

The Family: God's Greenhouse for Transformation

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Class Description:

Jason and Leila have been married for 26 years and have four children (ages 15-23). The "secret" to parenting is that there is no secret – it's a journey of sanctification and discipleship. This class is not meant to be "lessons learned", but rather the lessons we're still learning; not a list of tips, but rather themes we are still applying in our family (and wish we'd been more aware of earlier); it's a time to take biblical truth and discuss how to walk it out in our families. We will share practical advice and honest stories, all grounded in the truth that transformative heart change comes about through beholding and encountering Christ. Join us as we explore how God works through our closest relationships – our families – to help transform us to Christlikeness and how we can participate with God in the process.

We encourage you to commit to a module (or more) with friends and to use the class as an opportunity to deepen your community within the body of Christ as you study God's Word and His desires for your family.

Format:

This class will be structured a little differently than other BTC classes, both in how our time is spent in the classroom and by breaking the class into three modules.

1. Time in the Classroom:

Table Groups: During each module, our goal is for table groups to be consistent from week to week to help build and strengthen community. Part of our prayer for this class is that the Lord will use it as a scaffolding for relationship. You can come to participate in any way you might feel led - come as a single person or as a couple and meet new people at a table group. Or, consider taking the class with couples from your friend group or community group.

Balance of Teaching and Discussion: Our typical goal for each week would be approximately 30-45 minutes of total teaching/sharing time, with the remainder (30-45 minutes) being interactive, whether discussion in table groups over questions and case study exercises, 'ask us anything' time, or larger discussion in the class after table group discussion.

2. Modules:

We recognize that parents are busy. We recall how hard it was just to get out the door with young children. Committing to a semester class would have seemed overwhelming to us. We are structuring this class in three modules of five weeks each. While we would love it if couples joined us for the semester, it might be more manageable to commit to a five-week module. Each of the modules will focus on the application of biblical truth to your family relationships. While they do build upon one another, each module will also stand alone. The first module focuses on our foundation, Personal Discipleship and Marriage; the second explores intentional decisions we make as parents, Deliberate Instruction in the Home; and the third presents a biblical framework for engaging various situations that arise in life, Putting It All Together in the Crisis of Daily Life.

Outline of the Modules:

Module 1:

Personal Discipleship and Marriage

“Keep your seatbelt fastened at all times and put your oxygen mask on before your child’s.”

In this module we will start with what it looks like in our individual walks and our marriages to have God’s Word on our hearts. Do we understand God’s purpose for our marriages and families? That we are called to create a space (a greenhouse) in our individual and shared lives where He can cause growth? What are the ‘plans’ for the layout of my family’s greenhouse? To know its structure, I need to know God’s purposes. And to know His purposes, we need to know *Him*. We can only lead our children into what we know of the Lord and His Word. Here, our focus will be on individual discipleship and biblical marriage and how to work key biblical truths into specific relationships and situations. The church talks about these truths and teaches them in other settings; how do they show up in our marriages and families? Key passages: Psalm 78, 2 Peter 1, Jeremiah 17

January 11	Identity Truths - Position and Condition in Marriage and the Family
January 18	Walking by the Spirit - The War between the Spirit and the Flesh in the Family
January 25	Living from the Heart - “We Are What We Love”
February 1	Root & Fruit - How We Respond to Drought & Stress
February 8	Biblical Unity in Marriage

Module 2:

Intentionality in the Home

“The goal of our instruction is love.” 1 Tim. 1:5

In this module we will discuss key themes and ideas that recur throughout family life and look at how a biblical perspective shapes our purposes in parenting and family life. As we look around our ‘greenhouse’, the protected space we’ve worked to create so that our marriages and families can flourish, what does flourishing look like? What kind of growth is God working toward? How can we be deliberate in preparing the soil, training the fragile shoots and even pruning so that we are tending and cultivating in accordance with God’s heart? Key passage: Psalm 127.

February 15	Conformity vs. Transformation - the Tension between Intentionality & Sovereignty
February 22	Time: Yours, Theirs & Ours - Stewarding a Key Resource
March 1	Friends: Yours, Theirs & Ours - How to Approach Relationships
March 8	Goals & Aspirations: Yours, Theirs, Ours (and oh yeah, God’s)
March 15	How Not to Have a Feeding Disorder - Creating an Appetite for God in the Family

Module 3:

Putting it all Together.

“And your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, ‘This is the way, walk in it,’ when you turn to the right or when you turn to the left.” Isaiah 30:21

As growth happens, we are often in an ongoing process of sowing and harvesting. How do we help each other and our children evaluate the ‘fruit’ they are experiencing, bring these situations to the Word together, and give them biblical counsel? How do we help them learn and practice this skill with their friends? Ultimately, how do we prepare them to leave the greenhouse? This module will be a reshaping of some key biblical counseling concepts adapted specifically for family relationships and especially adolescents. We strongly encourage you to consider taking this module with your adolescent or young adult children. We have found that having a shared vocabulary about how to approach different situations from a biblical perspective is invaluable. Key passage: 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

March 22	Building Involvement - Approachability & Passport
March 29	Giving Hope - Finding Biblical Hope in Difficult Situations and Sharing it with our Kids
April 5	EASTER
April 12	Gathering Data - Listening for the Heart
April 19	Interpreting Problems Biblically - How do we take difficult situations to the Word for God’s counsel?
April 26	Providing Biblical Instruction - What Does God Say About It?