



LIFE GROUP STUDY MATERIAL

Every Home a *Discipleship* Centre

Session #6

Affirmation: The Words that
build Discipleship

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AFFIRMATION: THE WORDS THAT BUILD DISCIPLESHIP

LESSON AIM

To understand the power of affirmation and intentionally use our words to shape identity, release potential and influence those closest to us towards God.

VIDEO LESSON

Link to video: <https://youtu.be/Ma70F9ivqCE?si=VsslwWuKT-aiE1Hf>

SCRIPTURE READING

Mark 1:11

11 And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Mark 1:11 (ESV)

INTRODUCTION

What is affirmation? **Affirmation is the ability to speak life into a soul.** It is not empty flattery or exaggerated praise. It is recognising what God sees in a person and intentionally speaking words that encourage and build them up.

God Himself modelled affirmation at the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. In Mark 1:11, the Father declared, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased." Before Jesus performed a miracle, preached a sermon or went to the cross, the Father affirmed His identity, expressed His love and declared His approval. In the same way, those closest to us need to hear words that remind them who they are, assure them that they are loved and encourage them towards God's purposes. Affirmation is the power of words that shape identity, release potential and influence the heart for God.

A. THE POWER OF WORDS

Proverbs 18:21 says,

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits.

Proverbs 18:21 ESV

Our words have the power to build up or tear down, to strengthen or discourage, and to plant hope or create hurt. Every home has a climate, and that climate is shaped largely by the words spoken within it. A home filled with criticism, comparison and negativity can become discouraging, while a home where people consistently speak life can become a place of grace, security and growth.

People often become what the most important voices in their lives say they are. As parents, spouses, family members and disciplers, our voices carry significant influence. When we speak words that affirm what God is doing in those closest to us, we help shape their identity, strengthen their faith and encourage them to become who God has called them to be.

B. THE PRINCIPLE OF EDIFICATION

Ephesians 4:29 instructs us,

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

Ephesians 4:29 (NASB 1995)

The word **edification** means to build up, like building a house. This verse teaches us to guard our words, use them to build people up, consider the right timing and speak in a way that gives grace.

We can often be more careless with our words at home than we are with people outside it. Yet those closest to us are also the ones most deeply affected by what we say. Even correction should be given at the right time and in a way that strengthens rather than tears down. As we intentionally recognise and affirm what is good, we help those qualities grow because what we affirm often increases.

C. THE PRACTICE OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Hebrews 3:13 tells us to

But exhort one another every day...

Hebrews 3:13 ESV

Encouragement should not be occasional, but a consistent practice that shapes the atmosphere of our homes. We cannot encourage someone one day and spend the rest of the week tearing them down. Instead, we are called to create a culture where people regularly hear words that strengthen their faith, courage and confidence in God.

Throughout Scripture, God used encouragement to call out the potential He had placed within people. God told the young Jeremiah,

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...

Jeremiah 1:5 ESV

and later declared,

And I, behold, I make you this day a fortified city,

Jeremiah 1:18 ESV

Paul also encouraged Timothy not to let others look down on his youth and reminded him that God had not given him a spirit of fear (1 Timothy 4:12; 2 Timothy 1:7). People often rise or fall according to the expectations placed upon them. When we speak God-given encouragement, we help those closest to us believe what God says about them and become who He has called them to be.

Conclusion

Building a culture of affirmation requires intentionality. We must develop “a detective’s eyes” by training ourselves to notice what is good and affirming the character, effort, attitude, love and God-given potential of those closest to us. Even when correction is necessary, we can affirm what is good, address what needs to change and finish by reminding them of our love and confidence in them. Our goal is to become the Chief Encouraging Officer of our home, not the Chief Discouraging Officer. We can affirm others because God has first affirmed His love for us. As we become secure in our identity as God’s beloved children, we can speak words that build others up and help our homes become places where people are encouraged to know Jesus, become like Him and fulfil His purposes.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Instructions for group facilitators: Every group is different. You may modify the discussion questions to suit your group and you do not need to use all the questions in the group discussion.

Question 1: Share one key insight that stood out to you from the lesson. Was there anything that particularly resonated with you, or anything that did not?

Question 2: Why do you think a few words of encouragement can have such a lasting impact on someone?

Question 3: Read Proverbs 18:21. What do you notice about the way this verse describes the power of our words?

Question 4: “Every home has a climate, and it is controlled largely by words.” What kinds of words help create a life-giving climate, and what kinds of words can damage it?

Question 5: Why is consistent encouragement important, and how can it help someone grow into the person God has called them to be?

Question 6: What would it look like to develop “a detective’s eyes” and become more intentional about noticing and affirming character, effort, attitude, love and potential?

Question 7: How can we give necessary correction while still helping someone feel loved and encouraged?

Question 8: What practical habit could help you become more consistent in speaking life to those closest to you?

NEXT STEPS

Take some time this week to reflect on the words you regularly speak within your home. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any patterns of criticism, comparison or negativity that may be discouraging those closest to you. Develop “a detective’s eyes” by intentionally looking for what is good, then speak specific words that affirm someone’s character, effort, attitude, love or God-given potential. Remember, affirmation is the ability to speak life into a soul. Choose to become the Chief Encouraging Officer of your home by using your words to build others up and influence their hearts towards God.