

Family Matters

Study Guide

Dear Friend,

Thanks for taking the step to engage with this study guide as Life Center collectively grows in *FAMILY MATTERS*. Here is what I know: you matter to God. You matter so much to Him that when you put your trust in Jesus, you are welcomed into *His Family*.

No matter what your family experience or environment has been or currently is, you can rest in the fact that you are a part of the family of God! We all have experienced either joy or pain, or perhaps both, in family relationships. As we study in the coming weeks, we will look together at some important aspects of family that we need to know and grow in.

I love what Joshua declared:

“...as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.”

Joshua 24:15 (NLT)

The image and idea of the family is woven throughout the Scriptures. From creation, God put man and women together as a family; from that design, families would multiply and fill the earth. Even in salvation, we see the language of the family on display, understanding that through Jesus, we are welcomed *into the family of God*.

In the weeks ahead we will talk about belonging, marriage, parenting, mentoring, and overcoming cycles of brokenness. This is truly a study for us all!

Thankful to be in the journey with you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'TS' with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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Introduction

The image and idea of the family are woven throughout the scriptures. From creation, God put man and women together as a family; from that design, families would multiply and fill the earth. Even in salvation, we see the language of the family on display, understanding that through Jesus we are welcomed into the *family of God*.

During this series, we will talk not only about how much family matters, but also about several matters that come up in the family. This series will be for all because every one of us comes *from a family*, and as followers of Jesus we now have a place of belonging in *God's family*.

Key Scripture

Joshua 24:14-15 (CSB)

“Therefore, fear the Lord and worship him in sincerity and truth. Get rid of the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and worship the Lord. But if it doesn't please you to worship the Lord, choose for yourselves today: Which will you worship—the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living? As for me and my family, we will worship the Lord.”

Week 1

You Belong

Opening Thought

Family holds a central place in both society and Scripture, serving as a foundation for relationships, identity, and community. The Bible is filled with thoughts that speak on the importance of family and its significance in our lives as believers. As believers, we are not just individuals but part of a family, both by our physical DNA, which makes us part of a biological family, and by our spiritual DNA, which makes us part of the family of God. This idea of belonging to a family carries profound implications for our identity, relationships, and sense of community. As you spend time interacting with these questions, either with yourself, your family, or a small group let the words of these verses help to develop your sense of belonging.

Memory Verse

Ephesians 3:14-15 CSB *“For this reason I kneel before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.”*

Opening

- What has been your experience with “family” up to this point in your life?
- What differences have you experienced between your biological family and your spiritual family?

Discussion

- What does the Bible teach us about the origin and purpose of family? (Genesis 2:24)
- How does family reflect the image of God and His relationship with His people? (Ephesians 3:14-15)
- In what ways should the family provide support, guidance, and stability in your life? (Proverbs 1:8-9)
- What do you think it means to belong to God’s family? (Ephesians 2:19)
- How does the family imagery used in Scripture impact your understanding of God’s character and His relationship with you? (Psalm 68:5-6)

Application

- What are some practical ways that you can demonstrate belonging to God’s family in your daily life? (John 13:34-35)
- How can you prioritize your family relationships with the demands of your daily life? (Ephesians 5:25:28)
- Where do you feel some disconnect with either your earthly or heavenly family?
- What do you see as steps you can take to help with the reconnection?

Closing Thought

Family is a gift from God, designed to provide love, support, and a sense of belonging. Family, both by origin and by spiritual connection, shapes your identity, relationships, and life’s purpose. Choose to embrace the part you play within family and embrace your part in supporting, loving, and encouraging one another.

Week 2

The Meaning of Marriage

Opening Thought

Many different institutions make up a society, ranging from government to education. The first institution that was established was marriage. Marriage was established by God and designed to reflect His love, unity, and purpose. Several outside influences want to define and redefine that God-created relationship. As you spend time interacting with these questions, either with yourself, your family, or a small group, let the words of these verses help you to discover what God's word has to say about His institution of marriage.

Memory Verse

Genesis 2:24 CSB *This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh.*

Opening

- Why do you think marriage is part of the creation story?
- What are ways you've seen culture reflect marriage?
- How do you see these differing from a biblical view of marriage?

Discussion

- According to Genesis 2:24, what is the biblical definition of marriage?
- How do you see marriage reflecting the relationship between Christ and the church? (Ephesians 5:31-32)
- What purposes of marriage do you see in 1 Corinthians 7:2-5?
- How does the covenantal nature of marriage reflect God's faithfulness and commitment to His people? (Malachi 2:14-16)
- What relational qualities do you find in Proverbs 18:22?

Application

- Take a moment and read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.
- What words stand out to you in this definition of love?
- What is one aspect of love that you can practice this week?
Be ready to share next week how your practice went.

Closing Thought

Marriage is a gift from God that transcends beyond the human realm to reflect His love, unity, and faithfulness. Take a moment and thank God for the gift of marriage, even as you recognize the tension that can sometimes be found in this core relationship.

Week 3

Raising up the Next Generation

Opening Thought

There is a theme that runs through the Bible that speaks to the importance of passing on the faith to the next generation. There is something significant that happens when you choose to take on this responsibility. There is a part that parents and spiritual mentors can play, but there is also a reliance on God doing His part — you have to leave it with Him.

Memory Verse

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 CSB *“Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. Repeat them to your children. Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”*

Opening

- When did your family story find its connection to God's story?
- Who has had a spiritual impact on your life?

Discussion

- What does the Bible teach about the responsibility that parents have in raising their children? (Deuteronomy 6:4-7)
- How can parents develop a love for God and His Word in their children's lives? (Proverbs 22:6)
- How can parents model godly character and behavior for their children? (Ephesians 6:4)
- What part can the church play in coming alongside parents in raising their children? (Proverbs 27:17)
- How does prayer impact the raising of children? (1 Thessalonians 5:17)

Application

- What are some specific prayers parents can pray for their children?
- If you are not a parent, what ways can you engage in supporting the parents around you?
- How can you engage with the church in helping to set a biblical foundation in children's lives?

Closing Thought

Raising the next generation is a challenging and important task entrusted to parents and to those who are in supporting roles through connection and church. It takes wisdom and guidance from God's Word, prayer, and a supporting community. Find a way that you can invest in the spiritual growth and development of the next generation.

Week 4

Break the Cycle

Opening Thought

This week's discussion can lead down some challenging paths and conversations. Often in families, there are cycles of brokenness and dysfunction that may have been passed down and passed on within the family dynamic. Recognition of the past can be helpful, but there is something powerful that happens when a choice is made to move forward and look for ways to break the cycle.

Memory Verse

Ephesians 4:3 CSB *“And be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.”*

Opening

- What are some good traits or practices that you feel have been passed on to you?
- What are some good traits and practices that you are hoping to pass on to those who come after you?

Discussion

- What are some common cycles of brokenness that families may experience? (Genesis 27:41)
- How does sin and brokenness affect family dynamics and relationships? (Romans 3:23)
- What part do you see forgiveness playing in breaking cycles of brokenness within families? (Ephesians 4:32)
- Why is forgiveness so hard?
- How do you see the redemptive work of Christ involved in bringing healing and restoration to families? (2 Corinthians 5:17)

Application

- What part can you play in helping to break any cycles of brokenness that you see in your family?
- Is there something specific that the group could be praying with you about?

Closing Thought

These few minutes that have been spent talking and thinking about the cycles of brokenness have only scratched the surface. Breaking these cycles requires intentional effort, reliance on the transformative power of God's love and grace, and maybe some outside help. Choose to be someone who is working toward breaking the cycles that need to be broken. Allow God to bring healing and restoration to your life and the life of your family.

Week 5

Becoming a Godly Man

Opening Thought

What defines a man? The definition is often influenced by who you ask, what you read, or what you might watch. There is a wide range of answers, which in turn creates a wide range of pathways that could be pursued. The Bible provides some clarity and timeless ideas about how you can answer the question. In this week's study, let the words of Scripture help you to formulate the definition that God desires.

Memory Verse

1 Samuel 16:7 CSB *“But the Lord said to Samuel “Do not look at his appearance or his stature because I have rejected him. Humans do not see what the Lord sees, for humans see what is visible, but the Lord sees the heart.”*

Opening

- In your growing-up years, what definitions of what it means to be a man do you remember hearing?
- In thinking about current culture, what would you say is the definition of being a man that people are hearing?

Discussion

- How does the picture painted in 1 Samuel 16:7 compare with the picture that is painted by current culture?
- What are some key qualities of a godly man as described in Psalm 1:1-3?
- How do you think a godly man can lead and serve his family, community, and church? (Ephesians 5:25)
- What role do you see spiritual maturity and growth play in becoming a godly man? (2 Peter 3:18)

Application

- If you were going to apply 1 Corinthians 13:11 to your life, what are some of the things that need to be left behind?
- Who could you turn to as a mentor and who could you be mentoring along the path of becoming a godly man? (Proverbs 27:17)

Closing Thought

The pathway to being a godly man is a lifelong journey of growth and transformation that is guided by the principles of Scripture, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the gift of connecting with other godly men. Choose to pursue your God-given calling to lead, serve, and love others with humility, integrity, and courage.

Week 6

Becoming a Godly Woman

Opening Thought

The Bible provides timeless guidance on what it means to be a godly woman, a pursuit that doesn't follow cultural norms and expectations. As you take a few minutes to think and talk through this idea of becoming a godly woman allow God's word to lead you to the possibility of some new thoughts and pursuits.

Memory Verse

Proverbs 31:25 CSB *“Strength and honor are her clothing, and she can laugh at the time to come.”*

Opening

- If you were only going to use the media to provide your definition of being a woman, what would make up your definition?
- What messages were you given as you were growing up that formed your definition of what a woman is?

Discussion

- Proverbs 31 has been a key chapter in defining a godly woman. What do you see as some key attributes described in these verses? (Proverbs 31:10-31)
- How do you think a godly woman can cultivate a heart of wisdom and right perspective of God? (Proverbs 9:10)
- In what ways does a godly woman demonstrate the qualities found in Colossians 3:12?
- What do you see specifically in Proverbs 31:25 that helps a woman navigate some of the challenges and trials of life?

Application

- If you were going to paraphrase 1 Corinthians 13:11 to speak about a woman, what would you see as things you need to “put away” on your pathway toward becoming a godly woman?
- Who could you turn to as a mentor and who could you be mentoring along the path of becoming a godly woman? (Proverbs 27:17)

Closing Thought

The pathway to being a godly woman is a lifelong journey of growth and transformation that is guided by the principles of Scripture, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the gift of connecting with other godly women. Choose to pursue your God-given calling toward wisdom, kindness, and faithfulness as you connect to others with humility, love, and grace.

Week 7

Becoming a Child of God

Opening Thought

As this seven-week study ends, the final topic around the topic of Family Matters is focused on becoming a child of God. The Bible is filled with this connection: there is a natural family, but also, more importantly, there is a spiritual family. It's based on the words of Jesus; He identified those who did His will as those who are a part of His family. No matter what your birth certificate may say, you can have a new identity and family that connects you with all those who have said yes to Jesus.

Memory Verse

John 1:12-13 CSB *“But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born, not of natural descent, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.”*

Opening

- When in your life have you experienced a family moment that wasn't based on your DNA, but on something else?
- Have you had any personal experiences with a family that has experienced family growth through adoption? What did you observe?

Discussion

- According to John 1:12-13, what does it mean to become a child of God?
- How does faith play a role in becoming a child of God? (Galatians 3:26-27)
- How does being “born again” affect your life and relationship with God? (John 3:3-8)
- Why is it important to understand that your status as a child of God is not based on your own merit or hard work? (Ephesians 1:5-6)
- What do you see in 1 John 3:1-3 that speaks to your life as a child of God?

Application

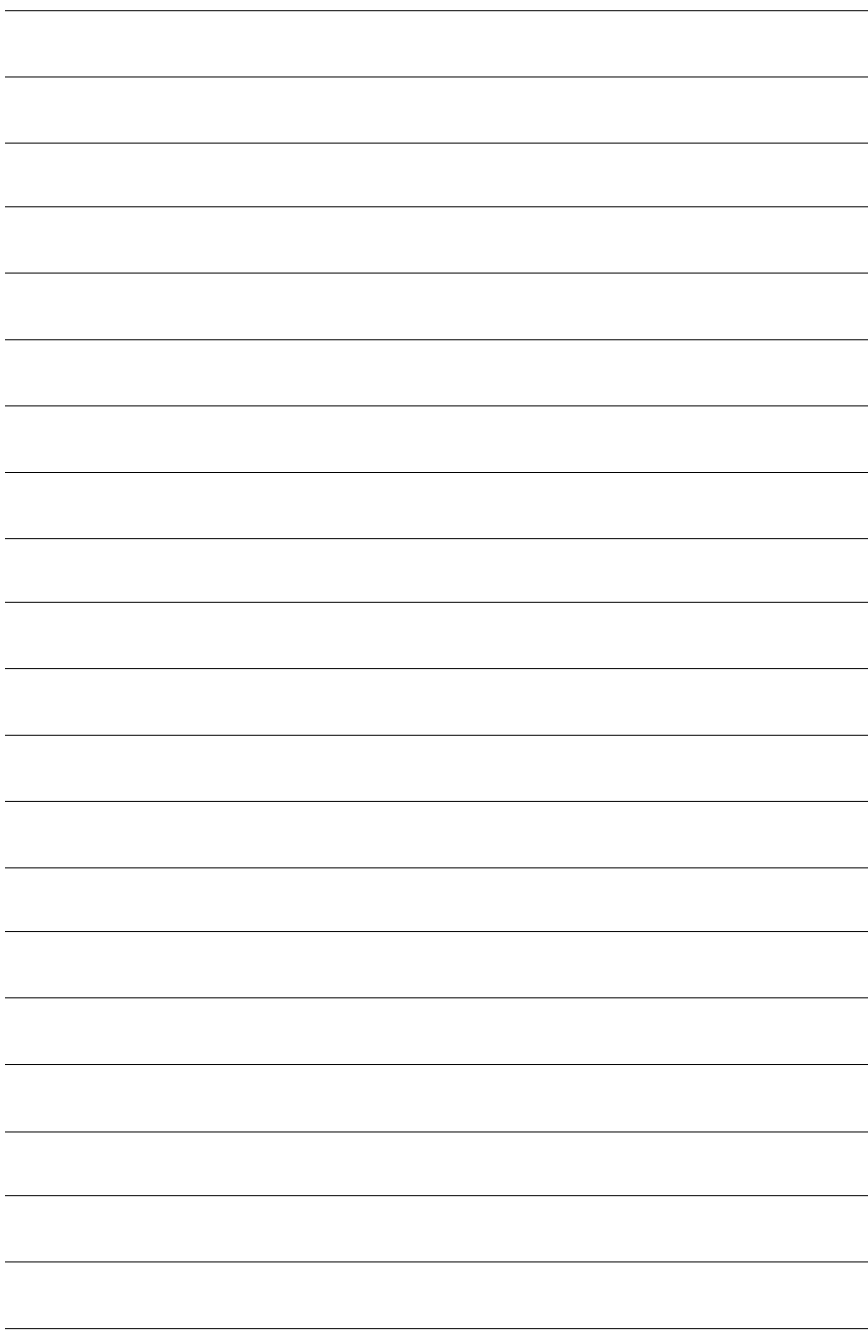
- When did you come to experience your identity as God's child in a real way?
- What do you think are some practical ways you can live your life in the identity of being God's child?

Closing Thought

As this study on Family Matters concludes, take a moment to thank God for the gift of family, both in the natural and also in the supernatural. May the truth that you are God's child impact and change your life. Choose to live in the truth that you have been adopted into God's family, and as you live as His beloved child, let the love of your Father shine through your life.

Life Group Guidelines

- 1. Make Room for the Holy Spirit:** When someone is sharing something deeply personal and/or painful, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or the situation. Often this will cause people to stop sharing, and results in their not going as deep as they might have gone. Resist the temptation to rescue people. Allow the Holy Spirit to guide the person into repentance and ultimately freedom. You may want to take time later to ask if you may offer some advice. (John 14:15-16)
- 2. Confidentiality:** Prevent gossip that only values the story; Jesus always valued the person above their story or their sin. (Proverbs 16:28)
- 3. Crosstalk:** Be considerate of others as they are sharing. Don't have side conversations. Trust is built in the moments when everyone feels like they are being listened to and heard by the entire group. Treat others in the group as you would want to be treated. (Mark 12:30-31)
- 4. Use Humor Responsibly:** Fun is an essential part of Life Groups; however, when meeting keep sarcastic comments or jokes to a minimum to allow for a safe atmosphere where sharing is encouraged. (Ephesians 5:4)
- 5. Give Everyone a Chance to Share:** Be sensitive to the amount of time you share. Encourage everyone to participate in group discussions. (Hebrews 13:15-16)
- 6. Use "I" Statements:** During small group, we want to hear your personal thoughts and perspectives. Using "I" statements to answer discussion questions allows you to speak for yourself rather than generalizing by using terms such as "them," "the church," "us," or "we." (Matthew 7:3)
- 7. Fight for Relationships:** Relationship reaches a whole new level when conflict is resolved in a healthy manner. When conflict or sin issues arise between group members, commit to fight for the relationship and discuss the struggle with the person you are in conflict with or seek Godly counsel. (Hebrews 12:14-15)





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