RELATIONSHIP STATUS — WEEK 3

FAMILY MATTERS

Building a Godly Family

Primary Text: Joshua 24:14–15

INTRODUCTION — FAMILY MATTERS

There are many things in life that matter.
Your career matters.
Your finances matter.
Your health matters.
Your reputation matters.
But there is something uniquely important about your family.

Your family is where you learn how to love.
It's where you learn how to communicate.
It's where you learn how to forgive.
It's where you discover what commitment looks like.
And for many people, family is both the greatest source of joy and one of the greatest sources of pain.
Some people grew up in wonderful Christian homes.
Others grew up in homes filled with conflict.
Some had parents who prayed with them.
Others never heard their parents mention God.
Some are enjoying a strong marriage.
Others are desperately trying to save theirs.
Some parents are celebrating children who are walking with Christ.
Others are praying for children who have walked away.
So when we talk about **building a godly family**, we aren't talking about creating a perfect family.

We're talking about putting a perfect God at the center of an imperfect family.

There are no perfect husbands.
There are no perfect wives.
There are no perfect parents.
There are no perfect children.
But there is a perfect God who can transform imperfect people.
And when imperfect people surrender their lives to God, He can build something beautiful.

1. GOD MUST BE AT THE CENTER OF THE FAMILY

Joshua 24:15

“But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

Joshua's declaration is powerful because he didn't simply say:
“As for me, I will serve the Lord.”

He said:

“Me and my household.”
Joshua understood that faith wasn't supposed to stop with him.
His relationship with God was going to influence his household.

YOUR FAMILY NEEDS A SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

Every family is going somewhere.
The question is: **Who is determining the direction?**

Culture?
Social media?
Friends?
Entertainment?
Politics?
The latest trend?
Or Jesus?

You don't have to intentionally decide what will influence your family.
If you don't establish the direction, **something else will.**
That's why Joshua made a declaration.
“We will serve the Lord.”

Deuteronomy 6:4–5

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.”

Notice the order.
God doesn't begin with:
“Teach your children.”
He begins with:
“Love God.”
Parents cannot effectively pass along a faith they aren't living.

Deuteronomy 6:6–7

“These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children.”

Faith has to move from:
Your Bible → your heart → your home.

Your children need to see that Jesus isn't just somebody you talk about on Sunday.
They need to see that Jesus is part of your Monday.
Your Tuesday.
Your Friday.
Your decisions.
Your marriage.
Your finances.
Your conversations.

IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE

Your children will learn more about God from watching you than from listening to you.

If you tell your children:
“God is important.”

But they see you never pray...
The message is confusing.

If you tell them:
“Church matters.”
But church is always the first thing canceled...

They notice.

If you tell them:
“Forgiveness is important.”
But they constantly hear you speak bitterly about someone...
They notice.

Your life is preaching a sermon every day.

2. YOU CANNOT OUTSOURCE THE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR FAMILY

The church has an important role in discipling families.
But the church cannot completely replace the spiritual influence of the home.

Think about it.

If a child attends church for one hour a week, that's valuable.
But parents have opportunities every day.

Every meal.
Every car ride.
Every bedtime.
Every difficult conversation.
Every family crisis.
Every celebration.

Those are discipleship opportunities.

Proverbs 22:6

“Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.”

This is a principle of intentional spiritual formation.
It doesn't mean faithful parents can guarantee every future decision their children make.
Children eventually make their own choices.
But parents have tremendous influence during the years God gives them.

ASK YOURSELF:

What are my children learning from me about:

Prayer? Money? Marriage? Work? Forgiveness? Church? Serving?
How to treat people?
How to respond when life doesn't go our way?

Psalm 78:5–7

Psalm 78 describes one generation teaching the next generation about God. The goal was:
“So the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born.”
That's generational discipleship.

We aren't just raising children. We're influencing generations.

What you establish in your home today may affect your grandchildren tomorrow.

3. A GODLY FAMILY IS BUILT ON LOVE, NOT JUST RULES

Rules matter.
Children need boundaries.
Marriage needs commitments.
Families need structure.
But rules without relationship can create resentment.

A godly family isn't simply a place where everybody knows:
“What am I allowed to do?”

It's a place where everybody understands:
“Why do we live this way?”

Because we belong to Christ.

1 Corinthians 13:4–7

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud...”

Now imagine that Scripture describing your home.
What if your family became known for:

Patience.
Kindness.
Humility.
Forgiveness.
Self-control.
That's powerful.

LOVE CHANGES HOW WE CORRECT

Imagine two parents responding to the same mistake.

Parent #1:
“What is wrong with you? How many times do I have to tell you?”

Parent #2:
“What you did was wrong. But I love you, and we're going to work through this together.”

Both are correcting.

But one communicates:
“You are a problem.”
The other communicates:

“You made a wrong choice, but you are still loved.”

That's the difference between condemnation and correction.

Colossians 3:14

“And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”

Love isn't weakness.

Biblical love creates the environment where truth can be received.

4. HUSBANDS AND WIVES MUST LEARN TO SERVE ONE ANOTHER

If you want a strong family, you have to strengthen the marriage.
Because the relationship between husband and wife establishes much of the emotional environment of the home.
Children notice how Mom and Dad treat each other.
They notice how disagreements are handled.
They notice whether Mom and Dad show affection.
They notice whether Dad respects Mom.
They notice whether Mom respects Dad.

Your marriage is teaching your children what marriage looks like.

Ephesians 5:21

“Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Paul begins with **mutual submission**.
Biblical marriage isn't about two people competing for control.
It's two people asking:

“How can I honor Christ by serving you?”

Ephesians 5:25

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”

Notice the model:
Christ gave Himself.
Biblical leadership is sacrificial.

It isn’t: **“You serve me because I'm the man.”**
It’s: **“I will lead by serving.”**

Philippians 2:3–4

“In humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

Imagine a marriage where both people live this way.

Instead of: **“Who’s right?”**

Ask: **“How can we honor Christ?”**

Instead of: **“You never do anything for me.”**

Ask: **“What can I do to serve you?”**

Instead of: **“I'm not apologizing first.”**

Ask: **“What would Jesus want me to do?”**

Humility can change the atmosphere of a marriage.

5. PARENTS ARE CALLED TO DISCIPLINE AND ENCOURAGE

Godly parenting requires both: **Correction and encouragement.**
Some parents correct everything.
Some parents correct nothing.
Biblical parenting requires balance.

Ephesians 6:4

“Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.”

The Bible gives parents two responsibilities:

Training.
Instruction.

But Paul also warns parents not to exasperate their children.
In other words:

Don't create a home where children constantly feel like they can never measure up.

CHILDREN NEED TO KNOW:

“My parents expect something from me.”

But they also need to know:
“My parents believe in me.”

They need boundaries.
But they also need affection.

They need correction.
But they also need encouragement.

Proverbs 29:17

“Discipline your children, and they will give you peace; they will bring delight to your soul.”

Biblical discipline isn't about releasing parental anger.
It's about preparing a child for life.

A parent who disciplines in anger asks:
“How do I make you pay for what you did?”

A parent who disciplines biblically asks:
“How do I help you learn from what you did?”

That's a completely different mindset.

6. THE FAMILY SHOULD BE A PLACE OF FORGIVENESS

Here's something every family needs to understand:
Somebody in your house is going to hurt you.

And you're going to hurt somebody in your house.
Marriage guarantees two sinners living in close proximity.
Parenting does too.
So the question isn't:

“Will somebody hurt me?”
The question is:
“What will we do when it happens?”

Ephesians 4:31–32

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger... Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

Imagine if forgiveness became normal in your home.

Not: **“I'll never forget what you did.”**

But: **“We are going to work through this.”**

TEACH YOUR CHILDREN TO APOLOGIZE

Let them hear: **“I'm sorry.”**

Let them hear: **“I was wrong.”**
Let them hear: **“Please forgive me.”**

But here's something even more important:
Let them hear YOU say it.

Parents sometimes think apologizing to a child weakens authority.
It doesn't. It demonstrates humility.
When you apologize to your child, you're teaching:

“Adults make mistakes too.”
“We take responsibility.”
“We don't hide behind pride.”
“We make things right.”

James 5:16
“Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.”

A healthy Christian family isn't one where nobody ever makes mistakes.
It's one where people know how to **deal with mistakes biblically.**

7. YOUR HOME SHOULD BE A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE ENCOUNTER JESUS

Your home is more than a building.
Your home is a ministry.

You don't have to be a pastor to minister to your family.
You don't have to be a theologian.
You don't need a seminary degree.
You need a willingness to put Jesus at the center.

Colossians 3:17

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

That includes:
Doing the dishes.
Going to work.
Paying bills.
Disciplining children.
Having difficult conversations.
Taking care of your spouse.

Matthew 5:16

“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Your children may not remember every sermon they heard.
But they may remember:

Dad praying over them.
Mom reading Scripture.
Parents forgiving one another.
A family serving someone in need.
A family worshiping together.
Your lifestyle becomes a living testimony.

8. DON'T GIVE UP ON YOUR FAMILY

This is where I want to slow down.

Because someone may be sitting here with a broken heart.

Maybe your marriage is struggling.

Maybe your children aren't walking with God.

Maybe your family hasn't spoken in months.

Maybe you have a prodigal.

Maybe you've been praying for years.

And you're tired.

Don't confuse God's silence with God's absence.

You cannot control someone else's decisions.
But you can remain faithful.

Galatians 6:9

“Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

That doesn't promise that every situation will turn out exactly the way we want.
But it does remind us:

Faithfulness is never wasted.
Keep praying.
Keep loving.
Keep the door open.
Keep living faithfully.
Keep showing Christ.

1 Peter 3:8–9

Peter calls believers to compassion, humility, and blessing rather than retaliation.
When family relationships become difficult, our response still matters.

You may not control their response, but you can control your witness.

We often think of holiness as something that happens privately between **me and God**.
But holiness inevitably affects our relationships.
If God's love fills my heart, it should change how I treat my spouse.
It should change how I speak to my children.
It should change how I respond when I'm angry.
It should change how quickly I forgive.
It should change how I serve.

Galatians 5:22–23

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.”

Imagine taking that list and putting it on the refrigerator.
Then asking every morning:

“What kind of atmosphere am I going to create in my home today?”

Love. Joy. Peace. Patience. Kindness. Goodness. Faithfulness. Gentleness. Self-control.

That's holiness lived out in the home.

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

7 WAYS TO BUILD A GODLY FAMILY

1. PRAY TOGETHER

1 Thessalonians 5:17
“Pray continually.”

It doesn't have to be complicated.
Before school.
Before a trip.
At dinner.
Before bed.
When someone is sick.
When someone has a big decision.

Make prayer normal.

2. READ GOD'S WORD TOGETHER

Psalm 119:105
“Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.”

You don't need a 45-minute Bible study.
Start with ten minutes.

Read a passage.

Ask:
“What does this tell us about God?”
“What does this tell us about how we should live?”

Then pray.

3. MAKE CHURCH A PRIORITY

Hebrews 10:25
“Not giving up meeting together.”

Church attendance isn't simply about filling a seat.
It's about being part of the body of Christ.
Your children need to see that faith isn't something your family does only when it's convenient.

4. CREATE FAMILY TIME

Put the phones down.
Eat together.
Play together.
Talk.
Laugh.
Ask your kids questions.
Don't let technology become the primary relationship in your home.

You can't disciple people you never talk to.

5. SERVE TOGETHER

Galatians 5:13
“Serve one another humbly in love.”

Serve at church.
Help a neighbor.
Visit someone.
Give together.
Let your children see that Christianity isn't simply about:

“What can God do for me?”

It's also:

“How can God use me to serve someone else?”

6. FORGIVE QUICKLY

Ephesians 4:26
“Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.”

Don't allow yesterday's offense to become today's identity.
Deal with it.
Talk about it.
Pray about it. Forgive.

7. KEEP JESUS AT THE CENTER

John 15:5
“Apart from me you can do nothing.”

Everything ultimately comes back to this.

You can have money.
A nice house.
Successful children.
A good career.
A great marriage.

But if Christ isn't at the center, you've missed the foundation.

Jesus isn't an addition to your family.

Jesus is the foundation of your family.

FINAL STATEMENT

You don't need a perfect family.

You need a family pursuing a perfect God.

Build your home on Christ.
Fill your home with grace.
Make forgiveness normal.
Make prayer a priority.
Make God's Word central.
And above everything else:
“AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD.”