

Are you a firstborn, middle or last-born child or only child? Birth order makes a difference! At least that was the claim on Sunday morning as we tackled the issue of our uniqueness and making the most of it.

*For those who think maybe they lost track of our sessions, we had a little glitch in our videos and we had to juggle Sunday's lesson – so we skipped to the “birth order” video on Sunday, which turned out to be right on track with Sunday's sermon for “The Prodigal Son” as we heard how an older son struggled with his father celebrating his younger son's obvious squandering of possessions. It was a challenging sermon and a Bible story that reminds us that God sees us all equally important.*

Likewise our Parenting Lessons from Sunday reminded us of these points:

First-Born children will likely be leaders and entrepreneurs, but not always. Middle children find themselves needing to be seen in the mix, while last-born can be seen as the comedian of the family or the one who is coddled. While Dr. Leman made a case that he believes birth-order tends to be the norm, as a group we discussed that often birth order can have some discrepancies based on: large family sizes (trying to figure out who the “middle children” are); blended families; when there has been a death of a child and birth order is shifted; or simply when birth order doesn't fit at all- because children are children and it's never “one size fits all!”

Why would the birth order theory not work at all? Because God is in control! We are all uniquely and wonderfully made by Him.

Psalm 139:13-14 says “For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.”

One final thought was to consider how our own personal birth order in our family may affect our parenting style. As you go through the week think about what your parenting style is and how it affects the way you are raising your child(ren). Secondly, while there may be different expectations because of ages among your children, be watchful this week as you speak and react to your children. Are your actions different based on whose older/younger because of how you have parented them through the course of their life or are expectations the same for each child?

Dr. Leman explains the normal tendencies to relax more as we become more experienced parents... for example the dirt on the second, third and fourth child seems a little less disastrous than it did on the first child. At the same time, we must challenge ourselves to expect great things from our last child! It's a fun balance to find – thank God we have each other to lean on, share ideas with and most importantly share in community with through activities and church each week.

Next week – I promise we will dive into the previously promised topic – “Anger Ahead!” We will look at how to ward off the tense moments and help keep both sides (parents and children) in better communication.

See you Sunday at 9:30 a.m.!