**Parenting Toward Freedom**

Lifegroup Study (AM) – 2 Sept 2018

**LEADERS NOTES:**

*Remind your Lifegroup of the House Rules: Allow people to share their own thoughts and experiences not just as parents, but as children themselves. Be thoughtful about navigating the conversation towards people encouraging rather than instructing parents where needed.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Parenting is a great blessing from God, that is filled with both joy and challenges. There is the joy of seeing your child walk for the first time, and the challenge of keeping that same child out of all the cupboards they shouldn’t be in. As our children go through different stages of life, the joys and challenges also change, and as parents we need to adapt our parenting to suit this. Children will be more willing to please their parents through obedience if parents are loving and full of grace towards them. According to the Bible, love covers a *multitude* of sins. This applies to our children also, who are in the process of exploring the limits of their freedom, and the depths of their parent’s love. As humans we have been wired by God for freedom, and this is displayed in kids from an early age. One of our roles as parents is to put clear boundaries in place for our kids, so that their desire to explore the world around them can be worked out in positive way. And it is through giving our children more freedom as they grow, that they are empowered to make responsible choices as adults.

**KEY SCRIPTURES**

**READ Ephesians 6:1-3 -** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2**“Honour your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise—**3**“so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”

**4**Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

**READ 1 Timothy 5:8** - ‘Those who won't care for their relatives, especially those in their own household, have denied the true faith. Such people are worse than unbelievers.’

**KEY POINTS FROM SERMON**

* As parents we are not to weigh our children down with endless rules and regulations, but rather teach them the way should live, not according to worldly wisdom, but according to God’s good teaching and instructions.
* As children move into adulthood, parents must release them from under their authority so that they can flourish into who God has called them to be. The obedience that was directed to parents, must now be directed to God.
* Young adults who are feeling pressure to live under parental authority must make a decision: Follow God and the leading of the Holy Spirit, or live under the oppression of controlling parents. Do it graciously and respectfully.
* However, honouring our parents is a lifelong commitment that brings great blessing.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. If you heard the sermon, was there anything God spoke to you about personally from this message?
2. Within this passage, what insights into God’s character do you find?
3. What does this passage teach us about God's purposes for His people?
4. What is the difference between obeying and honouring your parents?
5. If you were a child would you like to live in your household?
6. Contrast what it might be like living with controlling parent, or one who gives your kids to much freedom? What was your experience growing up? What kind of parent might you be? How could you adjust this?
7. As an adult, how are you choosing to honour your parents? Love covers a multitude of sins - do you need to repent of any judgement or wrong attitudes towards them? What is something you recognise your parents did that you appreciate now?
8. **James 1:22** says “*Don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves*.” Is there anything that God is asking you to stop, start or continue in this passage? What is the next step you need to take in response to God’s word? (i.e. obedience)

**PRAYER POINTS**

* For us to learn to honour and obey our heavenly Father and to train our children to do the same
* For us to learn to live graciously, towards our parents, and towards our children
* For God’s wisdom and power to be able to love our children towards freedom in Him

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Sam Alberry Event: CANCELLED** The combined churches event with Sam Alberry has been postponed due to his father falling ill. Please pray for his family.

**FLOOD DUNEDIN Sat 15th Sept:** An afternoon ofsweeping through our city demonstrating the love of God in creative ways. Talk Esther Holt or Dion Fasi for more info.

**BAPTISM Sun 16th Sept PM Service**: Does anyone in your Lifegroup want to be baptised. Contact Lois Little 0211723537 by 10th Sept.