



WEEK ONE

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-8a

Love Is . . .

SAY
THIS

Love others because
God loves you.

DO
THIS



MORNING TIME

Find a banana and use a marker to write, "The fruit of the Holy Spirit produces love!" on the fruit. As you say goodbye hand your child the banana and tell them to, "love others because God loves you!"

REMEMBER THIS

"The fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself."
Galatians 5:22-23a, NIV

LIFE
APP

LIFE APP—What God is doing in you to
change the world around you

DON'T DO IT FOR YOUR KIDS

By Carey Nieuwhof

We do so much for our kids:

- work late to ensure we keep climbing the ladder.
- enroll our kids in lessons and activities so they have every opportunity.
- drive them all over town and beyond so they can keep an active social life.
- buy them things they don't really need so they can have every 'advantage.'

But did you ever think that what you do with your kids is as important than what you do for your kids? It's an important distinction. Because often the things we do for our kids takes us away from the time we would could have spent with our kids. This tension exists in every home.

One of the things I treasured most as a kid was the time I spent with my grandparents. They were a like a second set of parents to me. They didn't have a lot of money, but what they did have was time. We did so many things together. Though we sometimes went on excursions, my favorites moments were those spent with them in the every day, ordinary course of life. Some of my fondest memories include:

- helping my grandfather build things in his garage
- eating my grandmother's cooking, then helping my clean up after
- sitting in the backyard in the shade on a hot summer's day
- helping them paint and clean up around the yard
- seeing my grandparents read the Bible at meal times

What they did with me was so powerful. I didn't care that they couldn't do much for me. They couldn't get me into the right school, help me with my homework, get me a good job, or enroll me in sports. They just hung out. But in doing so, they made a lasting contribution to my life. Ironically, by doing so much with me, they did an immeasurable amount for me.

I know as a parent, I have been tempted to justify my hard work, long hours or constant enrollment of my kids in 'programs' as a justification that I'm doing something good for my kids. But in the end, one of the best investments I can make as a parent is what I do with my kids.

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WEEK TWO

ACTS 5:17-42

Apostles Are Treated Badly

SAY
THIS

Choose joy no matter
what's going on.

DO
THIS



MEAL TIME

Q & A for kids: Fill in the blank: Love is _____

Q & A for parents: What is your earliest memory of experiencing love from someone?

REMEMBER THIS

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Galatians 5:22-23a, NIV

LIFE
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LIFE APP—What God is doing in you to change the world around you

WE'RE ALL A WORK IN PROGRESS

By Mike Tiemann

As our kids grow from toddlers to kindergartners to preteens, a funny thing happens. Our focus shifts. We no longer worry so much about just keeping them alive. Instead, as they slowly but surely become more independent, we think about what kind of *people* they'll become.

Our hope is that our kids will learn to live out good qualities like honesty, trust, courage, patience, and forgiveness.

But what's our role in helping our kid develop these traits? Are they already hardwired?

Here's something important to remember as you consider: God has made each one of us in His image, with the ability to live with integrity and demonstrate His character to others.

The apostle Paul said that when we follow God and make choices that honor Him, our lives will actually show the evidence—that other people will be able to see the proof of what God is doing in and through us. Paul referred to that evidence, or proof, as the "fruit of the Spirit."

Paul wrote:

The fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and

gentle and having control of oneself (Galatians 5:22-23a NIV).

Notice that it's the Holy Spirit that produces the fruit in us. We can try to do it on our own . . . but we're not perfect. We mess up. Our kids do, too. That's why we need to "power up" with the Spirit.

When it's hard for your son to wait because he wants what he wants, and he wants it right now . . . don't worry. Patience is a work in progress.

When your daughter always seems to be worried about bad things that might happen . . . take a deep breath. Peace is a work in progress.

When there's a gap—when you or your kids fall short—that's the perfect teaching moment. It's the perfect opportunity to help them understand that we can't do it all on our own. We all need God's help.

It can be tempting to want to rush things and want your kids to just grow up and get it all together. But they need space and a safe place to try . . . fail . . . and try again. Just remember, their character is a work in progress!

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WEEK THREE

MATTHEW 6:25-27

Don't Worry

SAY
THIS

You can have peace
because God is in control.

DO
THIS



BED TIME

When do you find it difficult to show love to others? The truth is, we don't always have it in ourselves to respond with love. But the awesome thing is that God can give us His love for others! He loved us first, and when we ask, He will give us His love to pass on to others. Any time you're tempted to act in an unloving way this week, ask God for His love to give to others.

REMEMBER THIS

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Galatians 5:22-23a, NIV

LIFE
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LIFE APP—What God is doing in you to change the world around you

QUANTITY OF QUALITY TIME

By Stephen Jones

When I was a kid, my grandfather would come to our house for dinner all the time. He used to say coming to our house was better than going to the movies.

I have three siblings, all sisters, so I was the only boy—and the youngest. I'm sure he found the level of mischief that ensued as a result of those dynamics quite entertaining. And although he came to our house, apparently to see a show, I was the one who was mesmerized by him. Kind, caring, and fun are just a few of the adjectives that describe my grandfather. I loved when he came over. And more than anything, his visits taught me the importance of quality time.

Now, we all know that quantity time, the amount of time you spend together, is important. I love when my daughter is reading, and she asks me to sit on the couch next to her. Even though we aren't interacting, it means something to her. The quantity of time we spend with our children provides comfort and communicates importance.

But we often rely on quantity time as a substitute for quality time. It's not quite the same, though. Sitting in the same room with my kids while we are each on our electronic devices may mean we are spending time together, but it's not intentional, undistracted time. And it won't build memories in the same way.

I was just twelve years old when my grandfather passed away. It's been over twenty-five years, but I still remember him coming over for dinner and tickling my feet until I couldn't breathe. I still remember spending the night at his house, watching Tom and Jerry, his favorite cartoon. I still remember going fishing with him, and I still remember the cabinet in his house that always had gum. In the span of my life, I didn't have much quantity time at all with Paw. But I had a whole lot of quality time that produced some pretty amazing memories.

Think about your favorite memories with the special people in your life and you'll realize, too, that it was the amount of quality time you spent together that made the difference. So this week, turn off the TV, put down the phone and spend some quality time with your children.

- Tickle their feet until they can't breathe.
- Make up a dance in the middle of the kitchen.
- Play tag outside.
- You'll be glad you did.
- And there will be a lifetime of memories to show for it.

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WEEK FOUR

LUKE 2:22-35

Simeon at the Temple

SAY
THIS

When you need to wait,
ask God for patience.

DO
THIS



DRIVE TIME

As you drive around this month, you may find yourself stuck in traffic. At that moment, ask your preteen, "What do you do when you have to wait?" Think of ideas on how to pass the time while stuck in traffic.

REMEMBER THIS

"The fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself."
Galatians 5:22-23a, NIV

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ADVICE I'D GIVE MYSELF IF
I WERE STARTING OVER AS A DAD

By Reggie Joiner

I became a parent like a lot of you, while I was still trying to figure out who I was, build a career, manage a minimal income, establish a healthy marriage, etc. It seems like it would make more sense to find my identity, build a strong marriage, retire and then have kids. I really do wish I knew then what I know now. Not that I have all the answers . . . I just think I would be a smarter dad.

So here's some advice I would give to myself if I were starting over as a dad:

1. **Listen more, talk less.** I can't count the college students who tell me they don't feel like their parents ever really listened.
2. **Don't "send" your kids to bed, put them in bed.** You only have a short window of time when they are young enough to want you to tuck them in.
3. **Ask better questions.** Learn to shift from performance questions to heart questions.
4. **Guard Saturdays to create family traditions.** There are a little over 350 Saturdays between the time your kids are 1st grade and when they become teenagers, then Saturdays change forever.
5. **Don't sign up your kids for everything.** We tend to make our kids experientially rich, but relationally poor.
6. **Play games.** Have fun together, build memories playing board games, or card games, etc.
7. **Don't take things too serious.** What you think matters right now will probably not matter as much as you think it does later. What does matter is what you communicate during stressful or dramatic moments.
8. **Never punish anyone relationally.** Don't withdraw your relationship to make someone feel bad for something they have done wrong.
9. **Do chores together.** Kids who work with their parents have a better work ethic and tend to be more responsible.
10. **Say "I love you" every day.** It's just a healthy habit you can never start too early.
11. **Apologize often.** You might as well admit when you do something wrong, everyone knows it anyway.

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WEEK FIVE

LUKE 10:25-37

The Good Samaritan

SAY
THIS

Be kind to everyone.



MEAL TIME

DO
THIS

Together take a minute to make a list of people you know or see sometimes who are different from you. You don't need to be best friends with all these people, but you can still find ways to be kind. Together, make a new list of ways that you could be kind to the people on the first list, whether it's a smile, an encouraging word, or stepping up to help.

REMEMBER THIS

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Galatians 5:22-23a, NIV

LIFE
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LIFE APP—What God is doing in you to change the world around you

THE HUMILITY OF CONNECTION

By Tim Walker

Growing up, I had a hard time connecting with my dad. As a kid, all I could see were the differences between us. I liked to read comic books. I loved to draw. I would play with action figures for hours. I didn't like to play sports. My dad was a gifted athlete, who had a history of sports accomplishments. Growing up, he played on the church softball team so our week usually included time at the ballpark. He seemed so foreign to me.

Then something changed. When I was 12, my mother was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor. She died a year later.

Suddenly, two foreigners had to learn how to relate. We stumbled our way through it, but a trust and respect was built. There's something about survival that knits people together, and changes their relationship.

I didn't become more athletic. He didn't start reading comic books. But we found more firm common ground than our interests. We found a way to enjoy each other without having to be like each other. And in the process, we found some ways that we were surprisingly alike.

Now I consider my dad one of my closest friends.

But in a great twist of irony, I am now raising three very athletic boys.

Two of them love basketball. One loves lacrosse.

And while I have a basic understanding of both games, the intricacies of each are beyond my comprehension. My brain refuses to get concerned with stats or fouls or penalties, and simply focuses on games won or lost.

But I try to find ways to get involved in their world.

I could never keep stats, or coach, but I can help set up the gym for a game, send out emails about the weekly schedule, update the team website, or serve my allotted time in the concession stand.

And while I don't like to watch sports on TV, I love watching my boys play. I marvel at them. They do things I simply can't do.

And while they are not involved in band, or art classes, or drama productions, I'm okay with that. It's humbling to be the geek dad in the stands. The one who knows more about comic mythology than basketball stats, but I think I am able to discover some of the same things my dad did.

Connection takes humility. Connection takes work. And connection takes time, cultivated in many invisible acts.

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