

Lake Forest Church Community Group Sermon Discussions

Sermon Series: Under the Influence August 30, Week 2: FIGHT FOR THE HEART

INTRODUCTION

Rules. Relationships. Families are a mixture of both. Sometimes, though, in the midst of dealing with rules, families can lose the relationship. When you lose the relationship, you can lose your child's heart. It's critical for parents to fight for the heart of their child.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What kind of home did you grow up in – a home that valued rules or relationships more? Did rules tend to get sacrificed for the sake of relationships, or did relationships become secondary to enforcing the rules? How did that impact you growing up?
2. What is the pattern in your home? Do you find the tension between valuing rules and valuing relationships a difficult one to manage? In what ways?
3. Read Matthew 22:34-40 together in the group. If you want, browse through the verses prior to verse 34 to get an idea of the context. As Mike said in this week's message, this passage is in the middle of a verbal fight. The Pharisees were known for their mastery of the law. What does verse 35 indicate about the Pharisees' motive in asking Jesus the question?
4. Read verses 37-40 again. According to Jesus, what is the most important goal? If Jesus had to choose between a relationship and a rule, which do you think he would choose as the most important? Why?
5. Read Deuteronomy 6:1-9. Notice that in Matthew 22:37, Jesus singles out one of the verses above all the others in Deuteronomy (v.5) and the whole Old Testament. What does that say about the priority that relationship (love) has in the mind and heart of God?
6. In the message, Mike said parents need to shift from fighting **with** their kids to fighting **for** their kids. He said that there is significance between what happens when we fight with our kids rather than for our kids. Do you recall what those differences are? How have you personally experienced the difference between the two kinds of fighting?
7. Mike listed several ways that you can begin to fight for your family: break the pattern, spend unstructured time with your children, and make your relationship dependable enough to earn trust. Which approach resonated best with you? Why?

Taking it Home:

How am I fighting for the heart of my child? Small steps are big steps. As soon as you begin to break the pattern and prioritize relationship above all else (even rules), you begin to fight for the heart of your child or teen. What tangible steps could you take this week that would help you fight for your family? Take some time in the group to pray for each other's families.

(Note: This material has been adapted from ReThink resources)