

**Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church
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Detroit, Michigan 48208
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“The Never Alone Church”¹

Lesson 13: “Experiencing Great Commandment Love by Cherishing Your Children”

Goal: *To become the “The Never Alone Church” by practicing the Great Commandment of Love with our community of believers. This will enable us to fulfill the mandate given in the Great Commission.*

Objective: **To understand God’s plan for you to experience the Great Commandment love by cherishing your children.**

Introduction:

Most of us are products of the parenting we received. Each one of us is left with impressions as a result of those experiences. Do you feel that your parents were too lenient, too strict or just right? Did you feel loved, cherished and secured by your parents or guardian during your years of development? How does your relationship with your parents influence your relationship with your children?

Our children are a blessing and a gift from God and they should be loved and cherished. As parents we ought to exhibit Christ like behavior with our children and teach them to abide by the Word of God. Our ultimate responsibility is to nurture our children by allowing the love of God to flow through us as we seek to understand how to meet their various needs.

“Behold, children are a gift of the Lord; the fruit of the womb is a reward.” —Psalms 127:3

“How would your children respond to memories about your relationship with them? Which if any of the following would they say of you as parents?”

- They sacrificially gave me their undivided attention when I needed it.
- They did not display favoritism among my brothers and sisters.
- They demonstrated through their actions that our family was more important than their careers, hobbies or ministry.
- They were clear examples of faith, conviction, prayer, and obedience.
- They demonstrated empathy and openness when I shared my heart with them.
- They patiently listened to me express my fears and hurts.
- They valued my thoughts, ideas, dreams, and goals.
- They frequently verbalized their appreciation, approval and love.
- Their hearts seemed filled with gratitude and worship to God.

¹ Ferguson, David, *The Never Alone Church*, Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1998

- They exemplified Great Commandment love for God, his Word and people.”²

In our God-given desire to love and cherish our children, parents model a legacy of personal experiences that shape what our children will become and how they will behave towards their own families. God knows the serious responsibilities parents feel in rearing their children. He gives us His Great Commandment love to allow us to overcome imperfections we display in our love for them. “As in all other relationships discussed in this series, we minister God’s Great Commandment of love to our children by identifying and meeting their relational needs. They too have needs for acceptance, security, approval, attention, encouragement, respect, and comfort. When we attend to their relational needs, we model to our children the love of our need-meeting God.”³

Discussion Point #1

Does your relationship with your children model your relationship with God or does it model the legacy of painful experiences that were inflicted during your development?

The healing of inevitable family hurts seems to be a significant factor in whether young adults will either deepen their own Christian faith or reject their parents’ values and ideals.⁴ If certain hurts or disappointments have not been resolved in a young person’s life, they can become stumbling blocks in future relationships. It is helpful as parents to have ‘heart to heart talks’ with our children to clear the ledger of any unknown hurts.

Our commitment to Christ includes our commitment to transform our lives and model our love relationship with Him before our children. As parents we cannot be everywhere to monitor and protect our children against the trials and tribulations of this world. It is through prayer and acknowledging God’s loving presence and power that we are enabled to rely on Him as we seek the very best for our children.

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” (Matthew 6:33 NKJV)

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.” And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:1-4)

Discussion Point #2:

How should your family represent an intimate community of love and life?

Many time parents are unaware of the unintentional hurts and disappointments they may have caused their children to experience. Parenting is a serious and challenging responsibility. Just as

² Ibid p.189

³ Ibid, p. 194

⁴ Ibid, p.200

we are strengthened by God's Great Commandment love in our relationships with one another, we are also guided by His love in raising our children.

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."
(Proverbs 22:6 NKJV)

"With all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."
(Ephesians 4:2-3)

Discussion Point #3:

How does meeting the relational needs of others begin at home?

When we struggle with our family relationships, we cannot experience the genuine love and intimacy that we need to provide hope and encouragement to others. Going before the Lord in prayer may reveal to us that we may need to forgive, confess a sin, obey His Word, and/or exhibit the fruit of the Spirit. Also as we share our past failures and successes with another person, we create an opportunity to model the Great Commandment of Love in process.⁵ This helps us to be accountable.

"But above all these things put on love which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful."
(Colossians 3:14-15)

Biblical Exercise:

While considering your childhood, reflect on experiences that helped to prepare you for your relationship with God and your children. Pray for God's wisdom and strength to fulfill His will in raising your children. Be proactive and take time to ask your children if they have needs that have gone unmet or how they feel you could be a better parent to them. Be sure to pray with your children!

*Implementing God's Great Commandment of love ministry with your spouse, children, family of origin, and friends may be a fresh new beginning for you.*⁶

⁵ Ibid, p.207

⁶ Ibid, p.207

The Great Commandment of Love:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” [Matthew 22:37-40]

The Great Commission:

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the age. [Matthew 28:19-20, NKJV]

Monthly Biblical Exercises

December, 09 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Forgiveness*

January, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Relevance for ‘The Never Alone Church*

February, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *People Need God and One Another*

March, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Responding to Vital Relational Needs*

April, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Meeting Needs of Others with Scripture*

May, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Ministering to Fallenness and Aloneness*

June, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Ministering by Knowing God Intimately*

October, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Ministering by Knowing God Intimately #2*

November, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Where Great Commandment Love Begins*

December, 2010 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *God’s Priority for Ministry*

January, 2011 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Great Commandment Love/Your Jerusalem*

February, 2011 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Great Commandment Love w/Family of Origin*

March, 2011 Monthly Biblical Exercise: *Great Commandment Love w/Cherished Children*