

Quiz

A. What are the 7 Core Areas of Life

(The reason these are important to identify are because they are the big rocks that must go in first...When we make them our priorities we are better able to stay focused on our race; if these are balance they help us stay in the greenzone (which is the place where we have capacity to handle the stresses of our day and stay relational)

1. **belief – relationship with God (the biggest rock)**
2. **body – very much tied to your spiritual and mental life so it's important too**
3. **beloved – the people in your life that are primarily attached to you (spouse and kids)**
4. **budget - finances**
5. **be renewed – the things that refresh you**
6. **business – your work**
7. **best friends – the other in your life that you need to carve out time for**

How do we keep these in the proper balance for each season of life? Regularly taking our day-to-day schedules to God and letting Him show us if anything is out of line or needs more priority than others. Go back to the perspective tests and questionnaires from the Selah workbook now before Spring gets busy.

A. What are 4 non-verbal ways you can create connection with your child?

(ex. Physical touch)

1. **Eye contact – getting down to their level (or below); soft eyes not mad eyes**
2. **Facial Expression – relaxed face not aggressive**
3. **Tone of voice – soft, comforting, calm not loud or angry**
4. **Posture – relaxed, bent down and open, not arms crossed or leaning forward or over them**
5. **Gestures – gentle touches not exasperated movements**
6. **Timing of response – waiting to let them finish or explain themselves so they are heard**
7. **Intensity of response – staying calm not yelling or crying**

Connecting with our child in their overwhelm helps them calm. When they feel understood and accepted their minds will be open to our discipleship. Before that our words are useless. Example, if my kids are fighting and I tell them to cut it out and treat each other nicely I may get them to stop for a few minutes but I haven't found out why they were fighting in the first place or helped them know what it means to treat each other nicely. Responding to the right brain takes more time on the front end, but will save time in the long run [you can expend energy now or later]. This takes being able to S.T.A.R...

C. What does S.T.A.R stand for?

Stop. Take a breather. Appreciate. Respond in love.

This is a skill that takes lots of practice! But it is a tool that can help us connect with our kids and effect true discipleship rather than create fear-based behavior change. When we don't respond in love, we can always REPAIR. Repairing gives narrative to our actions. [Example: getting upset at Joy for eating her cookie over the kitchen floor.]

D. What are the 6 Negative Emotions and why do we feel them (their purpose)?

1. **Sadness – shows us a loss and should make us want to move back to connectedness**
2. **Disgust – can protect us from things that are harmful**
3. **Fear – helps us react to things that could hurt us**
4. **Hopeless Despair – our capacity is at rock bottom, should draw us to the Father**
5. **Shame – helps us work on behaviors that turn people off**
6. **Anger – can help us protect others when an injustice has been done**

We will all experience these throughout our lives. Feeling them is not bad, what can be bad is how we act when we feel them. The point of this life is to learn to turn to God in all circumstances and learn how to return to joy faster and faster. As we do this, our capacity grows and we are better able to help and support others, including our spouses and kids. This takes continually taking bad character reactions to God, letting Him show us why we reacted the way we did, and then learning better pathways of behavior. We are His kids and just as we need to teach our kids how to behave, God wants to teach us how to behave.

E. Name at least 5 Creative Discipline Tools

1. Pray – God actually knows our kids best
2. Reflection & Planning – being intentional helps you be proactive rather than reactive; when something has gone badly, think through how to do it better next time. Chance favors the prepared mind.
3. Switch Positions – sometimes a distraction or a change of environment can completely change the mood; it can also help you calm down so you can respond better
4. Role-Play – teaches them what to do; helps their brain learn a pathway (will take time)
5. Realistic Expectations – what is your child actually capable of (1st child vs 4th child)
6. Natural or Relative Consequences – helps them connect what they did with a pain which is much more effective than a random consequence (if they play roughly with a toy and break it, it becomes garbage and they will feel a sense of loss, rather than you seeing them playing roughly and taking it away leaving them mad at you)
7. Reduce your Words – lectures don't accomplish much, connect and then use simple words
8. Tell the Story – helps us process what happened and give an explanation to an event (for kids this is really important because if they don't have narrative they will make up their own explanation for what happened, which isn't usually true).
9. Chase the Why – find out why they did something so that you can get to the root (it also helps them feel understood which will open the gate to their mind, helping them listen to your words of correction better)
10. Repair – shows them you are real, teaches them to say sorry, connects you to them
11. Stop saying Stop to Emotions – they can't help what they feel, rather teach them what to do with their emotions
12. Name it to Tame It – just identifying the emotion often brings the level down
13. Move it or Lose it – getting active physically changes chemicals in the brain which can help bring down levels of overwhelm to a place where they can be managed
14. Allow them to Make Mistakes – it's how they will learn (buying something you know won't last very long)
15. Increase the Family Fun Factor – builds bonds which creates openness

Keep reviewing these over summer. Listen to the recording on-line to remind yourself of what will create lasting, effective discipleship for your kids versus what feels good but doesn't actually make emotionally healthy children.

Building our Skills of Connection

APPRECIATION EXERCISE

1. Quiet breathing (1 min): *Be still and know that I am God* (Psalm 46:10)
2. *It's important to make sure we as moms are filled up. When we get low emotionally, or don't feel loved, our capacity is lower and it's much harder to pour out on our needy kids. So, we're going to start today by letting God love on us. Letting Him come and meet us in our Right-Brain so our baby gates will be open to His guidance for us today. This is something we should practice every day so we can do our job well. It's what Selah means: a pause to be reconnected to God.*

Listen to the Selah theme song. Go back and think about your life when we started in September. Let God bring to mind a way you have changed this year (*ex. growth in a specific character weakness, learning to recognize your reactions, being able to STAR more often and respond in love, making repairs faster...*). Let Him remind you of a specific way/time you have done something to show this forward growth.

3. Write down how it makes you feel to know you can change and become a better person (*empowered, peaceful, loved, warm, etc*). Thank God for His Holy Spirit power working in your life.
4. Think about your own children. What are some ways they have changed this year? [How could you encourage them in this today?] *It's important to do this regularly too so that it's easier to STAR. [Ex. Mady making a list in her journal.]*
5. **Returning your Heart to your Race (confession):** Next, think about our theme verse: *Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Hebrews 12:1*

Write down ways your heart has not wanted to engage in your race as a mother/wife. Where do you feel weak? What emotions have you been feeling? What have you been turning to to find joy? Be honest with God (He knows the state of your heart anyway).

6. Listen for God's response to your confession. What truth does He want to give you about yourself?
7. Share in groups of 3. Thank God for areas of growth, confess places where you are not focused and then ask the Holy Spirit to renew your desire today to press on in the race He's called you to run.

Skill Building Application

Today's application exercise is very similar to the one we did back in January. The one where we thought of a situation that puts our child into overwhelm and then worked through how to handle it. We're going to repeat this exercise because it's the type of thing we need to get good at as parents - that is taking parenting issues to God and getting His expertise in how to handle them. See, in case you haven't figured it out yet, our children will bring us a continual supply of these "parenting challenges" and the better we become at this skill of bringing these challenges to Jesus the more successful we will be in our parenting.

Before we start I'll share a story of a success one mom had after our January session:

1. The issue this mom brought to God was her 9 year old son and his reactions to having to clean his room. Every time she told her son it was time to clean his room he would go into overwhelm. It would start with dragging his feet, then whining, sulking, acting anxious or dramatic, when that didn't work it turned into arguing or begging. This mom would feel frustrated and end up saying things like "just do it", or finally ignore him.
2. During the reflection time at Selah, God showed this mom that her child was feeling overwhelmed with how big the job felt. He felt like the job was sprung on him and he felt out of control not knowing where and how to begin.
3. The strategy God showed this mom that she needed to give her son a heads up before getting right down to cleaning. And to help him work through strategies to make it feel more manageable and give him some control. The mom did a thorough clean of his room that afternoon so that he would not feel so out of control when they started this new system. When he came home that day, the mom went to his room with him and he was pumped to see it so clean. They then went over the new rules: he would be expected to tidy his floor every day before bedtime (that way it wouldn't be so messy by Sat) and do all the extra areas on Saturdays (desk, nightstand, etc). They talked through the consequences if it didn't get done.
4. This worked! And is still working. Simply by breaking down the job it feels more manageable. He knows what to expect and is in control of when it gets done as long as it's completed on time. They haven't fought about it once since they implemented this strategy!

Sometimes when we do this type of listening/praying with Jesus, the new strategies we get won't work right away and we'll be tempted to give up. But remember that most patterns of behavior take time to change so be patient. Take the situation back to God and ask for confirmation of what you're doing, or a tweak that might help your child. Other times the outcome will be instant and awesome

1. Think of a recurring situation that puts your child into overwhelm (this can even be the same situation you brought to God in Jan). Briefly describe what happens and how your child shows signs of overwhelm.
2. How do you typically respond to this? If you have not responded in love, confess your negative reactions to Jesus. Tell Him you want to love your child unconditionally and disciple them through this, not shame them or shut off their hearts. Are there any repairs you need to make? [*The importance of repairs is that they give our children the right narrative, or explanation for the story. Ex. Of getting upset with Joy for leaving crumbs on the kitchen floor.*] If your child's overwhelm makes you feel negative emotions, take time to reflect on why. *There may be an experience from your past that causes you to react this way (possibly even that you were not shown how to handle the same situation as a child).*
3. CHASE THE WHY: Take some time to think about why your child might be reacting the way they do?
4. Remembering the importance of connection, how could you respond differently the next time you child has this reaction? How can you connect to their emotion?
5. Once you have connected with them, what discipleship strategy can you use to help them correct their behavior? [Remember to discipline behavior not emotion.]
6. Share in groups of 3. Take time to listen to Jesus for each other about this.