

Creating the Right Environment at Home

God didn't just drop human beings onto an uninhabitable earth; he created the environment for life to flourish. In this lesson, we'll see that great parenting works the same way. When we do our part to create a healthy environment, we're giving our kids what they need to be healthy, flourishing human beings.

[Related Video: What was the environment of your home growing up?]

A simple reading of [Genesis 1](#) shows us God's strategy for creation. **God first built an environment that could promote life, and then he put living things there.** That's how great parenting works today. Wise parents work hard at creating an environment for life in the home, and that sets the stage for real life to flourish (see [Genesis 1:28](#)).

You Can't Force Growth

The opposite approach comes more naturally to many parents, especially those with a strict Christian upbringing. **Rather than creating an environment for growth, we often take it on ourselves to force growth to happen.** We sit our kids down and lecture them on what's right. We preach to them, and often don't even practice what we preach. This puts our kids in the place of a listener rather than a learner – and it fails to develop a personal conviction in their hearts that can go the distance in college and beyond.

So what does that kind of environment look like? It has two key ingredients.

Love Above All

The first key ingredient for creating an environment for growth is love. God is, after all, defined by this key attribute ([1 John 4:7-8](#)). Without love in your home, your kids will never want to pursue the God of love. God is relational, and he wants a relationship with us and with our kids more than anything. When we reflect the love of God to our kids, they'll be hungry for it from God himself. Without love, any other accomplishment – whether ours or our kids' – is pointless. You cannot win at parenting without love. Paul brought a similar message to a church family that was dysfunctional in their pursuit of "the win":

***1 Corinthians 13:1-3** "If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing."*

[Related Topic: The 3 T's of Parenting]

But love is only half of the equation for an environment where real life flourishes. The second key value is equally important.

Truth Underneath It All

The second key ingredient for creating an environment for growth is truth. Real love is honest. It puts the best interests of others first, and it is willing to address thoughts and behaviors that are destructive. Christian parents

have the sober responsibility of speaking the truth of the Bible in love to their kids, showing them the way they “should” go by teaching them to buy into a biblical worldview in their everyday lives. In short, parents are called to be mentors at home.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7 *“And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.”*

In today’s culture, ideas are thrown at us every day from a wide variety of sources. It’s information overload, and without the purposeful and wise guidance of godly parents, kids will easily be led down the wrong path. Parents must consistently weave truth into every conversation so that it becomes a natural part of the environment of the home.

[Related Topic: [Schedule It If You Want a Conversational Culture](#)]

At the end of the day, the parents’ job is to do their part, working hard to create an environment of truth and love, giving their kids every opportunity to flourish in every area of life. This doesn’t guarantee a win in the life of their kids, because kids must still show a willingness to learn and respond. But if everyone does his or her part, the result will be victory.

[Related Topic: [4 Corner Leadership at Home](#)]

1. Watch the video together or invite someone to summarize the topic.
2. What was the environment of your home growing up? How do you wish it was different?
3. List some of the ways parents try to “force” their kids to flourish. How do you think Jesus would do it differently if he were raising kids?
4. Read [1 Corinthians 13:4-8](#). Which of these attributes of love are present in your home? Which ones do you need more of?
5. Why do you think many parents struggle to speak truth to their kids? What is the end result?
6. Talk about the importance of [scheduling a weekly \(or daily\) family devotional time](#) to explore God’s truth on a variety of topics. Have you ever done this? Are you willing to try?
7. Write a personal action step based on this conversation.