



Week 3: Heart Change > Behavior Control

Opening

- Begin with a brief **welcome and prayer** to set the tone for the group time.
- **Introduce the theme:** Relationships between generations—parents to children, children to parents, mentors to younger disciples—are not about controlling behavior, achieving perfection, or creating outward success. They are about *heart change* and faithfully representing God’s love.

Discussion Questions

CONNECT

- What’s a memorable moment you had with a parent, mentor, or child (funny, embarrassing, or formative)?
- Who are the younger people God has put in your life to influence? How do you hope it “goes well with them?” (Ephesians 6:3)
- **Leader Note:** *As your group discusses, consider their members' stages and tailor accordingly. For example, if no members are parents, speak to them as those impacting the next generation. This is not irrelevant to anyone. Not all group members may be parents, but they are children and can relate to the topic differently.*

DISCOVER

Read Ephesians 6:1-4 together as a group

- What instructions are given to children in Ephesians 6:1–4? What promise is attached?
- How does Paul’s command to parents (“do not provoke... bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord”) apply to anyone who mentors or influences the next generation?
- Why do you think Paul starts with a warning (“do not provoke”) before a positive command?
- Hebrews 12:6–11 describes God’s loving discipline. How can His example shape the way we guide others?

APPLY

- Which of the seven “provoking patterns” (selfishness, severity, inconsistency, confusing immaturity with sin, comparisons, hypocrisy, failure to notice growth) do you most relate to, and why?

- What happens to a child's or student's heart if these patterns go unaddressed—even if outward behavior looks “fine”?
- How could you combine *discipline* (consistent training) and *instruction* (biblical guidance) in your context—whether as a parent, mentor, or influencer?
- You're not a parent, but you influence nieces, nephews, or students. What's one practice you can start to point them toward Christ?

RESPOND

- Where do you sense God inviting you to confess, apologize, or rebuild trust with the next generation?
- What is one relational practice you'll begin this week to faithfully represent God's heart?

GROUP PRAYER

Take time for prayer requests and celebrations and then spend time praying for these things specifically:

- **Thanksgiving:** Thank God for being the perfect Father who disciplines with love and patience. Praise Him for the people He's placed in your life who have helped shape your faith.
- **Dependence:** Ask for wisdom, restraint, and grace as you parent, honor your parents, or influence the next generation. Pray for the Spirit's help to reflect God's heart instead of provoking or discouraging.
- **Intercession:** Lift up by name the children, students, family members, or younger believers connected to your group. Pray that they would experience Christ through your words, example, and faithful love.

CLOSING

As we go, remember this: whether you are a parent, a child, or simply someone with influence in the life of another, your role is not about control or perfection—it's about faithfully representing God's heart. The next generation doesn't need flawless examples; they need people who depend on Christ and point them back to Him. Let's leave here committed to reflect His love, His discipline, and His hope in every relationship we steward.
