

LOVE THEM, RELEASE THE OUTCOME

A Christ-centered lesson on honoring parents, accepting what we cannot control, and choosing a wise response

Main idea

We can love and honor our parents while recognizing that we cannot make them choose change. Acceptance means facing what is happening now and choosing a wise response. It does not mean approving of hurtful behavior or deciding that change is impossible forever.

Facilitator preparation

Length: 30-40 minutes **Supplies:** paper and pens **Group:** adaptable for about 8 participants

Keep the lesson general. Invite people to reflect on any relationship or situation; no one needs to name a person or share private family details. Remind the group that honoring parents does not require controlling, rescuing, or accepting unsafe treatment.

Scripture readings (NLT)

PASSAGE	TEACHING CONNECTION
Exodus 20:12	Honoring father and mother.
Romans 12:18	Pursue peace as far as it depends on you.
Galatians 6:5	Each person has responsibility for their own load.
1 Corinthians 3:6-7	People may plant and water; God gives the growth.
1 Peter 5:7	Bring your worries and cares to God.

Suggested class flow

1. Welcome and frame the topic | 3-5 min

Say: "Today we are talking about loving someone while accepting that we cannot choose for them. Share only what feels safe."

2. Read and discuss Scripture | 8-10 min

Read Romans 12:18 and Galatians 6:5. Ask: "What is my part? What belongs to the other person?" Then connect 1 Corinthians 3:6-7: we can offer love, truth, and prayer, but we cannot force growth.

3. Private paper activity | 10-15 min

Have participants complete the worksheet on page 2. They may keep their writing private.

4. Reflection and closing prayer | 5-10 min

Invite volunteers to share one action they can choose this week. Close by offering the situation and the person to God.

Key distinction to repeat

Honoring parents can include speaking respectfully, praying for them, and treating them with care. It does not mean we can control their choices or have no boundaries. We can accept what is true today while leaving room for God to work in the future.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

What I can choose - and what I need to release

Think about a relationship or situation where you wish someone would change. You may keep the person and details private. Acceptance is not approval; it is an honest starting point for choosing your next step.

WHAT I CAN CHOOSE My part	WHAT I CANNOT CHOOSE Their part
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A few examples

I CAN CHOOSE	I CANNOT CHOOSE
My words, actions, and boundaries	Whether someone is willing to change
Whether I seek support or pray	How someone responds to my boundary
What I do with my time and energy	When another person is ready to take responsibility

Reflect

1. What feeling comes up when I accept that I cannot make this person change?

2. What is one loving, healthy boundary or action I can choose this week?

3. What worry or outcome can I entrust to God today?

Prayer

Jesus, I love this person, and I am tired of carrying what I cannot control. Help me face what is true today, show me how to respond with love and wisdom, and give me courage to keep healthy boundaries. I entrust this person and the outcome to You. Stay close to me in the hurt. Amen.

"I can love this person, treat them with respect, and pray for them. I cannot choose for them. I can ask God to help me respond wisely today."