



A SERIES ABOUT PARENTING

Love Unconditionally

#NPParenting

Week 3

3 of 5

May 22, 2016

Bottom Line: As kids grow older, we have to become better at reaching their hearts than filling their heads. We need to learn to open up in a way that will let them know they are loved unconditionally.

Icebreaker: What is something your parents did when you were younger that let you know they loved you?

Key Verse: *Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their enemies in the gate.* Psalm 127:3-5

Perhaps the most basic part of parenting is helping your children know and understand that they are deeply loved and valued by you. Children are a heritage and a reward, something to be treasured by parents. Children are also described as an arrow. Arrows need three things. First, you give them direction. You aim them. In our homes we want to redirect our children all the time. Giving direction is an act of love. Like anything else, we can put too much emphasis on direction, but giving them something to shoot for helps them know that they are loved.

Second, arrows need preparation. You've got to make sure everything is in order. Once you have determined a direction, you prepare the arrow to be launched. Preparation is a measure of love because you are looking toward the future, confidently pressing forward and giving your support and help.

Lastly, we let them go, which may be the hardest step for many parents, though it is a necessary one. Loving our children well means that, after we have done our job, we let them go their own way and test their strengths. Still, your children should know that after you let them go, you are always there for them when they return.

Loving children well requires work and effort on our part, but yields an incredible reward. When your children finally leave your home, it should be with a heart filled with love, rooted in the love of God. The best reward for a parent is for their children to know they are fully loved.

THINK IT OVER >>>

Thinking back on Dwight's message, what stood out to you?

Dwight said we need to aim our children toward . . .

- a humble heart
- a grateful heart
- a generous heart
- a servant heart

And give them attention, grace, and unconditional love.

To shoot an arrow, you need preparation, direction, and, finally, you have to let it go. How are you loving your kids in each of these ways?

How do your children grow when they know they are loved? What would happen if they thought they weren't loved?

Why should we communicate to our kids that they are loved every single day?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

How will you show your children love this week by spending time with them? Why is time such a valuable thing to give your kids?

How do you communicate to your children that God loves them? Why do they need to hear from their earthly parents that their heavenly Father loves them?

Do you know what your children's love languages are? What is something you can do to love your kids better this week in a way that they will receive?

Are you better at reaching your kids' hearts or filling their heads? How can you rely on your spouse to help you do both?

NEXT STEPS

This week, consider taking some next steps together, as a group:

1. Pray that our homes and the homes represented across NewPointe would be homes where unconditional love reigns – in good seasons and in bad. Thank God for the love that He shows us each and every day, a love that is evident in the way He provides for and takes care of us. Ask that you would be able to demonstrate the love you have received from Him in your care of your children.
2. Brainstorm together and think about ways to give your children attention, grace, and unconditional love.
3. What does it look like to love unconditionally when you're in a season when, if you were honest, you might say your kids are harder to love? Think through these and other issues together.

EVALUATION/ACTION **Realizing and reaching your full potential in Jesus Christ**

Bottom Line: As kids grow older, we have to become better at reaching their hearts than filling their heads

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Day 1: 2 Samuel 14:29-30

Day 2: Psalm 130:3

Day 3: 1 Peter 4:8

Day 4: 1 Corinthians 13:4-5

Day 5: 2 Corinthians 12:9

Don't let the conversation stop here. Keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting)