



JAMES 1:1-5

Community Group Study Guide Week of October 20, 2019

We continued our series “Tough & Tender” this week by looking at how to face our family of origin with resilience. For many people, issues with their family have left them wounded and at times even paralyzed by guilt, shame, bitterness, and disappointment. The gravity of our past can pull so hard that it seems impossible to move on and move forward. Even those with healthy families eventually need to come to terms with the reality that all families are broken. Even the best parents are sinful and imperfect people, and even the best upbringing leaves us with a deep, unsatisfied aching in our souls. Deep down we long for a great, loving, and perfect father and family.

Scripture is packed full of dysfunctional families. It doesn't hide the brokenness, abuse, favoritism, rivalries, and sin. Every family in Scripture cries out for a true and better family. We find this cry answered in the New Testament when Jesus establishes His Church. Jesus was the true and perfect Son, who became the true and perfect big brother, in order to reconcile us to our true and perfect Heavenly Father. Through Jesus' atoning death and resurrection, the Son frees us from our guilt, shame, and slavery to sin, and the Father adopts us into His Family. God forgives our sins that have caused woundedness, and he heals our woundedness by filling us with the Holy Spirit, and giving us a new Spirit-filled family. In the context of this family, we apply the Gospel to both the sins that needs repentance and forgiveness, and the wounds that need healing.

Many modern therapeutic methods encourage people to look back before they try to move forward. Christianity encourages us to look up before we look back. From the security of our new identity in Christ, and the new Spiritual family of His Church, we can look back at the sin and woundedness that come from our family of origin and begin to address them with truth and grace. We can develop a lamb-like tenderness to confess our sins to others, pray for those who have failed us, and forgive those who have sinned against us. We can also have the lion-like toughness to fight against the guilt, shame, bitterness, disappointment, entitlement, or apathy that threaten to enslave our hearts. As tough and tender Christ-like people, we can walk in victory over our past, take responsibility for our present, and trust God with our future.

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

To understand how Christ gives us a new family identity that allows us to face our family of origin with truth and grace.

Heart

To trust that God is a good, loving, and merciful Father.

Hands

To confess and seek forgiveness from those we've sinned against, forgive those who have sinned against us, and find healing for our family wounds through our new family identity in Christ and His Church.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Membership or Baptism:

Contact

admin@mosaicboston.com to sign up for our next membership class or learn more about baptism.

Mosaic JP:

Please keep Mosaic JP and other faithful Boston church plants in your prayers. If your CG would like to serve Mosaic JP together on a Sunday please contact Andy Hoot at andy@mosaicboston.com.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

Read James 1:1-5

1. What stood out to you from these texts or the sermon this week? What did you find challenging, convicting, or encouraging?
2. Why might it be beneficial to understand our past, and how might it be detrimental to focus too much or dwell on our past?
3. How does our new identity as Children of God, and brothers and sisters in Christ empower us to face our family issues in a healthier ways?
4. Those wounds that others have given us often carry the greatest opportunities for us to get better, but they also carry the greatest potential for us to grow bitter. What sets that trajectory? How can we learn to grow from our woundedness to become more steadfast, instead of being enslaved by our woundedness to grow in bitterness, anger, entitlement, resentment, or fear?
5. Why should our identity in Christ point us forward with a victor mentality instead of backward with a victim mentality when it comes to "facing trials of various kinds?"
6. What things keep us from facing our family issues? What might be at stake if we don't face these issues in a Christlike way?
7. As you listened to this week's sermon, did any specific people or events come to mind that you feel comfortable talking about? Are there any people you need to forgive, and ask for forgiveness? Is there anything keeping you from doing so?
8. Have you had to walk through a process of forgiveness or reconciliation with a family member or close friend in the past? How did that go, and what did you learn from that experience?
9. How do the gifts of God's Spirit, God's Word, and God's Church help us when we're threatened to be overwhelmed by family of origin issues?
10. How can facing our family's past in a Christlike way help create a more Christlike future for our families?