



P2P: PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Four Worksheets for Equipping Others to Bear the Image of Christ to Family
and Friends

Additional Resources:
You and Me Forever (Francis Chan)
The Five Love Languages (Chapman)

MEMORIZE

Romans 13:8

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.

FAMILY TIME

Spend some time this week to write 'love' letters to those in your immediate family. In this letter, attempt to show that your love for them is unconditional. Avoid cliché terms and phrases and write something deep and meaningful to each person.

'This is my commandment: That you love one another as I have loved you.' - Jesus

This is perhaps the most difficult call that Jesus makes to us. Even the greatest human love falls far short of perfection. All too often there is a hidden agenda, condition, or limit to the love we dispense. We only love people 'if...until...or 'unless'. Christ, on the other hand, loves unconditionally. He not only loves the unlovable, He woos them! He searches us out while we are enemies of God for the sake of an authentic relationship. If we are to love like Christ, we must first pray to see our friends and family through God's eyes rather than our own. When we start viewing others as God does, authentic and unconditional love is a very real possibility.

READ IT

- 1 John 4:7-12, 19-21 - Love Like Christ
- John 15:9-17 - Love One Another
- Matthew 5:43-48 - Love the Unloveable

DISCUSS IT

1. How has God modeled love to us?
2. How is the love God calls us to different than the love the world talks about? What does it mean to love *unconditionally*?
3. Who does Christ call us to love in these verses? How is God's Word made complete in us through our love for others?
4. Do you think your family feels you love them unconditionally or are there strings attached?
5. Who do you find it most difficult to love? What are some ways in which you can begin to show love to them?

LIVE IT

This week, pray to see those around you through God's eyes instead of your own. Purpose to act in love and respond to needs as you see them.

Spend some time encouraging those who are in your circle of family and friends. Write a letter, make a phone call, have a surprise visit - do whatever it takes to let them know that they are loved! Purpose to encourage at least two people this week.

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MEMORIZE

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

FAMILY TIME

If your children are old enough, have them write a list of qualities that they desire in a future spouse. Be strategic, and help them list some important Biblical qualities that they might have overlooked. Have them keep this list in a safe location so that they may use it as a reference when dating or courting.

Ephesians 5 presents one of the strongest commands directed towards spouses found in the Bible. In this chapter, husbands are told to *love* their wives - a word that implies protection, loyalty, and sacrifice. Wives, on the other hand, are commanded to 'respect' their husbands. Two very different words, but with the same goal - to produce healthy, wholesome marriages where both husbands and wives are growing alongside of each other towards God. Christ-centered marriages are a product of unconditional commitment to the fulfillment of this goal and a deep-seeded relationship to God. As we grow in love/respect towards God, we will grow in love/respect towards our spouse.

READ IT

- Ephesians 5:21-33 - Biblical Marriage
- 1 Corinthians 13 - Love, Love, Love
- Proverbs 31 - Picture of a Godly Woman

DISCUSS IT

1. Compare and contrast the Biblical view of marriage vs. our culture's.
2. Which of the characteristics of love in 1 Corinthians 13 comes easiest for you? Which is the most difficult?
3. Love "always protects" implies fierce loyalty. Are you your spouse's biggest critic or his or her biggest fan?
4. Keeping a record of wrongs can cause a marriage to rot. Our sins are as far as the east to the west in God's eyes. How are you at forgiving and forgetting?
5. According to Ephesians 5, what are the roles of men and women in marriage? What are the difficulties of holding this view in our world today?

LIVE IT

Read through 1 Corinthians 13. While reading, try exchanging your name for the word 'love'. Where are you falling short of authentic love in your marriage? Choose one of the action words in this chapter to put into practice this week.

Discover your spouse's love language style. The five love languages are: Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Receiving Gifts, Acts of Service, and Physical Touch (You can find more about these love languages online). Try to do at least one thing each week specific to his or her love language .

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MEMORIZE

Proverbs 22:6

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

FAMILY TIME

Many children have no idea what the purpose of discipline is. Often, discipline can seem inconsistent and erratic. Share with your children God's purpose and method of discipline. If you have created a discipline action plan of your own, talk your children through it so that they can better understand the consequences of the choices that they make.

We are often our children's first idea of what God is like. If we are merciful, firm, and loving, that is how they will view God. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. Many adults shy away from God because of misconceptions about His character, which they developed by interacting with their own parents. The Bible constantly refers to God as our 'Father' and this is no accident. To truly love our children as God intended, we must first understand how our Father in Heaven loves us. Then we are able to seek to love our children in the same manner. So when we read that we are '*the apple of His eye*' (Zech. 2:8) and that He *rejoices over us with singing* (Zeph. 3:17), we should take that as a cue to learn to rejoice in our children. When we read about how our Father disciplines those He loves, we should model that same love-centered discipline with our kids. As the primary disciple makers of our children, it is imperative that we learn to reflect our Father's character and example as we raise those whom He has entrusted to us.

READ IT

- Deuteronomy 6:4 -9 - Raising Disciples
- Ephesians 6:4 - Patience and Understanding
- Proverbs 13:24 - The Value of Discipline

DISCUSS IT

1. How was your view of God shaped by your parents? How does the title of *Father* that is given to God help you understand who He is?
2. How does your view of God effect how you love your own children?
3. What are you strengths as a parent? What are your weaknesses?
4. What do the above scriptures have to say about discipline? Honestly assess discipline in your household. Are you firm and fair, way too lenient or overbearing?
5. How can you improve in reflecting God to your children?

LIVE IT

Search for 'love languages' online and find out what the love language is of each of your children. Make a point to do at least one thing a month that specifically speaks to that child's love language.

If discipline in your house is not being handled in a Godly fashion, create a discipline action plan with your spouse.

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MEMORIZE

Ephesians 4:32

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

FAMILY TIME

Explain to your children how we have wronged God and how God has chosen to forgive us. Memorize this week's verse with them.

The next time you find your child in a situation where they feel they have been wronged, ask them to retell the story of how God forgave us. Help them to understand what their response should be in the situation.

We cannot honor God in our personal relationships without extending the same forgiveness God extended to us to those we love. When we reflect on the forgiveness God has extended to us, it should never cease to bring us to our knees in praise. He gave up His only Son so we could be restored to Him. We were the prodigal son He searched for every day until we returned home. Unlike love, forgiveness does come with a condition - we must forgive others so that God might forgive us (Matt 6:14-15). The alternative, unforgiveness, is costly. Unforgiveness births bitterness and hatred and ultimately results in our separation from our Heavenly Father. But when we offer forgiveness and grace, it allows God's love to shine through our actions.

READ IT

- Matthew 18:21-35 - The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant
- Matthew 6:14-15 - Forgive to be Forgiven
- Luke 23:32-43 - Jesus Models Forgiveness

DISCUSS IT

1. What does Biblical forgiveness look like? What makes this type of forgiveness so powerful?
2. Why do you think it can be so difficult to forgive those we love even though we have been forgiven of everything?
3. How has forgiveness changed your life?
4. Is it harder for you to forgive yourself or to forgive others?
5. What is something that you have found difficult to forgive in your life? What is something that you feel you could never forgive?
6. What is the cost of unforgiveness? Have you seen this cost in another person's life or in your own life?

LIVE IT

Do you have a relationship that needs real forgiveness present in it? Find a way this week to offer authentic forgiveness to the person/people who have wronged you. Don't just put a *band-aid* on the situation. Be authentic.

Write a letter to God thanking Him for the forgiveness that He's given you. Be as specific as you can about the ways that He has forgiven you. Keep this *letter of forgiveness* as a reminder that God forgave you wholly.

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