

Week 7 of our Parenting Class took us through the “ABC’s of Self Image.” There were three main points that we covered this week.

They were:

1. **A**CCCEPT your children for who they are.

With this we discussed concepts of building up our children for “who they are” not “who they aren’t.” As a group, we talked about how often we try to compare our children and even try to mold them into the best of each other, rather than being excited about the unique qualities that God has built into each child.

The second part of this was that parents must be “encouragers” instead of “flaw-pickers.” Look for the good in what is being done instead of waiting to find the bad or highlighting the wrongdoing.

2. Make sure your children **B**ELONG to the family.

Make home a place where kids belong. This point discussed that children should have a stake in the home. It’s not a hotel where they are to be served and cared for but rather a place where they have a part in taking care of it and a role to play.

A big one that we debated is a group was “the activity trap.” Dr. Leman suggested limiting children to one activity per child, per semester. He suggested that over-burdening children with activities is stretching families to the point that “family time” is being watered down. As a group we discussed the benefits of having children in activities, the frustrations of being pulled in many different directions and the stress that children can feel when they are involved in too many activities. As a group, our conclusion was that the best thing you can do as a family is to TALK ABOUT IT! As kids what they do and don’t want to do. As parents, decide what is most important and then be on the same team in getting kids to activities and commit to family time and when and how that will happen.

3. Help kids develop **C**OMPETENCE.

Children must feel like they are somebody. They should feel like they add value to situations and that they are building a knowledge base that will carry them into later years.

In the workbook, there was a good chart that shared about the difference in “Encouragement” and “Praise.” Encouragement focuses on the internal person, while praise normally looks at a performance or the external things we can see. Encouragement looks at effort, improvement, sense of responsibility, persistence or appreciation for progress.

Examples:

Encouragement: It looks as if that extra work really paid off for you – congratulations.

Praise: Three A's. That makes me happy. Next time, let's get that B up to an A.

Encouragement: You looked as if you were having a great time in the game today.

Praise: I am so proud of you. You did so well in the game tonight.

Encouragement: I'm glad to see you enjoy learning.

Praise: Your behavior was great at the scout meeting tonight. You can get that new toy we talked about.

As we head into the final weeks of this study, I would love to get some feedback on things that have improved in your homes and with your children. I also would like to hear ideas for future studies. We talked a little bit on Sunday and the class will take a break over the summer and we will start back with some new topics in August. Some ideas for classes that were tossed around included: marriage, financial peace (or some form of financial planning), healthy living (food, exercise and overall lifestyle). If you have thoughts or a preference on what interests you e-mail me back (it doesn't go to the whole group!).