

## Session: Back of Napkin

### Description

A friend of mine at World Vision recently shared a personal story with me. Apparently when he was little, he got into shenanigans. In other words, he was a handful.

Growing up, he got kicked out of two Christian schools and was constantly getting into trouble. But Sunday school was different. It wasn't that he was well behaved in Sunday school. As a matter of fact, he was just as disruptive as he was during the week. But on Sunday mornings, no matter what he did, the Sunday school teacher just seemed to love him.

One day my friend was being particularly challenging, and he thought the teacher would finally kick him out. Instead he asked him to come up and sit on his lap while he read to the other kids. As my friend made his way up front, the teacher hugged him, scooped him up onto his lap and began to read.

To this day my friend has never forgotten this. That moment of unconditional love changed his life. True obedience is rooted in love. As Eugene Peterson says in *God Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, "Things are dysfunctional not people".

In light of this story, and as I thought about what it means to be obedient, I began to realize that I was wrongly interpreting 1 Corinthians 13:4.

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth."

I always took this piece of scripture to mean that I should do those things—be those things to others. If I'm a follower of Jesus I should be patient, kind, I should not boast. But upon re-reading this I noticed that Paul is plainly saying that it is love that does these things, not us. Our role is to "pursue love" (1 Cor. 14:1).

These things, these godly actions and behaviors, are the result of "dwelling in love."<sup>1</sup> Love is doing these things through me. This love is a natural expression of who I am in God. Not only was this idea frankly mind-blowing to me, it was also extremely freeing. God's love works in and through me as I navigate a challenging world.

Part of obedience is working together as a family to navigate challenging obstacles in order to live out what you believe. In this session you'll be working in teams to solve a family challenge.

### Materials Needed

Stack of napkins and some ballpoint pens.

# Practice

## O B E D I E N C E



Handouts

None

### Back of Napkin

Read aloud the quote or scripture

"The truth is this: love is not determined by the one being loved but rather by the one choosing to love." - *Stephen Kendrick*

Questions for discussion  
(10 minutes)

1. Is unconditional love possible? Explain.
2. Is there any condition under which you would stop loving someone that you currently love unconditionally? Explain.
3. Is there any condition under which God would stop loving a person? Explain.
4. What does obedience mean to you in the context of a family? Is there a circumstance under which a parent should be obedient to their child? Explain.
5. Do you believe that true obedience is rooted in love? Yes/No Explain.

Rule of life activity

Back of Napkin

1. Some of the toughest challenges in history have been solved on the back of a napkin. Today you get an opportunity to give it a try.
2. Get a stack of napkins and some pens.
3. As a family, brainstorm a list of challenges that your family is facing.
4. Choose one problem (total) to solve.
5. These could be as simple as figuring out a better way to divide up chores or as complex as an ongoing disagreement among family members.
6. Now split up into teams of two (or three with odd numbers).
7. Give each team a few napkins and a pen.
8. Next teams sketch the solution to the problem on one napkin including a chart, diagram or graph. Sketches might include some small notes. Everything must fit on one napkin.
9. Now come back together and present your solutions to the rest of the family.
10. With every voice heard, decide together which solution you want to try.

# Practice

## O B E D I E N C E



### Examen

How did it go? Debrief highs and lows

1. Each person shares their favorite part of the conversation / activity and why.
2. Each person shares their least favorite part and why.
3. Did you do a Serving/Giving activity last week? How did it go?

Serving /giving ideas for any time this week: Choose one or create your own. These can be done individually or as a group. You will be sharing your serving experience in the next session.

- Establish a neighborhood serving group that serves together once a month.
- Try, for a whole week to say only positive things.
- At least twice this week, pray for each member of your family.
- Find a project in your home (like cleaning out a closet) that no one has had time to tackle and take care of it yourself without asking for kudos.
- Walk around your neighborhood praying for the people in each house or apartment as you walk.

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<sup>1</sup> Dallas Willard, *The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God* (New York: HarperCollins, 1998), 183.