

NAVIGATING FAMILY PRIORITIES

PARENT
GROUP
SERIES

#3 SPORTS & EXTRA-CURRICULAR LIFE

PARENT GROUP SERIES

GENERAL OVERVIEW

Families, more than ever, are caught in a continual battle of prioritizing and scheduling their lives. There is a never-ending struggle with the families of our ministries as they try to balance God, church, and your ministry with the pressure of extra-curricular activities, academics and social life.

Our American society has continued to push children and teens to the brink in order to be in first place in everything. Moms and Dads have also been swept up in the pressure to achieve. Stress levels are running high as more and more homes are cracking under the pressure of parent's careers and children's packed lives.

This 4-part study is for parents to refocus their attentions and intentions back on what should be first place in their home, God and His kingdom. Each stand-alone but connected study will be based around one of the key sections of Matthew 6. The key over-arching verse of the whole study will be Matthew 6:33

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well."

STUDY #3

OVERVIEW

Sports (extra-curricular) Life

This lesson will take on one of the biggest challenges and struggles in a family's schedule - sports and extra-curricular activities.

The key section of Matthew 6 for this lesson will be verses 19-23. In this part of the chapter, parents will be studying the "Treasures in Heaven vs. Earthly Treasures" passage.

This third seminar will be a challenge to the way parents view earthly achievements, activities and awards.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

WHAT

Helping parents step back and examine the priorities of their family. Challenging parents to reprioritize their lives around Christ and His kingdom and not around earthly things.

WHY

Families are living over-scheduled, stress-filled lives, chasing down the "American Dream" and "Keeping up with the Jones." Instead, they should be "Seeking First the Kingdom of God..."

HOW

Systematically teaching through Matthew 6, examining the topics and instructions in Big Group times. Breaking out into Small Group times to share, discuss and pray. Taking Home what is learned and discussed in each study with their family to work to plan, ask and seek to apply.

HINTS & HELPS

TEACHING, TALKING AND TIMING

This study is set up as a set of 4 seminars. This means that each lesson can be taught as a stand-alone study or as a multi-event curriculum. These studies may also work as part of monthly parent meetings or quarterly parent nights. Do not feel like you must limit the study to just one meeting. For example, study #2 will be covering the “Lord’s Prayer”. The lesson covers a large amount of information, and honestly may take you 2 different times to cover.

Each topic is a big topic and issue and can possibly take two meetings to teach. Make sure you are taking the time to answer all questions parents might have. It can be easy to focus on providing the lesson and miss time for discussion. Yet, if parent has come to engage on a specific topic because they have an interest in that topic, then they want information; but they also need a place to wrestle with the difficulties of raising their children.

Feel free to adjust, as we have provided more than enough content per study along with an extra suggested passage to “Get Deeper”. In addition, the study is geared toward parents who regularly attend church in some way. If you are gearing this towards parents who come from a more unchurched background, then feel free to adapt it how you see fit, as this is more of a Bible study formatted series. You know the parents coming and can easily make these lessons more of your own.

HINTS & HELPS

Be aware of “the one.” There is always the one person in the room who wants to dominate the conversation. Gently and respectfully make sure all parents have an opportunity to share their thoughts, questions and concerns.

NOT EVERYONE WILL AGREE

The concepts in these lessons are made to both inform and create open dialogue. When covering the topic of priorities, including examining things like “sports” involvement, this may stir up some differing views. There are different parenting styles, engagement and belief systems in play. Be respectful and honor each person in the room. Make sure you are sifting out the difference between Biblical truth and opinion on a topic, and share the difference when speaking. Help parents know that what works for their family will not always work for another, and

PARENT EXPECTATIONS & COMMUNICATION

Often times, when you set out to offer trainings and lessons for parents you may unintentionally believe, “Some parents just won't engage.” It's true that no matter what you do there will always be some parents who don't come to anything you offer. However, expect every parent, every time. When you change your attitude to one of anticipation, then the approach you take to inviting parents, prepping for lessons and teaching takes on a whole new light.

HINTS & HELPS

... It might sound corny, but whether 2 or 20 parents show up, it matters to that one that you are totally in.

Communicate clearly what the series is that you are offering and how it will benefit them. Avoid vague ideas like, "It will help you be a better parent." Instead, communicate the specific way this will help them understand their student better and feel better connected. We have included a sample letter for you to use. Feel free to cut and paste into an email or a physical mailing, or use it as inspiration for your own letter you will write to parents.

COME PREPARED

Lessons are intentionally made in an easy to follow format. To teach them should not take a lot of preparation. It's important, however, to take a look and read through the curriculum to know if you will need internet access for media clip, copies or any other materials for your presentation.

GROUP TIME #3

SPORTS & EXTRA-CURRICULAR LIFE

OBJECTIVES

- Parents will be challenged to take a hard look at their children's sports, extra-curricular activities, the related schedules and costs. Step back consider our culture's push to achieve.
- Parents will study God's perspective on temporary earthly trophies and achievement in comparison to eternal treasures.
- Parents will be given the opportunity to discern the value between temporary earthly treasures and eternal heavenly treasures.

FOCUS

Prioritizing the eternal lasting things of God and put God first, even in the temporary activities

MAIN SCRIPTURE

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven...”
Matthew 6:6-15

SETUP/ PREPARATION

Find some old trophies, certificates, awards, and medals.
Have them set up on a table up front.

GROUP TIME #3

BIG GROUP**GETTING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER**

Have everyone stand up and find 2 people they have never met or have not talked to yet. Share your name, your child/children's name, and what sports or extra-curricular activities your children are involved in.

GET STARTED

Have someone open the time in prayer.

Q&A TIME

Ask the following questions of the group:

Who here played a sport growing up?

How about music, band?

Any drama people, or what are some other things you were involved in, clubs and associations? (example: scouts, 4-h...)*

Was anyone an "All-Star" or received a scholarship based on their activities and involvements?

IN THE WORD

Make sure everyone has a Bible or a device with a Bible on it. Have everyone start off looking up Matthew 6:19-22. Read the verse aloud.

TEMPORARY TROPHIES

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal"

Matthew 6:19-22

Q&A TIME

Ask the following questions of the group:

How many still have your trophies/awards like these (refer to table) from when you were your kid's age? Do you still display them?

If they are not displayed, where do you store them?

If you were to take them to a pawn shop or a second-hand store, what would their monetary value be?

READ

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.

1 Cor. 9: 24-27

ASK

How much worth are the things your kids are involved in currently? Why are they so important to you, your children or your family? Is the value and importance a human reason or Godly reason?

TIP

"Navigating Family Priorities" is not about coming in first place in the things that don't matter. We want to achieve and be honored for things that matter to God.

ETERNAL VALUES

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal"

Matthew 6:19-22

Q&A TIME

Ask the following questions of the group:

We hear all the time that we want our children to have "good values." What does that mean?

How about "Family Values"? We hear a lot about that in the news and media. What does that mean when people say that?

What does your family value? Do the ways your family is involved in sports and other activities teach your kids to value God or fame, rewards, popularity and success?

READ

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

Phil 3:7-14



If you were to ask your children what the value of being involved in the things they are involved, what do you think say?



Navigating Family Priorities" is about teaching Godly values and teaching our children an eternally-minded perspective, even on the earthly temporary activities.

SPIRITUAL + PHYSICAL HEALTH

"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"

Matthew 6:22-23

Q&A TIME

Ask the following questions of the group:

What are positive things that come from your child/ren being involved in the activities they are involved in?

How has your child/ren's involvement been a witness or opened opportunities to share your faith or even invite people to church?

REFLECT

The Bible talks a lot about the eye in connection to our inner spiritual health and perspective. Are the things your family and children are involved in about more than physical, emotional, and social health? Have you drawn the line with your children and connected their talents to spiritual blessings?

READ

My son, do not forget my teaching... keep my commands in your heart for they will prolong your life many years... Let love and faithfulness never leave you... This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones."

Prov. 3:1-8



What are the teaching opportunities that you can have with your children through the things they are involved in?



Navigating Family Priorities" means being involved in more than activities that keep our children physically healthy and socially connected; we seek spiritual health as well.

SMALL GROUP #3

Have everyone break-up into small groups of 8-10, allowing parents to choose for themselves each week how they want to divide up and whether they want to have the same groups each week.

SHARE

- *Introduce yourself and your family. How many kids do you have and what ages? Any extra-curricular activities and sports your child is involved in year around?*
- *Share a highlight or great moment from sports or extra-curricular involvement when you were younger?*
- *Why do you think sports and other activities are such a big deal in our culture?*
- *Share a time when you were able to share your faith with someone or another parent through something your child/children were involved in?*

DISCUSS

- *Discuss Phil. 10:31. How would this verse change your family's approach to the activities you are involved in?*
- *What are things or activities that parents/adults also get involved in doing (hobbies...) that sometimes take priority or get in the way of doing more for God?*
- *Why do you, as parents, sometimes choose sports or extra-curricular activities over attending church or youth group?*
- *Often, parents will talk about making a commitment to a sport or other activity, and they want to teach their kids the importance of keeping your commitments. Would that be true of committing your life to Christ? Why is it easier to keep a commitment to a temporary earthly activity than to an eternal commitment of your life to Christ and His Kingdom?*

PRAY

How can the group pray for you and your family this week when it comes to balancing your earthly activities and your eternal values?

TAKE HOME #3

PLAN: Sit down as a family, and figure up a few things:

TIME

Time you spend on sports and/or other activities a week \$_____

a season \$_____

a year \$_____

Multiply that by number of years your child has left before college:

\$_____

MONEY

Amount of money you spend on sports and/or other activities

over a season \$_____

over a year \$_____

(include registration fee, clothes/equipment, gas, food, hotels...)

Multiply it by the number of years your child/children have left before they leave for college:

\$_____

How much money could you hand your child toward college as a "scholarship"

\$_____

What would be a 10% tithe of that amount? \$_____

APPLY

Talk as a family, and ask is _____ worth it, based on the temporary amount of time you have as a family and the temporary amount of money you have as a family.

