

NAVIGATING FAMILY PRIORITIES

PARENT
GROUP
SERIES

#1 COMING IN FIRST PLACE

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 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 seminar 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 #1

OVERVIEW

“Coming in First Place”

Study introduction, introducing parents to the overall key passage of series, Matthew 6 and the key verse Matthew 6:33, applied to their approach to parenting and family life.

This first seminar will be a challenge to change the way parents are thinking and start being a “God First Family”.

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 week's 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 that is fine.

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.

SAMPLE LETTER

Parents!!

First of all, I want to thank you for the privilege and honor of allowing me to speak into the life of your child. Raising today's generation can be tough, and I want you to know how much I appreciate the hard work you put into your child.

You are probably used to getting letters and flyers from me, communicating something for your child. This time, I wanted to share an invitation that is JUST FOR YOU!!!!

We are starting a new 4-week study, just for parents (if you are getting this then you are invited) entitled, "Navigating Family Priorities". The goal of this series is to help you. I know you sometimes feel stressed and overwhelmed by your family's schedule. Between work, school, and after-school activities, then you add on church, it seems like there is no way to keep up with all of it.

This series is an opportunity to step back and take a look at your schedule, priorities, and even the direction your family is heading. I do not want this to be another thing you add to your long list of things to do or places to be.

The next couple of weeks are going to be a time to connect with other parents just like you. It will be a time to take a big breath from the crazy, while studying Matthew 6 together. We will also have time to break into small groups to talk, share, support and pray.

Here is the information.

When:

Where:

Other details:

I look forward to you being a part of this time. Your input and discussion will be invaluable! Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,


Bob Jones

GROUP TIME #1

COMING IN FIRST PLACE

OBJECTIVES

- Parents will re-examine their family's priorities and schedule.
- Parents will be introduced to the key concepts and sections of the key series passage, Matt. 6:33
- Parents will take time, as a family, to think through, evaluate, and consider reprioritizing their family's schedule, spending, and most importantly their spiritual life.



MAIN FOCUS

Putting God first in all areas of family life, personal life, and the decisions you make about your children's life.

MAIN SCRIPTURE

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

SET UP/ PREP

Have a whiteboard or large pad in the front with a marker

GROUP TIME #1

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, age, and grade.

GET STARTED

Have someone open the time in prayer.

Q&A TIME

Ask the following questions of the group:

What are the things your family is involved in throughout the week?" (example: sports, church, music)

Which of the things on this list are the most important to your family and your children?"

"What about to you, as a parent?"

"Does your family's life reflect your answer?"

"Does your schedule, spending, social life, and even spiritual life reflect what is most important?" "How? "

WRITE IT DOWN

List the answers on white board/pad for everyone to see. List as any many things as people can think of.

IN THE WORD

Make sure everyone has a Bible or a device with a Bible on it. Have everyone start off looking up Matthew 6:33. Read the verse aloud.

STUDY OUTLINE

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Matthew 6:33

Q&A TIME

Ask the following questions of the group:

Do/Did your kids love Easter Egg hunts?

Are you an organized and strategic hunter, or a run and go for it kind of hunter?

Do you plan ahead to make for a successful hunt or just go and enjoy?

Are there any hunters or fishermen in the room?

READ

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

Matt. 13:44-46



What does this verse teach us about our perspective and value of the things of God?



“Navigating Family Priorities” is not about us or our kids coming in first place, but God coming in first place.

STUDY OUTLINE

*“But seek first His kingdom **and His righteousness**, and all these things will be given to you as well.”*

Matthew 6:33

Q&A TIME

Ask the following questions of the group:

“Righteousness” can be defined as “acting and living according to a higher divine standard or moral law.” Or “putting priority on doing the right thing...”

How would you explain “Righteousness” to your child/children?

READ

“But godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs”

1 Tim. 6:6-10



What does this verse teach us about our perspective and value of the things of God?



“Navigating Family Priorities” is about knowing what is right and knowing what God wants and then consciously choosing to make it the standard that everything else is measured by.

STUDY OUTLINE

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

Matthew 6:33

Q&A TIME

Ask the following questions of the group:

What are your biggest fears right now about your children?

What is personal fear or worry about your parenting?

READ

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths"

Proverbs 3:5-6



What does this verse teach us about our perspective and value of the things of God?

TIP

"Navigating Family Priorities" is about realizing that our family cannot achieve anything unless God allows it. They work hard to release their fears and worries, and instead, trust God in faith to provide blessings!

DIGGING DEEPER

GROUP TIME 1

Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?" "Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments." "Which ones?" he inquired. Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,] and 'love your neighbor as yourself.]" "All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?" Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth. Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

Matthew 19:16-24

REFLECTION

Ask the following questions of the group:

<p><i>What is first place in your family's life right now?</i></p>	<p><i>What is winning? Who/what is first place in your home?</i></p>	<p><i>If you were to ask a family friend who knows your family well, would they say Christ and His Kingdom was winning, or would they say something else?</i></p>
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TRY *Make a conscious choice as a family this week and over the next couple weeks to start*

TIP *Listen to "First" by Laura Daigle. Watch the lyric video or listen to the song as a closing reflection. (youtube.com/watch?v=Rb-WQV3OiRqA)*

SMALL GROUP #1

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

- *Go around and introduce yourself and your family. How many kids do you have and what ages?*
- *What was your favorite thing to do growing up? What were you really into?*
- *What kinds of things are your children involved in currently or regularly?*
- *How about academically? How are your children doing in school? What kind of year are they having?*
- *How is your personal and career life? What does your average work week look like?*

DISCUSS

SEEK FIRST

- *Why is it hard to live out this idea and imperative in our culture?*
- *What are the "lower 'k' kingdoms" people are trying to build for their family and children?*

HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

- *How do your choices as a parent affect your children's decision making?*
- *Our church offers ministry for your children. Have you ever had to make the choice not to attend church or our church's ministry because of a conflict?*

ALL THESE THINGS

- *What is the biggest fear of letting go of your priorities and schedules?*
- *What is your biggest fear in your family's life / biggest conflict or struggle as a family?*

PRAY

Pray for the person to your right (or choose another person in the group) about their family's biggest stressor and struggle that they've just shared.

TAKE HOME #1

PLAN

Plan a time to sit down as a family to read through the entire Matthew 6 passage. If you have younger children, consider finding a paraphrase Bible or age appropriate Bible.

Plan a time to talk to your children about "Navigating Family Priorities" seminar and what you will be learning.

ASK

Ask your children to come up with a list of things that they think are the important things about your family's life. Have them number them. Ask them to explain why they listed those things and numbered them the way they did?

APPLY

Sit down and look at your weekly schedule and monthly calendar. If they are not already listed, add church events and ministries that would fit yourself and your family. Beside them on your calendar write a "#1" next to them. Go through the rest of the calendar and start placing "#_-" next to items, thinking and praying through how you can navigate your family's priorities and put God first.

