

God's Design for Family, Part 3

Introduction

“Love is hard work. Work from which one is never entitled to take a vacation.” Family is a unique relationship where we know all of each others faults and still find a way to love the person. The family is a place where reconciliation and love are on display despite our failures.

Last week, we began to discuss God's Design for the Family. In the morning we focused in on how God created the family from the very beginning and wanted worship to be a focal point of the family. In the evening, we discussed how the family was to be a place where godly wisdom was given and warnings could guide children away from the path of evil.

3. A Place where Reconciliation and Love are on display

Last week, we highlighted several stories from Genesis to illustrate the division and turmoil that can occur in families. Satan certainly wants to attack and destroy our families. You remember the stories:

- ❖ Adam and Eve
- ❖ Cain and Abel
- ❖ Jacob and family
- ❖ Jacob and Laban
- ❖ Joseph and Brothers

Many of the stories that are told in the book of Genesis (which we briefly highlighted) contain some horrible transgressions. As you reflect on the stories, we are shocked by some of the actions in which they engage. One of our tendencies is to focus on the front part of the story which contains the bad parts, but interestingly many of the stories end up on some note of reconciliation.

- ❖ Gen 13:7-9: Abram want to avoid a quarrel with Lot; relationship more valuable than things
 - Absent from PowerPoint

a) Jacob and Laban

- Gen 31:15: Leah and Rachel poor relationship with their father
- Gen 31:20: Jacob and family flee from Laban
- Gen 31:29: Laban says it is within his power to do Jacob harm...
- Gen 31:41: Jacob says you have changed my wages 10 times

Story end with Covenant:

- ❖ Gen 31:44-55: Covenant between Laban and Jacob not to harm each other

b) Jacob and Esau

- After reconciling with Laban Jacob has to face his brother Esau
- Gen 25 and 27: Trickery
- Gen 27:41: Esau promises revenge

Story ends with reconciliation, forgiveness, and living together

- ❖ Gen 32:1-33:20; 36:6-7: Jacob and Esau reconcile and live together briefly (36:6-7)

c) Joseph and his brothers

- Gen 37: Hate Joseph and want to kill but settle for selling him into slavery
- Gen 40:14-15; 41:50-52: Joseph sorrow and “dealing” with pain from situation

Story ends with Joseph forgiving, providing, and refusing to hurt his brothers

- ❖ Gen 45-50: Joseph forgives and provides for his brothers

d) David and Absalom

- Tension in relationship between David and Absalom
- David restores Absalom once after being banished
- Absalom rebels against his father David
- He wants to kill his father and secure the throne
- When going out to battle David says be gentle with young man Absalom

- ❖ 2 Sam 18:33: David sorrows over Absalom’s death

e) Hosea and Gomer

- Hos 1:2: Hosea marries a prostitute
- She is unfaithful and returns to former life

- ❖ Hosea 3: Hosea redeems Gomer

In all of these cases the people involved knew what they were doing:

- ❖ Laban knew what he was doing to Jacob (Gen 31:41)
- ❖ Esau knew Jacob was trying to trick him
- ❖ Joseph knew his brother’s intended evil against him (Gen 50:20)
- ❖ Absalom wanted to kill David and David knew it
- ❖ Hosea knew how his wife had lived

Yet, there was an attempt to work out the situations (to various degrees). Why were these people willing to work out situations when wrongs have been committed? Because we do not want to give up on our family. Spouses do not want to give up on each other. Siblings want to work through problems. Parents love their children.

God’s love is often depicted as a parent, a husband, or even a brother. Family language is used to describe his love and forgiveness.

- ❖ Parent: Isaiah 49:14-16 (greater than parents love)
- ❖ Husband: Hosea 2:19-20 (common Biblical picture of God as husband and faithless people)

Our imperfect families become a place to reflect the perfect love of God by forgiving and reconciling despite the difficulties.