

Deuteronomy060412-050811
Bridge of Hope
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“Legacy: Rethinking Family Values

We have started a new series that is about the legacy we leave to those with whom we share relationships with. To help us out we found someone who can teach about legacy and family values in some unique ways. I think you will grow to love our guest over the next several weeks. Will you welcome this morning Mrs. Faithfire . . .

(Opening Sketch)

Now that was a great reminder!

This series on Legacy: Rethinking Family Values is about looking at our lives and evaluating if what we are doing are the things that are really important to us. Are they what we value most? Will those whom we consider our family be better from our lives or not? It doesn't matter how you choose to define family, it is about relationships we have with one another and the impact we bring to those who follow after us. Legacy is about how we live in relationship to each other. It is the investment we make during our brief moments together.

This is what Moses was doing when he gathered Israel around him to talk about moving into the Promised Land. He shared in the closer of his life some really important things that would be passed on to each generation. What Moses did was give the people of Israel a starting point. He gave us a great starting point.

And from this starting point we can rethink what we are doing as we evaluate the results we are achieving from the choices we make. We can discover in this process new ways to express important things in the context of the culture we live in. It can be effective, even though it may not be perfect. And in rethinking we recommit to what means so much and give it as a gift to the generation to follow us. Moses set in motion a great idea; he said . . .

“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. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

When the LORD your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you — a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant — then when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.” Deuteronomy 6:4-12 (NIV)

- **THE PROBLEM**

1. Most of the time when we want to learn how to do something we look for examples of real people who are doing it and then we model the behavior.
 - That is how we figure out what we need to fix so that we can have the perfect family or perfect relationships
 - This is how we learn to be families, especially when we are raised in environments that often times where our families didn't know how to be family.
 - They didn't know how to love, didn't know how to have relationships, they didn't know how to do those things.
2. If I can borrow from TV for a minute, we want to desperately find the Nelson's(Ozzie and Harriet) or the Cleaver's (Leave it to Beaver) or the Cunningham's (Happy Days)or the Huxtable's (The Crosby Show), but instead we find the Simpson's or the Conner's(Roseanne) or the Prichett's (Modern Family).
 - We see those examples, families who seem to make it, but not make it perfectly.
 - There is not a perfect model out there. We look for the Cleavers and we get the Conners, and we say to ourselves, what do I learn from this? How can I get this right, if I can't find an example that does it right.
 - And it is filled with all kinds of bumps along the way.
3. So we go to the Bible to find examples of the utopian family that did it all the right way.
 - And when get there we read families like Adam and Eve who blame everyone else for their sin and raise a son who kills their other son.
 - David's who had rebellion, adultery, murder, and even rape taking place.
 - We get to see Noah who gets drunk and his boys are left to cover him.
 - Then there is Lot who gets drunk and has sex with his daughters, not once but twice.
 - How about Eli the priest who son's are corrupt and steal from the people of Israel while leading their acts of worship. It was bad enough that the preacher's kids were bad, but the way Israel was, the preacher's kids did what the preacher did. So that meant they were priest just like daddy.
 - And just in case you want to reach back and point to the Proverbs 31 woman, what was her name? Oh yeah, she doesn't have one because she doesn't really exist.
4. Let's be honest . . . the Bible doesn't give the picture of utopian families who do it all perfectly. We need to understand...
 - Parenting is hard.
 - Raising families is hard.
 - Having relationship with people is hard. So because it is really hard to do, you know what we tend to do. We avoid or run away from it. We tend to excuse poor behavior and bad habits because relationships are difficult. They require things of us and force us to be accountable.
 - It means I have to invest and give; it doesn't matter whether it is between a man and a woman in love, planning to get married, love is wonderful, it is great and you can't do it without it, but you have to work really hard to make relationships work.
 - Having relationships with people is really hard to do that is why anywhere we can avoid it; we do, even with the people of God. People who are supposed to be gracious, loving, forgiving, understanding and helpful, but also are supposed to speak the truth. They are supposed to tell us when we are doing it wrong; they are supposed to hold us accountable.
 - So we avoid things like small groups. Because it is easier to do it on my own. But that is not how God made you. You were created in the image of God, which means you live in community like Him: God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, there is community.

- None of us can live to ourselves, isolated; all of us need other people so we can reflect the glory of God. Relationships, regardless of where we find them, how we create them, our family units, whether done through blood or with relationship with others in the church, or done in other forms or fashion, they all make you and I work really hard to do it.
- And there are no clear perfect examples except Jesus and He has an unfair advantage over us I think. We are not Jesus, he wouldn't do the things you or I do. His example can teach us some good things. How relationships ought to be.
- 5. Anyone who claims they have found the secret to having a perfect family is probably covering up something, just got married and is ready to have their first baby and know it all, or just graduated from Bible College and think they know it all.
- 6. Face it, the problem is that there is a bit of dysfunction in just about all of us. None of us are perfect, Paul said, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." There is a little bit wrong in all of us, that is why we need each other.
- 7. We need each other to help us with little things and sometimes with big things.
 - When facing stuff that we can't handle on our own, when we don't know the answers and when life is just bad.

● **WHAT IF**

1. it's not God's plan to have utopian families that are perfect in every way?
 - I don't have to be a perfect family.
2. it's God's plan to do amazing things through imperfect people?
 - Like David, Noah and Eli. Eli raised Samuel who did a lot of things right, and was revered until he died. David had a son named Solomon, who wasn't perfect, but was said to be the wisest man who walked the earth.
3. it's God's plan to put His grace on display through regular people who are simply human beings in need of some help from Him?
4. it's God's plan to heal, love, restore, and recreate a broken people in order to demonstrate His glory and plan of redemption?
5. we began to understand the story of redemption in Jesus Christ and saw family relationships as a way to express the love, forgiveness, and grace of God to our world?
 - What if our relationships are there to show how God redeems us, He saves us, He forgives us, He helps us; what if we begin to see them from that platform, do you think it might just change the way things are.
 - I think it might change everything about the way we live. Because, what if God looks at you and says, "Their imperfect and I know that, but I'm going to do amazing stuff through them anyway. In fact I'm going to use some of those imperfections to display My glory, My honor, My power and show them how to live in the midst of it, or choose to change the circumstances all together."
 - Just as He helps families to be redeemed from being perfect robots, He helps people be redeemed from the turmoil of their lives.
 - That changes everything. We need to understand, that when God set this in motion, He was looking at us, He was looking at families, and He was looking at the world, and He knew that if the utopian perfect person was the goal, it would never happen. They (Adam and Eve) didn't even make it out of the garden.
 - So Genesis begins the story of redemption. It talks to us about a God who wants to forgive, redeem, and restore people lives and work through them.

6. Reggie Joiner says, *“It is important to help parents understand that their role is not to impress their children or anyone else with their ability to parent. Their role is to impress on their children the love and character of God.”*¹

Conclusion: When we begin to realize that it's not our job to impress people around us, but to impress on them that Jesus loves and cares for them and He can be trusted. What if we began to embrace that and live that and walk in it? And let that be the thing that guides us. We need to help each other, so we can begin to influence the next generation, and just maybe we can get the community piece down and begin to understand it and find a way to help them do it a bit better way than what we did. What if that's what God wants to do, you as imperfect as you are, to help to figure out that with Him, the next generation can learn to do this better. He can heal them, He can empower them, He can restore them, and He can take the brokenness of their life and change the course.

Where are we at today? Rest in the understanding that we are imperfect people and none of us can say different, and God still works through us. This week, try and work on that. How we can live for Christ and how we can demonstrate through relationships, via our home or through others. The real values that we hold deep inside of us. The values by the grace of God I do what I do, I am the person that I have become, the mercy of God that enables me to even stand with him and I have a total dependence on him to do anything good in life, to love, to care, to provide, to do all the things we do in relationships with each other. Today we can walk out of here knowing that is what we are trying to do. It starts with a relationship with Christ, none of us can change any of this in ourselves, but through the grace of God we can. Redemption is seen through community.

¹ Reggie Joiner, Think Orange, pg 48