How can we apply these principles learned at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church?
7. The facilitator was prompt and efficient:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐
8. The facilitator was courteous and informative:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐
9. I will commit to lead my home in biblical love:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐

## LESSON FOUR

## “PRESENCE” EVALUATION

**Directions:** Please answer the following questions.

1. I am:    ☐ Male            ☐ Female
2. I am:    ☐ Married    ☐ Single
3. What instruction of this lesson did you find most meaningful?
4. What have you learned about the concept of God’s *hesed*?
5. How can this lesson help you as a parent?
6. How can we apply these principles learned at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church?
7. The facilitator was prompt and efficient:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐
8. The facilitator was courteous and informative:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐
9. I will commit to lead my home in biblical love:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐

## LESSON FIVE

## “COMMUNICATION” EVALUATION

**Directions:** Please answer the following questions.

1. I am:    ☐ Male            ☐ Female
2. I am:    ☐ Married    ☐ Single
3. What instruction of this lesson did you find most meaningful?
4. What have you learned about the concept of God’s *hesed*?
5. How can this lesson help you as a parent?
6. How can we apply these principles learned at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church?
7. The facilitator was prompt and efficient:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐
8. The facilitator was courteous and informative:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐
9. I will commit to lead my home in biblical love:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐

## LESSON SIX

## “DISCIPLINE” EVALUATION

**Directions:** Please answer the following questions.

1. I am:    ☐ Male            ☐ Female
2. I am:    ☐ Married    ☐ Single
3. What instruction of this lesson did you find most meaningful?
4. What have you learned about the concept of God’s *hesed*?
5. How can this lesson help you as a parent?
6. How can we apply these principles learned at Mt. Calvary Baptist Church?
7. The facilitator was prompt and efficient:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐
8. The facilitator was courteous and informative:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐
9. I will commit to lead my home in biblical love:  
Strongly Agree   Agree   Neutral   Disagree   Strongly Disagree  
☐            ☐            ☐            ☐            ☐

## LESSON ONE THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

## “BIBLICAL LOVE”

**Directions:** Recall the Bible study experience and reflect on the following questions.

1. I am:    ☐ Male            ☐ Female
2. I am:    ☐ Married      ☐ Single
3. In Deuteronomy 7:7-8, how is the Lord described?
4. In Deuteronomy 7:8, what caused the Lord to set his heart on Israel?
5. In Hosea 11:1, how is God described?
6. In Hosea 11:1-3, how does God react to the people's disobedience?
7. Based on John 3:16-17, what is the benefit of God's love? In what ways have you been transformed by his love?
8. According to 1 John 4:8, who is God?

## LESSON TWO THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

## “LOVE GOD”

**Directions:** Recall the Bible study experience and reflect on the following questions.

1. I am: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. I am: ☐ Married ☐ Single
3. In Deuteronomy 6:4, how is the Lord our God described?
4. In Deuteronomy 6:5 and Matthew 22:38, how are you challenged by this command?
5. In John 14:15, how are you challenged by this command?

## LESSON THREE THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

## “LOVE ONE ANOTHER”

**Directions:** Recall the Bible study experience and reflect on the following questions.

1. I am:    ☐ Male            ☐ Female
2. I am:    ☐ Married      ☐ Single
3. In Matthew 22:39, how are you challenged by this command?
4. In Matthew 22:39, what is the connection between your understandings of loving your neighbor and loving yourself?
5. In John 13:14, how is Jesus understood to be relating to his disciples?
6. Based on John 13:34-35, what causes a person to love another?
7. According to John 15:13, have you experienced this kind of love?
8. According to Philippians 2:7-8, what is required to love another person?

# PRESENCE

## (PRE-) (POST-) LESSON SURVEY

1. I am: ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. I am: ☐ Married ☐ Single

**Directions:** Read each statement and determine how true each statement is for you.

The scale is read as follows:

- 1= not true at all
- 2= hardly ever true
- 3= sometimes true
- 4= typically true
- 5= always true

1. I find it difficult to connect with my child(ren) 1 2 3 4 5
2. I am too busy to spend *quality* time with my child(ren). 1 2 3 4 5
3. I plan activities to spend *quality* time with my child(ren). 1 2 3 4 5
4. I often place responsibilities (job, ministry, etc.) before my child(ren). 1 2 3 4 5
5. My child(ren) are more valuable than other priorities in my life. 1 2 3 4 5
6. I am supportive of my child(ren)'s activities. (church, school, etc.) 1 2 3 4 5
7. I am a positive influence in my child(ren)'s life. 1 2 3 4 5



# COMMUNICATION

## (PRE-) (POST-) LESSON SURVEY

1. I am: ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. I am: ☐ Married ☐ Single

**Directions:** Read each statement and determine how true each statement is for you.

The scale is read as follows:

- 1= not true at all
- 2= hardly ever true
- 3= sometimes true
- 4= typically true
- 5= always true

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| 1. I have a good relationship with my child(ren).          | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. I can talk to my child(ren) about anything.             | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. I find it difficult to talk to my child(ren) about God. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. I use profanity while talking to my child(ren).         | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. I communicate words of encouragement to my child(ren).  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. I find it difficult to listen to God.                   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. I find it difficult to listen to my child(ren).         | 1 2 3 4 5 |

DISCIPLINE  
(PRE-) (POST-) LESSON SURVEY

1. I am: ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. I am: ☐ Married ☐ Single

**Directions:** Read each statement and determine how true each statement is for you.

The scale is read as follows:

- 1= not true at all
- 2= hardly ever true
- 3= sometimes true
- 4= typically true
- 5= always true

- |   |           |
|---|-----------|
| 1. I desire what is best for my child(ren).           | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. I am confident in my authority as a parent.        | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. I am clear when it comes to giving instructions.   | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. I teach and discuss the Word of God in my home.    | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. I set a godly example for my child(ren) to follow. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. I expect my child(ren) to behave in good conduct.  | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. I love my child(ren) enough to say no!             | 1 2 3 4 5 |

ACTIVITY ONE  
PRESENCE APPLICATION

1. I am: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. I am: ☐ Married ☐ Single

**Directions:** During this week practice the application and answer the questions.

***Application:*** Plan an activity with your child(ren). \*The activity can range from spending time at the park or a family night at home. Be sure to describe the activity and answer the questions below:

Provide a description of the activity:

1. What did you learn that was most helpful for you?
2. What portion of the activity caused you to be uncomfortable?
3. Do you think you can do other activities similar to this one on a consistent basis?  
Yes or no. Explain your answer.

ACTIVITY TWO  
COMMUNICATION APPLICATION

1. I am:    ☐ Male            ☐ Female
2. I am:    ☐ Married      ☐ Single

**Directions:** During this week practice the application and answer the questions.

***Application 1:*** Say, “I love you” to your child(ren) at least three times each day this week.

1. What did you learn that was most helpful for you?
2. What portion of the activity caused you to be uncomfortable?
3. Do you think you can do other activities similar to this one on a consistent basis?  
Yes or no. Explain your answer.

***Application 2:*** Communicate and listen to your child(ren) at least thirty minutes concerning daily activities (i.e. school, friends, work, church, sports, etc.)

1. What did you learn that was most helpful for you?
2. What portion of the activity caused you to be uncomfortable?
3. Do you think you can do other activities similar to this one on a consistent basis?  
Yes or no. Explain your answer.

ACTIVITY THREE  
DISCIPLINE APPLICATION

1. I am: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. I am: ☐ Married ☐ Single

**Directions:** During this week practice the application and answer the questions.

***Application 1:*** Select a Bible lesson of your choice and teach to your child(ren).

Provide a description of the Bible lesson and what you taught:

1. What did you learn that was most helpful for you?
2. What portion of the activity caused you to be uncomfortable?
3. Do you think you can do other activities similar to this one on a consistent basis?  
Yes or no. Explain your answer.

***Application 2:*** Choose and establish one rule that needs to be implemented in your home and followed by your child(ren). (i.e. no T.V., no cellphone, no video games, wash dishes, take out the trash, etc.)

Provide a description of the rule and both yours and your child(ren)'s responses:

1. What did you learn that was most helpful for you?
2. What portion of the activity caused you to be uncomfortable?
3. Do you think you can do other activities similar to this one on a consistent basis?  
Yes or no. Explain your answer.

## ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS

1. I am: ☐ Male ☐ Female

2. I am: ☐ Married ☐ Single

**Directions:** During the last three weeks of this project, each of you will be assigned an accountability partner. This survey will test how well or how poorly the accountability partnership aided you in the application activities.

1. My accountability partner communicated with me

☐ Every Day ☐ Once every week ☐ More than once every week ☐ None

2. The conversations between my accountability partner and I went

☐ Very Good ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor ☐ Very Poor

3. I shared my successes and failures with my accountability partner

☐ Always true ☐ Typically true ☐ Somewhat true

☐ Hardly ever true ☐ Never true

4. Having an accountability partner encouraged me as a parent to take the initiative in parental leadership through biblical love through presence, communication, and discipline

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

5. Having an accountability partner motivated me to accomplish my activity assignments

☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

6. The one aspect I most like about this accountability partnership is

7. The one aspect I most dislike about this accountability partnership is

## APPENDIX C

### LESSONS AND POWER POINT SLIDES

## Week 1

### Discovering The Meaning Of Biblical Love (Lesson Plan)

Scripture references: Deuteronomy 7:7-8, Hosea 11:1-3  
John 3:16-17, 1 John 4:8

- I. Opening Devotional: Ephesians 6:1, 4 (5 mins)
- II. Praise Reports and Prayer Requests (5 mins)
- III. Ask the question: If the parents have not fully embraced their role as parental leaders, can we really blame children for making poor decisions? Allow some time for discussion. Then ask: Where does a parent begin when it comes to their leadership role? Allow some time for discussion: What is the most effective way for parents to lead in their home? Allow some time for discussion and then suggest biblical love. (10 mins)
- IV. Discussion: How does the term biblical love differ from the world's idea of love? What is it about biblical love that causes it to be distinct? Love is from God and is the very essence of God. Perhaps parents would have greater fulfillment of leading in their home if they would start with God and upon the foundation of his love. If parents do not experience God's love they will be unable to lead their home in the love of God. What is the love of God? What is biblical love?  
Say: The power that parents have is inside the walls of the home, but the hope is when children venture beyond the walls of the home, their parents have provided leadership through love that will guide them in the right direction in life. Although that's not always the case, regardless if the parents have done all the right things, children can still make bad decisions. (10 mins)
- V. Biblical exploration: (25 mins)
  - Have someone to read aloud Deuteronomy 7:7-8
  - Ask: What grabs your attention concerning God's choice of Israel? Is there anything special about Israel?
  - Have someone to read aloud Hosea 11:1-3
  - Say: In the book of Hosea the theme of family is seen as God is portrayed as a loving husband to an unfaithful wife and as a loving parent to "hard-headed" children.
  - Ask: What are the actions of Yahweh towards Israel? What is Israel's response towards Yahweh?
  - Say: God understands what it means to be a parent who consistently shows love, not only to children who obey, but to the same children who disobey his commands. God disciplines (Hos. 11:5-7) and then restores (Hos. 11:8-11)



Ask: What keeps God from giving up on Israel? *Hesed* (*self-giving, unconditional*)

Say: The noun loyalty is preferred when *hesed* is done, because greater attention is required concerning the specific types of relationships and circumstances (Sakenfeld).

Have someone to read aloud John 3:16-17

Ask: What is the core of God's love? (to give)

Have someone to read aloud 1 John 4:8

Ask: Does love define God?

- VI. Conclusion: Based on the lesson write a definition that describes the meaning of biblical love in your own words. How can parents model this love? (5 mins)
- VII. Closing litany: I will not try to build my family without the love of God. I will throw myself on His grace and mercy and say to Him, Lord, I know that apart from You, I can't do anything but mess this thing up. So I'm going to hang on to You with both hands. Together, we'll make this family work!

## Developing Parental Leadership Through Biblical Love



### Introduction

- Parental leadership is a crucial component during a person's childhood experience. Christian parenting is especially crucial because they are **responsible** for **forming** the **faith** of their **children** (Proverbs 22:6). Parents should be the **primary source** for their children when it comes to demonstrating **love**, establishing **nurture**, providing **protection**, and offering **guidance**.

## Introduction

- Parenting is more than a title, it is a task!
- If parents have not fully embraced their role as parental leaders, can we place total blame on their children for making poor decisions?
- Where does a parent begin when it comes to their leadership role?
- What is the most effective way for parents to lead in their home?

## Introduction

- Biblical love is the starting point/foundation for developing parental leadership in the home.
- How does the term biblical love differ from the world's idea of love?
- If parents do not experience God's love they will be unable to lead their home in the love of God.
- The power that parents have is inside the walls of the home, **but the hope is when children venture beyond the walls of the home**, their parents have provided leadership through love that will guide them in the right direction in life.

## Deuteronomy 7:7-8

- What grabs your attention concerning God's choice of Israel?
- YHWH "set his heart" (hasaq) on Israel. The verb bespeaks a strong emotional attachment that runs beyond any reasonable, explicable act. YHWH made a leap of love in committing to Israel. (Brueggemann)
- Is there anything special about Israel?
- The phrase "God kept his oath/promise" refers to what?
- Yahweh never forgets!

## Hosea 11:1-3

- In the book of Hosea the theme of family is seen as God is portrayed as a loving husband to an unfaithful wife and as a loving parent to "hard-headed" children.
- What are the **actions** of Yahweh towards Israel?
- What is Israel's **response** towards Yahweh?
- God understands what it means to be a parent who consistently shows love, **not only to children who obey**, but to the same children who disobey his commands. God disciplines (Hos. 11:5-7) and then restores (Hos. 11:8-11)

## Hosea 11:1-3

- What keeps God from giving up on Israel?  
– *Hesed (self-giving, unconditional, steadfast)*
- There is no English equivalent that easily covers the implications of this theological concept.
- The noun *loyalty* is preferred when *hesed* is done, because *greater attention is required* concerning the specific types of relationships and circumstances... A *significant need of help* that goes beyond the usual expectation. *It overflows into forgiveness in order to preserve the relationship* (Sakenfeld).

## John 3:16-17; 1 John 4:8

- In John 3:16-17, what is the core of God's love?
- In 1 John 4:8, does love define God?
- Based on the lesson, in your own words write a definition that describes the meaning of biblical love? List ways that parents can model this love?

## Week 2

### Discovering What It Means To Love God (Lesson Plan)

Scripture references: Deuteronomy 6:4-5, John 14:15, Matthew 22:37-38

- I. Opening Devotional: Deuteronomy 4:9 (5 mins)
- II. Praise Reports and Prayer Requests (5 mins)
- III. Brainstorming: Write down the first word that comes to your mind when you hear the phrase: “A responsible parent.” Show different images of something missing and ask, “What do each of these have in common?” Ask: “What is missing?” Say: It would be impossible, according to Deuteronomy 6:4-9, for parents to lead and teach their children (Deut. 6:6-9) without first having a love for God (Deut. 6:5). Make the connection between the brainstorming assignment to the “something is missing” assignment. Say: It is possible that parents are trying to be a responsible parent – trying to obtain all of the ideas giving in the brainstorming assignment but struggle tremendously because the love for God is missing. (15 mins)
- IV. Explore Deuteronomy 6:6-9. Have some to read aloud. Pick out the leadership responsible of a parent. Discuss the value and importance of each. Make the connection back to Deuteronomy 6:4-5. Explaining the impossibility of verses 6-9 if verses 4-5 are missing. (5 mins)
- V. Biblical exploration: (25 mins)
  - Have someone to read aloud Deuteronomy 6:4
  - Explain: Shema. The *Shema* is a prayer (Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Num. 15:37-41) that states the core beliefs of Judaism, primarily monotheistic faith: “Hear (*shema*), O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord alone.
  - Explain: God, the Lord alone. Brueggemann suggest this phrase is used to stress the unity of YHWH. It could be read as YHWH is one.
  - Say: Thomas Mann points out, “The Shema has two primary foci: first, the confession that only Yahweh can be Israel’s God (rather than that Yahweh is the only God), and secondly, that this confession carries with it the demand to love Yahweh (hence the continuation of the imperative mood in vs.5)
  - Say: Holly Allen says, “The Shema was central to the life of the Israelite people, and in this Old Testament passage specific instructions were given to parents to teach their children about the wonders and provisions of their Heavenly Father; the parents were to teach in such a way that the word of God would be a part of the very fabric of their lives.
  - Have someone to read aloud Deuteronomy 6:5
  - Say: Parents cannot lead their children to “who” they do not love.

Say: The command “You shall love” is more than saying “I love God,” but it seeks to know how to love God. The act of loving God requires a person’s whole self being committed to God and willing to constantly spend time with God.

Say: David Payne says: No half-hearted sentiment is good enough. Nothing could be more emphatic than the second half of the verse: “with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might”... perhaps we should paraphrase “heart”, “soul” and “might” in Deuteronomy 6:5 as *intellect, emotions and will-power*. Our love for God (as for wives, children or parents) must *first* be practicable and intelligent; love that does not show itself forethought and sensible actions is worth very little. Our love for God must *second* stir our emotions. The God who loved us and gave his Son for us asks for a genuinely loving response. Our love

for God must *thirdly* exercise our will-power. To fulfill the promises we have made to love afterward the heat of an emotion is the reality of our love being tested.

Discussion: What comes to your mind when you hear the phrase “undivided loyalty?”

Have someone to read aloud John 14:15

Say: It is a condition of “if” and “then.”

Have someone to read aloud Matthew 22:37-38

Say: It stresses two things: (1) Parents must put their “self” at God’s disposal. (2) This is the most important command. But there is a second command as well... Love for God implies we love what God loves (Outka)...

- VI. Conclusion: Based on the lesson write a definition that describes what it means to love God. What must happen first before parents can effectively lead their homes in the love of God? (5 mins)
- VII. Closing litany: I will not try to build my family without the love of God. I will throw myself on His grace and mercy and say to Him, Lord, I know that apart from You, I can’t do anything but mess this thing up. So I’m going to hang on to You with both hands. Together, we’ll make this family work!



## Discovering what it means to love God

*Deuteronomy 6:4-5, John 14:15, Matthew 22:37-38*

### Brainstorm

What is the first word/phrase that comes to your mind when you hear:

**A responsible parent.**



What do these images have in common?



## Reflection

- It is possible that parents are trying to be a responsible parent – trying to obtain all of the ideas given in the brainstorming activity but struggle tremendously because the love for God is missing.
- Deuteronomy 6:4-9
  - According to Deut. 6:6-9, the responsibilities of a parent are:
  - It would be impossible, according to Deuteronomy 6:4-9, for parents to lead and teach their children (Deut. 6:6-9) without first having a love for God (Deut. 6:5).

## Deuteronomy 6:4-5

- Read Deut. 6:4
- The *Shema* is a prayer (Deut. 6:4-9; 11:13-21; Num. 15:37-41) that states the core beliefs of Judaism, primarily monotheistic faith: “Hear (*shema*), O Israel: the Lord is our God, *the Lord alone*.”
- Expresses the “*Unity of YHWH*” (Brueggemann)

## Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Thomas Mann points out, “The Shema has two primary emphases: **first**, the confession that only Yahweh can be Israel’s God (rather than that Yahweh is the only God), and **secondly**, that this confession carries with it the demand to love Yahweh (hence the continuation of the imperative mood in vs.5)

## Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Holly Allen says, “The **Shema** was central to the life of the Israelite people, and in this Old Testament passage specific instructions were given to parents to teach their children about the wonders and provisions of their Heavenly Father; the parents were to teach in such a way that the word of God would be a part of the very fabric of their lives.

## Deuteronomy 6:4-5

- Read Deut. 6:5
- Parents cannot lead their children to “who” they do not love.
- The command “You shall love” is more than saying “I love God,” but it **seeks to know how** to love God. The act of loving God **requires a person’s whole self** being committed to God and willing to constantly spend time with God.

## Deuteronomy 6:4-5

David Payne says: No half-hearted sentiment is good enough. Nothing could be more emphatic than the second half of the verse: “with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might”... perhaps we should paraphrase “heart”, “soul” and “might” in Deuteronomy 6:5 as ***intellect, emotions and will-power***. Our love for God (as for wives, children or parents) ***must first be practicable and intelligent***; love that does not show itself forethought and sensible actions is worth very little.

## Deuteronomy 6:4-5

David Payne continues to say: Our love for God must *second* **stir our emotions**. The God who loved us and gave his Son for us asks for a **genuinely loving response**. Our love for God must *thirdly* **exercise our will-power**. To fulfill the promises we have made to love after the heat of an emotion is the reality of our **love being tested**.

## John 14:15

- Read John 14:15
- What comes to your mind when you hear the phrase “undivided loyalty?”
- It is a condition of “if” and “then.”

## Matthew 22:37-38

Read Matthew 22:37-38

It stresses two things:

(1) Parents must put their “self” at God’s disposal.

(2) This is the most important command. But there is a second command as well...

Love for God implies we love what God loves (Outka)...

## Conclusion

- Based on the lesson write a definition that describes what it means to love God. What must happen first before parents can effectively lead their homes in the love of God?

### Week 3

#### **Discovering What It Means To Love One Another (Lesson Plan)**

Scripture references: Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39; John 13:34-35, 15:13; Philippians 2:6-7

- I. Opening Devotional: 1 John 4:11 (5 mins)
- II. Praise Reports and Prayer Requests (5 mins)
- III. Seed thoughts: What does the word automatic means? Allow a moment for rapid answers. Say: it is done instantly and without conscious thought or decision. Say: it is designed to replace or decrease human labor and especially physical labor. Talk about the difference between an automatic car engine versus a manual (stick shift) engine. Say: in a manual engine you need to shift gears based on the vehicle's speed and this requires the use of the clutch pedal and the gear shift (stick). When the clutch pedal is depressed the clutch is disengaged - the engine and the transmission is separated. If the clutch pedal is not properly used the car will "jump-start" (much like an angry donkey) and often stall. Then say: also have a clutch except instead of a clutch pedal a torque converter is used to separate the engine from the transmission - and it all happens automatically without the need of driver input. (hint: if you commute in bad traffic, buy an automatic and forget about control- it's just not worth the stress driving a stick shift through traffic jams) [manuelvsautomatic.com]. The point is that we cannot manually shift ourselves to love another person, but it happens automatically when we love God. (15 mins)
- IV. Explore Leviticus 19:18. Have someone to read aloud. Say: used to reinforce the boundaries of the Jewish community. Although "our neighbor" can be understood in a boarder perspective, the Leviticus 19:18 places it within a specific community. For the purpose of this rationale I will relate the specific community to the individual home, and proceed by saying before we can attempt to love the neighbor outside of the specific community or home, we must first begin by loving the neighbor inside of the specific community or home. (5 mins)
- V. Biblical exploration: (25 mins)
  - Have someone to read aloud Matthew 22:39
  - Say: A person's love for God (the desire to be in an intimate relationship) transforms the person to share in the seriousness of that divine command.
  - Say: the "love of neighbor" command in the New Testament comes from the command in Leviticus 19:18 (Perkins). Quote Gene Outka: "If one loves God one is not free to decide whether to love the neighbor or not."
  - Have someone to read aloud John 13:34-35

Explain: Farewell Discourses. Say: John echoes Matthew's "love one another" in his gospel's section called *Farewell Discourse (13-17)*. "Love one another" is at the very center of the moral and spiritual legacy which is presented in the Farewell Discourses. In the first part of verse 34, Jesus' love for his disciples provides a model concerning **how** to love another person. Say: it is new because it is grounded in Jesus love (Kloppenborg). Say: this love command is absorbed as the basis of three relationships. (A) it defines relationships between members of the community; (B) those relationships in turn are founded on the special relationship of presence that the community enjoys with God/Jesus and Spirit; (C) it must also be reflected in Jesus' commissioning his followers to represent him before a hostile world (Perkins).

Say: It does not discriminate, nor is it passive or a non-active affection. "Love one another" reveals the relationship the person has with God's love. It is intriguing that before Jesus gives this command he demonstrates the command through the action of washing his disciples' feet (John 13:1ff). Allow discussions...

Have someone to read aloud John 15:13

Say: Explains the footwashing event (Kostenberger). Also say: To lay down one's life for one's friends is not always meant to die but it can also mean the sense of self-denying or others-oriented service. (Kostenberger). Ask: What is required to love another person?

Have someone to read aloud Philippians 2:6-7

Say: It stresses what to expect when one is in the form of God and could if he wish to have claimed equality with God (Hooker).

Say: Christ did not cease to be 'in the form of God' when he took the form of a slave, any more than he ceased to be the 'Son of God' when he was sent into the world; on the contrary, it is in *his self-emptying and his humiliation that he reveals what God is like*, and it is through his taking the form of a slave that we see 'the form of God'. (Hooker)

- VI. Conclusion: Based on the lesson write a definition that describes what it means to love one another. What will automatically happen if parents desire to love God first? (5 mins)
- VII. Closing litany: I will not try to build my family without the love of God. I will throw myself on His grace and mercy and say to Him, Lord, I know that apart from You, I can't do anything but mess this thing up. So I'm going to hang on to You with both hands. Together, we'll make this family work!





## Discovering what it means to love One Another

*Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39; John 13:34-35, 15:13; Philippians 2:5-8*

## Seed Thoughts

- Automatic:
  - done instantly and without conscious thought or decision
    - instinctive, uncontrolled, spontaneous,  
conditioned, simple, unforced, quick, ready,  
sudden; impromptu, improvised, unplanned,  
unprepared, unrehearsed, random,
  - designed to replace or decrease human labor and especially physical labor

## Seed Thoughts



**Manual** (Stick Shift)

**Automatic**

## Seed Thoughts

- **Manual** – you need to shift gears based on the vehicle's speed and this requires the use of the clutch pedal and the gear shift (stick). When the clutch pedal is depressed the clutch is disengaged - **the engine and the transmission is separated**. If the clutch pedal is not properly used the car will "jump-start" (much like an angry donkey) and often stall.

## Seed Thoughts

- **Automatic** – also have a clutch except instead of a clutch pedal a **torque converter** is used to separate the engine from the transmission - and it all happens automatically **without the need of driver input**. (hint: if you commute in bad traffic, buy an automatic and forget about control- it's just not worth the stress driving a stick shift through traffic jams)

## Seed Thoughts

We cannot manually shift ourselves to love another person, but it happens automatically instinctive, uncontrolled, spontaneous, conditioned, simple, unforced, quick, ready, sudden; impromptu, improvised, unplanned, unprepared, unrehearsed, random,  
when we love God.

Be an instrument for God's **hesed** to flow through

## Leviticus 19:18

- Used to reinforce the boundaries of the Jewish community. Although “our neighbor” can be understood in a boarder perspective, this text places it within a “specific community.”
- Before we can attempt to love the neighbor outside of the specific community or home, we must first begin by loving the neighbor inside of the specific community or home.

## Matthew 22:39

- The “love of neighbor” command in the New Testament comes from the command in Leviticus 19:18 (Pheme).
- A person’s love for God (the desire to be in an intimate relationship) transforms the person to share in the seriousness of that divine command.
- Outka: “If one loves God one is not free to decide whether to love the neighbor or not.”

## John 13:34-35

- John echoes Matthew's "love one another" in his gospel's section called *Farewell Discourse*. (13-17)
- "Love one another" is at the very center of the moral and spiritual legacy which is presented in the Farewell Discourses.
- In v.34a, Jesus love for His disciples provides a model concerning **how** to love another person.
- It is new because it is grounded in Jesus' love.

## John 13:34-35

This love command is absorbed as the basis of three relationships.

- (A) it defines relationships between members of the community;
- (B) those relationships in turn are founded on the special relationship of presence that the community enjoys with God/Jesus and Spirit;
- (C) it must also be reflected in Jesus' commissioning his followers to represent him before a hostile world. (Perkins)

## John 13:34-35

- It does not discriminate, it is not passive or non-active affection...
- “Love one another” reveals the relationship the person has with God’s love.
- It is intriguing that before Jesus gives this command he demonstrates the command through the action of washing his disciples’ feet (John 13:1ff).

## John 15:13

- Further explains the *footwashing* event.
- To lay down one’s life for one’s friends is not always meant to die but it can also mean the sense of self-denying or others-oriented service. (Kostenberger)
- What is required to love another person?

## Philippians 2:6-7

Christ did not cease to be “in the form of God” when he took the form of a slave, any more than he ceased to be the “Son of God” when he was sent into the world; on the contrary, *it is in his self-emptying and his humiliation that he reveals what God is like*, and it is through his taking the *form of a slave that we see the “form of God”*. (Hooker)

## Conclusion

- Based on the lesson write a definition that describes what it means to love one another. What will automatically happen if parents desire to love God first?

## Week 4

### Love Expressed In Presence (Lesson Plan)

Scripture references: Isaiah 49:15-16; John 14:15-21; John 15:1-7

- I. Opening Devotional: Psalm 142:5 (5 mins)
- II. Praise Reports and Prayer Requests (5 mins)
- III. Seed thoughts: What does it mean: for me the best present is presence? What does Henri Nouwen mean when he says, “Never underestimate the power of your presence?” What does Thich Nhat Hanh means when he said, “When you love someone, the best thing you can offer is your presence. How can you love if you are not there? Ask: what is the impact of a father’s presence? What is true presence? List examples... Ask: what is the impact of a mother’s presence? What is true presence? List examples...  
(15 mins)
- IV. Explore Isaiah 49:15-16. Have someone to read aloud. Say: To be present with someone is an action motivated by God’s love. “Daughter of Zion” (Jerusalem) stresses her vulnerability to invasion and defilement by foreigners... Mothers are not given to forget or neglect their children (Read Lam. 1:2, 9, 16, 17, 21 = no comfort)... Even if they were, God will never forget (hesed) (10mins)
- V. Biblical exploration: (20 mins)
 

Have someone to read aloud John 14:15-21

Say: From the beginning of creation God has desired to be present with his creation. The reason God desired to be present with his creation is because he “so loved the world” (John 3:16a). According to Kostenberger, “The Word – the same Word that was in the beginning with God and was God; the same Word that served as the exclusive agent of God’s creation – the Word was made flesh and ‘made his dwelling’ (lit., ‘pitched his tent’ [*skenoō*]) among ‘us,’ and ‘we’ have seen his glory (John 1:14)... Kostenberger continues to say, “Thus the language here shifts from the safe distance of an observer and reporter of news, as it were, to that of a participant observer whose life was affected by the Word-made-flesh... Say: Closely connected is chapter 14 (the promise of the Holy Spirit)... When Jesus physical presence would no longer be upon the earth, his spiritual presence would remain. His presence is permanent (v.16). Ask: How can parental presence remain permanent in the life of their children? (The Father to give them the Spirit/ introduce them to His presence through Christ’ presence). Say: remember as parents we are only instruments to be used by God. What does it mean to never be left as an orphan (v.18)?

Have someone to read aloud John 15:1-7



Say: The subject is concerning the vine being present with the branches; however, the core of this subject is motivated by love. The command is clearly stated as “remain or abide in me” (John 15:4). John Calvin suggests, “Christ has no other purpose in mind than to keep us as a hen keeps her chicks under her wings, lest we be carried away by our indifference and fly to our destruction.” To remain or abide in the presence of Jesus can only be successful when one remains or abides in God’s love (John 15:9). The choice is up to the parent to remain connected so that the children can see his presence through their parent’s presence and then it becomes the children’s choice to remain connected to the his presence.

- VI. Conclusion: Based on the lesson write a definition that describes what it means for love to be expressed in presence. (5 mins)
  
- VII. Closing litany: I will not try to build my family without the love of God. I will throw myself on His grace and mercy and say to Him, Lord, I know that apart from You, I can’t do anything but mess this thing up. So I’m going to hang on to You with both hands. Together, we’ll make this family work!



## Love Expressed In Presence

*Isaiah 49:15-16; John 14:15-21; John 15:1-7*

## Seed Thoughts



## Seed Thoughts



## Seed Thoughts



## Seed Thoughts

- The impact of a father's presence...
- The impact of a mother's presence...

## Isaiah 49:15-16

- To be present with someone is an action motivated by God's love.
- "Daughter of Zion" (Jerusalem) stresses her vulnerability to invasion and defilement by foreigners... Mothers are not given to forget or neglect their children (Read Lam. 1:2, 9, 16, 17, 21 = **no comfort**)...
- Even if they were, God will never forget (**hesed**)

## John 14:15-21

From the beginning of creation God has desired to be present with his creation. The reason God desired to be present with his creation is because he “so loved the world” (John 3:16a).

## John 14:15-21

“The Word – the same Word that was in the beginning with God and was God; the same Word that served as the exclusive agent of God’s creation – the Word was made flesh and ‘made his dwelling’ (lit., ‘pitched his tent’ [*skenoo*]) among ‘us,’ and ‘we’ have seen his glory (John 1:14)”... Kostenberger

## John 14:15-21

“Thus the language here shifts from the safe distance of an observer and reporter of news, as it were, to that of a participant observer whose life was affected by the Word-made-flesh...”

Kostenberger

## John 14:15-21

- The promise of the Holy Spirit... When Jesus physical presence would no longer be upon the earth, his spiritual presence would remain. His presence is permanent (v.16).
- How can parental presence remain permanent in the life of their children?  
*remember as parents we are only instruments to be used by God.*
- What does it mean to never be left as an orphan (v.18)?

## John 15:1-7

The subject is concerning the vine being present with the branches; however, the core of this subject is motivated by love. The command is clearly stated as “remain or abide in me” (v4).

## John 15:1-7

- John Calvin suggests, “Christ has no other purpose in mind than to keep us as a hen keeps her chicks under her wings, lest we be carried away by our indifference and fly to our destruction.”

## John 15:1-7

- To remain or abide in the presence of Jesus can only be successful when one remains or abides in God's love (v9).
- The choice is up to the parents to **remain** connected to God so that the children can see His presence through their parental presence and then it becomes the children's choice to remain connected to the His presence.

## Conclusion

- Based on the lesson write a definition that describes what it means for love to be expressed through presence.



## Week 5

### Love Expressed In Communication (Lesson Plan)

Scripture references: Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; Colossians 3:8-9;  
Ephesians 4:29; James 1:19.

- I. Opening Devotional: Proverbs 16:24 (5 mins)
- II. Praise Reports and Prayer Requests (5 mins)
- III. Seed thoughts: A group of volunteers will take (3) mins and write down as many “words/phrases of affirmation” that comes to their mind. Ask: What do these words/phrases mean to you? Ask: How often do you use these words or phrases on a daily basis? Say: Communication is one of the forms which the love of God takes in His manifold dealings with us (John McIntyre).  
(10 mins)
- IV. Explore Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22b; Matthew 3:17. Have someone to read aloud. Say: In the context of Mark 1:11, “Son” is not a messianic title, but is to be understood in the highest sense, transcending Messiahship. It signifies the unique relationship which Jesus sustains to the Father, which exists apart from any thought of official function in history: Jesus is God’s unique son (Lane). Say: The affirmation of Jesus as God’s Son in Luke 3:22 resonates with declarations of Sonship throughout Israel’s history i.e. Isaac was the promised child of the covenant, the son who Abraham loved (Gen 22:2) – Lane. Say: Whereas, Mark and Luke affirm Jesus as the Son God in a “more private” matter, Matthew affirms Jesus as the Son of God in a “public matter.” Discuss: when communication is motivated by God’s love it is both a private and public matter.  
(20mins)
- V. Biblical exploration: (20 mins)
  - Have someone to read aloud Colossians 3:8-9
  - Say: When communication is motivated by God’s love it teaches one how to communicate. Ask: why is it important to know how to talk to your children?
  - Have someone to read aloud Ephesians 4:29
  - Ask: In what ways do we build up our children? How about when they fail?
  - Say: The focus is on the destructive power of words and the harm they can produce in communal life... what is required instead is the use of words in a constructive fashion – that which is good for building. (Lincoln)
  - Have someone to read aloud James 1:19

Say: Communication is not always speaking but also listening. Say: James values listening, temperate speech, and humility in all areas of life... therefore,

Christians must listen carefully and patiently to God before they presume to speak and act in God's name (Gench) Ask: what hinders us from listening to our children? Ask: what are ways we can practice in order to listen to our children?

- VI. Conclusion: Based on the lesson write a definition that describes what it means for love to be expressed in communication. (5 mins)
- VII. Closing litany: I will not try to build my family without the love of God. I will throw myself on His grace and mercy and say to Him, Lord, I know that apart from You, I can't do anything but mess this thing up. So I'm going to hang on to You with both hands. Together, we'll make this family work!



## Love Expressed In Communication

*Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22;  
Colossians 3:8-9; Ephesians 4:29; James 1:19*

## Words of Affirmation



## Words of Affirmation

Communication is one of the forms  
which the love of God takes in His  
manifold dealings with us  
(John McIntyre).

### Mark 1:11

“Son” is not a messianic title, but is to be understood in the highest sense, transcending Messiahship. It signifies the *unique* relationship which Jesus sustains to the Father, which exists apart from any thought of official function in history: Jesus is God’s unique son.  
(Lane)

### Luke 3:22b

The affirmation of Jesus as God's Son resonates with declarations of Sonship throughout Israel's history i.e. Isaac was the promised child of the covenant, the son who Abraham loved (Gen 22:2)  
(Lane)

### Matthew 3:17

Whereas, Mark and Luke affirm Jesus as the Son God in a "more private" matter, Matthew affirms Jesus as the Son of God in a "public matter."

*How* are we to  
Communicate (express) love??

Colossians 3:8-9

When communication is motivated by  
God's love it teaches one how to  
communicate.

Why is it important to know how to talk  
to our children?

## Ephesians 4:29

In what ways do we build up our  
children?

How about when they fail?

## Ephesians 4:29

The focus is on the destructive power of words and the harm they can produce in communal life... what is required instead is the use of words in a constructive fashion – that which is good for building up.

(Lincoln)

## James 1:19

James values listening, temperate speech, and humility in all areas of life... therefore, Christians must listen carefully and patiently to God before they presume to speak and act in God's name.  
(Gench)

## James 1:19

What hinders us from listening to our children?

What are ways we can practice in order to listen to our children?



## Conclusion

- Based on the lesson write a definition that describes what it means for love to be expressed through communication.

## Week 6

### Love Expressed In Discipline (Lesson Plan)

Scripture references: Deuteronomy 6:6-9, Ephesians 6:4, Hebrews 12:5-8

- I. Opening Devotional: Luke 15:20 (5 mins)
- II. Praise Reports and Prayer Requests (5 mins)
- III. Seed thoughts: Ask: when you hear the word: discipline, what automatically comes to mind? Say: On a sheet of paper write down as many words related to discipline in 1 minute. Discuss the words written down. Have the class to call out words they wrote down and see how many people in the class have the same word. Identify which word or words are most in common.  
(10 mins)

Explore Deuteronomy 6:6-9. Have someone to read aloud. Reconnect to the first lesson by asking: What grabs your attention concerning God's choice of Israel? Is there anything special about Israel? Say: Discipline is motivated by God's love. To say no, to correct, to train, and to guide in the right direction are not expired methods and procedures. (20mins)

- IV. Biblical exploration: (20 mins)

Have someone to read aloud Hebrews 12:5-8

Say: "Discipline is proof of two very important things: first love (Heb. 12:6) and Sonship (Heb. 12:7-8) - Evans. Say: God sometimes lets men suffer because he loves them. For example, the writer of the Hebrews quotes Proverbs 3:11-12 to emphasize the thought that God actively chastens his people: "For whom the Lord loves he disciplines and he scourges every son whom he welcomes" (Heb. 12:6). Those saved by the cross see suffering in a new light, because it has brought them the greatest good. They see meaning in their own suffering, interpreting it as God's discipline at work. It is not evidence that God does not love them; it is precisely because he loves them that he goes to the trouble of disciplining them – Morris. Ask: why is it crucial to discipline children?

Have someone to read aloud Ephesians 6:4

Say: Ephesians 6:4 focuses on the requirement that parents educate their children... Ephesians is less interested in the negative aspects of discipline than in the positive responsibility for instruction. The term "disciple" spans the range between appropriate disciplines for young children to the philosophical instruction of the old adolescent. The second term "instruction" refers to verbal correction or education. Thus Ephesians indicates that Christian fathers will be

devoted to training their children in virtuous behavior – Perkins. Ask: How does Ephesians 6:4 reconnects and confirms the instruction in Deut. 6:7-8?

- V. Conclusion: Based on the lesson write a definition that describes what it means for love to be expressed in discipline. (5 mins)
- VI. Closing litany: I will not try to build my family without the love of God. I will throw myself on His grace and mercy and say to Him, Lord, I know that apart from You, I can't do anything but mess this thing up. So I'm going to hang on to You with both hands. Together, we'll make this family work!



## Love Expressed In Discipline

*Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Ephesians 6:4; Hebrews 12:5-8*



## Deuteronomy 6:6-9

- Reconnect (full circle)
- Listen, Love, and Learn  
Hear, Hesed, and Heart
- Discipline is **motivated** by God's love. To say no, to correct, to train, and to guide in the right direction are not expired methods and procedures.

## Hebrews 12:5-8

- Discipline is proof of two very important things:  
Love (Heb. 12:6) and Sonship (Heb. 12:7-8)
- God sometimes lets people suffer because he loves them. For example, the writer of the Hebrews quotes Proverbs 3:11-12 to emphasize the thought that God actively chastens his people: (Heb. 12:6). ~Morris

## Hebrews 12:5-8

- Those saved by the cross **see** suffering in a new light, because it has brought them the **greatest good**. They **see** meaning in their own suffering, interpreting it as God's discipline at work. It is not evidence that God does not love them; it is precisely because he **loves** them that he goes to the trouble of disciplining them. ~Morris
- Why is it crucial to discipline children?

## Ephesians 6:4

- The focus is on the **requirement** that parents educate their children.
- Ephesians is less interested in the negative aspects of discipline than in the **positive responsibility** for instruction.
- The term "disciple" (paideia) spans the range between appropriate disciplines for young children to the philosophical instruction of the old adolescent... (It is the "how")

## Ephesians 6:4

- The term “instruction” (nouqesia), refers to verbal correction or education.
- Ephesians indicates that Christian fathers (both father and mother) will be devoted to training their children in virtuous behavior. ~Perkins
- How does Ephesians 6:4 reconnects and confirms the instruction in Deut. 6:7-8?

## Conclusion

- Based on the lesson write a definition that describes what it means for love to be expressed through discipline.

## APPENDIX D

## DATA



<b>Pre-Survey</b>					
<b>Control Group: Married</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Pre	0	0	3	11	15
Question 2 Pre	11	1	6	7	3
Question 3 Pre	0	0	0	9	20
Question 4 Pre	0	0	2	8	19
Question 5 Pre	1	1	4	8	15
Question 6 Pre	9	7	6	6	1
Question 7 Pre	1	0	3	9	16
Question 8 Pre	0	0	1	9	19
Question 9 Pre	0	0	0	10	19
Question 10 Pre	0	1	5	8	15
<b>Post- Survey</b>					
<b>Control Group: Married</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Post	0	0	0	13	17
Question 2 Post	0	0	0	7	23
Question 3 Post	0	0	1	4	25
Question 4 Post	0	0	1	8	21
Question 5 Post	0	0	3	10	17
Question 6 Post	10	2	6	8	4
Question 7 Post	1	1	3	6	19
Question 8 Post	0	0	1	6	23
Question 9 Post	0	0	1	4	25
Question 10 Post	0	0	2	9	19

<b>Pre-Survey</b>					
<b>Control Group: Single</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Pre	0	0	2	10	15
Question 2 Pre	13	1	3	4	6
Question 3 Pre	1	1	1	8	16
Question 4 Pre	0	2	3	6	16
Question 5 Pre	1	1	5	4	16
Question 6 Pre	9	1	9	8	0
Question 7 Pre	1	0	3	7	16
Question 8 Pre	1	1	1	4	20
Question 9 Pre	0	2	2	3	20
Question 10 Pre	1	1	2	7	16
<b>Post- Survey</b>					
<b>Control Group: Single</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Post	0	0	1	7	16
Question 2 Post	0	0	0	6	18
Question 3 Post	0	0	1	2	21
Question 4 Post	0	0	1	5	18
Question 5 Post	0	0	0	5	19
Question 6 Post	11	4	4	3	2
Question 7 Post	1	0	0	6	17
Question 8 Post	0	0	2	2	20
Question 9 Post	0	0	0	1	23
Question 10 Post	0	1	1	1	21

<b>Control Group: Pre-Survey Status Mean &amp; StDeviation</b>		
	Married	Single
% answered favorably	56%	54%
# of observations	290	270
Mean	4.082758621	4.033333333
Standard Deviation	1.194007229	1.300128675
Standard Error	0.070114519	0.079123311

<b>Control Group: Post-Survey Status Mean &amp; StDeviation</b>		
	Married	Single
% answered favorably	66%	77%
# of observations	300	240
Mean	4.453333333	4.495833333
Standard Deviation	0.933126271	1.030894792
Standard Error	0.05387407	0.066543973

<b>Control Group: Pre-Survey Gender</b>					
<b>Males</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Pre	0	0	1	6	8
Question 2 Pre	5	2	3	3	2
Question 3 Pre	0	0	0	5	10
Question 4 Pre	0	0	0	5	10
Question 5 Pre	0	2	2	3	8
Question 6 Pre	3	3	4	5	0
Question 7 Pre	0	0	3	4	8
Question 8 Pre	0	0	0	3	12
Question 9 Pre	0	0	0	3	12
Question 10 Pre	0	0	2	2	11
<b>Control Group: Post- Survey Gender</b>					
<b>Males</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Post	0	0	1	7	13
Question 2 Post	0	0	0	8	13
Question 3 Post	0	0	2	2	17
Question 4 Post	0	0	1	5	15
Question 5 Post	0	0	2	6	13
Question 6 Post	7	4	2	4	4
Question 7 Post	0	1	2	5	13
Question 8 Post	0	0	1	4	16
Question 9 Post	0	0	0	1	20
Question 10 Post	0	0	0	7	14

<b>Control Group: Pre-Survey Gender</b>					
<b>Females</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Pre	0	0	4	15	22
Question 2 Pre	19	1	6	8	7
Question 3 Pre	1	1	1	12	26
Question 4 Pre	0	2	5	9	25
Question 5 Pre	2	0	7	9	23
Question 6 Pre	15	5	11	9	1
Question 7 Pre	2	0	3	12	24
Question 8 Pre	1	1	2	10	27
Question 9 Pre	0	2	2	10	27
Question 10 Pre	1	2	5	13	20
<b>Control Group: Post- Survey Gender</b>					
<b>Females</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Post	0	0	0	13	20
Question 2 Post	0	0	0	5	28
Question 3 Post	0	0	0	4	29
Question 4 Post	0	0	1	8	24
Question 5 Post	0	0	1	9	23
Question 6 Post	14	2	8	7	2
Question 7 Post	2	0	1	7	23
Question 8 Post	0	0	2	4	27
Question 9 Post	0	0	1	4	28
Question 10 Post	0	1	3	3	26

<b>Control Group Pre-Survey Gender Mean &amp; StDeviation</b>		
	Males	Females
% answered favorably	59%	56%
# of observations	150	410
Mean	4.186666667	4.012195122
Standard Deviation	1.131529028	1.282703274
Standard Error	0.092388958	0.063348199

<b>Control Group Post-Survey Gender Mean &amp; StDeviation</b>		
	Males	Females
% answered favorably	67%	73%
# of observations	210	330
Mean	4.457142857	4.481818182
Standard Deviation	0.948719322	0.996026924
Standard Error	0.065467853	0.054829478



<b>Pre-Survey</b>					
<b>Control Group: Younger Age</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Pre	1	3	3	17	10
Question 2 Pre	19	11	2	2	0
Question 3 Pre	0	0	4	4	26
Question 4 Pre	0	0	1	8	25
Question 5 Pre	0	0	5	10	19
Question 6 Pre	0	1	5	20	8
Question 7 Pre	0	0	0	10	24
Question 8 Pre	0	0	0	7	27
Question 9 Pre	0	0	1	6	27
Question 10 Pre	0	0	4	10	20
<b>Post-Survey</b>					
<b>Control Group: Younger Age</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Pre	0	0	0	7	25
Question 2 Pre	0	0	0	5	27
Question 3 Pre	0	0	0	5	27
Question 4 Pre	0	0	1	3	28
Question 5 Pre	0	0	2	3	27
Question 6 Pre	0	17	4	11	0
Question 7 Pre	0	0	0	4	28
Question 8 Pre	0	0	0	3	29
Question 9 Pre	0	0	0	2	30
Question 10 Pre	0	0	1	6	25

<b>Pre-Survey</b>					
<b>Control Group: Older Age</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Pre	0	0	0	7	15
Question 2 Pre	12	5	5	0	0
Question 3 Pre	0	0	2	4	16
Question 4 Pre	0	0	1	6	15
Question 5 Pre	0	0	3	9	10
Question 6 Pre	9	8	3	2	0
Question 7 Pre	0	0	2	7	13
Question 8 Pre	0	0	0	8	14
Question 9 Pre	0	0	0	10	12
Question 10 Pre	0	0	0	9	13
<b>Post-Survey</b>					
<b>Control Group: Older Age</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Pre	0	0	0	2	20
Question 2 Pre	0	0	0	2	20
Question 3 Pre	0	0	0	3	19
Question 4 Pre	0	0	1	3	18
Question 5 Pre	0	0	4	8	10
Question 6 Pre	15	5	2	0	0
Question 7 Pre	0	0	1	2	19
Question 8 Pre	0	0	0	0	22
Question 9 Pre	0	0	0	0	22
Question 10 Pre	0	0	0	7	15

<b>Control Group Pre-Survey Age Mean &amp; StDeviation</b>		
	Younger	Older
% answered favorably	66%	59%
# of observations	340	220
Mean	4.208823529	4.013636364
Standard Deviation	1.134304888	1.2909221
Standard Error	0.269506403	0.08703395

<b>Control Group Post-Survey Age Mean &amp; StDeviation</b>		
	Younger	Older
% answered favorably	82%	77%
# of observations	320	220
Mean	4.6375	4.463636364
Standard Deviation	0.775708797	1.132155763
Standard Error	0.04336344	0.076329926

<b>Focus Group: Presence Pre- Survey</b>					
<b>Married Parents</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Pre	1	3	3	0	1
Question 2 Pre	3	2	2	0	1
Question 3 Pre	0	2	3	1	2
Question 4 Pre	1	1	4	2	0
Question 5 Pre	0	0	2	1	5
Question 6 Pre	0	0	0	2	6
Question 7 Pre	0	0	0	5	3
<b>Focus Group: Presence Post- Survey</b>					
<b>Married Parents</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Post	3	1	3	0	0
Question 2 Post	2	2	2	1	0
Question 3 Post	0	2	0	4	1
Question 4 Post	0	3	2	2	0
Question 5 Post	0	1	1	2	3
Question 6 Post	0	0	0	3	4
Question 7 Post	0	0	0	4	3

<b>Focus Group Presence Survey Mean &amp; StDeviation</b>		
	<b>Married Pre</b>	<b>Married Post</b>
% answered favorably	52%	47%
# of observations	56	49
Mean	3.5178571	3.387755102
Standard Deviation	1.32103364	1.304101327
Standard Error	0.17653055	0.18630019

<b>Focus Group: Presence Pre- Survey</b>					
<b>Single Parents</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Pre	0	2	3	0	0
Question 2 Pre	2	2	1	0	0
Question 3 Pre	0	0	1	3	1
Question 4 Pre	1	2	2	0	0
Question 5 Pre	0	0	0	2	3
Question 6 Pre	0	0	0	3	2
Question 7 Pre	0	0	1	2	2
<b>Focus Group: Presence Post- Survey</b>					
<b>Single Parents</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Post	4	0	2	0	0
Question 2 Post	5	1	0	0	0
Question 3 Post	0	0	1	3	2
Question 4 Post	1	2	3	0	0
Question 5 Post	0	0	0	1	5
Question 6 Post	0	0	0	2	4
Question 7 Post	0	0	1	2	3

<b>Focus Group: Presence Survey Mean &amp; StDeviation</b>		
	<b>Single Pre</b>	<b>Single Post</b>
% answered favorably	51%	64%
# of observations	35	42
Mean	3.4	3.30952381
Standard Deviation	1.264911064	1.584807371
Standard Error	0.213808994	0.244541086



<b>Focus Group: Communication Pre- Survey</b>					
<b>Married Parents</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Pre	0	0	1	4	3
Question 2 Pre	0	0	3	2	3
Question 3 Pre	4	0	3	0	1
Question 4 Pre	2	2	2	0	2
Question 5 Pre	0	0	1	5	2
Question 6 Pre	3	3	2	0	0
Question 7 Pre	2	1	3	2	0
<b>Focus Group: Communication Post - Survey</b>					
<b>Married Parents</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Post	0	0	1	4	4
Question 2 Post	0	0	1	3	5
Question 3 Post	5	1	3	0	0
Question 4 Post	1	5	1	2	0
Question 5 Post	0	0	0	4	5
Question 6 Post	2	4	2	1	0
Question 7 Post	1	4	2	2	0

<b>Focus Group: Communication Survey Mean &amp; StDeviation</b>		
	<b>Married Pre</b>	<b>Married Post</b>
% answered favorably	43%	51%
# of observations	56	63
Mean	3.125	3.19047619
Standard Deviation	1.38908079	1.38955949
Standard Error	0.18562373	0.17506804

<b>Focus Group: Communication Pre- Survey</b>					
<b>Single Parents</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Pre	0	0	1	2	1
Question 2 Pre	0	0	2	0	2
Question 3 Pre	3	1	0	0	0
Question 4 Pre	1	0	3	0	0
Question 5 Pre	0	0	0	2	2
Question 6 Pre	2	2	0	0	0
Question 7 Pre	2	0	2	0	0
<b>Focus Group: Communication Post- Survey</b>					
<b>Single Parents</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Post	0	0	0	3	2
Question 2 Post	0	0	0	1	4
Question 3 Post	5	0	0	0	0
Question 4 Post	0	2	2	1	0
Question 5 Post	0	0	0	1	4
Question 6 Post	1	1	3	0	0
Question 7 Post	3	1	1	0	0

<b>Focus Group: Communication Survey Mean &amp; StDeviation</b>		
	<b>Single Pre</b>	<b>Single Post</b>
% answered favorably	57%	69%
# of observations	28	35
Mean	2.821428571	3.114285714
Standard Deviation	1.467009339	1.586179809
Standard Error	0.277238706	0.268113323

<b>Focus Group: Discipline Pre- Survey</b>					
<b>Married Parents</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Pre	0	0	0	0	11
Question 2 Pre	0	0	0	5	6
Question 3 Pre	0	0	2	5	4
Question 4 Pre	0	1	2	4	4
Question 5 Pre	0	0	2	6	3
Question 6 Pre	0	0	0	1	10
Question 7 Pre	0	0	0	1	10
<b>Focus Group: Discipline Post- Survey</b>					
<b>Married Parents</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Post	0	0	0	0	11
Question 2 Post	0	0	0	1	10
Question 3 Post	0	0	0	4	7
Question 4 Post	0	0	2	3	6
Question 5 Post	0	0	0	6	5
Question 6 Post	0	0	0	0	11
Question 7 Post	0	0	0	0	11

<b>Focus Group Discipline Survey Mean &amp; StDeviation</b>		
	<b>Married Pre</b>	<b>Married Post</b>
% answered favorably	68%	81%
# of observations	77	77
Mean	4.5194805	4.766233766
Standard Deviation	0.69981933	0.48384708
Standard Error	0.07975181	0.055139492

<b>Focus Group: Discipline Pre- Survey</b>					
<b>Single Parents</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Pre	0	0	0	0	6
Question 2 Pre	0	0	1	0	5
Question 3 Pre	0	0	2	2	2
Question 4 Pre	0	0	0	3	3
Question 5 Pre	0	0	1	3	2
Question 6 Pre	0	0	0	1	5
Question 7 Pre	0	0	1	1	4
<b>Focus Group: Discipline Post- Survey</b>					
<b>Single Parents</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1 Post	0	0	0	0	6
Question 2 Post	0	0	2	2	2
Question 3 Post	0	0	0	4	2
Question 4 Post	0	0	1	2	3
Question 5 Post	0	0	1	4	1
Question 6 Post	0	0	0	1	5
Question 7 Post	0	0	0	3	3

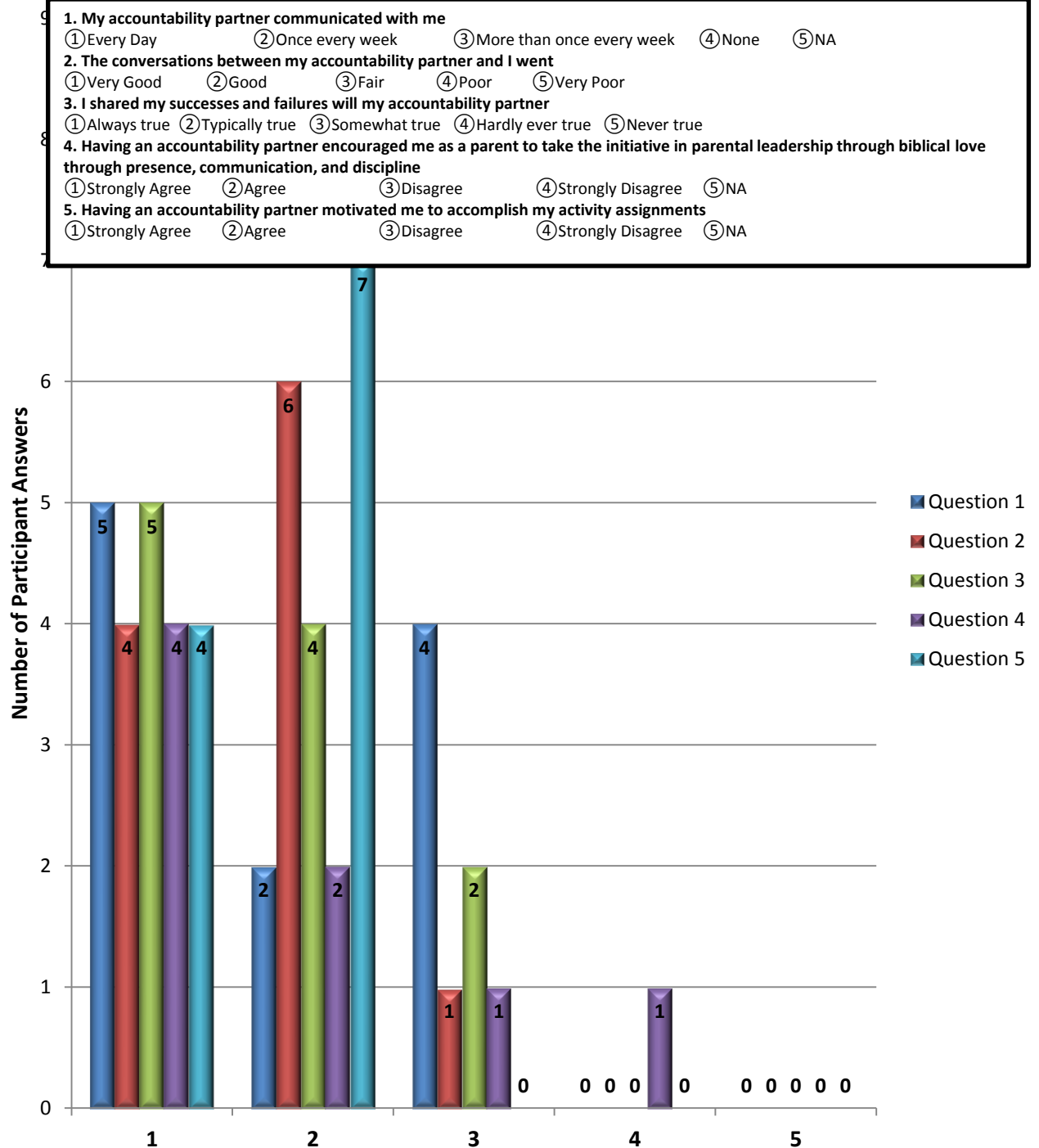
<b>Focus Group Discipline Survey Mean &amp; StDeviation</b>		
	<b>Single Pre</b>	<b>Single Post</b>
% answered favorably	67%	64%
# of observations	42	42
Mean	4.523809524	4.428571429
Standard Deviation	0.706696031	0.667827097
Standard Error	0.109045565	0.103047958



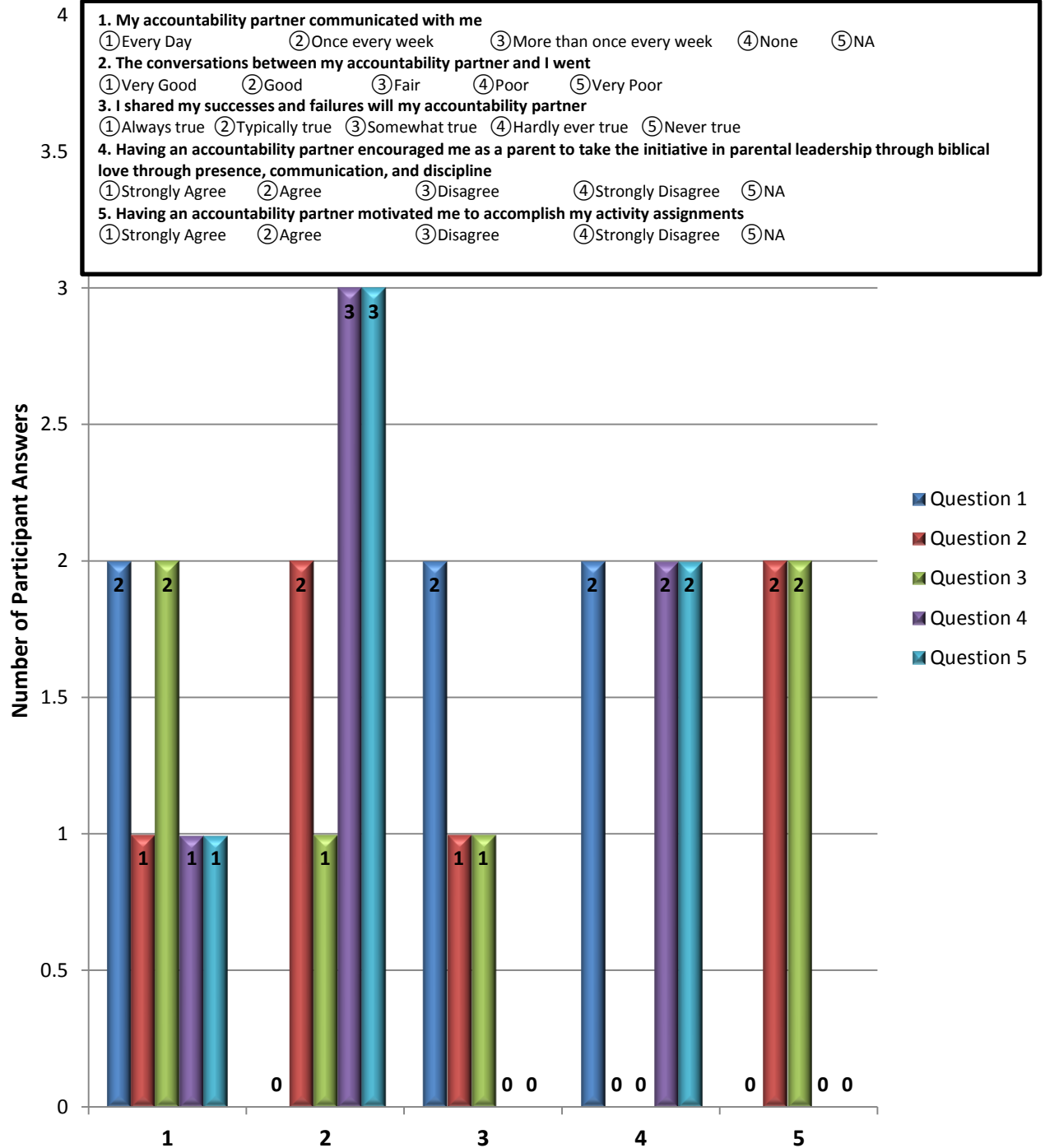
<b>Focus Group: Accountability Survey - Married Parents</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1	5	2	4	0	-
	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Question 2	4	6	1	0	0
	Always True	Typically True	Somewhat True	Hardly Ever True	Never True
Question 3	5	4	2	0	0
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	NA
Question 4	4	2	1	1	-
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	NA
Question 5	4	7	0	0	-

<b>Focus Group: Accountability Survey - Single Parents</b>					
#	1	2	3	4	5
Question 1	2	0	2	2	-
	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Question 2	1	2	1	0	2
	Always True	Typically True	Somewhat True	Hardly Ever True	Never True
Question 3	2	1	1	0	2
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	NA
Question 4	1	3	0	2	-
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	NA
Question 5	1	3	0	2	-

## Accountability Survey - Married Parents



## Accountability Survey - Single Parents



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