

BEATING THE ODDS

WEEK 5: IN OUR FAMILY

DAY 1: READ JOHN 15:1-17

Every family is different, with different histories, personalities, experiences, gifts and limitations. While we can get overwhelmed or frustrated trying to care and foster health in our families, our ultimate model is demonstrated in our savior: Jesus. How does Jesus regard for His Heavenly Father shape His behavior? We are all part of His family. How did Jesus care for us, his family – some of us lost, some of us obedient, all of us sinful? How can you better mimic the way Christ shepherded His family in the way you care for your parents, siblings, children, relatives, etc.?

DAY 2: READ PSALM 128

In the worldly perspective we often hear (and perhaps express ourselves), family is presented as this paradox of frustration and blessing. In Psalm 128, the psalmist is looking at family through the lens at a bigger spiritual picture, seeing blessing in obedience to the Lord, seeing that faithful obedience fosters blessing, health, prosperity and generational praise. When you think about your family, do you think only about preparing them for the future physically, financially or culturally? Or, do you see your role in your family as an opportunity to faithfully steward obedience and delight in the Lord so that every generation of your family will extend out to increase His praise and bless the world with His love? How do you see God's blessing for you and your family?

DAY 3: READ 1 TIMOTHY 5:1-16

While Paul talks a great deal about caring for widows, we can also learn about their role in their families and the role of families in caring for them. Paul has strong words for people who do not provide for relatives and household members. Who in your family needs better care? How can you better care for your family members and, in doing so, demonstrate Christ's love? Are you a widow? How can you pursue righteousness and demonstrate Christ's love in your care for other family members? What does it look like to pursue righteousness and invest in prayer?

DAY 4: READ 1 TIMOTHY 3

Paul sets out some standards for overseers in the church; family is a major part of these standards. Why is the health of a marriage, family and household important for looking after God's church? As we strive in Christians to pursue and obey the calling Jesus gives us, what can we do to better prepare ourselves to be above reproach, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money, not double-tongued, dignified, not greedy for dishonest gain, faithful in all things. How can we manage our children and our households better so we can grow stronger to take on more of God's mission?

DAY 5: READ ACTS 16:1-15

Lydia heard the Good News Paul was teaching and brought it to her family. She and her household were baptized. Lydia was the doorway through which the rest of her family could know the full truth, peace and salvation of Jesus. How can you bring the truth of the Gospel into your homes for your family to hear, see and be saved? After they were baptized, she urged Paul to come to her family's home and stay. This is significant because she involved her family in the work of the Gospel; she brought ministry home with her. When we are actively participating in the Gospel, we invite our family members to join in, see, learn and participate in the mission of Jesus. When the Gospel is a segmented part of our lives reserved only for Sundays and Wednesdays, we miss out on opportunities to demonstrate the active work of God going on around us and, tragically, withhold opportunities for our family members to see and engage in the mission of Jesus.

DAY 6: READ ACTS 16:16-40

Just like Lydia, the jailer heard the Gospel, responded to the good news of Jesus, and invited his family into this life-changing, saving love – in the middle of the night! Are you eager for opportunities to share the love of Jesus with your family? Are you looking for opportunities to bring the truth of the Gospel into your home for your family to hear, see, encounter, believe and participate? What can you do to better bring the Gospel into your home or involve your family in the work of Christ? What are you withholding from your family? What's stopping you from bringing Jesus into your home?