

Leaders – In this series on parenting, half of every message is meant to be about a different characteristic of God and how it applies to **everyone**. As you get into the discussion that is specific to parenting, feel free to alter questions based on the needs of your group (non-parents, or different seasons of parenting).

– **What is an environment/setting where you felt incredibly out of place?**

The hope is that this question is more lighthearted and sets the stage for the discussion later about how following Jesus' commands leads us to stand out and sometime feel like foreigners in this world.

Many of us welcome receiving grace more than we do receiving truth. Yet, Jesus' example was filled with both. Many times, we think of grace as the heart and truth as the hammer. Yet, is that how God intended us to view it?

Have someone volunteer to read John 1:14 and Matthew 7:24-27

– **What does it mean that Jesus was full of grace AND truth?**

Jesus was the perfect example and embodiment of both. Jesus met people where they were and showed immeasurable grace to people, and yet He spoke truth to everyone He met. While His example is perfect, we can have great discussion about how we can better embody grace/truth in our lives. You can even ask your group who in their life does a good job of showing both grace and truth.

– **Do you see God's truth as a hammer, as his heart, or both? Why?**

We often think of God's truth being the opposite of grace, and in a sense being a hammer. It may be helpful to first let your group discuss how they see God's love as a hammer or His heart, and why. Then you can help them to see that God's truth is really His love directing us. The upcoming questions will help develop this conversation.

Sometimes God's commands can seem like boundaries that restrict our fun and freedom, yet they're intended to bring so much more to our lives.

Have someone volunteer to read Psalm 119:103-106

– **From your life experience what are examples of God's commands, which may seem restricting, that lead to freedom?**

You can give them categories like Marriage/Sex, Financial Management, Life Purpose, to help them think through this question. We sometimes view rules as things to restrict our enjoyment, but God's commands are ultimately for our good. If this is hard to picture, you can use an example of a parent who sets a specific rule or boundary to protect a child even though the child doesn't fully understand what is best for them.

– **If you are a parent, you've probably recognized the importance of guardrails. What is an example of a guardrail you erected to protect your children from potentially harmful situations?**

There are so many guardrails, big and small, that parents set for their children's benefit. Feel free to have your group share different guardrails and their benefit. Ultimately, the hope is that as your group sees the benefit of these guardrails in children's lives, they would also see that the same is true for God's commands. His commands are ultimately for our good too.

Jesus' commands stood apart from the priorities and desires of this world. Likewise, those who choose to follow His commands will also stand out in this world.

Have someone volunteer to read 1 Peter 2:11-12

– **As a Christ-follower have you ever felt like an alien living in a foreign land? How?** Jesus said “you have heard it said before...but I tell you...” The idea is that Jesus was bringing new commands that ran contrary to what the world wanted/expected. If we choose to follow Jesus’ ways, we too will begin to stand out and may even feel like foreigners.

– **Why is it so hard to trade the comfort of “fitting in” for the calling of “standing out?” Why is it even harder to lead our kids in that?**

It is human nature to be liked and to want to fit in. Yet, there is a reason Jesus said, “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.” **John 15:18** When we follow Him, we will stand out. This is hard enough for us to do as individuals, and even more difficult to lead our kids to do. We want to protect our children and help them to belong/fit in.

Have someone volunteer to read Colossians 3:12-13 & Ephesians 4:15

– **What is an area that you have an opportunity to live out compassion without compromise? What does it look like in that area to be full of grace and truth?**

Help your group think through different areas in their life where they might have the opportunity to show compassion without compromise (a situation with their children, a coworker, a family member, etc.) Then have them share what it looks like to have grace AND truth in that situation.

Beyond Campaign Update

*(This update is for you to share with your small group when you meet.
Please do not share the details until after our announcement on Sunday)*

Given to date - \$125,000. Outstanding pledges - \$63,000.

Current total of \$188,000.

Remind you group: If they haven’t turned in their pledge or decided what to give, they still can. Our Beyond Campaign is going for 3 months. We would love for them to be a part of something special. If they have children or students, they can encourage them to take part in the paving the road to Seattle in the foyer.

End your group time with some guided prayer for the North American Mission Board, which is one of the recipients of our Beyond campaign. NAMB works to reach those living in North America who have not been reached with the gospel. They do this by training and supporting church planters in North America.

- **NAMB** – Pray that NAMB would continue to facilitate more church plants and that these churches would bring the good news to areas and neighborhoods that need a church.
- **Church Planters we support**
 - Mac Gervais – City West Church, Houston, TX
 - Daniel Englehart - Mountain Church, Des Moines, WA
 - Stephen Searles - The Pointe Church Federal Way, WA
- **More Church Planters** – Pray that more people would say yes to church planting. As church planters or as part of a launch team.