



## PARENTING GOALS

### START UP

Imagine a job where you have absolutely no experience, get zero training, are forbidden from quitting, and innocent and fragile lives are at stake. That's parenting! Needless to say, it can be difficult to know how to win at raising kids. And it's easy to feel like a failure when things don't go as planned. The good news is the Bible gives us a great model for how to approach parenting and some practical help in this challenging journey.

- It's common to say, "Kids don't come with an instruction manual." And they don't. But say someone attempted to write one for the kids in your life. What would you tell them to make sure to include?
- When you think of a "model" family, what family or families come to mind (both personal examples and famous families)? Why did you think of them?

### DISCUSS TOGETHER

Read **Matthew 6:6—10** and **Romans 8:14—16**.

- Out of all the ways the Bible could describe God, it consistently refers to Him as being Father. Why do you think God chose to use this image to describe Himself to us? Is this the primary way you picture God when you think about Him?
- From your experience, how would you describe God's parenting style? What are the ways He parents us?
- Dan shared how God parents us with grace and that we should parent with grace too. When we hear the word "grace," many of us think it means being nicer or going easy on them. How would you define grace?
- Dan talked about the importance of cultivating an environment of grace in our homes. What are three words you would use to describe the home environment you grew up in? Would grace be one of the words?
- What are three words you would use to describe your current home environment? Is grace one of the words?
- Kids crave our undistracted attention, where we can see them for who they are, affirm them, and provide structure and support. How has technology made being undistracted more challenging... for both you and your kids? What helpful things have you learned about navigating parenting in a technological world?
- How do you balance keeping a child safe and sheltered versus helping them grow strong and dealing with disappointment, frustration, and adversity? Do you think you currently balance this well?
- If you were to do an audit on your past week, do you think you focused more on the strengths or the weaknesses of the people in your life (e.g., your kids, spouse, friends, and co-workers)?
- Dan said, "God is a perfect parent but even his kids rebel and get off track." Where do you most need to be encouraged today in your parenting? Are you struggling with a situation where a child you care about has gotten off track? Share with the group.

### LIVE BIG

Handing the baton of faith off to the next generation is a high honor and big challenge. God doesn't want us to be overwhelmed in this journey. But He does want us to depend on Him—for us to come to Him as our Heavenly Father as we parent our kids well. Break up into groups of 2–3 and pray in these specific ways.

- If you have children, pray for each of them by name. Ask God to reveal more of Himself to them. If you don't have children of your own, think of and pray for children in your life (nieces, nephews, students, children of friends, etc).
- Pray for our Kidzone, Studio 56, and Student ministries. Ask that God would work mightily in the next generation.
- Pray for God to help you understand more of His empowering grace in your own life.