

INFANT TO PRESCHOOL

MANNA IN THE MORNING: PARENTING CLASS

PARENTING 0-5

- 1. Foundations of a God-Centered family
- 2. Discipline
- 3. Helping your child to bloom
- 4. It takes a village



1. Foundations of a God-Centered family
2. Discipline
3. Helping your child to bloom
4. It takes a village

Our family like the Incredibles (moody teenager, boy with endless motor, controlling mom, etc.)

Be open. We have made tons of mistakes. Some of them we can look back on and laugh, but others still cause us a lot of heartache. Right now we are dealing with the emotional consequences caused (in part) by a situation we mishandled with one of our children.

We have really deep convictions about the principles we are going to talk about. Have we been perfectly consistent in following them? No!

But seen the benefits of following them both in our family and other families

Remember: We are all just doing the best we can. Thankfully, God fills in the gaps in what we lack as a parent

1. GOD-CENTERED FAMILY

God and kingdom

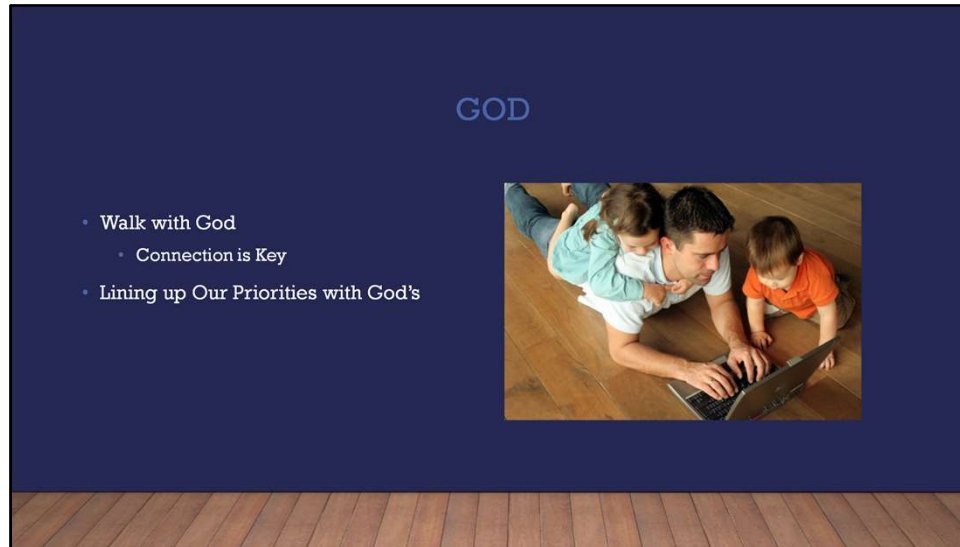
Marriage

Family Devos

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rains came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house yet it did not fall because it had its foundation on the rock"

Matt 7:24-25

Hard to imagine as you look at your cute baby or toddler! But the rains will come. Being God-centered from the beginning helps us weather the storms



Priorities

Life is busy!

Constantly reevaluating and recalibrating our priorities. Does the way our family spend time reflect our core values?

God 1, marriage 2 kids 3

Can be attentive to your child's needs but still communicate God (and mommy/daddy) are the priorities

Imagine your family is a solar system. God is the sun. Marriage is the moon and your children are the planets. Your children will try to become the center of your solar system- don't let them!

Adult quiet times

Fight for your time with God. Expect it to be interrupted many times. As your children get older and more independent they can be trained to not interrupt ("go play mommy is praying")

Breakfast picnics

Meetings of the body

Church schedule has become much more family friendly over the years.

Our motto, if the church family is together (except for illness) we are there too

1 or 2 late nights a week will not harm your child. It teaches them FLEXIBILITY (a skill they will use their entire lives)

Consider bath and jammies before midweek

They will develop great friendships and look forward to those meetings

Our kids are genuinely disappointed when we have to miss

MARRIAGE

- Save energy for one another
- Marriage banks require regular “deposits”
- Separation anxiety



Save energy for one another

Parenting young children is physically exhausting and time intensive. There are only 24 hrs in a day and our bodies are fragile. Talk about ways you can pair down other responsibilities so that you have time and energy left for each other. Is there any wiggle room in work schedules? Hobbies that may need to be put on hold? These don't need to be permanent changes. Life will likely be much more manageable in a few years.

Marriage banks require regular deposits

It is very common for marriages to be neglected while you have young children. Or for wives to focus all their attention on the children and neglect the husband. Marriages require regular deposits or run the danger of going bankrupt. Can't just put it on hold until the children are older. Regular date nights, overnights without kids, a lock on the bedroom door! (mommy and daddy are going to spend time hugging and kissing-don't interrupt)

Separation anxiety

Moms and dads have separation anxiety too (share about my binder)

11-18months (even up to 24 months) is the peak of the attachment period in infant development. Would make sense that this also the time when separation anxiety is most intense

Brief time away from mom and dad helps your child in a few ways

Allows them to learn and explore new places and people

Builds their confidence and independence

Builds their trust that you will come back



Emphasis on fun fun fun! Should be very fun and positive experiences. (not a time for discipline or focus on problems)

Keep it short (5-10 minutes for toddlers where most of that time they are moving around in some way)

Lots of acting out stories (Pinterest again)

Find a consistent weekly time

Work together (I often think of a game or activity and chris comes up with a scripture or spiritual application)

As nearing school age, find Bible stories that are unusual or even funny to peak their interest in the Bible even movies that have a spiritual theme

(share about some of our favorites- finding baby jesus with the flashlight, breaking out of pretend jail, good Samaritan and bandaids)

"Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far away"

Proverbs 22:15

2. DISCIPLINE

Parenting styles

Early concepts

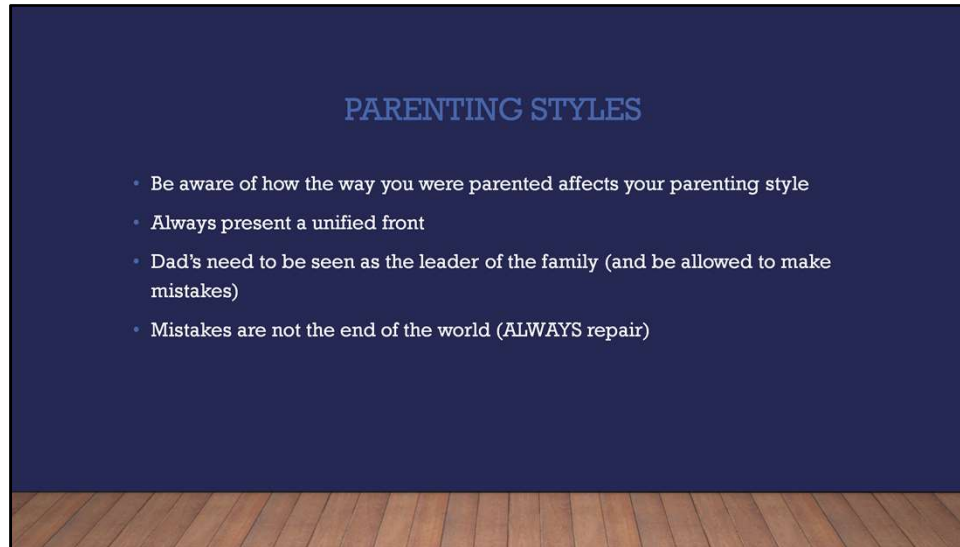
Types of discipline

Problem behaviors

Dealing with anger



Folly! Pretty much sums up most childhood behavior! Don't be shocked by it, just get armed with the right tools



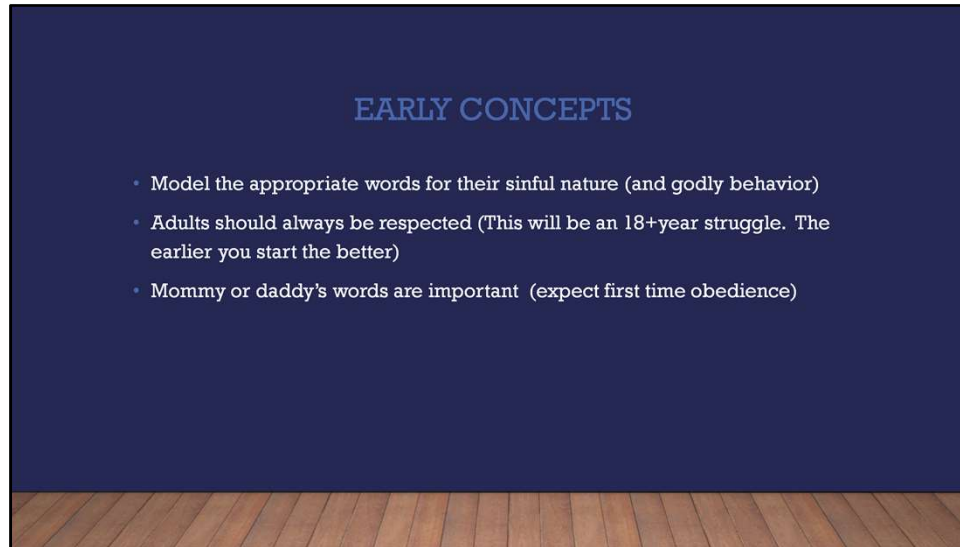
Our parenting can be an over-reaction to the way we were parented (funny- Chris and eating vegetables) I have a lot of fears about showing negative emotions to my kids because I grew up in such a toxic environment. Have had to work through this Chris more permissive, I am more hard lined

Present a unified front. Its ok to say: I need to think about what the consequence will be. Or Ill have to talk to mom/dad about it first.

If cant reach an agreement (moms defer to dads)

Dads need to feel the responsibility of leading the family.(And be allowed to mistakes) Making mistakes is how we all learn. (moms may need bite their tongue at times)

Mistakes are not the end of the world. It is an opportunity to show our kids how much we need god. Always make a repair attempt. I'm sorry I got angry, Im sorry I was frustrated, I'm sorry I over-reacted. This is so important. Don't assume they forgot about it or assume they know you are sorry. (share Meagan "Dad's gonna apologize for that one")



Model appropriate words for their sinful nature Define sins (that was haughty, selfish, disrespectful) that was kindness, loving, etc.

Adults should always be respected

Responding to or giving greetings (eye contact, hug or high five) dealing with shyness

You are not doing them any favors if you allow them to treat you in a way that would not fly with teachers, coaches and bosses. The struggle to respect authority figures does not end when they leave your home.

Expect first time obedience (but understand it is a work in progress and requires years of training)

Yes maam, yes sir, ok mommy, yes daddy (whatever term you choose) (model it every time you give them a directive, we are still doing this with our 12 year old!)

TYPES OF DISCIPLINE

- Spanking
- Natural consequences
- Time out/time in
- Visual aids



Spanking (lots of opinions here. Used more when they were very young- reserved for dangerous or defiant behavior (otherwise we would have been spanking them all day long!). Toddlers understand cause and effect very well: I do this and it hurts. Always make sure you are emotionally in control before spanking (take an adult time out if needed) Always use for character development, never out of frustration. Tapered off on spanking as they got older and could be reasoned with. (Again, reserved for extreme disobedience)

Natural consequences: Logical, makes the punishment fit the crime. Throw food off your plate, may go to bed hungry. Break a toy due to rough play, the toy does not get replaced, bite a friend, you play by yourself the rest of the day so everyone can be safe (share about Mallory and the “snow walk”) Our kids typically learn lessons very quickly when we use natural consequences. Works from toddler to teen

Time out/ Time in: 1 minute per age of child. Designated spot away from main activity of the house. Time doesn't start until child is willingly sitting there. Child must tell you what house rule they broke (this is where it helps to have designated house rules posted on the wall or fridge. (no hurting others, no talking back to adults, etc. try to create 2-3 general rules vs. several specific). We have also used “time in” (especially when our kids were emotionally or physically out of control) child sits next to adult and cannot get up until they

regain self control and can tell you what rule they broke.

Visual aids: color chart, marbles in a jar, clips, etc. Pinterest is full of creative ideas. Make sure consequences and rewards are also clearly laid out. Here is where it is helpful for your kids to have privileges (screen time, desserts, etc) because then you have a bargaining chip. Privileges must be earned. They are not given for free.

PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

- Behavior diaries (what are stressors they may be sensitive to)
- Maladaptive behavior: A way of bypassing appropriate behavior to get needs met (learned and reinforced over time)
- Determine the goal of the behavior (attention, escape, revenge, stimulation, tangibles)
- Once you understand the goal of the behavior you can be conscious of addressing that need in an appropriate way.
- Make sure the maladaptive behavior DOES NOT WORK (if it works even once, they will keep trying)

For challenging behaviors- Make a behavior diary. Watch for stressors that could be contributing to the behavior (fatigue, hunger, over-stimulation, boredom, mild food reactions) Share about NiNi's tantrums before breakfast.

Maladaptive behavior- learned and reinforced over time (examples: parent puts child into bed, child cries and runs around the room, parents rocks him to sleep. Guess what will happen the next time the child is put to bed)

What is the goal of the behavior- attention (I cry and I get picked up), escape (from something they don't want to do), revenge (if another child took their toy, they may hit him or her), stimulation (I'm bored and this makes me feel better- kicking back of the seat, jumping on the bed), tangibles (tv, a certain toy, a certain activity)

Once we understand the child's goal in the behavior we can begin to make the problem behavior ineffective for him/her. And meet their need in an appropriate way. Look for trends in their behaviors (situations, times of

day, etc)

Make sure the maladaptive behavior doesn't work Kids are smart! They will continue to engage in a behavior as long as it gets them what they want. If you make the behavior work, even once, they will keep trying it in hopes it will one day work again (share Ozzie and buying stuff at the store)

Be careful we aren't unwittingly rewarding attention seekers with negative attention (sometimes just as good as positive attention). Sometimes ignoring is the way to go. Share about video of child stopping and starting their tantrum based on where they could be seen. For biting we ignored the biter and showered the 'victim' with all the attention. This was much more painful than a time out.

PROBLEM BEHAVIORS (CONT.) ABC BEHAVIOR CHART			
Antecedent (What was happening right before the behavior)	Behavior (What the behavior looked like)	Consequence (What happened as a result of the behavior)	Possible purpose of behavior (attention, escape, power, stimulation, revenge)
Making dinner, children playing	Johnny bites his sibling	Johnny has to play alone in his room until dinner time	Attention

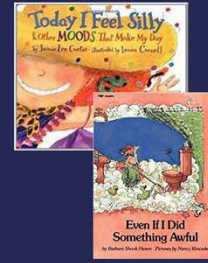
Antecedent, behavior, consequence chart

Over time you might find that a particular behavior often occurs around the same time of day or activity (during dinner prep)

To stop the behavior, Begin to anticipate that Johnny will need extra attention or stimulation during this time. Maybe he has a special toy he gets to play with **ONLY** when you are making dinner. Or he gets a special job with you in the kitchen during that time such as sorting silverware

DEALING WITH ANGER

- Toddlers: Define their emotions
- Communicate ALL emotions (even anger) are ok
- Passive-Aggressive: An expression of anger that gets back at a person indirectly
- Have a safe time to “debrief” the day’s events
- Always communicate acceptance no matter what their behavior (acceptance is not the same as condoning)



For toddlers, define their feelings “Oh, You are really angry” or “ That made you really sad” (books that describe emotions)

Learn to be comfortable with the full range of human emotions (extreme sadness, rage, grief) Try to not over-react. If kids sense their emotions are too much for you, they may learn to stuff those feelings. Anger is not the enemy! It is a natural human emotion. Never communicate that certain emotions are “not ok.” The bible just says in your anger do not sin.

Passive Aggressive behavior: “An expression of anger that gets back at a person indirectly. It is the opposite of open, honest, direct verbal expression of anger” (quote from book) Indirect resistance of demands while avoiding direct confrontation. I bet we can all think of a passive aggressive adult right now! They are extremely difficult to work with! You don’t want that to be your kid. PA may look like: cleaning up while slamming things around. Doing what they are told but sighing, whining, or “aw man”, coming when you call but moving very slowly. PA behavior can happen when kids feel shut down or you focus on outward behavior only. When you

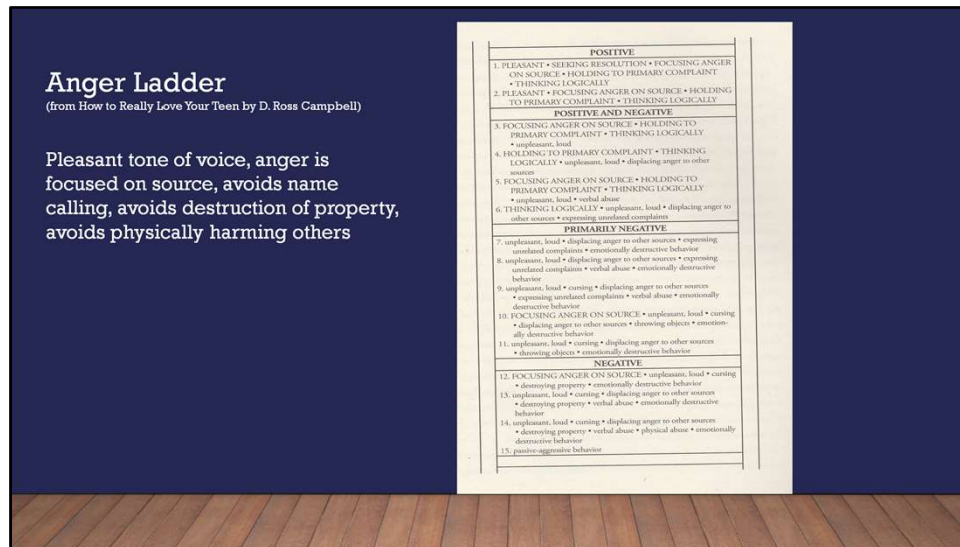
notice a mismatch with their behavior and how they seem to be feeling inside (for example saying “sorry” but not really feeling it), always follow up and address their hearts.

Have a debriefing time

Have a time during the day (for example bed time routine) when its natural to bring up and process emotionally charged events that happened that day in a non confrontational way. For example, “When it was time to turn off your show, you were really angry. Its hard for you to stop doing what you really enjoy.” The goal is to teach them to identify and talk about their feelings in an appropriate way (this is a very long process that they will continue to work on even as adults)

Always communicate love and Acceptance “I love you. But your choice to color on the wall made me sad”. Always follow up with hope and belief in them “I bet tomorrow you will make a better choice”

Book- even if I did something awful. Child has to repair the damage (natural consequences) but the parent’s love and acceptance stays the same



Anger needs to be expressed and there are appropriate ways to do it

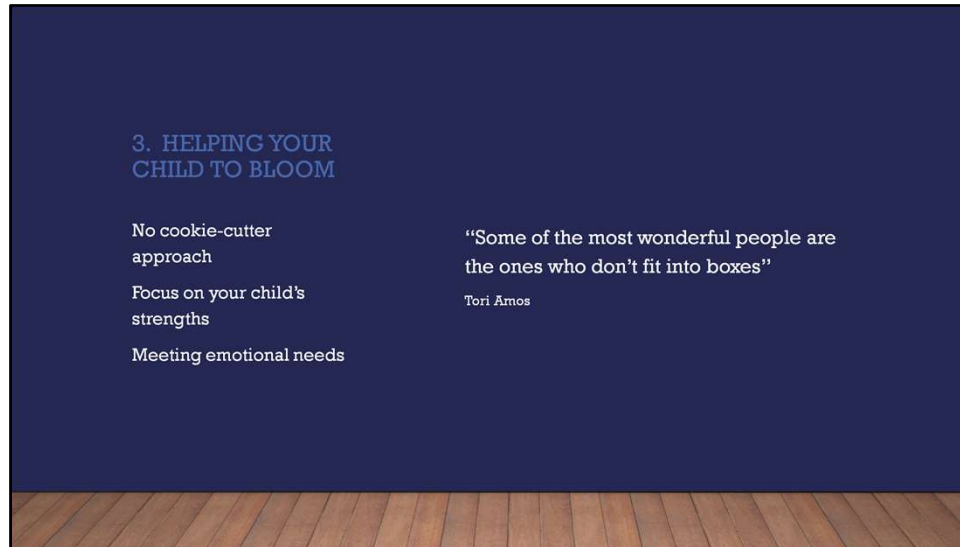
All caps= appropriate ways to express anger (lower case type= inappropriate ways to express anger

Notice... passive-aggressive behavior is on the bottom rung! It is the worst possible way to express anger- the author suggests even worse than using physical aggression!

Communicate that it is ok for your child to bring you their anger. Help them to work toward more and more appropriate ways to express it

For example “Thank you for bringing me your anger. The only thing you did wrong was yell” (or throw a toy, kick the cat, call your brother a stupid, etc.)

The goal is not to have “good little soldiers” who are outwardly compliant- but really angry on the inside.



We adopted 2 kids with “special needs” (on paper) but Most of our kids have special emotional or physical differences. Or are very different from us or not the child we expected them to be.



What works for some may not work for others

Would be nice if all our kids were the same and by the 3rd kid we could be expert parents. But had to start over with a whole new learning curve with each kid

Some kids strong willed (share NiNi and the cayenne pepper on her fingers “mmmm...spicy!” vs Meagan we rarely had to even spank)

At times there can be significant challenges and this can be isolating to parents – get help! (share NiNi RAD diagnosis)

Don't compare

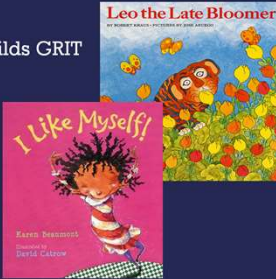
Tempting to feel like “im doing all the right things – why is my kid not turning out like your kid”

Always think of psalm 139 (you knit me together) each kid is a masterpiece! Each stitch carefully planned

No comparisons

FOCUS ON STRENGTHS

- Explore and maximize each child's strengths
- Helping your child struggle through something difficult builds GRIT
- Stay positive (Leo the late bloomer)
- Self-esteem
- Work through your own grief first



Explore and maximize strengths

Ethan extremely small for his age ADHD (struggles academically) but great at gymnastics, fast, tenacious at learning a new skill- ice skating, pure heart
 build using his strengths (going to carefully choose experiences that will build his confidence in his areas of strength) Football or spell bowl would be a bad choice!

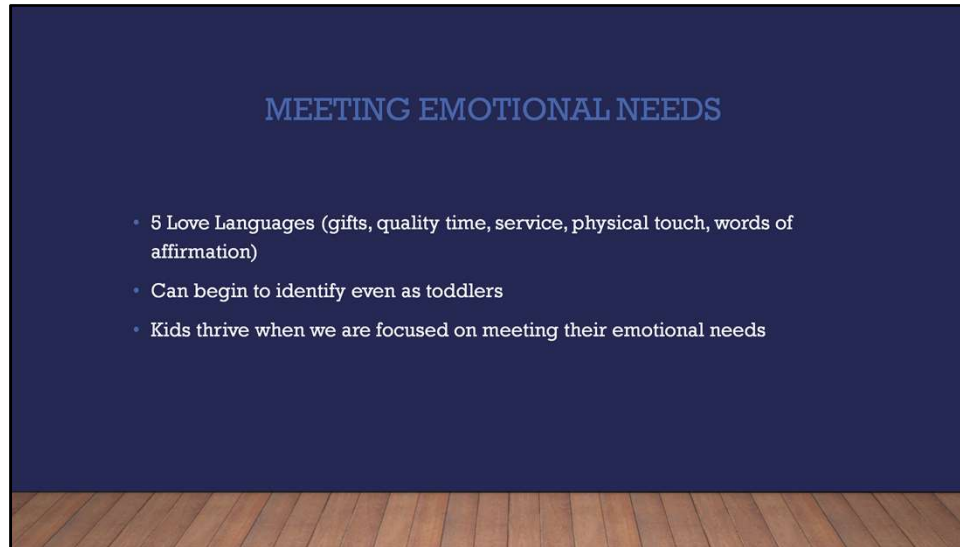
Don't be afraid of your kid struggling (Chris point about grit???)

Stay positive

Don't be so focused on the timing of their blooming. They need to feel you are proud of them and are enjoying them

Focus on building their self esteem. Kids love affirmations (Noah with birthday sharing "Now your turn")

Work through your own grief first. Sometimes our kids are tougher than we are and don't have the fears and emotional baggage that we do. They may be handling a challenge just fine but we need to work through our own grief
My meltdown with Ethans scars on his face (letting his stitches get infected)



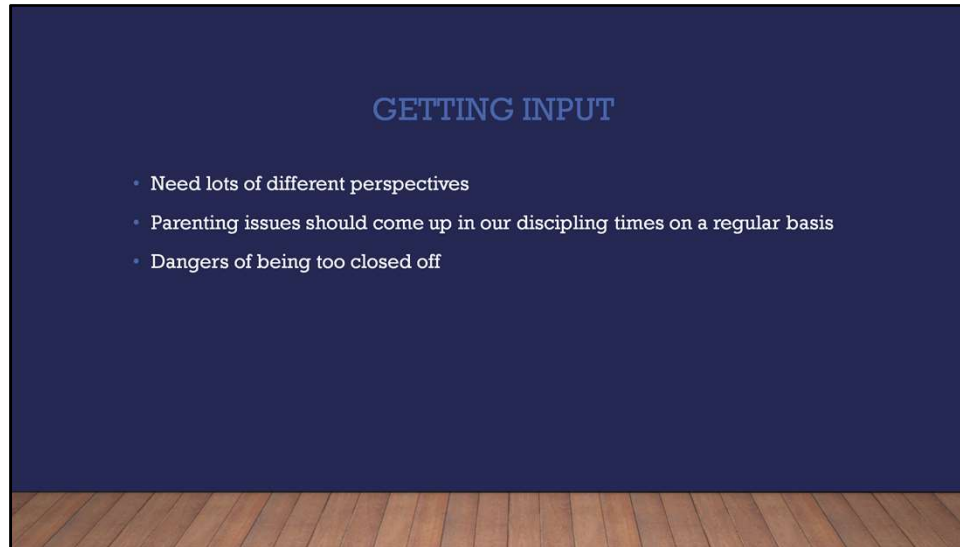
Begin very early to try to read their love language

(NiNi gifts- all about the surprise (share about fish tank)

If we focus on setting healthy boundaries and meeting their emotional needs that is a great foundation



So thankful we are not in the fight alone. Good friends who celebrate our victories and grieve our losses.



Our we are infinitely better parents because of Godly advice

Need lots of different perspectives

Avoid the temptation of getting advice only from people who parent like you do. Missing out on rich variety of perspectives

After 17 years of having kids, parenting issues still come up in nearly every discipling time. It is a life long learning process

Choose wise advisors and then pray about what is best for your family

Being too closed off to input can be very damaging to your kids

SHAME

- Moms and Dads tend to think very differently!
 - Unrealistic standards
 - What are contributors?
- Social media
 - Moms of kids 0-5 most active
 - Pros
 - Cons

Moms and dads tend to think very differently

Moms can go there with their thoughts (shoulds, musts, oughts) and can struggle with fears. Can go to a very dark place. Chris' saying "if mom goes down, the whole ship goes down"

Dads be aware of the pressure your wives put on themselves. Help keep mom afloat! They need regular affirmation from you that they are doing a good job, listen to their feelings, pray with them through their fears

Social media is great for connection and community, idea sharing, etc.

The dark side of social media. Feel like should be able to do it all.

Study showed moms with children ages 0-5 most active on social media compared to moms of older children. Fine line between staying connected and staying distracted. If you can't regulate try taking a break. Or stick to a schedule (or only during naps, only after x is done etc) Moms on devices talk less to their children= can slow language acquisition. Kids on devices have less opportunities to work on play skills and independent play

SELF-CARE

- No one has it all together
- Keep running list of our strengths as a parent
- Take care of our emotional health
- Ask for help- who is your village?
- Get creative



No one has it all together

I have a lot of strengths, tidiness is not one of them (I'm super handy, but cant seem to ever get clothes into dresser drawers) And lucky for me my spouse isn't too bothered by this

Try to keep a running list of all your strengths

Make sure you are doing activities every week that refuel you emotionally (exercise, girlfriend time, outdoor time, a hobby)

Ask for help from others who are not in your stage of life – its very bonding! Empty nesters who may be itching for grandkids (share Tom Cates)

Team up with others in your same stage – babysitting co-ops, meal sharing (share Karen and I)

THOUGHTS FOR NEXT CLASS?

- Trouble shoot behaviors?
- More in-depth focus on one of the points from today?
- Share specific needs/prayer requests?
- Marriage dynamics?
- Family devo ideas?