



GOSPEL Family

*small group
Bible study*

Jonathan Williams



Cultivating Family Discipleship, Family Worship, & Family Missions

*8-Week Small-Group Bible Study
By Jonathan Williams*

- Session 1: God's Blueprint for Family
- Session 2: Restoration of the Broken Home
- Session 3: Celebrating the Gospel inside the Home
- Session 4: A Great Commandment & Great Commission Family
- Session 5: Family Discipleship
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Session 1: God's Blueprint for Family



*What's your favorite
book or movie?*

I love stories, and I pay special attention to how stories begin. The first pages of a book, the opening scene of a movie, determine whether or not you're hooked. Will you keep reading, watching?

The first two chapters of the Bible launch the greatest story ever told, and immediately communicate two weighty truths for every home: (1) Family was designed with sacred intention, and (2) God is the divine designer. Our hopes to celebrate worship, missions & discipleship in the home are founded upon our belief that the Lord fashioned everyone in our home in his image and for his purposes.

Open God's Word

Genesis 1:1—In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

- I believe that Genesis 1 & 2 is less about creation and more about the Creator. This is a passage, not just about the beauty of the heavens and the earth, but about the beauty of God.

Genesis 1:26-27—The God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

- Genesis 1 reveals God's purpose as he fashions man and woman in his image for his sovereign reasons. How overwhelming to see God's purpose for his creation of man, woman, marriage, family; for his heart for the family, his purpose, his blueprint, to be exposed before us, that we might embrace it and bring it through the front doors of our homes.

Genesis 1:31—God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

- God's design for the family is good (*Genesis 1:31*)

Genesis 2:20-25—The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of Man.”

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

- God's design for the family is one man & one woman (*Genesis 2:20-23*)
- God's design for the family is one flesh (*Genesis 2:24-25*)

○ *Share testimony of how God brought your marriage together.*

Ephesians 5:22-33—Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to

Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

- God’s design for the family is Gospel Reenactment (*Ephesians 5:25-32*)
 - Submission to Christ as Head of the Church/Bride
 - Christ leading His Bride
 - Christ sacrificing Himself for His Bride
 - Coming together as One w/ Christ

Open Our Homes

1. Did you grow up in a home of one man, one woman, and one flesh?
2. What did you see in your home growing up that you want to avoid in your home?
3. What did you see that you want to reproduce in your home today?
4. What are some of the worldly things that have corrupted the good family God created?
5. What would need to change in your family for your home to reflect the Gospel?
6. What prayer requests do you have today for your family?

Open Our Hearts: Close in Prayer

Session 2: Restoration of the Broken Home



If you could rebuild your house from scratch, what would your new house look like?

We all know our homes well. We know where the door is located, how many rooms we have, and which walls have cracks and chipped paint. We know what we like and we know what we would like to change.

Families are a lot like houses. We know our families well, and we know where the cracks are. We know what has caused hurt, what sin has proven destructive, and what we'd like to change. Many of us would like to rebuild our families from scratch, and yet we can't.

But Christ can.

Open God's Word

Matthew 7:24-27—“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

- Unfortunately, many homes today have seen the truth of Jesus' words here at the end of His Sermon on the Mount. Unfortunately, many homes today have come crashing down because God's Word was not the foundation of the home. Many families have fallen greatly because family devotions, family worship, and family missions had no place in their home.
- How can a broken home be rebuilt?
- How can a hurting family be restored?
- Let us rejoice in the truth this morning that the Lord can heal, the Lord can comfort, the Lord can restore!
 - Psalm 147:3—He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.
 - 2 Corinthians 1:3-4—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.
- Let's look at two stories of restoration in the home:

Luke 15:11-24—And he said, “There was a man who had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me.’ And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country, and there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs. And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything.

“But when he came to himself, he said, ‘How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.”’ And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring quickly the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.’ And they began to celebrate.

- How was restoration found in this home, for this family?
 - There was repentance—a turning from the sinful path back to the path that leads to the father.
 - There was forgiveness
 - Colossians 3:12-13—Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
 - There was celebration—we must celebrate the Gospel Family and rejoice over godly things like repentance and forgiveness

Luke 19:1-10—He entered Jericho and was passing through. And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

- How was restoration found in this home, for this family?
 - The head of the household sought Jesus

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Share testimony of how you sought and found Jesus.</i>

- The head of the household welcomed Jesus into his home
- The head of the household repented of his sin and made things right with those he had wronged
- The head of the household found forgiveness and salvation in Jesus Christ who actively seeks and saves the lost

Open Our Homes

1. What areas of your family need healing?
2. What do you or what does your family need to repent of in order to enjoy true forgiveness?
3. How can you seek Jesus as a family?
4. How can you welcome Jesus into your home?
5. Do you believe that the Lord who seeks and saves and comforts and restores can transform your family?
6. What prayer requests do you have for your family today?

Open Our Hearts: Close in Prayer, and pray Psalm 51:9-12 over each family: Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Session 3: Celebrating the Gospel Inside the Home



*Name the members
of your Family*

We all know the names of our family members? But what if God gave your family a new name this year? What if God allowed you to be called a “Gospel Family” this year?

What is a Gospel Family?

Gospel Family: A family that exalts Jesus Christ & His gospel, embraces biblical values & godly character, and engages in worship, prayer, missions and other spiritual disciplines inside and outside of their home.

Gospel Family: A family that serves and loves the Lord completely, while celebrating the Gospel together.

Open God’s Word

Joshua 24:15—If it is evil in your eyes to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

- Throughout the book of Joshua, God takes his chosen people and leads them to the land he had promised them centuries before. In the final chapter of the book, God renews his covenant with them. First, he reminds them of his history with them, chronologically storying through their relationship together from the time he called Abraham in Genesis 12, through Moses & the Exodus, all the way to Joshua & the Promise Land.
- Joshua then leads the people to respond to God’s faithfulness. Joshua says, “Now, therefore, fear the Lord and serve him in sincerity and truth.” This is a natural response to God’s history w/ his people. It’s like saying, since God is always faithful, always good, always sovereign, since he always keeps his word, since he always protects & provides, it seems fitting that we should serve this faithful God faithfully.
- Joshua continues his exhortation, saying, “and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living.”
- Joshua leaves the people with two options: Either serve God, or serve false gods; either worship the God who has revealed himself as personal, powerful and faithful, or serve dead idols made by man.
 - This is an appropriate and necessary admonition for 3 reasons:
 - At the beginning of this chapter, as God is storying through their relationship together, He reminds them that Abram’s family, his father, Terah, served other gods...the false gods of Mesopotamia...idols (24:2).
 - The location of this covenant renewal is Shechem, which was previously a center of pagan worship. Some theologians believe that as Joshua was addressing the people, he was standing in the excavated Fortress Temple, the very spot pagan worship from other nations had previously occurred.
 - Every family, then and now, needs this admonition to “put away” idols from their home, for every family, then and now, is tempted with and often struggles with giving time, devotion, and attention to idols.

- *Share testimony of removing idols from the home.*

- Joshua concludes his challenge with the famous words, “But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”
 - The word here for “serve” in the Hebrew means to serve or worship and is the main focus of this final chapter and covenant renewal. In fact, in this chapter alone, this word is used 16 times.
 - Joshua sets the example. As the leader, he’s the first one to commit to be a Gospel Family...to fear the Lord, put away any idols, and serve the Lord alone. He commits himself and his family to a life of worshipping the one, true, living God.
 - This is what it looks like to celebrate the Gospel as a family. This is what spiritual leadership looks like in the home, and this is what we need today, namely, more “Joshua’s” who will step up and lead their family to worship the Lord, to get rid of idols, and to celebrate the true Gospel.

Open Our Homes

1. How does your family spend your evenings? Free time? Vacation?
2. According to the way you spend your time, what does your family value the most?
3. If someone who didn’t know you, watched you and your family for a week, would they say you are a worshipper of Jesus Christ? What would they say you and your family were devoted to primarily?
4. Are you a Joshua, leading your family to worship and serve the Lord?
5. What prayer requests do you have for your family today?

Open Our Hearts: Close in Prayer

Session 4: A Great Commandment & Great Commission Family



*What was the most frequent
Instruction your parents gave
You as a child?*

Just as a parent gives instruction to a child, our Savior, Jesus, has spoken through His Word, the Bible, and given us instructions, commandments, words of guidance, and even a mission that He calls us to live. At the heart of a Gospel Family is a devotion to these words of Jesus, specifically the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

Open God's Word

Matthew 22:35-40—One of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

- People were always coming to Jesus: coming for healing, teaching, a miracle. Often, people came to Jesus with a question, and often they asked their question in order to test Jesus, to see what he would say, to see if they could trap him in saying something they could use against him, like the lawyer in Luke 10:25 who tested Jesus asking, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”
- In Matthew 22, another lawyer puts Jesus to the test with the question, “Which is the great commandment in the Law?” Jesus had just silenced another group called the Sadducees when they challenged him about the resurrection, and now this lawyer takes his turn.
- Jesus answers this expert in the law by quoting the law, specifically, Deuteronomy 6:5. Jesus’ audience would have been very familiar with this command since faithful Jews repeated this verse twice a day, highlighting the idea of loving God, devoting oneself to God, with all affections.
- Jesus continues, though, and shares the second greatest commandment, quoting again from the Law, Leviticus 19:18, saying, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
- Simply put, we are to LOVE GOD & LOVE PEOPLE. Jesus says the rest of the Law depends upon these commandments. This makes sense when we read the 10 Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17).
- If we Love God, we will naturally keep the first 4 commandments:
 - You shall have no other gods before me.
 - You shall not make for yourself a carved image.
 - You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
 - Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
- If we Love People, we will naturally keep the next 6 commandments:
 - Honor your father and your mother.
 - You shall not murder.
 - You shall not commit adultery.
 - You shall not steal.
 - You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
 - You shall not covet your neighbor’s house...or anything that is your neighbor’s.
- Paul teaches this same truth:

- Romans 13:8-10—Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.”
- A **GREAT COMMANDMENT FAMILY** will spend their days devoting themselves to God, loving him with all they’ve got, while showing that same love to their neighbor, serving, meeting needs, and praying for the least of these.

Matthew 28:18-20—Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

- This is the Great Commission: Make Disciples of All Nations. When our families are Great Commandment families, Loving God & Loving People, we live with the mission to lead other families to do the same so that God may be glorified and their family may be blessed with the spiritual blessings of forgiveness, adoption, freedom, salvation, eternal life.
- A **GREAT COMMISSION FAMILY** will spend their days sharing the Gospel with any and all people, whether down the street or across the world, showing them how to know and obey Jesus. This is our mission. This is our calling.

Open Our Homes

1. What competes for our love, making it hard to love God with all of our heart?
2. Who is the neighbor that we are to love?
3. How can we, as a family, love people?
4. Who discipled you, taught you the Gospel?
5. How can we disciple others?
6. What is significant about Jesus’ mission to, not just make disciples, but to make disciples of All Nations?
7. What needs to change in your home, in your heart, for you to become a Great Commandment & a Great Commission Family?

Open Our Hearts: Close in Prayer

Session 5: Family Discipleship



*Describe a normal Family Dinner
in your home*

Most families share meals together throughout the week. These can be rushed, messy, and loud. Often, it's a challenge to just find time to eat with our family, whether people in our home, extended family, or our church family.

Can you imagine adding a time of prayer or Bible study to your family dinnertime? Would it be difficult? Would it be rewarding? Would it be worth the effort?

Open God's Word

Deuteronomy 6:4-9—Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

- Jesus calls this the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:36-38), and here, we see the when a family is founded upon this great commandment, when a family loves God with all of their affections, their home is filled with spiritual fruit.
 - We can say that a Gospel Family will be a Great Commandment Family.
- We are commanded to teach our children the Word of God all day and night, finding creative ways to keep the Word of the Lord in front of them, even posting them around the house.
- The original Jewish audiences of this text, and some Jewish families today, took this command literally and created phylacteries, small boxes they would bound on their foreheads and arms, filling the boxes with this passage and other Bible verses.
- 2 Primary Commandments:
 - Love God through obedience and worship.
 - Reproduce this love in your children, family, home.
- 2 Practical Applications:
 - Pray together as a family. This allows you the chance to talk about God together, sharing testimonies, prayer requests, as you recognize the Lord's provision, blessings, love, healing, grace, answered prayers.
 - Establish family devotions, allowing your family opportunities to read the Bible together. This can be in the morning before work & school, in the evening around the dinner table, or at night as you put the kids in bed.

▪ *Share Testimony of challenges & blessings your family has encountered in celebrating family devotions.*

2 Timothy 1:5—I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well.

- Although Paul referred to Timothy as his child in the faith, Paul was not the first one to disciple Timothy. Timothy first learned the Gospel in his home through his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice.

These ladies were faithful with the Deuteronomy 6 command as they loved the Lord and taught Timothy to do the same.

2 Timothy 3:14-15—Continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

- Paul doesn't call Timothy away from his childhood discipleship into something new, but instead, he affirms the foundation of Timothy's faith, recognizing that what he learned in the home through his family, through the Scriptures, is what led him to salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Open Our Homes

Many families find it overwhelming to begin family devotions if family devotions have never been a part of their family. Before you dive into this rewarding and challenging spiritual discipline, talk through these 8 questions in order to prepare your hearts and minds, while revealing areas of need that should be covered in prayer.

1. In what ways did you see worship in the home when you were growing up in your parents' home?
2. Did you grow up in a home that taught the Bible regularly?
3. Did you grow up in a home that shared meals together regularly?
4. Do you do either of these regularly in your home today?
5. Do you feel confident enough to lead your family in acts of worship (Scripture reading, teaching Scripture, prayer, singing songs of praise)?
6. What fears or concerns do you have about leading your family in worship?
7. What would it look like if your family worshipped together regularly?
8. What blessings do you believe would come from this?
9. What prayer requests do you have for your family today?

Open Our Hearts: Close in Prayer

Session 6: Family Worship



What are some family traditions you celebrate?

Families spend a lot of time together. We eat, we play, we travel, we sleep, we celebrate birthdays and holidays, and we see each other just about every single day of our lives. Years from now, however, we will only remember a fraction of these events and activities.

What will you remember about your time with your family in your home?

Today is our chance to establish Gospel traditions in our homes that we will remember for years to come; traditions that will bless us for years to come. Today is the day to start leading our families to worship together, to spend time, not just eating and playing, but exalting Jesus Christ with one another.

Open God's Word

Psalm 78:4—We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done.

- Are we a people after God's own heart? Are our homes "homes of worship"? Is our greatest desire to see the next generation praising God? Are we pursuing a time of family worship?
- 4 Questions to ask to see if your family is a family after God's heart of worship:
 - If worship is about us, we are not a family after God's own heart.
 - If worship is something we can take or leave, we are not a family after God's own heart.
 - If worship is not a natural overflow of all of the blessings we have received from Christ then we are not a family after God's own heart.
 - If worship occurs only when we are comfortable, happy, and pleased with the events of that week, then we are not a family after God's own heart.

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Share testimony of how your family engages in Family Worship. |
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Acts 10:24-27—Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. When Peter entered, Cornelius met him and fell down at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter lifted him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am a man." And as he talked with him, he went in and found many persons gathered.

- God had told Cornelius to invite Peter to his home, so Cornelius knew that Peter was bringing a message from the Lord.
- Cornelius didn't want to keep this message for himself. He wanted the Gospel message in his home and he wanted all of his family and relatives and close friends to hear it too. So he invited them into his home and they waited for Peter.
- By the time Peter arrived, he "found many persons gathered."
- Peter shares the GOSPEL with the entire family:
 - God shows no partiality, but saves families of all nations
 - Jesus, anointed with the Holy Spirit, performed miracles during His ministry.
 - Jesus was crucified on the cross and buried
 - God raised Jesus from the dead on the third day
 - Jesus appeared to many witnesses after His resurrection

- Jesus gave His disciples the command to make disciples of all nations
- Whoever believes in Jesus will receive forgiveness of sins
- After they hear the Gospel, we see Cornelius and his family:
 - Believe the Gospel
 - Receive the Holy Spirit
 - Receive Baptism
 - Worship God
- This is Family Worship: Bringing the Gospel into the home and then responding to the Gospel by exalting the name of Jesus Christ together.
- We need men and women in our homes today to be a Cornelius; to lead their families in engaging and responding to the Gospel through worship.

Open Our Homes

1. Who of your family members and relatives have yet to hear the Gospel?
2. Who of your family members and relatives have yet to receive the Gospel?
3. What are some ways you could begin to lead your household to worship Jesus Christ together?
4. What are some reasons your family has to worship Jesus?
5. What keeps you from worshipping together?
6. What prayer requests do you have today for your family?

Open Our Hearts: Close in Prayer

Session 7: Family Missions



*If you & your family could travel anywhere,
where would you like to go?*

Families often travel together. They go to the store. They go to the church. They go to weddings.

What would it look like if a family went on mission together? Can you imagine an entire household serving the poor, the hungry, the needy, the least of these together? Can you imagine an entire family engaging, believing, and then proclaiming the Gospel together to the lost?

Open God's Word

(1) Family Missions means leading your family to Christ:

Acts 16:11-15—So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.

- Lydia was the first European convert reported in the Scriptures.
- We see three people moving in her salvation experience:
 - Paul preaches the Gospel
 - Lydia responds to the Gospel
 - But, most importantly, it is the Lord who opened her heart
 - 1 Corinthians 3:6-7—I (Paul) planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.
- The day she becomes a Christian, Lydia becomes a missionary.
- She puts her family in a position to hear the Gospel and her entire household was saved and baptized that day.

Acts 16:25-34—About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.” And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

- Again we see an example of a brand new Christian becoming a brand new missionary to his family, as the jailor believes in Jesus and his faith immediately overflows into his home. By the end of the story, his entire family believes in God, is baptized, and spends the night rejoicing together around the dinner table.

(2) Family Missions means leading others to Christ as a family:

Acts 18:1-4—After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them, and because he was of the same trade he stayed with them and worked, for they were tentmakers by trade. And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and tried to persuade Jews and Greeks.

- Aquila & Priscilla give a beautiful example of family missions.
- As they are expelled from Rome, they immediately become partners in the Gospel with Paul, a fellow tentmaker.

Acts 18:24-28—Now a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was an eloquent man, competent in the Scriptures. He had been instructed in the way of the Lord. And being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things concerning Jesus, though he knew only the baptism of John. He began to speak boldly in the synagogue, but when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. And when he wished to cross to Achaia, the brothers encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him. When he arrived, he greatly helped those who through grace had believed, for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

- As they serve together in their new home, Aquila & Priscilla find an opportunity to disciple Apollos together, and their family missions ministry bears much fruit for Apollos' ministry.

Romans 16:3-5—Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks but all the churches of the Gentiles give thanks as well. Greet also the church in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in Asia.

- By the time Paul writes the Roman church, Aquila and Priscilla now lead a church in their home.
- They are always paired together as missionaries as disciple makers (not just tentmakers), for they are not engaging in individual missions separate from one another, but, instead, they are living the Great Commission together.
- We can say that a Gospel Family will be a Great Commission Family.

○ *Share testimony of your family serving together as missionaries.*

Open Our Homes

1. In what ways has your family served together?
2. What opportunities do you have coming up that your family could take advantage of to serve alongside one another?
3. What blessings do you think would come if you engaged in Family Missions?
4. What spiritual gifts, talents, or passions does your family have that could work well together in missions?
5. What prayer requests do you have today for your family?

Open Our Hearts: Close in Prayer

Session 8: Leaving a Legacy of Faith



What do you want your Tombstone to say?

What do you want to be

The focus of your obituary when you die?

We all know our time on Earth is short. We all know we have but a few years to make an impact, to do something that matters, to be a part of something bigger than ourselves, and when we stop long enough to think about it, most of us are determined to make sure that we do not waste our lives.

Have you ever thought about what today's decisions and habits and schedules will mean for tomorrow? Have you ever considered the impact you may or may not have on the next generation?

A Gospel Family is like a stone tossed into the lake. It's impact is felt, creating ripples of water that spread out across the surface. This is our prayer for our homes, for our lives: that we would become Gospel Families that impact those around us, creating a ripple affect of Gospel Families that will spread out across the nations.

So how do we leave this legacy of faith?

Open God's Word

Judges 2:6-10—When Joshua dismissed the people, the people of Israel went each to his inheritance to take possession of the land. And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work that the Lord had done for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died at the age of 110 years. And they buried him within the boundaries of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash. And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel.

- Joshua was a faithful, servant leader, used by God to lead the nation of Israel after the death of Moses. Joshua was the one who led them into the Promised Land.
- The Scriptures here say that as long as Joshua was alive, as long as his elder leaders were alive, as long as all who had seen, firsthand, the great work of the Lord were alive, the people served the Lord.
- But then Joshua died.
- The elders died.
- And the next generation arose.
- It's heartbreaking to read the description of the next generation: "They did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel."
- And the consequences are just as tragic:
 - Judges 2:11-12—And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals (false god). And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them. And they provoked the Lord to anger.
- How could such a faithful generation fail to pass the baton to the next generation? How could men like Joshua not leave a legacy of faith?

- An author named Timothy Witmer writes, “We are all just one generation from unbelief. It is our responsibility to pass the truth along to our children. This is no area in which we should drop the baton.”
- Witmer continues, “As shepherd leader, you must take the lead in nourishing your family spiritually. You must make provision for your family to receive this nourishment from the word of God found in the Scriptures. You must strive to engage your family regularly in the Word at home.”
- A 2003 survey reported that 85% of Christian parents believe they are responsible for their child’s spiritual development, and yet the majority had no plan for how to engage their children spiritually. (Barna Research)
- Our prayer is to become Gospel Families who leave a legacy of faith for the next generation who will also live as Gospel Families who cultivate discipleship, worship & missions in their homes.

Open Our Homes

1. What are some practical ways we can pass the Gospel Family baton to the next generation?
2. What challenges will we likely face while investing in the younger generation?
3. Who did God use to pass the baton to you?
4. Would you describe the next generation of our nation as a generation of faith? Why or why not?
5. What prayer requests do you have today for your family?

Open Our Hearts: Close in Prayer