The Basics

I have six kids. And as I teach the same things over and over, you’d think I might get tired of the basics… and I admit, I do.

My middles have been disgustingly disobedient recently. You know when you go away from your house for a bit, then come back and look at it with fresh eyes, and wonder, “How did I let it get this bad???” Yeah. I’m having that experience with some of my parenting.

But I will tell you, some of the basics haven’t gotten old. In fact, I’ve become such a passionate believer in repentance and forgiveness, I’m halfway ready to write a book and tour the country teaching workshops on how this one concept is going to transform your life, your family, your business, and our whole country’s culture!

I was teaching a class recently, and a 6 year old girl came up to me complaining of something rude my 4 year old boy did to her. He did it. And she was right: it was gross. So I did what I always do, and I called him over and told him he owed her an apology. This is one thing we do well, and I’ve not let get disgusting (gonna brush my knuckles on my shoulder here and enjoy a moment of pride), and he apologized readily and sincerely. Then she made a little face at him. I asked her if she would forgive him; and startled, she looked at me like that was a totally new concept for her. But she said the words. He walked away. Then she started telling me the story all over again. I stopped her and said, “But he said he was sorry, and you said you forgave him. It’s done. Now, we get to move on.”

Mind blown.

This is big, guys.

Why are we living without this?

It’s so big, Jesus said that if you are on your way to worship God, you should go no further, go back and be reconciled to the person who has something against you, and only then go and offer your gift to God. Big deal stuff.

Apologies are hard. Impossible for some. Why? My guess is that it is lack of practice.

I’m thankful my kids have had lots of practice. Lots. So much (because they sin a lot.)

We’ve made sin into a shameful thing. But read your Bibles: it’s not God that attaches shame to sin. That was Satan. God’s response to sin is sadness (more on that later). And about the sinful woman, Jesus said that her love for him was so great because she had been forgiven so much. And, “Whoever has been forgiven little loves little.” Luke 7:47

If we want to be people of love (and God is love), then we deeply need to be practicing this most basic skill of not just forgiving, but of being forgiven. And I’m not talking about an idea of forgiveness that just assumes things done count because of grace, I’m talking about the kind of forgiveness that follows repentance.