



LOVED
as you are

**GROUP
CURRICULUM**



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OVERVIEW - LOVED AS YOU ARE

The theme for this curriculum is “You Are Loved.” Not for how clean you can keep your kitchen, or how well-behaved your kids were today—but for how infinitely and perfectly loved by God you are. No matter what you’re going through, no matter how you feel in your most difficult moments, God sees you and loves you. And we do, too. You are not alone.

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When You're Scared of What Others Think

When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord." But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The Lord has not chosen this one either." Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the Lord chosen this one." Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The Lord has not chosen these." So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse answered. "He is tending the sheep." Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."

1 SAMUEL 16:6-11

I have always wanted to be a mama—from the first stirrings of my little girl heart to the day I said "I do." So many dreams I had about my life shifted and morphed, but that dream never changed. So, it makes sense that now I want to be the best mama to my six children that I can possibly be—and, I want others to see that I am a good mom, too.

However, their trauma and brain differences have made looking like a good parent pretty hard. Other people don't know their struggle. Others only see their behavior, not our ability to meet our children in the depth of their brokenness. Sometimes we have what we need to calm their anxious hearts or solve the problem. And sometimes we simply do not.

Our children's history and stories prevent them from hiding what we are all so good at covering up. Lacking a filter, they say what everyone else only would have thought. Not knowing how to regulate their emotions, they spiral out of control before anyone can calm them down. They shut-down during homework that feels too hard, and the work they actually can do never gets turned in. While they protect themselves the only way they know how, we are left looking like failing parents.

But while people look at appearances and what is on the surface, God looks at the heart. God sees us serving our children and loves us as we are. He understands the roots of their behavior, and He honors us for our sacrificial care towards them. While all of Israel would have chosen any other brother in David's family, God saw David's heart. He looked past the appearance of these young men, ignoring their outward strength. Knowing their hearts, God walked past every older brother to choose the smallest and youngest: the shepherd, who was out in the field while more important business was taking place.

Let's let other parents look and play the part well. God sees us in our struggle and recognizes our effort when nobody else can. He sees our love and courage and undying hope in the midst of brokenness. He loves us and our children exactly as we are, celebrating each small overlooked victory.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Surely we have had people see the negative behavior of our children, and judge us rather than seek to better understand. Can you share a time when someone showed grace in the midst of a very difficult season or moment?
2. How can we better show grace and love to parents when they are in tough situations with their own children? Or how can we better show grace to others?
3. Share a small victory that you have had with your child or with yourself that the world may never see.