

## Family Faith Connection Day 1

## Scripture: Proverbs 22:6



\*Read todays scripture and answer the following questions:

1. What are your hopes and dreams for your family in the following areas: (Make a list for each person in your family that you will refer to every day—use a piece of paper/notebook/journal)

- A. Spiritual/Relationship with God
  - B. Family
  - C. Financial
  - D. Educational
  - E. Success/Failures
  - F. Friends/Relationships

2. What are some areas in your life you need to get right with God?  
(Make a list to use on a daily basis in a notebook/journal etc.)

3. Designate a time daily you will stop and pray for your family specifically as directed each day. It does not have to be a very long, drawn out prayer, but make a promise and designate and let your family know the time in which you are going to set aside for prayer. Put it on a card, write down the time, put it somewhere everyone will know (refrigerator, bedroom door, bathroom mirror, etc.) and sign it.

My Prayer Time: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Designate a day of the week, Monday-Friday, that as a family you will stop and spend time reading through the weekly devotional provided each week.

Family Devotional Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Now return to the Scripture for today. Reread it and write it down in your own words. Make it personal.. Replace the words child and he with each person in your families name(s). For example: Train Amelia in the way Amelia should go, and when Amelia is older, Amelia will not soon depart from it. Maybe it will allow you to see this verse in a brand new perspective as it pertains to your youth.

\*Today is the first step. It is filled with a lot of questions of where tomorrow may lead all of us as a family. Each day will be a test and some days will be easier than others. Following today the true test will be left to you. Each day will be found on the church website @[www.wynntonumc.org](http://www.wynntonumc.org) by noon. We will all have to make the choice to be a part. If you would like this information sent out to you daily via email please notify me by email at [jwade@wynntonumc.org](mailto:jwade@wynntonumc.org)

"It's the best of jobs. It's the most difficult of jobs. It can bring you the greatest joy. It can cause the greatest pain. There is nothing as fulfilling and exhilarating. There is nothing so depleting and exhausting. No area of your life can make you feel more like a success when everything is going well. No area of your life can make you feel more like a failure when things go wrong. PARENTING!". Stormie Omartian

## Family Faith Connection Day 2

## Scripture Reference: 2 Corinthians 13:5-9



# Examination Day

## \*Read today's scripture verses

Today, as we continue in our journey together, I would like each of us to do a self-evaluation. I know this sounds crazy, but I think you will understand why in the end. Take a moment and in your notebook, on a piece of paper or journal write down everything you have on your schedule on a weekly basis. Many of us have such a set routine even our cars know when and where we are going. It can be as detailed or as vague as you would like it to be, but the more specific the better. Once you have completed your detailed weekly schedule I want you to stop and say this prayer:

Dear God, examine my time and help me to see where my time with You begins and ends on a daily basis. Help me to redirect my time so that it will become your time. Amen

I know you may be thinking Jason you don't understand how hectic and crazy my schedule is or how long it took me to finally get my schedule right. Trust me I know I'm looking at mine too. In the beginning I am just asking that we find a time daily to stop and put God in the schedule for us! Once you find the time to put God in for you then you can finally move into putting God back in your family. Reading the scripture for today you will see we are asked to examine our lives to test and see if we are IN the faith. So today begins with us examining our schedules and lives. Stop and reread the scripture and think through the following questions: Answer based on a 1-10 basis 1 being every day and 10 being very seldom.

1. When is the last time, excluding meals, that you and your family read scripture together at home and prayed?
  2. How often, outside of church have you opened your Bible and read?
  3. How often do you stop and pray to God to open your heart, mind, and soul to His plan for your life?
  4. In your family, how many times is the name God or Jesus used in a positive way?
  5. How often does your family get on the computer or sit in front of the television?

Reexamine the answers you put for each question. In 5 basic questions how much more time do we find ourselves spending on things of the world and ask ourselves why our families seem fragmented or distant from each other. Coming from a generation which completely was raised by TV, it's so much easier for me to say I have no time to do this stuff I'm asking all of us to do by realizing the hours I lose each day sitting in my chair and "relaxing" because I had a hard day. Just know starting on this journey you are now in a fight with the World for your family. And until we are hard set on fighting for God to have time in our families, He will only get the leftovers and so will our families. Today is an examination day... Are you ready to fight for your personal growth and your family?

Final thought... Read and pray through the words from Psalm 139:23-24. If we are really ready to see a change in our families, we must first take and examine our personal lives. Are you ready to be examined? If its like me, you honestly may not like what you find if you are completely honest. But know you are not alone and know once the examination is over, we can begin to learn from our faults and humbly rejoice in our successes.

\*Close today's journey by taking out your sheet and praying specifically for your Family's spiritual relationship with God from the list you made from Day 1. 90% of what families learn about their relationship with God and the church comes from home... Not from church. If in your list your dreams were for your family to be more grounded in their faith... Guess what.. We have to become more grounded in our faith at home. So pray just for that area of your family's lives today. AMEN

#### Today's Scripture Verse:

Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you-unless, of course, you fail the test? And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test. Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong. Not that people will see that we have stood the test but that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is for your perfection. (2 Corinthians 13:5-9 NIV84)

## Family Faith Connection Day 3

### Scripture Reference: Jeremiah 29:11-14a



## Restoration Day

\*Read today's scripture verses

So now we have started day 3. In understanding where we are today, we must also understand where we have been for, however many years, in lala land. Today's scripture reminds us that God is ready to restore us. After 70 plus years of being completely separated, God was ready to fulfill His promise to restore His family. I know that it is hard to believe, but God was tired of seeing everything in the state that it was in and He called for everyone to come back home. He knows the plans that are in store for us, however, we must be willing to do one thing... Humble our hearts and pray. This is why Phase 1 is so important to this process. For 30 days I am asking you to begin to establish a time of prayer for and with your family. I believe in the power of prayer and to be honest, I still believe that we are all separated so far apart that only through the power of prayer will restoration be possible. Reread the verses again and answer these questions today:(Answer in your notebook or journal)

1. Do you fully believe that God has a plan for your life? If so, what do you honestly believe His plans are for you and your family.
2. In verse 12 God uses the word "THEN". See we must be first willing to accept that God is wanting to restore us with the full assurance that there is a better plan for us. THEN, we will call to Him and come to Him. What is standing between you and God in perspective to your family being restored? Guilt? Time? Failure? What are you holding onto today that is not allowing you to receive God's promise of hope and a future?
3. Verse 13: Are you willing to stop and seek God with your WHOLE heart? This is where most people begin to turn away. Are you truly ready to watch God change your life in order that your family can have a hope for the future?
4. Verse 14: I WILL BE FOUND BY YOU! Does this completely terrify you like it does me? I know a lot of the times I say I want to find God, but in my sin filled life, sometimes I feel that it would be better for me to hide like Adam and Eve. Although He found them too. Before we can even think about our families, we have to accept the fact

that if we want to be restored, we must first have to be willing to be found in our present state. Are you willing to be found?

\*Restoration is not easy. In fact it is a life long process for most of us. We seek to find new ways and methods to make us look or feel better about ourselves instead of honestly getting to the root of the problem....US!

\*Today our prayer time is going to be designated to our families and the future families of our students. Believe you me, I am already praying for the ones who are going to one day marry Amelia and Avery. You may think I am crazy, but honestly I am praying that God will be a firm foundation in their lives. I pray for their parents to do the best they can to raise them in a God centered home, and I pray for the lives of the grandchildren that will be a blessing to our family. Yes, my daughters are 15 and 10 years old... and YES I am already starting to pray for their family... that's how passionate I am about believing that God has a plan and future for them already! And I am asking for you to do the same starting today. Ask God for these things today:

\*That God will provide a godly husband/wife for your daughter/son

\*That God will give strength to the family as they grow in their faith. If you are having issues in your family, so are they. Pray for their willingness to make right decisions.

\*Pray specifically that God will continue to give you vision to lead your family on a daily basis.

\*Pray that God will humble your heart in hopes of His plans for your future being revealed.

\*Finally, Pray for the obstacles that we have placed in our lives that are causing us not to want to accept this idea of restoration. God says he will bring us back from captivity...what is still holding you captive today?

#### **Today's Scripture:**

11 For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.14 I will be found by you," declares the Lord, "and will bring you back from captivity. *Jeremiah 29:11-14*

## Family Faith Connection Day 4

Scripture Reference: 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a,9-13

### Reflection Day

\*Read today's scripture verses



What did you see when you looked in the mirror this morning? You may not want to answer that question. For most of us we see the reflection of the child we used to be so long ago. We see the person that stands before us that has been educated, scarred, beaten, aged, surprised, loved, changed. Some of us see our parents. Others see but a mere reflection of a life that has passed us by within the blink of an eye. This year would mark my 30th high school reunion. It is amazing to see pictures of my formal classmates. Some of my classmates look the same and some look completely different. It's truly hard to believe how much has changed over just 30 years. I saw a reflection of my past life as Paul says "face to face", but that is not my life now.

Many of us have heard 1 Corinthians 13 read before at a wedding, funeral or at a worship service. Today I want us to actually dive into understanding these words as it refers to our reflection of our lives as parents and as a family in general. We must understand that in order for our personal lives and families to grow stronger we must have love. Paul shares with us so many aspects of love in the first 8 verses that it literally humbles and blows my mind. So today I want you to do a reflection test.

1. Reread versus 4-8a. I want you to read them multiple times and each time I want you to insert different names in for the word love or in some versions the word it. Read them in this order:

- a. Your Name
- b. Spouses Name
- c. Each Student(s) name
- d. God

\*It's really not that easy to do is it? It becomes difficult when we hit those words that really don't describe us well at all. See here is where we must stop and take a self-reflection of where we are. Draw a line down the middle of the page in your notebook/journal. On the left side of the page at the top write the word good. On the right write the word struggles, and above the middle line write the word progressing. Then make a list of areas from the scripture which you feel are good in your life. For instance, patience, kindness, you don't envy, etc. Then list the areas in which you personally may struggle: keeping records of wrongs, pride, boasting, rude, etc. Finally

over the middle line write the ones that are progressing from struggles to good or vice versa, i.e easily angered, etc.

2. Following the list you made for yourself, begin making a list for the other members of your family in which they may struggle or do well. Write down the areas where they are progressing because of their walk with God. Once you have made these lists....Stop and pray for God to continue to walk with you to change the personal struggles we have in and with ourselves and our families.

\*Our reflections are no longer of that child that Jesus encouraged us to be in the gospels. Unfortunately the world has directed many of our paths and thoughts and we have lost our innocence and become hardened. But as it says in verse 10, when perfection in Christ comes, the imperfect disappears. In other words our life's reflections will begin to become less flawed and begin to reflect the love of Christ in us. Our personal lives, families, marriages etc. will begin to reflect the love, grace, mercy, faith, hope and happiness of God. For too long the world has taken our families and given us a poor reflection of how life is supposed to be in this time and age. It's time we take a good look at ourselves and begin to work on the things we feel we cannot handle by allowing God the opportunity to remove the imperfections that the world had so easily placed on us. Finally, I would love for you and your family to watch the video God's Chisel remastered by the skit guys. You can find it on YouTube. This video may put into perspective a better picture of who we need to reflect every day of our lives. Pray for the areas where we struggle...remember God never fails. Amen

#### Today's Scripture:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:4-13 NIV)

# Family Faith Connection Day 5/End Week 1

## Scripture Reference: Ecclesiastes 5:1-7



## DEDICATION

## \*Read today's scripture verses

"Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in His grace, and promise to serve Him as your Lord, in union with the church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations and races? Will you nurture these children in Christ's holy church, that by your teaching and example they may be guided to accept God's grace for themselves, to profess their faith openly, and to lead a Christian life?

\*Today I begin with the words that were spoken at every child's baptism and confirmation service since I have been a part of the United Methodist Church. I don't know about you but these words are humbling to me. I am reminded of these words every time we are baptizing another child in dedication to God. I am reminded of these words because it seems justice yesterday it was my family that was standing at the alter and it was my voice that was saying I WILL or WE WILL, or I DO to these questions. It floored me that for some odd reason I had missed the meaning of these words in the emotion of the day in which they were spoken to me, and the days in which I have spoken them to countless others. A VOW. A point of dedication in which I, agreed to give my life in teaching and training my children as an example in order that they may be "guided" by me and my life to accept God's grace and mercy. Then I stumble across the words in the scripture today.. more profoundly the words written in verse 4, "When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow." OUCH....

Over the last week, we have all embarked on a journey that has either allowed us to question where our families stand, or question whether or not we are going to be faithful to take the next step in this journey at all. We are at a very decisive fork in the road. See, I am not going to berate you if you don't follow this daily plan. In fact this entire phase 1 process is to see where we stand at all. Instead of searching for methods or books or the next new thing that someone has told us will work based on Dr. Phil, Focus on the Family, or whoever, we are getting back to the basics of where we were when God first granted us these blessings. This Phase 1 is no fad but a way in which we begin to fulfill the vow in which we spoke that day when you received this amazing child or children from God. Each of us said a prayer that God will give us the strength, wisdom, power, understanding, ability or fill in whatever word you would like into that phrase that first moment we held our sons or

daughters. Now we just have to begin fulfilling the promises we made, and that starts by us accepting the words we agreed... to be an example in our teaching, service, trusting, praying, and guidance.

1. Today, reread the scripture as a reminder of where we stand today in promising to fulfill our calling as parents. We must "guard OUR steps" and "Go near to LISTEN". We must be slow to speak, quick to listen, and not be "hasty" in our hearts. Step one today is to just PRAY. Write out a prayer in which you ask for strength to fulfill your promise to "EDUCATE" your family, then sign it!
2. If you have not determined the day of the week you as a family will pray... STOP and make that DEDICATION of your time NOW. You will be amazed that when you make this dedication to God and your family, how much stronger your relationship with your family will become.
3. Pray for guidance. Write this phrase daily: Today I must pray for my family. The very first part of the scripture today says GUARD YOUR STEPS... and it closes with "Stand in AWE of God". Wherever you are struggling in finding time to do the daily walk, remember you have to crawl before you can walk and walk before you can run..but once you run, understand that this life is a marathon not a short race.. Breathe and take it one step at a time.

\*Final thoughts: Are you ready to dedicate now 55 days of your life to the betterment of your family? Are you ready to fulfill the vow each of us took as our children took their first breathes? It's not a question of will...but when? I pray you begin with me today. AMEN

#### Today's Scripture:

Guard your steps, when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong. 2. Do not be quick with your mouth, do not be hasty in your heart to utter anything before God. God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few. 3. As a dream comes when there are many cares, so the speech of a fool when there are many words. 4. When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. 5. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it. 6. Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, "My vow was a mistake." Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? 7. Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore stand in the awe of God.

## Family Faith Connection Week 2/Day 1

Scripture Reference: 1 Timothy 4:11-16



### IMAGES

\*Read today's scripture verses

Who is the greatest example of someone you wanted to be like when you grew up? Was it your dad, mom, coach, teacher, some athlete, or movie star? And why did you want to be like them? I remember sitting outside for hours playing basketball wanting to be just like Michael Jordan. Yes, I wanted to be like Mike... For me he was one of the greatest athletes of my time. He was amazing and astonishing in everything he was able to do on the court. Now off the court, I really did not hear much about that until I was older in life, but it did cause me to go back and rethink my idea of what type of example he was making in my life. What about you... Do you still hold those heroes in the same perspective as you did as a child, or has something happened to cause your image of them to be tarnished? Write down in your journal who your heroes were and why? Would they still be your images of who you would want to be today? Why?

For Timothy, his mentor was Paul. Not a bad person to have as a mentor if you ask me, but Timothy continued to question if he could handle being an example to his family, congregation and others who crossed his path. Maybe that is where you are today. Maybe it is hard for us to believe two very important things:

1. You are seen as an example to someone. Regardless if you believe it or not, the truth is that you are for someone an example of a hero. They see you as an image of what they define God to be in their minds. An example of how your son or daughter is suppose to live when they become an adult. If we as parents don't put a lot of emphasis on God, guess what, neither will our children. In fact they will actually do less than what we are doing unless we break the pattern now.
2. Crazy to believe, but in your family, you are seen as the image of the expert of the law. Both spiritually and physically, your children, until a point, look at you as the strongest, godliest image they know. So I guess after the reflection stage, my question is this: If this is how much you are reflecting God, how much of God are they actually seeing on a daily basis? If you are their "GOD" image and they are trying to reflect your image of Christ, what is the next generation going to see?

\*Timothy states that we should not allow ANYONE to look down on us because we are young, but that we must set an example in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. Today, I am asking you to pray for the success and failures for your family. In order that you can be an example for your family, we must all realize that we must get our lives in order so that our families can see the things that we value the most. I know that I might step on some toes, but week two begins with the realization that we have to set God in our sights and realize the things that we place before God (sports, jobs, ourselves, etc...) can no longer take the place of spending time with God. We have to take time as a family to help each other out. In each of these areas from verse 12 we must begin to pray for God to strengthen our foundations. So take time and pray that God will strengthen your walk in life, in love, in faith, and in purity.

\*In the last half of today's scripture, we are to devote ourselves to teaching and preaching the Scriptures and to give ourselves wholly to this process so the other families will be able to see our progress. Stay strong to the image of what you want your family to be. Write down the dreams and desires you have for your family. Imagine what your family will be like if you continue to give everything to God. It won't be easy at first. In fact it will probably get worse before it gets better, because satan will do ANYTHING to stop this from happening.

You can do this...I have complete faith in you... because I know someone had to show me.. and yes I had a hard time breaking my mold too... still do. So pray for me and I'll pray for you. In His grip, Jason AMEN

Today's Scripture:

**11** Command and teach these things. **12** Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. **13** Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching. **14** Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you. **15** Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. **16** Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

## Family Faith Connection Week 2/Day 2

Scripture Reference: Matthew 6:19-21



### Hidden Treasure

\*Read today's scripture verses

What do we treasure most in this world? Honestly, I think that sometimes I forget about that when I get so involved in so many things. I tend to put things that are so minimal to the top of the list when I just don't want to do the things I am supposed to do. I lose the hidden treasures of the moments that I allowed to get by because I wanted to do what I wanted to do when I wanted to do it. As I am finding out with both of my children, one day they were just small, crying and in need for me to do everything for them. They needed me for food, for protection, to change their dirty diapers and to take them from place to place. Before I blink my eyes, they will be running, playing, driving, dating, graduating, leaving, marrying and having a family of their own. Within this blink of an eye, I will find that I will either have taken the time to pour into these treasures or I will find just an empty treasure chest.

On this journey God has chosen each one of us to take a hidden treasure and mold it and shape it into the most amazing gift that could ever be. The problem is we continue to miss the treasure. Technically it is not hidden, but it is more of the fact that we are blind to the opportunity that we have to share such amazing things with the people that we love. Why is that? I mean why are we so much more concerned about everybody else and when it comes to our own families, we feel as though we are inadequate to talk about or teach about Jesus. It is the same mentality that many of us see when we try and decide about doing a mission trip. Many times we feel as though we would be so much more effective if we go to some foreign land, when in reality the United States has now become the third largest lost nation in the world. We hope and pray that our friends and family will learn it by just bumping into us so that we don't have to step out of our comfort zone.

Wow, I think I just smacked myself in the face with truth. The real hidden treasure is the opportunity that each of us has today to pass on the idea of eternal salvation to the people we love the most... our legacy... our children.

Growing up all I really wanted was a trophy. I mean I really wanted to prove myself to the world and to my family just how good I really was. Year after Year I continued to collect trophies, and I could remember making sure that each night before I went to bed they were polished and arranged from smallest to largest. I was so proud of those trophies and I wanted them to be a focal point for anyone that would enter into my room. But when I go back to my parent's house today, those trophies are all boxed up, dusty and meaningless. Not that they didn't have meaning at one time, but I now understand what Jesus was saying in Matthew 6:19. I finally understood the fact that they were never going to give me the eternal victory I needed.

1. Today, I am asking for you to truthfully make a list of things that you put above spending time with God and your family. Just because the family is in the same place does not mean they are spending time with God. Pray that God will open your eyes to the treasures that are all around you.
2. Now make a list of the amazing talents that each member of your family has... singing, dancing, laughing..etc.. Realize that God gives each of us these moments to treasure. We must be willing to take the time and rejoice in the hidden treasures of each of our children. None of them are the same. They each give us joy in different ways, even though many times we may feel as though they are annoying us, strive to see the amazing gift before you of life from God. Today is a test of your heart.. are you ready to take the test?

I know that throughout my life I have missed so many moments that God had in store for me because I was too selfish, jealous, lazy, or you can continue to insert a word. I just want you to open your eyes today to the greatest gift that anyone could ever be a part of.... the ability to take time and plant an eternal treasure in the lives of our family. I don't know where you stand on this journey, but it humbles me everyday. Take the time to pray to God that you have another day with your family, because today may be our last. AMEN

Today's Scripture:

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

# Family Faith Connection Week 2/Day 3

## Scripture Reference: Ephesians 6:1-4



# Family Night

## \*Read today's scripture verses

SO here we are... midway through week 2. How are things progressing? Have you hit the wall yet? Are you able to enjoy stopping in the chaos of your life and spending time praying for your family? I honestly hope so. This journey will continue to take us through many different loops that will challenge, humble and cause us to question our foundations. GOOD. Not only cause us to question our foundations, it will give us an opportunity to see things from a brand new perspective. I am not a great philosopher, but one thing I do know is that by making family and prayer a priority, you are going to be on an adventure that will completely blow your mind.

\*So...today here is your challenge. It is really not that hard, except for the fact that it will be a little time consuming. It's almost Friday and the weekend is almost here and my challenge for you this weekend is to have a family night. Now that is not defined as everyone sitting in the same room watching TV and acting like knots on a log. That is also not defined as going to the lake, or football game, and every one doing their own thing. I honestly want to encourage you to find about 2-3 hours this weekend and have a family night. DO something crazy and break out the OLD board games that you use to love as a child and teach your children how to play, or go get your FAVORITE movie from your childhood and watch it as a family. Now this is different than just watching TV. Pop Popcorn, discuss the movie, allow your kids to know something about you. Yes, be careful which movie you get. For example, Stand By Me was a great movie of our time, but note that there were A LOT of foul language in movies growing up in the 70's and 80's. I know a family that watches old movies every Sunday Night as a family and they have an AMAZING family bond. Remember growing up, Sunday Nights after church was the Wonderful World of Disney. Families would gather and watch together connect. I don't really know what your family may want to do.. I know our family has gone bowling, taken trips to the playground together, played board games like Phase 10 and UNO.. we have family nights to enjoy just being a family.

SO many times during the week we are in a constant sprinters pace. We never stop to take time to breathe or even see what our kids are even wearing sometimes. Other times, as in our case, we have to get up so early and get home so late, that there are some nights I don't even get a chance to see my family while they are awake.. A DAY MISSED...NO LOST! We try to incorporate recreational sports as family time, but many times we find ourselves chewing out each other or yelling at coaches and referees that by the end of the game we are so angry we snap on each other. So today is no more than a planning day for the weekend. Every so often as we move down this path, I will encourage you to set up a family night out. It will give you an opportunity to do your family devotional, which you can use the one we provide or use one of your own. If you go to the lake, instead of everyone doing their own thing... spend time teaching them how to fish or explore. Find something that YOUR family can do together and do it. Then at the end of the day ask everyone how they liked spending time as a family and what they might like to do next time. It amazes me when we finally start giving "real" time to our family the possibilities that will open up to enjoy spending time with family. It might seem forced at first, but as we get the hang of it, it will become a time that you and your family will not miss for years to come.

### **1.PLAN YOUR FAMILY NIGHT**

### **2.CATCH UP THIS WEEKEND**

### **3.SPEND TIME IN FAMILY DEVOTION AND PRAYER**

**AMEN**

#### **Today's Scripture:**

**1** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2** "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise— **3** "so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." **[a]4** Fathers, **[b]** do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. Ephesians 6:1-4

# Family Faith Connection Week 2/Day 4

**Scripture Reference: Psalm 27:11-14**



# Confidence

## \*Read today's scripture verses

During the week I had a question continuously pop in my head. How confident am I that without a doubt I know that my family will all be in heaven? I know that is not what you pretty much expected to start off your week with, but I was just pondering the question as I look over my family. As far as April and I are concerned, we both know that each of us have given our hearts to God, and through watching Amelia we are "confident" to believe that she has a child's understand of who God is and why Jesus died for us. Avery has been dedicated to God and is in that time where she is learning from our actions and trying to discern what is right or wrong. But do we have confidence in the fact that each of us know that we will spend eternity in heaven with our families? If not...why?

Over the week, I hope and pray that you guys had an opportunity to spend time with your family. Joking, playing, talking, and enjoying a time of just seeing God's miracles right in front of your face. If we say that our first passion is God and that our second passion is our family, what is truly holding us back from being able to proclaim with confidence that our family is earmarked by God. I don't know why, but it is one of the most uncomfortable conversations that parents want to have with their family. I mean they will talk about everything else under the sun: sex, drugs, relationships, even crazy Tik-Tok Trends. Why is it that we falter when it comes to the greatest decision that our families could ever make? Maybe because no one has written a book about it, or it has not become the hottest new trend... I mean I can definitely see a market for a book entitled: "A Purpose Driven Family" .. Can't you? Wait it already exists.

Today I encourage you to reread the verse as a prayer for you and your family. Once you have reread the scripture, take time to do a survey I have listed for each member of your family. Begin getting to know them and hopefully when the next 2 weeks come, you will not feel so awkward asking questions in your family devotion time or in your personal time.

1. What is some of your favorite things to do?
2. What is a new book or series that you would like to read?
3. What is something that you would like to improve on?
4. What is something that you have wanted to do but have not found the time?
5. Who are your friends that you play with or talk to most of the time?
6. Who is someone that you know but would like get to know better?
7. What do you spend most of your time doing while you are at home?
8. Who is God to you and can you see God in our family?
9. If you had the chance to change one thing about our family, what would it be?
10. On a scale from 1-10, how much do you see God in my actions?

\*Note they may not give you extensive answers, but its sparking the conversation that we are more interested in at this point.

\*Now the toughest part is seeing if you have the confidence to actually ask the last few questions with the confidence to understand you may not like the answer. Ask them to be honest... It's the only way you will be able to work on the areas that may have problems. Remember in week 1 we asked you to write down the areas from 1 Corinthians 13 that you struggle with. Start today making an action plan for the areas in your life that need to be refined. Verse 11 says for God to teach us His way and help to lead us into a straight path. We must see the problem before we can try and fix the problem and be confident in our future.

\*Final Thoughts: Today's scripture is a prayer for each and every one of us. We must understand that to love our families is a daily battle to overcome the evil that is ready to devour them. The world would like nothing less than to watch families continue to fall, because then they don't feel as bad doing what the world is doing. Raise your family in confidence knowing as verse 13 says that we will "see the goodness of the Lord" if we are willing to hold true to sharing God's truth. Yes, this is a waiting game, but understand that within each of us is the CONFIDENCE that God will never leave us or forsake us. If He won't leave us... should we not also fight all hell to save ours. Are you ready for the battle today? AMEN

#### Today's Scripture:

11 Teach me your way, O Lord; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.  
12 Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me,  
breathing out violence. 13 I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord  
in the land of the living. 14 Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the  
Lord. Psalm 27:11-14

# Family Faith Connection End Week 2

## Scripture Reference: John 15:1-5



# PRUNING

## \*Read today's Scripture Verses:

\*Hard to believe that we are already 10 days finished into our Phase 1 Family Devos. How is it going? Honestly, let me know how things are going on your journey, because 10 days in is the point where commitment and apathy meet. People have either bought into wanting to make a difference and a change and others have allowed satan to sell them that this is not going to work for them so just give up. PRUNING. I cannot make anyone do anything that they don't want to do, and I fully understand that, but I am in hopes and prayers that we will have some positive input this Sunday. I know that just like in building muscles, some things have to break, and there is some soreness before the muscles stretch and reconnect and stronger muscles are formed. So is true with our family ministry. I am breaking you down and stretching you, and it's hard, and it hurts, but we must break it all down if we are going to have the chance, yes the "chance" to rebuild.

Into today's scripture we see that Jesus is focused on teaching us this very same idea of breaking things down in order for them to grow. In gardening, many times you have to cut away or cut down the parts that are not growing in hopes that the vine will continue to reproduce fruit. So let's break that down today, ok:

1. Verse 15:1, Jesus states that He is the true vine, and that His Father, God, is the gardener. See from the very first words we have to understand that we have to have a connection with God. We have to have a lifeline that is giving us nourishment, strength, posture, or whatever we need. We have to have a connection with God through Christ before we can even begin to grow. Do you have a connection? Are you a branch between Jesus and your family? Are they getting the vital nourishment they need? Let's see what happens if they don't.
  2. Verse 15:2- He cuts off every branch... WOW! You know what that means... If we are not using the power and strength of God and continuing to give it away, we are not producing fruit and guess what, we are cut off. And get this... if we are cut off, what does that mean for our families if we are the spiritual leader of our families. Possibly generations will be lost or destroyed because of our unwillingness to stop and give "spiritual food" to our families. They will either have to find another branch or possibly be lost forever. However, branches bearing fruit will be pruned in order that more fruit can be bore. Which means if we are able to establish this connection in our families, we will see "spiritual fruit" for generations to come. So sometimes we have to be

pruned from the things that we continue to put before God (time, work, us, whatever it may be) in hopes that we see the fertile soil God has provided right in front of us.

3. Verses 15:3-4- We know that we have the word, now whether we understand it and apply the word in our lives is a personal question for each of us. But we have "heard" the word and hopefully we are all able to help each other to understand God's purpose, but verse 4 is the kicker. We are to remain in Him, we cannot do this on our own, even though we think we have the market to understand what we need to do to be a strong "Christian", but without being CONNECTED to God through the love, mercy and grace of God's WORD, JESUS, we will slowly wither and die. NO BRANCH CAN BEAR FRUIT ALONE, YOU MUST REMAIN IN THE VINE!
4. Verse 15:5-Understand God is always with us, all we have to do is be willing to open the door and invite Him into our families. We must REMAIN in Him and He promises to remain in us. We must give back, cut back and be willing to be pruned from ourselves in order for the opportunity to prune our family to bear fruit for God. Your children are your fruit... apart from God they will not survive... they will continue to die a little more each day until one day they will just be an empty shell unless they find connection somewhere else, but why do they have to go somewhere to find food and connection with God. Do you want to be pruned or cut away?

\*Final Thoughts: Today we must cross over the thresh hold. We have to determine that today we will give all that we can so that God can begin preparing us to bear fruit. If you stopped feeding your family food, they would do 2 things... 1. They will accept that they are not going to get any more food and just die. 2. They will start looking for somewhere else to get nourished. Are your kids looking somewhere else? School, friends, internet, church, another family to find food? Why? Apart from God we can do NOTHING... Where are you children finding their "spiritual food"? AMEN

#### Today's Scripture:

1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. John 15:1-5

# Family Faith Connection Week 3 Day 1



## Scripture Reference: Jeremiah 18:1-6

# THE POTTER

## \*Read today's Scripture Verses:

\*Have you ever seen a potter's wheel? They continue to spin round and round and add a lump of clay, a little water, and a steady hand and it amazes me what can be created. From nothing comes this amazing masterpiece.. By placing one thing on the side, it begins to make ripples... By raising your hands it begins to grow taller... but look out. If you are not careful and fail to pay attention, as soon as it begins to be shaped it can easily fall apart and crumple and fall back into a lump of clay. Then the piece of art is placed in the kiln to be fired. Inside temperatures begin at 212F and this allows extra water to begin being released. As the temperature rises to 900F, the clay pot begins to undergo a ceramic change. All the excess water has been burned off and the molecules begin what is known as the quartz inversion stage. From this point, the pot can NEVER return to its original state. Raising the temperature again to 1,480F, this is the stage in which all the impurities will begin to melt away, and the purified pot begins to solidify and glow. 1650F is called the sintering stage. Because of the heat, new chemical bonds are formed helping to increase the solidity of the pot and it begins to glow bright red. Finally from temperature ranging from 2,000F-2,600F, the particles in the pot begin melting together and vitrification occurs, fusing of particles to form a glass-like structure. The pot is cooled and the final product is finished.

I know that seems like a long process to read through this morning, but I am challenging you to do the same thing in your life and the lives of your family. God said He is the potter and we are the clay. In your hands, you have been given a moldable piece of clay in your family's lives that is fashioned by yours and others hands. They are constantly pushed and pulled and spun around in so many different directions that they feel as though they are on a potters wheel. The question is whose hands are molding their clay. Yours or the worlds? In each of the rendering stages, the pot has the tendency to be destroyed until it is in the final cooling stage. So is true with our lives. At any point of the journey, it seems that we are so easily distracted or given an out clause to walk away. Maybe it is in our child like years where we don't really see church as that important and we determine our pot is just fine the way it is. Maybe when the heat rises and we are pressed on all sides during our teenage or young adult years, we find ourselves starting to change because of friends or other things that are going on in our lives and we just don't see the need for God now... we have plenty of time.

God begins to get pushed out and we begin solidifying our thoughts about church, praying and studying God's Word... just not that important, and we form a very difficult habit to break. As the years go on and the temperature rises again, we find ourselves in lifestyles and habits that are too hard to break. We have formed this bond or wall that continues to melt God away, and we become this hardened picture on the outside of what we have been missing on the inside. Finally, we are at the end of our lives and the final artwork is seen. For too long have we wanted to change but cannot go back and retrace where the years slipped away to. We look in the mirror and see but a glimpse of God because we have now become hard-pressed and set in our ways that there is no way we are going to change our habits, our time with God, and the scarier fact is that we realize that our children and grandchildren begin to resemble the artwork that we have become.

Remember when we started I made the case, based on Barna research that regardless of how long a child spends in church, 90% will revert to the patterns and thoughts of their parents regarding church and their ability to spend quality time with God. You are the potter now whether you understand that or not. You are molding and making the impressions that will continue to form and shape your family for years and maybe generations to come. Our prayer today is to meditate on these words from Jeremiah and hopefully open our eyes beginning week 3 to just how close we are to either making an amazing masterpiece for God or watching everything we have tried to do blow up in our faces because we did not take the time to render the clay properly.

#### Today's Scripture: Jeremiah 18:1-6

*1 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord: 2 "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." 3 So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. 4 But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. 5 Then the word of the Lord came to me. 6 He said, "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?" declares the Lord. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel.*

# Family Faith Connection Week 3 Day 2

## Scripture Reference: PSALM 19



## WORDS

### \*Read today's Scripture Verses:

\*What are your last words? As I was driving to drop Avery off this morning she kept saying the word happy. I've heard her say the word happy before but I was joining right in repeating the word back to her. Every time she would giggle and laugh and think it was the greatest thing since sliced bread. Words are something that can hurt, pierce to the heart, cut like a knife, rebuild, restore, and even completely help one to fill the love of God. From the tone of our voice to even the expression on our faces we are able to watch others respond to us based on our ability to communicate both verbally and non-verbally. WORDS ARE POWERFUL!

So I say that to ask, what are the first words you say each day to your family and the last words you say before you go to bed. I have to be honest, some times my first words start off very sweet and nice, but gradually begin to grow louder as time begins to go by faster and faster. The 10 minutes earlier I woke up seem to fly by and satan knows the right buttons to push to cause an interaction that can set the entire pace for the day. Regardless of my work day, regardless of my frustrations, I find myself having to pause and remember that the words I say will continue to help direct the path of my daughters for the remainder of the day. So I must pause and meditate. Even in our frustrations, the more we meditate in and on God's word we see the words and the tones begin to change. I mean how many of us get into a confrontation with our kids trying to get them to school, church, or some other activity only to find ourselves all worked up and completely useless the rest of the day.

In today's scripture we read and hear the word of God through His own creation. There is nowhere we can see or look and not hear the voice of God more plainly. Every day through the rising of the sun, the blowing of the wind, the song of the birds, the rhythm of the rain we hear God speaking His mercy to us. I could only imagine what God "wants" and probably should say to us each day because of His frustrations over our lives, but He continues to show restraint beyond compare, and today I am asking you to try and do the same.

After re-reading the scripture today, I want you to try 2 things:

1. Write down the hurtful words that are said in your conversations over the next 3 days, not on purpose but words said in the moment and discuss them with your family this week. I'll tell you one of mine today was, "Come on Amelia, I know you can move faster than that"... It began the pouty face that caused her to move even slower, causing more time to be lost and higher frustration. Words are powerful! When did I begin sounding like and become my parents? Also think and write down word you remember your parents use to say to you.. How did they affect you? Be honest!
2. The last verse really hits home with me today, "May the Words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be pleasing in your sight". I ask you over the next three days before the moments get out of control for you to pause and quote this scripture in hopes of avoiding words that should not be said. Begin practicing this and see if your conversations in the heat of the moment will possibly get better. I know it will not change overnight, but the more you practice the better it will become, but also note if we blow out one day, we have to get right back up and start again.

\* Final thought: My first words and last words every time I say to my family is I Love You, maybe prefaced by hey. But I don't care how bad the day starts or how bad the day ends, my family knows that regardless of it all I love them! These three words are the hardest to live out and the easiest to misuse. I pray you continue to choose your words wisely and meditate, or think before we speak. Funny how even our words seem to pass from one generation to the next. If you cuss, don't be surprised to know your kids cuss. If you quote scripture, don't be surprised to see them quote scripture. Avery kept repeating happy all morning long because she has heard that word being used as I take Amelia to school, from the mouths of babes come truth. What would yours say? AMEN

#### Today's Scripture: Psalm 19

\*Can only fit last verse today, encourage you to read all 14 verses. Also, pick a verse of the week for your family to begin learning as a family!

"May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer". (Psalm 19:14 NIV)

# Family Faith Connection Week 3 Day 3

## Scripture Reference: Luke 15:11-32



# THE PRODIGAL'S SON

### \*Read today's Scripture Verses:

\*Have you ever found a place in your life where you just wanted to go home? As Jesus was talking to the people in Jerusalem, He knew that there were many that had no idea that they were lost and they were living their lives as if it didn't even matter. He continued to use different examples to express the extent in which God is willing to do to fight for His family. Jesus used examples of leaving 99 sheep to go after the 1, searching for a lost coin, and of course the prodigal's son to help them understand the extent of His love for the lost. The question is how far are you willing to go? Many of you had the opportunity to spend some time last weekend as a family doing family things... Question is, how did the next week go? Did you fall back into the same patterns...were things a little harder... or did you see new doors begin to open. This weekend, I am asking that maybe you have a family "banquet" (meal) around the table. I don't know about you but sometimes we find ourselves so much on the go, we never get time to stop and celebrate our family. Have a meal at the table and pray. Then actually spend time letting each member of your family know how proud you are that they are in your family. You can use this time to share about the week, or even do your family devotion time.

WHY? The reason is because just as the prodigal son has taught us, we all need to celebrate our family. If you wait until you feel the right time, you have missed it. Get a birthday cake and celebrate the fact that God has blessed you with an amazing family in whichever fashion it might be. Yes, it might not be the norm, but allowing your family to understand that you can celebrate being a family instead of just at holidays or birthdays, the more likely they will begin to desire to do more family things. The problem with fast food living is that it causes us to continue drive at such a fast pace that we miss all the moments that God is creating. Then in the blink of an eye, we see our sons/daughters going off to college, military, or the work force and we are standing in the middle of the road waiting each day until they finally come back home. Ask any parent of a college student, they truly celebrate when they come home, because those times are so few and far between. It's not because the student has forgotten about home, but the fact that their life is now in a different stage, as with the first son, and they must determine their own path for the future and when to return home.

1. Today, I encourage you to relate the prodigal son's story to your life. I ask that you look at your children and see if you are willing to wait for them and even though you have already sacrificed everything for them, what are you willing to give that is not financial. If you desire, read through the other examples Jesus gives on those that are lost and found in Luke 15:1-10. Are you willing to forsake everything to find the one lost? Are you willing to give up the world to fight for your family if they no longer have an identity that they still are a family and not just different people, with different lives, living under the same roof. If the latter is the case, then you don't have a cohesive family setting, but tenants all living different lives.
2. Here is the test... When you get home... Where does everyone go? Do they go immediately to their dwelling cave and do their own thing, or do they congregate in the "family room" and spend time together. Have we lost our families because we all just want to have our own "ME" time and we watch as the walls begin to crack under the stress of the world. Do we have to get to the point of where we have lost it all, and we are on our knees with no where else to turn amongst the slop of the pigs? Does our family have to reach the bottom before we can admit we have a problem that only God can fix?

Final Thoughts: It's time to celebrate, kill the fatten calf (steak or burgers), and realize that you have the opportunity to get your family back from death. Yeah they once may be dead because each of them are in their own world, but through the mercy and love of God I am amazed to watch them come back to life. This is a time to CELEBRATE for our family is once again together. Don't wait until you only get the chance to see them once or twice a year over the holidays... Celebrate their lives and the blessing that God has placed in your household. Stop living the fast food lifestyle and for the love of God take your family back HOME. AMEN

**17** “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! **18** I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. **19** I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ **20** So he got up and went to his father.“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. **21** “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ **22** “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. **23** Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. **24** For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate. Luke 15:17-24

# Family Faith Connection Week 3 Day 4



## Scripture Reference: Psalm 86:1-12

# YOUTHLED

## \*Read today's Scripture Verses:

Some of my favorite memories is watching students have the chance to serve. We had an opportunity for our students to lead us in a crazy form of worship during our Road Kill Cafe. It makes me proud to watch students use their talents for God and spend time digging deep into God's word and trying to explain to their friends how much God means to them. David writes in this Psalm for God to be near him and for Him to listen to his cry for mercy and grace. Many times we find ourselves in the same situation. I know that when both Amelia and Avery were babies, around 3:00AM almost every day, I heard a cry out for mercy, help, support, love in a time of confusion and in a time of need. Well I say all this because maybe it is time for us during this journey to turn the tables a little bit. Right in the middle of the very first month, I am asking that once again we reach out and listen to the voices of our children.

As we continue to spend time on this journey together I am asking you to try something new today. In our worship, so many times we continue to place upon our families our traditions of what we know and even the music we listen to. I mean I know so many people that have such a passion for a certain genre of music mainly because they have heard it from either their parents or their friends. So today, spend time listening to a song, hopefully a christian song, that your someone else finds very meaningful to them and ask them why they like the song so much. Allow them to express why the song has a certain place in their heart, whether it be the rhythm, the words, or sometimes just the person who is singing the song. Spend time breaking the words down and writing in your journal the names of these songs, and if you want to go even further, the lyrics. Pray that through music God will lead people into a time of hearing the gospel. Then, depending on the song, I am going to challenge you to find a scripture reference for the song and challenge your family to memorize the scripture so that every time that song is played you can have fun learning and remembering God's word as the music is being played.

I know that may sound a little crazy this morning, thinking through the words that continue to go through the hearts, minds and souls of others, but on the other side of things, as I have stood at football games on Friday nights and been amazed to hear AC/DC Hell's Bells playing through the speakers and kids just head bobbing and singing the words. One thing

that tells me is that classic rock may never die, but secondly it tells me about the amazing pull music continues to have over people and our families. Scary as it may seem, music and lyrics have a stronger pull than God's word and so I encourage all of us to begin to dig into this realm this week. Ask your friends who they listen to and why. I know that many will be going to different concerts and as with many "idols" of this day, what are our families really gaining from this. If I recall the last time Luke Bryan was in Macon, many people, including students, got stumbling drunk and many fights broke out at central city park. I am not saying anything against concerts or Luke Bryan, I am saying be careful and realize the impact of our environments.

So many times I have had the opportunity to watch students worship different 'idols' that have come and gone: Back Street Boys, Michael Jackson, Jonas Brothers, Hannah Montana, Justin Bieber, and many others. It is also interesting to watch how their songs seem to lead students in their thoughts about relationships, personal appearance and even self-esteem. If you don't believe me, remember back in our days.. well at least for me, I remember that Chicago had a song for every situation for a relationship. My favorite, "You're the Inspiration". You can stop singing it now.. however, funny how we are able to quickly remember the tune and many of us still can barely quote 10 scripture verses from memory. Get into the battle and see who is "leading your family". Are they learning their morals from a song, or from the one we are to lift our voices to on a daily basis. Whether we want to admit it or not... it may be the world winning this battle.

**Final Thoughts:** A few years ago my daughter had the opportunity to sing with the children's choir the song Joshua and the Battle of Jericho. She snapped, she danced, and she sang her heart out, and the coolest thing is that she learned about an AMAZING story of truth and power from the Word of God. Literally she would wake up every morning singing the song.. You cannot tell me that music is not a medium that directs their path. Help them as David writes in verse 11 today where their hearts will not be divided as we teach them about God. Listen to what they are listening to... it may just surprise you the things of this world they already are being exposed to because of the music they hear.

#### **Todays Scripture Verse:**

**5** You, Lord, are forgiving and good, abounding in love to all who call to you. **6** Hear my prayer, Lord; listen to my cry for mercy. **7** When I am in distress, I call to you, because you answer me. **8** Among the gods there is none like you, Lord; no deeds can compare with yours. **9** All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name. **10** For you are great and do marvelous deeds; you alone are God.  
**11** Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. **12** I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name forever. Psalm 86:5-12

## Family Faith Connection Week 3 Day 5 End Week 3



## Scripture Reference: John 15:11-17

# JOY

### \*Read today's Scripture Verses:

Today we are learning simply about three little letters...J O Y. How many times have we heard this word and really missed the full meaning of what it means to have JOY. Today in our scripture verses, we are seeing that Jesus is continuing from the bearing fruit theme we talked about last week of our phase on day 1. The real question is have you found "complete JOY"? Man this is a tough subject for us to handle today. I say this because we actually may get into some areas in which we must all admit that we are not complete...So here we go.

As Jesus is continuing to talk to His disciples in John 15, we see that His demeanor changes from giving instruction about bearing fruit to hitting a more root issue that was going around amongst the disciples. ACCOUNTABILITY. Jesus first told them that they had to get rid of all the stuff that was holding them back...the pruning phase, and once they were pruned that they would be able to grow. But in the process of growing, Jesus began to illustrate to them that this would be a very difficult journey in which they would not be able to walk it alone. Why is it that we feel as though we have everything so together that we don't need help? We see this as a sign of weakness, where Jesus is telling His disciples that this is how you have "complete JOY". Work with each other, love each other, help each other, pray for each other and walk down the hard roads with each other. Jesus shifts His teaching model from directing to informing at this stage. He is telling them that now they are all brothers in the faith together. He is giving them authority to carry the Gospel to all the ends of the world by allowing them to know they have been empowered by the Son of God. We too, know the business of the Father, and it is now our job to share all the JOY of God to our families. Let me break these letters down into an easier format that I hope that you can begin teaching your family as you grow closer in your walk.

J. J stands for Jesus. As we continue to grow in our walk, Jesus must be the central point of our journey. As with Peter and the other disciples, we must all understand that the central truth of God's amazing story about grace and mercy and love comes from the life and testimony of Jesus. Without the full understanding of Jesus and His sacrifice for our sins, it may be very difficult for us to fully understand joy and freedom. So the beginning

of today's leg of the journey is Jesus. May we continue to keep our eyes focused on Him as we end week three, and keep Him close in our hearts and minds.

- O. O stands for others. As we hear in the scripture today, we see that Jesus is continuing to challenge and encourage us to reach and share the story of God's grace with others. Jesus' story was never meant to be contained in a box. Instead, it was meant to be opened and shared with the whole world. Are you willing to lay day your life for your family? Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." Here is where the rubber hits the road again. I am not saying you should throw yourself into the path of hurt and harm, which I honestly think that everyone would do for your family, but what I am saying is, are you laying down your worldly life in order to allow the "others", your family, to see the importance of the sacrifice we are willing to make to lift up the name of Jesus. Our joy can only be complete if we are willing to lay down the lives that are taking the place of God's plan and celebrate the family that God has put into our lives. I am not asking you to go outside your walls...yet... I am asking that we all spend time just in open conversation about Jesus with our family. In the book of Revelation, we read that Jesus is continuing to "stand at the door and knock"... I just hope for all of our sakes that we don't leave Him outside waiting and waiting.
- Y. Finally, Y stands for You. In order for God to complete His JOY in your life, you must be willing to see that HE CHOSE YOU as verse 16 reminds us! In all of the people, in all of the world, God gave in your life a bundle of JOY. God chose you to protect and present the love of Christ into the lives of those in your family. So the opportunity to find "COMPLETE JOY" is in your hands.

Today I am just asking that you spend a moment thanking God for the JOY, I know sometimes we question it more to be headaches, but the opportunity to see a small picture of God's love in the lives of your family. Jesus closes today with these words which are your assignment.. LOVE EACH OTHER. There is nothing more I can say.. AMEN

#### Today's Scripture Verse: John 15:11-17

**11** I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. **12** My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command. **15** I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. **16** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. **17** This is my command: Love each other.

# Family Faith Connection Week 4 Day 1



## Scripture Reference: 1 Chronicles 4:9-10

# FAMILY TREE

### \*Read today's Scripture Verses:

One of the craziest and most amazing stories throughout the Old Testament is the story of a man named Jabez. His story is short, found amongst the lineage of a long list of generation after generation of people put in "chronological", or in short, a huge family tree. It blows my mind just out of the blue, in the midst of listing name after name after name, the writer just stops and tells a 2 verse story about the life of Jabez. In the midst of it all, his name means pain, and it is funny to see that we are able to hear his prayer, see God answer it, and then move right back into the naming of more names. The pause was intentional to me. In fact in the 90's it was a huge deal to go through and pray the prayer of Jabez in hope of God "increasing your territory".

\*So today here is our challenge. As we start week 4, I want to encourage a family project this week. Many of you may already see where I am going with this, but really I would like for you as a family to sit down and do some work on a family tree. One of the greatest things hanging in my office is a list of EVERY person in the Bible and how they fit into God's story. It blows my mind how someone was able to go from person to person and track down their path. I say that today because maybe the way we increase our territory is to go backwards. I really wish that my grandparents were still alive. I miss the stories they use to tell me about when they were growing up. I miss how God was a central part of everything in their stories because they had no where else to turn during the times of depression and world wars. So maybe it is time you sit down and begin a family history of your own. Yes, I know that there may be many branches that have split or broken, but I feel that it is important that our families know where they came from. Maybe that is the history buff in me, but so many times our kids have no idea of their lineage or history so instead of being able to take root into their family, they just grab a hold of what the world tells them to do. Now, I also know that this may take a few days or even weeks, but I encourage you to tell the stories of your family and why their names are important. In fact I encourage you to find or create a family crest. Back in the "olden" days, families had a crest that would show and represent what their family name meant and stood for. It was sent on every piece of mail or everything that was used in barter and trade. Your name meant something and

maybe we need to go back and learn about our family heritage before we lose ourselves altogether.

1. So your first part of your work this week is to try and see if you can begin tracing and telling stories of your extended family. Siblings, cousins, grandparents, great-grandparents. In fact scary thought would be to try and work out a family reunion... but I won't go there.. yet. As was the case in Old Testament times, stories about God were passed down from generation to generation. If you have any grandparents or older aunts and uncles who have a strong faith in God, maybe you can invite them over one night to share their faith with your children. Sometimes our youth listen to their grandparents more than they do their parents, and maybe they need to hear about how life used to be in the tough times. Just think about it. You can use [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) to begin your search.
2. I encourage you in your family time to seek out your family crest. If in your search you cannot find a family crest I encourage you to make one that represents your family. Here is a website that you can go and maybe search: <http://www.houseofnames.com> If you feel as though that does not represent your family, then recreate your own. Just get a piece of poster board and have a time with family decorating and determining the your family values that are attached to your name. Jabez was known for pain... I hope that maybe my name that will be passed down through generations could represent Christ or healer, leader, I don't know. But even though Jabez had a tough road from the start, it was great to see how God was able to change all of that and "increase his territory".

Final Thoughts: How amazing would it be to increase your family territory through the lineage of Christ. Through this family study, what if you were able to have the full assurance that generation after generation would have the opportunity to come into an open understanding of God in their lives that would be so strong that when future generations looked back on your family branch, they could mark it as the turning point. What if you were able to begin a completely new family tradition where God is the central point of everything you do. I know it would not be easy, but just imagine the territory you would create. It's your family tree... How strong will the branches be, and how far will your territory for God spread? AMEN

#### Today's Scripture: 1 Chronicles 4:9-10

9 Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez,[a] saying, "I gave birth to him in pain." 10 Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request.

# Family Faith Connection Week 4 Day 2



## Scripture Reference: Ephesians 4:20-27

# ATTITUDE

## \*Read today's Scripture Verses:

## ATTITUDE by: Charles Swindoll

"The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a team... a company...a church... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our attitudes."

Today I wanted to give you some encouragement. I love this poem or saying by Charles Swindoll. The words are so true and it is a constant reminder for me every day of the opportunity I have to influence those that I come into contact with on a daily basis. Whether it be my family, friends, strangers, or whoever, I realize that nothing has the right if God is in my life to claim victory over me an my outlook on the day. My wife literally disowns me sometimes because of my continued positive outlook on life. She doesn't really understand how I can be a day and a night person who doesn't need sleep and can be happy "most" of the time. I'm not going to lie, I have my down points too. But today I am going to ask you to do a check up on your attitude.

Paul writes to the Ephesians about their attitudes as it pertains to the fact that once they came into contact with God, their lives should reflect that in their daily walk. He writes that we have come to know Christ through the knowledge of truth and in doing so our attitudes should reflect the "NEW" life not the old. Unfortunately, we find ourselves so caught up in the old life, we have no idea how to change our attitudes. We have to begin to see things in a different manner. I have told the story that I have heard before about having an encounter with God. If a man walked up to you and said that he got hit by a bus and didn't

look any different, you would begin to question whether the man got hit by a bus. I mean if the man got hit by a 2-4 ton bus, there would be a definite change. The same is true about God. By the Way.... God is BIGGER than a bus.

Today I encourage you to write down in your journals things that you do that reflects the love of Christ and things you do that reflects the world. A scarier thought might be to allow your family to make the list. In making the list, look and see what attitudes you are still carrying that don't show a change in your life. Begin to pray for the areas that continue to reflect the old life in hopes that these attitudes will not be passed on to our families. It's funny how our attitudes effect our families without us even knowing it. I mean just take the idea of Georgia and Florida fans or maybe Alabama/Auburn fans. Traditions have been passed down from generation to generation, because of such a big rivalry. Kids that have never even seen the others campus have a deep hate and desire for the other to be destroyed based solely on the attitude they have been witness to by, you guessed it, us. Never thinking about how God has used both schools to do amazing advances in education, technology, science, medicine, etc. You get two fans together in the same room and you might just have another battle between the Hatfields and McCoys. It's all based on the attitudes that are passed on from one generation to the next. If it can happen with a football game, imagine the influence your attitude has towards other areas of their lives. Toward their attitude of church, God, family, love, marriage, etc... Attitudes are powerful, and can easily reflect the true heart of the foundation we are building. It's time we stop giving the devil a foothold in our lives.

AMEN

#### Today's Scripture Verse: Ephesians 4:20-27

20 That, however, is not the way of life you learned 21 when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. 26 "In your anger do not sin"<sup>a</sup>: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, 27 and do not give the devil a foothold.

# Family Faith Connection Week 4 Day 3

**Scripture Reference: Ephesians Luke 2:40, 47-52**



## **MARKS OF MEASUREMENT**

### \*Read today's Scripture Verses:

Do you remember as a kid when your parents or grandparents would measure your growth by asking you to stand next to a door frame and they would take a marker and go over your head and mark a spot. Out beside the line they would mark the date and possibly your age. I miss those days. I remember how excited I used to be to go and see if I had actually grown any over the last week. I also remember going and standing by the door frame and putting my hand on my head every day to see if I had grown at all. It was amazing... What was even more amazing was going back when I was older and remembering everything that had happened to me and my family during those days of my life. A measurement that seemed so important at the time, really allowed me to understand the true meaning of growing later in life.

What if, what if for just a moment we had the opportunity to go back and measure our spiritual growth in the same manner. What if we went and placed a marker in our lives that would represent specific dates and times of when God showed up in our lives. I know that the first one for me that I could remember was in the fall of 1982. At 8 years old, I remember that Sunday night that I felt God calling me to give my life to Him. I remember walking down the aisle and giving my hand to Brother Joe B. Church, and telling him I wanted to accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior. It was a marker, a point of reference for my spiritual growth. Another was in December of 1991 when my grandfather, who was one of my strongest spiritual mentors, passed away and on the same day I met the person that was going to be my future wife. A day in which I rededicated my life to giving everything I had to God, a day to measure growth. March 21st 1998, I stood at an altar with God, my family and my best friend, and pledged my life and my love to my wife. February 12, 2007 God finally blessed my family with one of the greatest gifts I've EVER received, Amelia Eise Wade. August 8th, 2011, God once again showed His love and trust by honoring our family with another miracle, Avery Eden Wade. All of these are markers of measurement in my life. I could spend hours talking about ministry, about future goals, but God has been able to show my growth and the growth of our family through these moments of measure.

Today's scriptures help us to realize that we should have a plan for our growth. Even though we may not fully understand how and why we are able to make it through the tough times, we are able to look back and see the marks that measure our growth. The verses show the growth of Christ from childhood to adulthood. Verse 40 states, "and the Child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him". We see that in His life, Jesus grew and became physically strong. So do we. So do our families, but it is the second half of that verse that helps us to see where we need to go with our family. He was filled with "WISDOM" and the "GRACE" of God. We are to begin measuring the spiritual growth of our families. Are they growing in strength, wisdom and grace? It is reiterated in our second verses today, verses 49-52. We see Jesus in his first "teachable moment" with his parents. After completely panicking because they cannot find the Son of God, when they do, he is teaching in the synagogue. If that happened to me my parents would have killed me, but Jesus is able to show them God's plan for His life. At that moment, Mary began creating a marker to measure the growth of her son. Verse 51 states, "But his mother treasured all these things in her heart". She never forgot ever moment, and then it said that Jesus grew in wisdom, and stature, and in favor with God.

This weekend, I want to encourage you and your family to create your spiritual board. Find a 1 x 4 or 2 x 4 piece of wood that you and your family can spend time decorating and putting spiritual "markers" to measure growth. It might be a good time to mark the days in which your student was baptized or dedicated at the church. Maybe put on the board a very important day in your family that marks where God showed up. Place the wood in a very open place, maybe near your family crest and you might even want to mark the heights of your kids and as they grow taller, mark the number of scriptures verses they have learned since the last time you measured them. Maybe your board is a memory verse board, I don't know. Make it a fun time in which your family can create a spiritual marker board that continues to "measure" your spiritual growth as a family. Help them to begin to grow in "strength, wisdom and grace". Maybe even start different boards for each family member. The possibilities can be endless. The most important reason is to begin making spiritual memories that will help to remind your family about the markers in their lives. This could possibly become a family heirloom passed down from generation to generation, or at least the idea. AMEN

#### Today's Scripture Verses: Luke 2:40, 49-52

40 And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.  
47 Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"<sup>[a]</sup> 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

# Family Faith Connection Week 4 Day 4



## Scripture Reference: Galatians 2:20

# HUNGER

## \*Read today's Scripture Verses:

Why is it that all of the news we ever hear on television or read in the newspaper is NEGATIVE? One of the things that my grandparents use to tell me is that negative breeds negative. I will be honest, I really did not understand what they meant until I became a pastor and a parent. When Amelia was younger, it was funny to watch her act like her teachers. Yes, so if you were one of her teachers watch out... she literally would come home and reenact the entire day she had spent at school. She would either teach her stuffed animals or Avery what she learned today. The funnier side of being a parent is that they also continue to reenact situations that go on at home when they are out in public. It completely blows my mind. All of a sudden you are in a conversation with someone and you hear your son/daughter saying things that they overheard at home. Thankfully for us, we don't say anything that can get us in trouble.. but have you ever wondered about that? My greatest example is the age old "Christmas Story" where Mikey is helping his dad change the tire and all of a sudden the lug nuts he was holding in the cap fly everywhere and you hear the word "FUDGE" said. Well needless to say it took his dad by surprise and he was taken home to a hefty dose of soap in the mouth. Not to mention that Mikey was too afraid to tell his dad that he heard it from him so he instead blamed his friend who gets pummeled by his parents. I think many of us have been there and we start thinking where in the world does this come from?

Well my Sunday School teacher once told me... Trash in... Trash out.. I use to watch a show entitled "Kids say the Darndest Things". And that is exactly what they did when asked about questions... they continued to just be honest and let things flow. After hearing all of these things we yearn for our families to have a desire to consume God. One Sunday years ago, my daughter called me on her way to her grandparents house completely excited about the fact that she had memorized a scripture verse. April said she said it about 20 million times.. And it gave her a desire to want to say and learn more. There is so much in the world to divert our families attention away from the things of God, and the devil will come to each person with his agenda and plan to see if they will buy into it. But when we do our part to teach, instruct, discipline, and train our families in the ways of God.. when we read stories from God's Word.. when we teach, when we pray and demonstrate faith that God is who He says

He is... when we demonstrate what God will do what He says He'll do, when we get plugged in with godly friends, when we show others that walking with God brings joy and fulfillment, not boredom and restrictions, when we pray with and for strangers about everything.. we will be amazed at how their appetite for God and hunger to consume more will grow. (Yes a long run on sentence, I'm sorry).

Maybe just maybe our families will begin to fear God and live a longer and better life. They will know the things of God are top priority. They will become God-controlled and not fleshed controlled. They will long for His ways, His Word, and His presence. It is like you will be opening their hearts, minds and souls to a buffet of God in which they will continue to hunger and learn how to be filled with righteousness.

So today, all I am asking is for you to talk to your family about their favorite foods and why they are their favorites. It might be steak or Japanese. It might be home cooked spaghetti, I don't know.. but there is a desire that is in them to want to consume that food. Our hope is that with a steady diet of God and His Word, they will crave it every day of their lives.

Second part of your homework is to begin putting scripture somewhere they will see it every day. Take a dry erase marker and go into their bathroom and write out your weekly family scripture verse so that they can see it every day. Write out a sticky note of encouragement or say I Love You and place it in their lunch box, car, book bags, purses, or simply text it to their phone. Spend time creating within them a hunger for family time and conversation with God. The more that you offer, the more they may desire to have more in their life. I am not saying to force it on them, but I am saying is that a steady diet of God can go a long way for their future.

Start right now by praying for your family to fear God and desire to have a closer relationship in their faith in hopes they will develop a heart that seeks after Him. This could be the determining factor in whether your family will have a constant struggle living in the flesh or be fulfilled and blessed living in the Spirit. Remember, there is no want to those who fear Him, Psalm 34:9. It's never too early or to late to begin praying about this. DON'T WAIT ANOTHER MOMENT!

#### Today's Scripture: Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who love me and gave Himself for me.

## **Family Faith Connection End Month 1**



## Scripture Reference: Luke 9:57-62

# NEVER LOOK BACK

### \*Read today's Scripture Verses:

It truly amazes me to watch people. I guess with my job of being around people, I find myself watching people all of the time. Then I also guess it amazes me that God puts up with a lot of the things I do all of the time as well. We are a very interesting creation is all I have to say. But without a doubt, flaws and all, sin and all, God has never given up on us. Yes, He wiped off the board and tried to start over with Noah, and yes I know there will be a time when He will say it's over, but why in the world He does not just pick us up and shake us around and say, "Hello, you know I'm right here watching everything you are doing" is beyond me. But in my sinful state, I am glad God continues to look forward and through His grace and mercy gives me a chance for forgiveness and reconciliation.

Today is a milestone. Today marks the one month period in our Phase 1 family ministry. By this point, you have crossed over a threshold and should begin to see a change in the way your family interacts. I know that at first things were a little awkward, and in just one month many of you might have been able to find out some things about you or your family that you might have never known. A milestone, because you were able to step out on faith and determine for yourself that you are going to fight for the heart, mind and soul of your family. Now my words for you are simple...NEVER LOOK BACK! Hopefully over the last month you have been able to develop a time each day where you have had the chance to stop and spend time with God. I'm not saying that things may be completely perfect with your family, in fact things may have gotten a little worse, because once you dedicate this time with your family to God, Satan is going to do everything in his power to deter your steps... But once again I say.. NEVER LOOK BACK!

I am not offering you a quick fix. Through your daily and weekly time with your family I am offering you an opportunity to get your family back from the world. I am not trying to give you a 30 day or 90 day or even 180 day prep guide that once you are finished you will be able to say, "ok, finished that program, check" and you move on to the next thing. I am honestly hoping to instill within your family a desire to see and feel and experience God right in your own home. We have set goals, we have stopped and learned about our families, our history, looked toward our future. We have prayed as a family. Talked about God as a

family. We have learned hopefully over the first month that we love and care about our family, and even living in the same household we have probably missed out on a lot of opportunities to see victory and growth because of our own selfish nature. So now is the time to "put your hand to the plow" and never look back. One of the hardest things for anyone to do is to establish a good habit. I hope and pray that once we are finished with our phases of our family ministry you will be able to see how God speaks to you and directs your path. I pray you will have a desire to see the end of the row and not worry about the things in your life you have left behind.

This is the point in which today's scripture picks up. Many people think that Jesus must not care about family or that being dedicated means giving up so much, but in reality Jesus is saying that it is time for us to stop saying we are going to change and then going back to our old lifestyle. Once we decide we want to follow Jesus, we must set aside the world and strive to move forward in His direction. Looking back at Peter, we see what taking our eyes off Jesus can do... Cause us to once again begin to drown in our own sinful nature that is filled with doubt, fear, and uncertainty.

Only thing I am asking you to do today is take the time to see just how far you have come over the last 20 days. Don't take for granted the time you have spent sharing the Word of God with your family or the times of prayer and growth you have seen in such a short time. Write down the baby steps or leaps that your family has been able to accomplish and write the milestones down on your calendar so you will never forget those moments. You should never question why God has your family in certain situations, but rather look forward to the promise of watching God draw your family closer through every step that you take. We are 1/3 of the way through Phase 1, and just look at the fertile ground God has been able to plow. Keep Moving Forward! Amen

#### Today's Scripture: Luke 9:57-62

As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." He said to another man, "Follow me."

But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:57-62 NIV)

## **Family Faith Connection Week 5 Day 1**

## **Scripture Reference: Matthew 9:35-38**

## THE HARVEST



\*Read today's Scripture Verses:

1. What are your hopes and dreams for your son(s)/daughter(s) in the following areas: (Make a list for each youth that you will refer to every day-use a piece of paper/ notebook/journal)

  - A. Spiritual/Relationship with God
  - B. Family
  - C. Financial
  - D. Educational
  - E. Success/Failures
  - F. Friends/Relationships

2. What are some areas in your life you need to get right with God? (Make a list to use on a daily basis in a notebook/journal etc.)

3. Designate a time daily you will stop and pray for your son/daughter specifically as directed each day. It does not have to be a very long, drawn out prayer, but make a promise and designate and let your family know the time in which you are going to set aside for prayer. Put it on a card, write down the time, put it somewhere everyone will know (refrigerator, bedroom door, bathroom mirror, etc.) and sign it.

My Prayer Time: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Designate a day of the week, Monday-Friday, that as a family you will stop and spend time reading through the weekly devotional provided each week.

Family Devotional Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

I started today as we will every day of a new month, putting things into perspective and revisiting our progress. This was day one, have you seen any changes over the last month? Since now you have been able to hopefully bridge the gap in your family space, is there anything in the list that has changed? Starting I would like for you and your family to try and comprise a mission statement for your family. No we are not trying to direct this like a business, but if you were able to have someone come and ask what are your family beliefs, it would be awesome if each member of your family was able to recite from their heart exactly what they believe. Now, you cannot use this one, but I think Joshua had the best family vision statement, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord". I really don't think you can beat that one, but I would love for you as a family to sit down and determine your families vision statement. It will

go a long way to help each member of your family understand the necessity walking together towards a common goal. If the entire family wanted to read the book of John and they accomplished it, the family would grow stronger together as a family. I am not asking for you to do everything yourself, I am asking for you to cast a vision that will hopefully determine your destination. Andy Stanley has a quote that we used all summer, "Direction, not intention, determines our destination". In other words, if you set a point where you want to go, and are diligent in getting there, you will be amazed, as a family how much stronger you will be in the end. If you only intend to get there, don't be surprised when you look back and see no one is following you because you gave them no direction to truly follow, you just kinda aimed at something you didn't truly believe in yourself.

Today's scripture is still just as profound as when Jesus originally said it. The harvest is plentiful, you have been cultivating the soil, and it is now ready to begin planting seeds. But the problem is that the workers willing to follow through continue to get smaller and smaller. Remember your dedication you made and hold true to the lives that each of us has been called to nurture. AMEN

Today's Scripture: Matthew 9:35-38

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:35-38 NIV)

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