

The Family

Week 1 – April 11, 2021

Scripture: Luke 11:1-4; Luke 15:11-32; Romans 8:12-17

Grab your Bible and a few people to connect with. Look up the verses below and share your thoughts. It's that easy!

Share: Think about all the iconic TV dads. (Frank Constanza, Carl Winslow, Mike Brady, Philip Banks, Ward Cleaver, just to name a few!) Who is your favorite and why?

Read Luke 11:1-4; Luke 15:11-32; and Romans 8:12-17 together: Take turns reading if you prefer. Enjoy the different Bible translations we each read.

Discuss the following context:

Throughout the Bible the Gospel is presented in family terms: sons, daughters, children, discipline, inheritance, adoption, father, or a mother's comfort. There is wisdom and power found in Jesus, and also a reflection of God and His love for us. Walking through the stress of this last year, families are stretched like never before. It has produced some beautiful moments, but also painful and broken moments. This series is about families experiencing the transforming and restorative power of Jesus.

A.W. Tozer once said, "what comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us". The most consistent way God is described throughout the Bible is as Father. This tells us about the heart of God and the way He longs to relate to us. It provides a way for us to relate to Him and to relate to others, including our families. However, our broken earthly fathers make it difficult to clearly see our perfect heavenly Father. If we are to relate to God and then to those around us as intended, it begins with correcting the picture of God in our minds as a perfect Father.

Share your thoughts about following questions:

1. Jesus changed His disciples understanding of how to talk to and how to relate to God, but also how God wants to relate to them (Luke 11:1-4). This prayer is commonly called The Lord's Prayer and Jesus begins it by addressing God as Father.
 - a. What does using the name "Father" express when addressing God in this way?
 - b. What emotions does the name "Father" stir in you? (Consider your earthly father and heavenly father)
2. What we think God is like is how we respond to Him. Can you think of a time when you tried to define who God was as opposed to letting God define Himself? Share with the group.
3. Sometimes we create a version of God that doesn't exist. Jesus told a story about a family and its dynamics (Luke 15:11-32); it shows how God wants to relate to us and us to Him, and what can happen when we have a wrong idea of what God is like.
 - a. The younger brother is broken (selfishness, shame, regret). The older brother is wounded (relational hurts, disappointments, betrayal). But they share a distorted view of their dad. How do you relate to the younger son, older son and father in the story?
 - b. How can a distorted view of God stop us from seeing Him as the perfect Father?

Pray together: Ask each other to share what is on your heart today. Thank God that He is our perfect Father. Thank Him that when we relate to Him as Father, we are empowered to better relate to those around us. Ask God to pull you in closer and to give you more of Himself. Reflect on A.W. Tozer's thought "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us."