

Merry Christmas from all of us in the FIT Family and thank you for enabling us to serve in 2018

- ❁ \$8,150 raised in May Fundraiser ❁ \$2,870 raised in FIT November Online Fundraiser
- ❁ Monthly support increased. ❁ Growth and Enthusiasm in new geographical areas
- ❁ 1,961 course completions in 2018 ❁ 33,758 contact hours ❁ 43 agencies
- ❁ 100 active facilitators ❁ Appreciation for our new courses

received from Dr. Katherine Gratto, Executive Director SIRA, Gainesville, FL about the class held at Grace United Methodist Church at Gainesville, FL-

◇ Thank you for saving a life when all was dark. Your kind help and understanding have put a light on my path. Sincerely, Frank Mitner ◇

◇ Dear Grace Methodist, The FIT class on grief has been amazing. The group has ministered to one another with the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Thank you so much for your generous hospitality. Marsha Blackford, facilitator ◇

◇ Dear Grace UMC, Thank you for allowing our group to meet here. The FIT class was

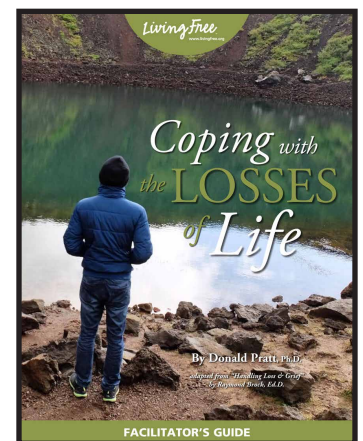
very helpful in dealing with my grief. This has been an awesome and helpful group. Thank you! Sierra Milliner ◇

◇ Dear Grace Church, Thank you for hosting our group "Coping with Losses of Life" on Wednesday nights. Your generosity has been a blessing to the participants of the group. Having a place to come and gather with others of similar experience has helped us all to heal. With gratitude, Beth Keeter FIT This has been an amazing group and I am glad to have been a part of it. Sharon Walters ◇

◇ Dear Grace Methodist, I am very grateful and happy that you allowed us to meet at your church every week for our "Coping with the Losses of Life" sessions this Fall. I am most grateful. God bless you all, Felicity Tackey

◇ To Grace Church, Thank you for allowing this grief class to gather for support in our loss of loved ones. Marsha has been an inspiring leader and the class members frank and sympathetic. Thanks so much! Fay Alexander

◇ Grace, Thank you so much for everything you have done for me over the past six months after the loss of my wife. The literature and counseling you provided has been a big help. Thank you for providing the FIT class. Pat Wheeler ◇



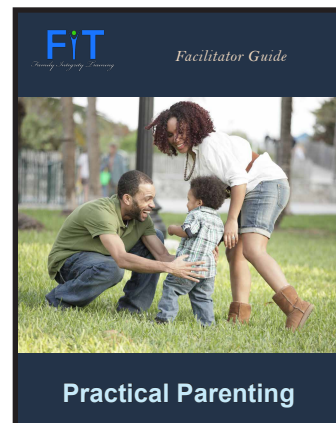
Coping with the Losses of Life

Can't help by being a volunteer but would like to support our team by providing funds for their support and materials to facilitate with? You can now donate at www.familyintegrity.org and click on [Donate Now](#). One-time and monthly gifts accepted.

received from Dr. Gary Ensign, FIT Facilitator and church leader from Dowling Park, FL-

I thank Family Integrity Training for supporting FIT approved classes at Suwannee Correctional Institution (Main Unit). Chaplain Wilbur Wood and I feel that the **"Practical Parenting"** course is having a significant positive impact on the men and their families.

Dr. Pratt, you and others at Family Integrity Training (FIT) who designed these FIT program courses have done an especially good job with **"Practical Parenting"**. The layout of the participant **"Study Guide"**, like a workbook, requires thoughtful write-ins of what the men really want to accomplish in their "parenting" **starting right now**. The end-of-course preparing of a 'Plan for More Effective Parenting' encourages each dad to really think through what they want and can do. I use a format for their plans and approach that I received from our friend Ms. Beverly Shatterly who in October 2016 was also my FIT Leader Trainer.



Parenting from prison is a long, difficult and often depressing road for **incarcerated dads** as they reach out to children and family. Almost always a journey of tears and years. A period of self-examination, brokenness, and confession. But **all** who sign-up and attend the course do so because **they love their kids**. Even if their children and families do not believe, trust or forgive them. It is an emotional rollercoaster for the men taking the course and quite frankly for me to facilitate.

Some men have been incarcerated for a short time while others have been separated from children and family much longer. Some men are scheduled for release relatively soon but for others it will be much longer. Some receive letters (now iPad texts) and a few even visits. Others do not. For some men, if their kids are under 18 and there is no court prohibition, they will locate them and contact the child's care giver. This assumes that the care giver will write back (which isn't always the case or isn't always regular correspondence). Of course some men have adult children and even grandchildren.

But **all have issues with children and family relations**. So if they "can" locate them what will they write? What will they do when they don't get a reply? How do they keep trying when it hurts not getting a reply? Or, they get a very angry reply? What do they do if the care giver or adult child want no further contact? How do they handle these and dozens of other thorny issues and situations? These are very difficult realities to deal with. Each man's situation is unique and there is no one approach that works or that doesn't require prayer, patience, persistence, perspective and "tons" of faith.

Family Integrity Training's **"Practical Parenting"** provides incarcerated dads with the basic elements for effective parenting from a Christian faith, Bible-based perspective. Based on out of class study and in class participation in facilitated small group discussion, sharing and problem-solving the men see how attitudes, values, and behavior - theirs and child's - shape the legacy (for good or bad) that they will pass on to their children as well as to grandchildren.

Dr. Pratt as you note in your title to 'Lesson 9' **Parenting is not Easy!** which is especially true for dads in prison. But through the Lord's grace, design and power the FIT **"Practical Parenting"** course facilitated by a caring and listening volunteer provides the foundation and motivation for these dads to be better parents. To have hope. Sincere Thanks, Gary Ensign