

Small Group Questions: Loving Your Kids By Honoring (and forgiving) Your Parents

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Read

Ephesians 6:1-4

Reflect

Each of us carries issues from our childhood into parenting and sometimes these problems stem from how our parents raised us or didn't raise us. Yet, there is a way to honor our parents and set a better example for our kids.

Pastor Darrin Patrick highlighted three points for how to honor our parents:

1. It begins by defining family as "a covenant (committed) community where worship and learning happens in the context of unconditional love." – Tim Kellar
 - a. First comes marriage. Vows to God and between a husband and wife are meant to unify two people, creating an interdependent relationship, meaning reliant and helpful, joined together in all manners. Do you see your marriage this way? Are there areas you keep completely separate (finances, parenting strategies, etc.)
 - b. Then comes children. The goal of parenting children is for them to graduate into independence as adults. Do you do things for your children that they can do for themselves? (Age appropriate chores: making beds, setting tables, doing laundry, etc...)
 - c. Do you think of your child as your best friend or a servant? Either extreme makes it difficult for a child to adult later in life.
2. The reason for honoring our parents begins with God's intent for families. Parents are given authority in their children's lives to teach them boundaries around freedom and rebellion, sin and the need for Jesus.
 - a. Can you see how your fallible parents were used to protect, teach, and/or discipline you?
 - b. How about your parents' mistakes, were they used to point you to a need for a perfect God?
3. Honoring our parents has less to do with what our parents have done right or wrong and more to do with God's original intent for families. "I don't think you ever really forgive the abuse, I think we're always forgiving." – Darrin Patrick
 - a. Do you take your parents seriously when they speak?
 - b. Are you finding common ground with your parents?
 - c. Do you ask them for advice? (You don't have to take it, but you can ask for it as a way of showing respect.)
 - d. Are you listening to their struggles and their joys?
 - e. Do you continually forgive them and ask for forgiveness from them?

Respond

Discuss ways to take one step in the right direction for creating a covenant community in your household. Sometimes this begins at the marriage level by learning how to respect your spouse and co-parent better, for others it will be establishing better boundaries with their children, and for some it will be finding ways to honor their own parents.