

FINDING ENERGY FOR WHAT'S IMPORTANT WEEK 1

Reading for week 1: The power of priorities:

(You can do the reading either before your group study or after, whatever best fits your group.)

- Day 1 The Priority of Love
- Day 2 Priorities Begin with My Choice
- Day 3 Priorities Are Expressed in My Goals
- Day 4 Priorities Are Done in My Time
- Day 5 Motivated by Love

CHECKING IN

- If you are meeting together as a group for the first time, begin your meeting by introducing yourselves and by telling about your kids.
- What are you hoping to get out of this study?

Key Verse

**Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.
Galatians 6:2 (NASB)**

VIDEO STUDY

Watch the video lesson now and take notes in your outline. Refer back to the outline during your group discussion.

In this session we'll be looking at the need for accountability in order to live out our priorities. There are three kinds of accountability we all need: To God, To others & To ourselves.

1. ACCOUNTABILITY TO GOD

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:13 (NIV)

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad. 2 Cor. 5:10 (NIV)

Yes, each of us will have to give a personal account to God. So don't condemn each other anymore. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not put an obstacle in another Christian's path. Romans 14:12-13 (NLT)

2. ACCOUNTABILITY TO ONE ANOTHER

- **Encourage one another**

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. Hebrews 3:13 (NIV)

- **Bear one another's burdens**

**Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.
Galatians 6:2 (NASB)**

- **Rejoice and weep with one another**

**Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.
Romans 12:15 (NASB)**

3. ACCOUNTABILITY TO YOURSELF

Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Ephes. 5:15-16 (NIV)

Divert Daily – do something different.

Withdraw Weekly – choose to rest

Abandon Annually – take a vacation

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- What barriers or realities do you face that make scheduling time with your children a challenge?
- Which of the ways of supporting each other that Chaundel talked about do you most need this week: someone to encourage you, someone to bear a burden with you, someone to weep with you or someone to rejoice with you?
- Share ideas with each other about how you divert daily, withdraw weekly and abandon annually with your children.

PUTTING LOVE INTO PRACTICE:

This week, try out one new way of “diverting daily” with your kids.

PRAYER DIRECTION

During this six week study we’ll focus on praying for your children and praying for each other as parents. This week, find out what particular needs in your kid’s lives you can be praying for.

THE REAL TRUTH ABOUT YOUR KIDS WEEK 2

Reading for week 2: The Power of Love

- Day 1 Finding a New Pattern
- Day 2 Getting the Right Foundation
- Day 3 Discovering a Higher Purpose
- Day 4 Tapping into a Greater Power
- Day 5 Becoming a Model Parent

CHECKING IN

- How did your attempts at a new way of “diverting daily” with your children work out this week?

Key Verse

**So God created people in his own image;
God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them.
Genesis 1:27 (NLT)**

VIDEO STUDY

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God knows me best, so whatever He says about me has to be at the start and at the core of what I understand about myself and about my children.

FOUR THINGS YOU CAN KNOW TO BE TRUE OF YOUR CHILD:

1. Your child is created and loved by God

So God created people in his own image; God patterned them after himself; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27 (NLT)

2. Your child is a fallen sinner

For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard.

Romans 3:23 (NLT)

Your sins are the roadblock between you and your God. Isaiah 59:2 (CEV)

3. Your child is offered the gift of salvation

**For the free gift of eternal salvation is now being offered to everyone...
Titus 2:11 (Living)**

4. Your child will become a new creation when they trust in Jesus

**Those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old life is gone. A new life has begun!
2 Cor. 5:17 (NLT)**

Understanding and remembering these 4 truths about our nature help you in three powerful ways as a parent:

- 1. They help you know who to listen to and who to not listen to for parenting advice.**
- 2. They keep you from feeling surprised or shocked that “something is wrong” with you or your child**
- 3. They help you to treat your child as someone created for a relationship with God.**

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- When was it that you first realized you had a “little sinner” on your hands as a parent? How have you experienced your children to be both wonderful creations of God and truly fallen sinners – even this week?
- Who have been some good models of parenting for you?
- Do you ever struggle with some form of guilt as a parent because “something is wrong” with your child?
- How does thinking of your child in terms of their relationship with God help you to see them with a different perspective?

PUTTING LOVE INTO PRACTICE:

This week, look to see the truth that “God created people in his own image” in the life of your child. You might even want to keep a journal of the ways that you see the wonder of God’s creation in your child’s life.

PRAYER DIRECTION

Continue to pray for your children, take some time also to pray for yourselves as parents this week. Ask God to give you the wisdom to see your child's faults while also seeing the "new creation" that Jesus wants to make of them.

GETTING THE MESSAGE THROUGH TO YOUR KIDS WEEK 3

Reading for week 3: The Power of Your Words

- Day 1 Words Start in the Heart
- Day 2 What to Say When Your Child Is Hurting
- Day 3 What to Say When Your Child Is Angry
- Day 4 What to Say When Your Child Is Deciding
- Day 5 What to Say When Your Child Is Anxious

CHECKING IN

- How did things go in your parenting this last week? Where did you find yourself in the ranges between:

"Blessed with a bundle of joy"	to	"Buried under a pile of diapers"
"A stroller through the park"	to	"A roller coaster in the dark"
"Pulling Together"	to	"Pulling Apart"

Key Verse

**Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No';
anything beyond this comes from the evil one. Matthew 5:37 (NIV)**

VIDEO STUDY

Watch the video lesson now and take notes in your outline. Refer back to the outline during your group discussion.

WHAT WE LEARN FROM JESUS ABOUT COMMUNICATING WITH OUR CHILDREN:

1. The power of honesty

The foundation of communication is trust

Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one. Matthew 5:37 (NIV)

2. The power of questions

"Who do you say I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Messiah." Mark 8:29 (NLT)

"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked. "Teacher," the blind man said, "I want to see!" Mark 10:51 (NLT)

3. The power of pictures

Jesus always used stories and illustrations like these when speaking to the crowds. In fact, he never spoke to them without using such parables.

Matthew 13:34 (NLT)

4. The power of touch

As the sun went down that evening, all the villagers who had any sick people in their homes, no matter what their diseases were, brought them to Jesus; and the touch of his hands healed every one! Luke 4:40 LB

5. The power of your response

When criticized, give a clear, confident response

When doubted, offer proof

When ridiculed, don't respond to the insult

When backed into a corner, turn on the light

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- What are the challenges you are facing right now in communicating with your children?
- How could you see (or have you seen) the power of honesty, questions, pictures, touch and your response helping you to communicate better with your child?
- Have you experienced a circumstance where a new strategy or direction for communication helped you to break through a barrier? Tell the story of how this happened.
- How do you get your heart to a place where you can ask your child for forgiveness?

PUTTING LOVE INTO PRACTICE:

Following the example of Jesus - try using Questions, Pictures or Touch to communicate with your child in an opportunity that comes your way this next week.

PRAYER DIRECTION

Pray for each other in situations where you may be having a difficult time communicating with one of your children. Ask for God's wisdom, and ask Him to open the doors of communication.

THE D WORD WEEK 4

Reading for week 4: The power of discipline

- Day 1 We All Need Mercy
- Day 2 Stop Driving Your Kids Crazy
- Day 3 Loving Discipline
- Day 4 The Gift of Compassion
- Day 5 Forgiveness Unlocks Families

CHECKING IN

- Share any opportunities you had to use Jesus' model of questions, pictures or touch to communicate with your child this week.
- What issues or struggles did you face with your children this week?

Key Verse

**No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.
Hebrews 12:11 (NIV)**

VIDEO STUDY

Watch the video lesson now and take notes in your outline. Refer back to the outline during your group discussion.

Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Hebrews 12:10-11 (NIV)

1. Everyone needs to be disciplined

2. Discipline is painful

So even though Jesus was God's Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered. Hebrews 5:8 (NLT)

- D** iscuss what they did wrong
- I** nstruct them to take an action

S eparate them from others
C hange their environment
I nvolve them in choosing their punishment
P attern the right action for them
L imit their privileges
I gnore a wrong behavior
N aturalize the consequences
E ducate them with physical consequences

3. Discipline is for their benefit... not my benefit

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus... Philip. 2:4-5 (NIV)

Discipline your children, and they will give you happiness and peace of mind. Proverbs 29:17 (NLT)

4. My short term discipline should prepare my children for God's life-time discipline.

My child, don't ignore it when the Lord disciplines you, and don't be discouraged when he corrects you. For the Lord corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights. Proverbs 3:11-12 (NLT)

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- How have you seen God's discipline work to make a difference in your own life?
- As you look through the DISCIPLINE acrostic, which methods of discipline have you seen work best for you in your parenting?
- Talk together about how the different personalities of your children affect how you discipline each child.
- How do you come out on top in the battle to set aside your own selfishness when disciplining your child?

PUTTING LOVE INTO PRACTICE:

Try a different method of discipline with one of your children this week – especially in a circumstance where the message doesn't seem to be getting through.

If you're struggling with a tough discipline problem in your home, pair up with another parent (men with men/women with women) for mutual support, accountability and encouragement.

PRAYER DIRECTION

Take some time together to pray for God's wisdom and grace as you discipline your children.

YOUR SERVE/THEIR SERVE WEEK 5

Reading for week 5: The Power of Serving

- Day 1 A Great Parent
- Day 2 Leading toward Faith
- Day 3 Prayers That Last a Lifetime
- Day 4 Encouraging Spiritual Growth
- Day 5 Truth along the Way

CHECKING IN

- Ask if anyone has had an answer to prayer for a child this week.

Key Verse

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus... Philippians 2:3-5 (NIV)

VIDEO STUDY

Watch the video lesson now and take notes in your outline. Refer back to the outline during your group discussion.

Jesus' Example:

He settled on twelve, and designated them apostles. The plan was that they would be with him, and he would send them out to proclaim the Word.

Mark 3:14 (Message)

1. You serve them

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. John 13:14-15 (NIV)

2. They serve alongside you and you show them how

See people as Jesus did

Jesus noticed needs

One day some parents brought their little children to Jesus so he could touch them and bless them, but the disciples told them not to bother him. Then Jesus called for the children and said to the disciples, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I assure you, anyone who doesn't have their kind of faith will never get into the Kingdom of God." Luke 18:15-17 (NLT)

3. They serve at your prompting

The Lord now chose seventy-two other disciples and sent them on ahead in pairs to all the towns and villages he planned to visit. Luke 10:1 (NLT)

4. You serve alongside them and support them

Late in the afternoon his disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and it is getting late. Send the crowds away so they can go to the nearby farms and villages and buy themselves some food." But Jesus said, "You feed them." "With what?" they asked. "It would take a small fortune to buy food for all this crowd!" "How much food do you have?" he asked. "Go and find out." They came back and reported, "We have five loaves of bread and two fish." Mark 6:35-38 (NLT)

5. They serve on their own

But the Holy Spirit will come upon you and give you power. Then you will tell everyone about me in Jerusalem, in all Judea, in Samaria, and everywhere in the world." Acts 1:8 (CEV)

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus... Philip. 2:3-5 (NIV)

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- What are some ways that you see that you need to serve your child this week?
- What are some ways that you've served together as a family?
- Talk about the struggles that we all have with letting go so that our children can serve on their own. How do you make sure that nurturing doesn't become smothering?

PUTTING LOVE INTO PRACTICE:

Do something, large or small, to serve together with your children this week. Ideas could include:

- Baking some cookies for a neighbor.
- Going to help out together in a food bank.
- Giving some practical help to one of your child's friends.
- Planning a day mission trip through your church to help another church serve their community.

PRAYER DIRECTION

As you pray for your children this week, also pray for one another as parents – asking God to give you strength and patience for the daily grind of parenting.

LOVE FIRST BECAUSE LOVE LASTS WEEK 6

Reading for week 6:

- Day 1 How Your Kids Treat You
- Day 2 How You Treat Your Kids
- Day 3 No Such Thing as a Perfect Family
- Day 4 A Father Like No Other
- Day 5 Trusting God for the Impossible

CHECKING IN

- Did you do something to serve together with your children this last week? Tell the group how it went.
- How could truly knowing that God is your Father make a daily difference for you in your parenting?

Key Verse

**Love never gives up, never loses faith,
is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.
1 Cor. 13:7 (NLT)**

VIDEO STUDY

Watch the video lesson now and take notes in your outline. Refer back to the outline during your group discussion.

THE GREATNESS OF LOVE

Words without love? Just noise

If I could speak in any language in heaven or on earth but didn't love others, I would only be making meaningless noise like a loud gong or a clanging cymbal. 1 Cor. 13:1 (NLT)

Gifts without love? Nothing

If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I knew all the mysteries of the future and knew everything about everything, but didn't love others, what good would I

be? And if I had the gift of faith so that I could speak to a mountain and make it move, without love I would be no good to anybody. 1 Cor. 13:2 (NLT)

Sacrifice without love? Profitless

If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would be of no value whatsoever. 1 Cor. 13:3 (NLT)

LOVE WILL MEET THEIR DEEPEST NEEDS

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable, and it keeps no record of when it has been wronged. It is never glad about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 1 Cor. 13:4-6 (NLT)

LOVE WILL SURVIVE THE GREATEST CHALLENGES

Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. 1 Cor. 13:7 (NLT)

LOVE WILL OUTLAST EVERYTHING ELSE YOU DO

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. 1 Cor. 13:13 (NIV)

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

- How do the words of 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 challenge you as a parent?
- How could the words of 1 Corinthians 13:4-6 give practical guidance to you as a parent? Which of the qualities listed here does your child need from you this week?
- How do the words of 1 Corinthians 13:7 encourage or strengthen you as a parent?
- How do the words of 1 Corinthians 13:13 focus you as a parent?

PUTTING LOVE INTO PRACTICE:

Read 1 Corinthians 13 together as a family this week, and have a discussion about how you could better love one another.

Or... if that seems too programmed for your family... make sure that you TELL your kids you love them this week and that you SHOW them that you love them – letting 1 Corinthians 13 be your guide.

PRAYER DIRECTION

As you end this study together, take some time to pray for each other's children by name, asking that they receive God's love and open their lives to God's blessings.