

the Andersons

WEEK 4 | PARENTING | GROUP GUIDE • CHAD BRUEGMAN

START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer this question:

Growing up, what was the one thing your parent or parents did that drove you crazy?

SHARE

Welcome to our ongoing teaching series called “The Andersons.”

God has much to say when it comes to doing relationships his way. Relationships done right can enrich our lives and bring us to whole new levels of fulfillment, peace and growth. Relationships done wrong will reap frustration, stagnation and ultimately will bring us harm.

We can all recall times in our lives where we asked people for relational advice. Whether a friend, co-worker, stranger on the plane or even a counselor, how do we know what advice is good advice and what advice is bad advice? Throughout this series, we are going to look at God’s perfect design on how to do relationships right by contrasting that with what it looks like to do relationships wrong. Each week, we will start the message with a look into the dysfunctional world of “The Andersons.” We will learn what not to do when it comes to friendship, dating, marriage and parenting.

Whether you are parents, being parented or desire to become parents, God has much to say about parents. Parenting is hard and God has tons of grace for those in need of it. If you are still living under the roof of your parents, let’s recognize today that your parents have had to learn as they go and probably have failed your expectations. If you are a parent, you can resonate with the idea of “learn as you go,” because it can feel that way. Every time your child gets a year older, there are now new challenges you haven’t experienced before. How can we continue to learn to parent with grace during difficult times? Then there are those of us who desperately want to be parents, whether biological or adoptive, we desire to be good parents someday. Who should we model our parenting after? What can we do now to prepare? Lastly, there are many of us who were unable to have kids or choose not to. You now find yourself able to devote more time toward things God might be calling you to. Regardless of where we find ourselves, let’s see what God has to say on the subject.

It is true that our culture tends to breed “make it happen” type people. We believe we control our destiny and no matter what, we will be winners if we just fight hard enough for the things we want. The truth is parenting is hard and no matter how perfect of a parent we might be, our kids will make their own decisions ultimately. God has precepts, principles, and rules to follow as parents; however none of us are able to perfectly execute God’s rules and precepts ... we all fall short and listen up ... we need grace. Grace brings a certain freedom to us that only God can give when we are willing to receive it.

Grace is what attracts us to him (God) and what confirms his love for us over and over. God’s grace has the power to transform the most hardened, indifferent soul into a person spilling over with kindness. If God our Heavenly Father is the perfect Father, and the primary way he deals with us as humans is through the power of his grace, it stands to reason that grace forms the best template for bringing out the best in our own children. -Dr. Tim Kimmel

Why is there power in grace?

Can you think of a time when someone showed you grace in a powerful way? Why do you think you still remember it to this day?

If you are a parent, would you say you give yourself grace when it comes to parenting?

GROW

Grace is the most important thing we can export to our children. Methods on parenting come and go, but showing our kids grace is the greatest commodity we have as parents to show them God's love.

We need to parent our kids the way God parents us!

God is not afraid of our mess, our candid questions, doubts, weaknesses and so we shouldn't be afraid, intimidated or embarrassed by our kid's messes either.

A key characteristic of grace-based families is that they are not afraid. Because we have been saved by grace, we should be the least fearful person/parent on the planet, right? Fear can be disabling and controlling in life and if we are parents, it can cause us to go down three dangerous paths if we succumb to fear:

1. **Controlling Parent** – instead of keeping your kids under control, you outright control everything for them.
2. **Comparison Parent** – keeping up with the Joneses has now become keeping up with the Jones' kids. Appearances must look right for fear of what others might think of you and your family. Your child's performance is sadly a reflection of you. You find yourself in an exhausting competitive-parenting game and the game never ends.
3. **Behavior Modification Parent** – You believe that if you can get your child in the right environment with the right people, right influences, far from any negative influences and the right school, you can modify your child. This fixation on external environments can be noble and helpful to some extent, but the greatest problem for your child will be their internal heart condition.

Let's read Titus 2:11-15:

In Lea, T. D., & Griffin, H. P. (1992). 1, 2 Timothy, Titus Commentary, talks about the utmost importance of grace in teaching us:

God's grace "has appeared" (epephanē). This verb occurs in Luke 1:79 (metaphorically) with regard to Jesus' birth and in Acts 27:20 (literally) with regard to the appearance of the sun and stars. The only other occurrences of this verb are in Titus 2:11 and 3:4, where it clearly refers to the manifestation of God's salvation. Paul may have intended this highly suggestive term to illustrate the dawning of the light of God's gospel upon a dark and lost world (cf. Eph 5:8; Col 1:13). Or he may have chosen this term as a contrast to its common usage with reference to the "divine appearances" of the Roman emperors. In either case, Paul stated that God's salvation (characterized by his grace) "appeared" at a given time in history (note the aorist tense) for "all men" indiscriminately (e.g., Jew and Gentile, slave and free). "The grace of God" was revealed and personified in Jesus Christ. This appearing was not limited to his birth but refers to his entire life including his death, resurrection, and exaltation, which accomplished the salvation now offered to "all men."

Paul did not limit the operation of God's grace toward Christians to justification in the restricted, legal sense of the conversion experience. Rather, throughout his letters Paul indicated that God's grace continues to operate in the sanctification process of the Christian's life. God's grace is active and powerful. It sustains in time of need (2 Cor 12:9), it provides strength (1 Cor 15:10; 2 Tim 2:1), it produces thanksgiving and glory to God (2 Cor 4:15), it affects our conversations (Col 4:6), and it enables believers to live holy and godly lives (2 Cor 1:12).

2:12 The continual operation of God's grace in the lives of Christians is one of Paul's strongest aspirations for the

churches, as evidenced by his epistolary salutations and concluding benedictions. Therefore it is not unusual for Paul to have stated that God's grace "teaches us" (paideuousa hēmas, present participle, continuous action). The Greek verb paideuō commonly means to instruct, educate; however, its biblical usage may contain the nuance of discipline or chastisement.

According to Scripture, what does grace teach us?

Considering the character traits you just read about, which ones have been most difficult for you to learn? If you have kids, which character traits do you think they struggle with currently? Any similarities?

MOVE

In this week's message, Chad talked about the importance of receiving grace. As parents, if we do not receive grace and allow grace to teach us, how are we then going to give grace and allow grace to teach our kids? We must define our success as parents through God's eyes.

The world will tell us that if our kids grow up to make a lot of money, look beautiful, attain power or fame; that we have been successful. God may indeed bless your kids with financial means or an influential position, but that doesn't mean we have been successful parents. If we are able to allow grace to teach our children humility, generosity, servanthood and gratitude, then that is success, regardless of the outcome. Parents, allow yourself to receive some grace as you are doing one of the most difficult things on earth.

How can those around you pray for you when it comes to parenting? In other words, where do you need to receive God's grace?

If you have difficulty receiving grace, do you think it affects your parenting, job, friendships, etc.?

Think about your circle of influence. What can you do this week to encourage a parent, spouse, friend or family member? *(We included some ideas)*

- *Go to coffee with your parent/parents or call them and specifically take time to just honor them, thank them regardless of their performance.*
- *Encourage a struggling parent/parents by watching their kids or pay a babysitter and take them out just to lift their spirits.*
- *Encourage your spouse specifically on at least one good thing they are doing as a parent.*
- *Pray with your spouse today or commit to praying for them.*
- *Encourage a couple you know that desires to be parents, but are struggling.*

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles that we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

TO GO

Let's remember, don't be dismayed, God will strengthen us to do what we are called to do!

Isaiah 41:10 | Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Additional Resources on Parenting:
Grace Based Parenting by Dr. Tim Kimmel

*For a complete list of Red Rocks Classes offered for parenting enrichment, please contact Chris@redrockschurch.com