

SMALL GROUPS

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by inviting the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and asking God to speak to each family represented in your group.

Key Scripture

Matthew 7:24-27 - "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

Main Takeaways

Three Promises Jesus Makes About Life and Family:

1. **Every family will face storms** - Trials are inevitable, not a sign of failure
2. **Obedience brings stability** - Hearing God's Word isn't enough; we must do it
3. **Ignoring God's Word leads to collapse** - Culture builds on sand; Christ builds on rock

Four Practical Ways to Build a Family That Lasts:

1. **Surrender your life and family to Jesus**
2. **Trust God as your Heavenly Father**
3. **Think generationally, not just temporarily**

4. Keep your family planted in God's house

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Foundation

1. What's the difference between having Jesus as "Savior" versus having Him as "Lord" of your life? Which one better describes your current relationship with Jesus?
2. The sermon mentioned that "storms reveal what foundation you've built your life on." What has a recent challenge or difficulty revealed about your spiritual foundation?
3. Read Matthew 7:24-27 again. Why do you think both builders faced the same storm but had different outcomes?

Personal Application (20 minutes)

4. Pastor Mack said, "Obedience looks like forgiving when it's uncomfortable, leading spiritually when you feel inadequate, choosing humility over winning arguments, and trusting God when fear feels louder." Which of these is most challenging for you right now? Why?
5. How does culture's message of "just do it" and "have it your way" conflict with Jesus' call to "deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me"? Where do you see this tension playing out in your daily decisions?
6. What does it practically look like to make Jesus "Lord" of your:
 - Schedule?
 - Finances?
 - Parenting decisions?
 - Marriage?

Family Dynamics

7. The sermon emphasized that "your kids don't need perfect parents; they need parents who are submitted to Jesus." How does this truth relieve pressure? How does it also challenge you?
8. What are some practical ways you can let your family "hear faith" instead of "hear fear"? Share examples of faith-filled language versus fear-based language.
9. The pastor asked: "Is Jesus shaping our schedule or just fitting into it?" How would you honestly answer this question about your family's priorities?

10. What does "thinking generationally" mean to you? What kind of spiritual inheritance are you currently building for the next generation?

Church Community

11. Why is staying planted in God's house described as "foundational, not optional"? What role has church community played in strengthening your family?
12. The sermon stated, "You cannot disciple your family alone." How can this small group help support you in discipling your children or building a Christ-centered family?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to implement this week:

For Individuals:

- Start each day with 2-5 minutes surrendering your day to the Lord before checking your phone
- Identify one area where you've made Jesus "Savior" but not "Lord" and take a step of obedience

For Couples:

- Pray together as a couple at least three times this week
- Have a conversation about what "building on the rock" looks like for your marriage specifically
- Choose one area where you need to prioritize God's Word over cultural values

For Parents:

- Start a simple family devotion time (even 5 minutes counts!)
- Let your children hear you pray out loud about a family concern
- Have a conversation with your kids about what it means to trust God when things are hard
- Model repentance by apologizing to your children when you make a mistake and showing them what it looks like to follow Jesus

For Everyone:

- Examine your schedule: Is church attendance optional or foundational in your family?
- Write down three "faith statements" you can speak over your family (examples: "God will make a way," "We trust the Lord together," "Let's pray about it")

- Identify one cultural value your family has adopted that conflicts with Scripture and make a plan to replace it

Reflection Exercise

Take a few minutes of quiet reflection. Ask yourself:

1. What foundation am I currently building my family on?
2. What needs reinforcement in my spiritual life?
3. What needs to be completely rebuilt?
4. What is one specific thing God is asking me to surrender today?

Share with the group (as comfortable) what God revealed to you.

Group Prayer Time

Prayer Focus Areas:

- Marriages represented in your group - for unity, healing, and Christ-centered partnership
- Children and teens - for protection, wisdom, and hearts that seek God
- Prodigal children - for those who have wandered from faith
- Single parents - for strength, wisdom, and support
- Those preparing for future families - for godly foundations now
- Financial concerns and provision
- Spiritual leadership in homes
- Protection from cultural lies and deception

Prayer Method: Go around the circle and have each person share one specific family need, then have the person to their right pray for that need.

Before Next Week

1. **Read:** Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (about passing faith to the next generation)
2. **Memorize:** Matthew 7:24-25
3. **Journal:** Write about one "storm" your family is currently facing and how you can build on the rock in the midst of it
4. **Act:** Implement your chosen practical application from above
5. **Connect:** Check in with one other group member during the week about how your application is going

Closing Thoughts

Remember: Strong families aren't built on good intentions - they're built on daily obedience. You don't have to be perfect; you just need to be surrendered. When storms come (and they will), what matters is not the size of the storm but the strength of your foundation.

Final Quote from the Sermon: "Jesus isn't asking, 'How successful does your family look?' He's asking, 'What is it built on?'"

Leader Notes

- Be sensitive to various family situations in your group (single parents, blended families, those without children, those with prodigal children)
- Create a safe space for honest sharing about family struggles
- Remind the group that this is a journey - no one has it all figured out
- Consider having members share success stories next week about implementing their chosen application
- Be prepared to offer additional prayer or support for those dealing with significant family crises