

SESSION 2: PARENTING TO HEALING

Welcome and Review Last Week's Homework & LIFE Starters: 20 minutes
Session #2 Teaching: Parenting Our Kids to Healing: 10 minutes

One of the most beautiful things about the way God made Man is that He made us in His image. We are three parts; body, mind and soul, just as He is three parts. But we live in a fallen world, where sin takes over, bad things happen, and the relationships, bodies and minds that God made have been corrupted by human sin. Thankfully, God knew before we were born what hardships we would go through, and how they would affect us and our families. So, while science shows that toxic stress in any form changes the way our brains work and how our children grow and develop, it also shows that God built us with the ability to heal, through healthy relationships with Him and the people He put in our lives. Juggling healing for ourselves and our children, along with the day to day requirements of parenting is not an easy job. It requires an understanding of how God made us, how He parents us through hardship, and some of the tools that can help our children heal.

There are no easy answers to difficult circumstances, and there are no cookie cutter solutions. We do have Biblical examples of how He loves us, and our responsibility as parents to meet our children's physical, emotional and spiritual needs, regardless of convenience or what we think our parenting journey **should** look like. Just as Jesus met people where they were; on the shore, in a boat, a garden at night or under a sycamore tree, we must meet our kids where they are. We are the parents God wanted for our children. What works for one family may not work for another. **community and sharing of resources.*

In the NT, we are told that John the Baptist "leapt in Elizabeth's womb" when he heard Elizabeth greet Mary. Science shows that children begin forming attachments to their mother in utero, then by learning her voice, eventually seeing her face, and then being held and fed by her. So imaging the confusion that happens internally when the mother whose voice has been heard for 9 months is suddenly gone, for whatever reason. Or does not feed or hold gently to comfort. The stress hormones a mother feels also impacts her growing baby. A child who has these experiences at the time when their brain is developing is receiving confusing and damaging messages about their value, who they can trust, and their development is impacted. The adults blessed with caring for these children cannot approach them as they would a child who had not experienced these things.

Small Group Discussion: 15 minutes

- Did you experience periods of intense or ongoing family stress as a child? What helped you cope, or not, with that situation?
- What family hardships have your children experienced?
- Have you noticed changes in your children through these challenges?

Small Group Wrap-Up: 10 minutes

What did you cover in your small group time? What were the biggest take-aways and action items?

Discuss This Week's Homework on next page: 5 minutes

- Do your LIFE Starter Journalling and make time to continue the discussion from your small group breakout time.

Resource: The Connected Child and Created for Connection