



# Discussion Guide

## MEET THE PARENTS

### Part 1: “Family Matters”

*Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me. Don’t stop them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people who are like these children.” Matthew 19:14 (NCV)*

*“So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” John 13:34–35 (NLT)*

In our task-oriented world, it’s easy to see parenting as another item on our to-do list, something that starts in the morning and ends at bedtime each day. Or we think of it as a skill to be mastered, only to discover we’ve fallen woefully short somewhere along the way. The truth is, parenting is neither of these things.

Parenting is about love. Parenting is a relationship. It’s a relationship that encompasses many types of parenting, from you as parent to you as a child. Often we come to a place in life where we parent our parents. In every case, we’re talking about a relationship. Relationships, whether with family members, friends, or co-workers, are always tough and no one has all the answers, so what we need most is encouragement.

**OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE—SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.**

## HOW DO I LOVE LIKE JESUS?

### 1. I NEED A BETTER EXAMPLE.

*“Just as I . . .”*

I will **FOLLOW** the example that I focus on.

In 1 Corinthians 11:1, what advice did Paul give and how did he illustrate his point?

- Why is what we model so important?
- Some might argue that we can’t be like Christ because he was perfect. How would you answer that argument? Discuss this briefly in your group.

**Fellowship**—More than just hanging out with other believers, Paul exhorts us, “whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). He encourages us to model the principle of Christian love, which is not self-seeking (1 Corinthians 13:5). Could this be a time to ask yourself how serious you are about growing together in a love relationship rooted in God’s truth? What ways can your small group grow together as a family and demonstrate the love of Christ to others?

### 2. I NEED A STRONGER FOUNDATION.

*“. . . I have loved you . . .”*

I will give love as I have **RECEIVED** love.

What does Romans 8:1 tell us about the way God loves us?

- What is condemnation? How can we be free from condemnation?
- What does it mean to belong to Jesus?

Whose example became Jesus' foundation in loving us (John 15:9)? How are we to respond?

- Think about our relationship with Jesus and the Father in terms of the parent/child relationship. How have the Father and his Son given us a model for practical parenting?

How is the life of love described in Ephesians 5:1–2?

- Share about a time when someone showed you how to do something you didn't know how to do. What did this person teach you? How did you learn?
- What is the difference in trying to become an imitator of God in your own strength vs. God's strength? Give examples of each.

**Discipleship**—We can only model the kind of love that has been modeled to us. Look up several of the Scriptures below and discuss what they say about God's love for you. How does knowing how much God loves you affect the way you encourage others?

God loves YOU. Pass it on: Isaiah 54:8; Romans 8:38–39; Ephesians 3:17–18; Psalm 86:5; Zephaniah 3:17; 1 John 3:1; Psalm 57:10; Hebrews 13:5; John 3:16; Ephesians 2:4–5; Psalm 36:7; Psalm 136:1–3; 1 John 4:9–10.

### **3. I NEED A HIGHER PURPOSE.**

*“... by this all will know that you are my disciples ...”*

Parenting must have a purpose higher than **ITSELF!**

How does Psalm 115:1 define our purpose—not just in parenting, but in everything we do?

- In what way does this idea of a higher purpose redefine the role of parents and family?.
- All of us have a higher purpose, both parents and children. How can this influence family life?

Where do our children come from, according to Psalm 127:3a?

- How can we treat our children in this way? Does this mean we shouldn't discipline them? Why or why not?

**Mission**—Sharing Christ with others is our greatest purpose on Earth. Talk about how this mission starts at home. How have you modeled the Great Commission in your family?

### **4. I NEED A GREATER POWER.**

*“Just as I have loved you ...”*

Caution: Don't try this at home without Jesus' **EXPERT** help.

Read 1 John 4:19. Where does real love originate?

- Share some examples about God's love for us in biblical times and in modern times.
- Even when we ignored God, he still loved us. How can we use this model in parenting?

According to Philippians 4:13, what are we capable of and why?

- Why is it so important to realize that Christ is the source of our power to do all things?

- Give an example of a time you experienced Christ's strength in your daily life.

**Worship**—Scripture tells us that God inhabits the praises of his people (Psalm 22:3). If it's God's power we want, the best way to connect to it is through worship. Share your plan for increasing your power supply over the coming week. Take just a moment or two to connect with God's power as a group right now.

**PERSONAL APPLICATION AND COMMITMENT:**

*By everything I did, I showed how you should work to help everyone who is weak. Remember that our Lord Jesus said, "More blessings come from giving than from receiving." Acts 20:35 (CEV)*

Parenting is an act of love, and one way to spell love is **S-H-O-W**. If you want people to understand the love of Christ, you need to show them what it is. You can do this by serving God together. What can you do as a group or with your families to demonstrate God's love to the world around you? Discuss this as a group and write down at least one idea you will try this week.

*"If I speak . . . if I know . . . if I have faith . . . if I give . . . if I sacrifice . . . but do not have love, I am nothing."  
1 Corinthians 13:1-3*

Love is also spelled **T-I-M-E**. It's easy to get so busy in the "doing" of life that we forget to just spend time together. Think of one way to spend time with your kids or those people most important to you that's different from your typical activities. Be creative—try something new.