

Session #3

1 Samuel 1

Dealing with Discouragement

Ice Breaker: Parenting feels like riding on a roller coaster: sit down, strap in, hold on, and try to make it to the end without throwing up! Share one of the recent “highs” you’ve had as a parent lately. What was a “low” you had to struggle through?

Read 1 Samuel 1:1-6

1. The road to discouragement as a parent often starts with the comparison trap. As a parent, in what ways do you compare yourself with other moms and dads?
2. What ways do you compare your kids with other kids?
3. The cure for the comparison trap is to have the right perspective with your kids. Instead of comparing your family to other families, what part of your life and family can be celebrated and highlighted?

Read 1 Samuel 1:7-8

4. Has a parent/spouse ever tried to console you or help you through a difficult season, only to make it worse? (At least you have me, Hannah!). What are some helpful things people have done to support you through discouragements and hard times you’ve experienced in life?
5. Comparison always leads to discontentment, mainly because we always compare ourselves with people that have MORE than we do. What areas of your life and parenting are you feeling a sense of discontentment over? Is discontentment a healthy or unhelpful feeling?
6. The cure for discontentment is gratitude. Sure, you can always focus on what you don’t have or how things could get better; nevertheless, there are many things in the life of your family that you can be thankful for. What are those things?

(Personal Note from Nathan: When I see a small child confined to a wheelchair, the same thought always crosses my mind: God, you have been so gracious to me in my life and family. Having the right perspective totally changes my heart from what I don’t have and the problems that I am facing, to the grace that has been shown to me and how lucky I am as a parent. Forgive me Lord, and thank you!)

Read 1 Samuel 1:9-16

7. Comparison leads to discontentment, and discontentment leads to discouragement. When you are discouraged, what kind of physical/emotional/mental toll does it take on you as a parent?

8. Notice that Hannah took her problems and feelings to the Lord in prayer. What is your response when you face a time of discouragement? (self-pity, go to spouse, shut down, get overly emotional, anxiety/depression, talk with friends, pray, search the Scriptures).

9. The priest encouraged Hannah by speaking a blessing over her and reminding her of who God is. As a parent, how can you be a source of encouragement to your spouse during a hard time? How can you encourage your kids when they are facing discouragement?