

“Family Matters - discipleship”

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:1-9; Proverbs 22:6

Graphics: house, family, home, worship, reading, mission

Big Truth: Families are important to God, to our communities, to our church, and to us. No matter in what stage you find yourself, family matters are vital to our lives. Sometimes we struggle with our families, but they are still family. Home building allows us to weather any storms for today and tomorrow. Raising children and grandchildren in the faith is our main task. Family finances point our hearts and lives to God’s kingdom work. Discipling our families makes new and stronger disciples of Jesus. Making transitions well leads to peace and joy, as God leads us to new places.

Focus Phrase: Family Discipleship is when parents help their children become disciples of Jesus Christ in the home through reading the Bible, praying, worshiping, and doing missions together.

1. Introduction

A. PRAY!

B. Family matters...to God, to the church, to our communities, and to us!

C. This is Week 4 of our Family Matters sermon series and today, we get into the heart of the series. So far, we’ve built our homes on the solid rock. We’ve gotten additional tools for raising children and grandchildren. AND, we’ve been equipped to use all our finances for God’s glory.

D. Today, we dive deeply into God’s true desire for our families.

E. God has a three-fold purpose for families.

i. The first one is **procreation** and the continuance of His human creation.

ii. The second one relates to some of the things we’ve been talking about: **food, shelter, security, and other basic needs.**

iii. But the last one, the matter at hand today, is discipleship - raising up followers of Jesus Christ. All three purposes are grounded in love, and the last one is the way we teach our families that love is from God.

F. On the shores of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus called men to be his disciples - to be his student learners. But he didn’t call them simply so they would learn from him. He called them, trained them, equipped them, and then gave them a mission SO THAT when he left they would CARRY on his MISSION.

G. That mission, we read in Matthew 28:19-20 is to, “...go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...”

H. Those disciples were family to Jesus. In fact, in Matthew 12:46-50 we read this. “While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. Someone told him, ‘Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you.’ He replied to him, ‘Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?’ Pointing to his disciples, he

said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.’”

- I. The main mode of teaching and equipping for mission, for Jesus, was within that family unit - his closest disciples AND his biological family.
- J. So, in one sense, those who are closest to us in our immediate families are the first and most important context for discipleship. In another sense, though, Jesus clearly teaches us that discipleship happens in a wider context, starting from the family unit, and then radiating outward to the world.
- K. Discipleship is a process that makes disciples starting with our children and grandchildren, and those children and people close to us, and then going out from there to the world...to make disciples of ALL nations.
- L. This morning, we’re going back to the Old Testament to get some foundational truth about what God requires of us as both disciples and those responsible for discipling our families.
- M. And, then, we have 3 families that have a testimony about family discipleship. During our COVID pause, we started a brand new small group of younger families with children. The one focus was family discipleship. The team used a resources by Winfield Bevins called Grow at Home.
- N. Winfield defines family discipleship like this: “Family Discipleship is when parents help their children become disciples of Jesus Christ in the home through reading the Bible, praying, worshiping, and doing missions together.”
- O. At the heart of Jesus’ ministry, and the ministry of homes and the church is to lovingly **give every person the opportunity to believe in and follow Jesus.**
- P. Are you ready?! Let’s grab our bibles and turn to Deuteronomy 6, verse 1...

2. Scripture

A. READ Deuteronomy 6:1-3

- i. At this point in history, the people of Israel were preparing to enter into the Promised Land...the land described as “a land flowing with milk and honey.” This was the land that God promised He would take them into AFTER he led them out of Egypt and slavery to the Egyptians.
- ii. Before they crossed over the river that separated them from Canaan, though, Moses gave the people a whole bunch of instructions and commandments from God...ways that they were to act, rituals they were to keep, and things they were to DO as a nation.
- iii. Yet, God’s commandments to the people were not just a list of do’s and don’t’s. Obeying the commandments was in response to God’s provision, protections, guidance, salvation, and promises fulfilled.

- iv. These commandments weren't given because God wanted perfect people to serve Him. These commandments were given, prior to their crossing the Jordan River, so that His people would be faithful to Him alone.
- v. God was preparing them, their children, and their grandchildren to, it says in verse 2, "...fear the Lord your God all the days of your life, and keep all his decrees and his commandments that I am commanding you."
- vi. This wasn't about rules...this was about giving God the honor and glory that was due Him. The 'fear the Lord your God' is not cowering in the corner, but bowing before His all-powerful and sovereign presence, worshiping and obeying and serving Him, as He commands.
- vii. Teach these things, God said to Moses. Keep them at the center of your lives and families. Moses went on in verse 4...

B. READ Deuteronomy 6:4-9

- i. The people of Israel needed to know and always remember that there was ONE God. That that One God, Yahweh, CHOSE them to be His people. That He loved them. And that they were to keep God at the center of all they did.
- ii. To do that, they would keep God's commands at the center of all they did. The main command being that they, "...shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."
- iii. And by keeping God and His commands at the center of everything they did, they would express their love for God.
- iv. How? Well...here's what Moses said:
 - a. Recite the commands to your children.
 - b. Talk about God and God's commands when you are at home, and when you are away from home (meaning - at all times, because you're either home or you're not home, right?)...when you lie down and when you rise up. (all the time)
 - c. Bind them (keep them close) as a sign on your hand - the Jewish people even to this day worship with scripture and commands wrapped around their hands and arms.
 - d. Fix them as an emblem on your forehead - the Jewish people also place scripture passages in a small box and attach that to their foreheads. When we were in Israel, we saw this taking place. And...
 - e. Write them on your doorposts and on your gates - so that when you come and go, you'll be reminded of God's commands.
- v. All this to say that God wanted His people to be prepared - equipped - to love Him and keep his commands at the center of all they did...one big

family, living together and teaching and learning together so that they would stand strong, love God and each other, and be a witness to the world.

3. Application

- A. God's call on YOUR life today is no less about Him than it was then. In fact, in order to prove His love and give you a central focus of your life and your love, He sent Jesus to teach us, suffer and die for our sins which cause a barrier to keeping Him at the center, and then sent the Holy Spirit to be Christ IN US.
- B. With Christ IN you, keeping Jesus as the center of all things is not about keeping rules and commands. Keeping Christ at the center is responding to the Jesus in ME and the Jesus in YOU.
- C. Teaching our families to respond to the Holy Spirit IN US is the main goal of discipleship.
- D. And, because the family is the place and context in which God has chosen to make that happen most profoundly, then making disciples happens first in the family setting...and then, as an extension of the family, in the church as a conduit to the world.
- E. Before we get to our family discipleship testimonies, here are a few things that will help families frame discipleship. I'm not going to tell us HOW to do family discipleship, since it's different for each family. Our testimonies will give us some ideas and I invite anyone who can to engage in the Grow at Home Small Group.
- F. When you're reading the Bible, praying, worshiping, and doing missions together, as a family, keep these things in mind.
 - i. First, raising disciples in the home will mean that **your home will look vastly different** than non-Christian homes
 - a. Romans 12:2 reminds us, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."
 - b. Crossway's Adam Griffin wrote, "In an increasingly secular culture, it is likewise increasingly critical to equip Christian kids with the audacity it will take to be countercultural. Today's children need to not only be taught what is true but how to distinguish it from what is false and how to boldly stand up against a torrent of opinions to the contrary."
 - c. Reading the Bible, worshiping, praying, and doing missions together will make you distinctly Christian. Embrace that. Strive for it. Live it!
 - ii. Second, **family discipleship is mostly just ordinary stuff**

- a. Family discipleship is not a secret sect or cult that has handshakes and codes to learn. Family discipleship is being who you are. Or better yet, it's being who you are disguised as a follower of Jesus...and being transformed every day by the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Stacy and I always tried to normalize our faith with our kids. It's just who we are. Family discipleship, at its best, is an ordinary part of your family's normal rhythm.
 - c. Remember what Deuteronomy says about going in and out, lying down and rising up. This doesn't have to be a super-spiritual highlight of every day. Faith lessons take place on the way to the garbage can and doing homework as much as they do when you pray and read the bible.
- iii. Third, family discipleship is **straight-up indoctrination of our children**
- a. I often hear parents say, "I want my child to make those decisions for themselves when they are old enough." If it doesn't work with brushing their teeth and doing homework, then why would it work for the most important decision in your child's life?
 - b. The definition of indoctrination is, "instruction in a body of doctrine or principles; the instillation of a partisan or ideological point of view." Is that NOT exactly what God is commanding us to do?
 - c. 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 says, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual." 1 Corinthians 2:12-13
 - d. Your job, family, is to teach each other a very specific set of things about this God who loves us, died for us, was raised for us, and is praying for us from His throne! Don't ever be ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ!
- iv. Fourth, family discipleship is **not easy and not a guarantee** of our children's salvation
- a. In order to spiritually lead a family to Christ, it takes stubborn, gracious, loving, prayerful persistence. Children, and even spouses sometimes, may rebel against what parents or family members teach them or ask of them. You can't give up when the going gets tough.
 - b. But it must be done with love. Ephesians 6:4 says, "Fathers (and mothers), do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."
 - c. And, children, remember what Paul said in Colossians 3:20, "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."

- d. And, parents, you can do everything according to the plan, and still a rebellious child may walk away from the faith. Keep loving them and taking the given opportunities to show them Christ's love...and keep teaching them about forgiveness and grace. Let God handle the heavy-lifting.
- v. Lastly, family discipleship the **most important thing you do as a parent**.
 - a. Proverbs 22:6 in the Message translation says, "Point your kids in the right direction—when they're old they won't be lost."
 - b. That's the promise we have and the reason we engage in family discipleship.
 - c. This is about loving God with our whole heart, whole soul, and whole might. It's about raising up a new generation of Jesus people so that the world will know and experience the love of God through Jesus, The Way, The Truth, and the Life.

G. Testimony from Adam and Tory

H. VIDEO from Casey

I. Testimony from Kim

4. Conclusion

- A. Family Discipleship is when parents help their children become disciples of Jesus Christ in the home through reading the Bible, praying, worshiping, and doing missions together.
- B. We see that in action in our church. If you want to learn more about Grow at Home, you can talk to any of the families that have been through the course. Maybe a new one will start soon!
- C. Your homework for this week is to keep developing a lifestyle of family discipleship. It's not just about setting aside time in our busy schedules, but allowing the Holy Spirit to invade every moment of your family life, no matter how old or young you are.
- D. Train 'em up church!
- E. Let's pray...and then we'll welcome some new members...