

## Family Faith Connection Week 5 Day 1

Scripture Reference: Matthew 9:35-38

### THE HARVEST



\*Read today's Scripture Verses:

1. What are your hopes and dreams for your son(s)/daughter(s) in the following areas: (Make a list for each youth that you will refer to every day-use a piece of paper/ notebook/journal)
  - A. Spiritual/Relationship with God
  - B. Family
  - C. Financial
  - D. Educational
  - E. Success/Failures
  - F. Friends/Relationships
2. What are some areas in your life you need to get right with God? (Make a list to use on a daily basis in a notebook/journal etc.)
3. Designate a time daily you will stop and pray for your son/daughter specifically as directed each day. It does not have to be a very long, drawn out prayer, but make a promise and designate and let your family know the time in which you are going to set aside for prayer. Put it on a card, write down the time, put it somewhere everyone will know (refrigerator, bedroom door, bathroom mirror, etc.) and sign it.

My Prayer Time: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Designate a day of the week, Monday-Friday, that as a family you will stop and spend time reading through the weekly devotional provided each week.

Family Devotional Day:\_\_\_\_\_. Time: \_\_\_\_\_

I started today as we will every day of a new month, putting things into perspective and revisiting our progress. This was day one, have you seen any changes over the last month? Since now you have been able to hopefully bridge the gap in your family space, is there anything in the list that has changed? Starting I would like for you and your family to try and comprise a mission statement for your family. No we are not trying to direct this like a business, but if you were able to have someone come and ask what are your family beliefs, it would be awesome if each member of your family was able to recite from their heart exactly what they believe. Now, you cannot use this one, but I think Joshua had the best family vision statement, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord". I really don't think you can beat that one, but I would love for you as a family to sit down and determine your families vision statement. It will

go a long way to help each member of your family understand the necessity walking together towards a common goal. If the entire family wanted to read the book of John and they accomplished it, the family would grow stronger together as a family. I am not asking for you to do everything yourself, I am asking for you to cast a vision that will hopefully determine your destination. Andy Stanley has a quote that we used all summer, "Direction, not intention, determines our destination". In other words, if you set a point where you want to go, and are diligent in getting there, you will be amazed, as a family how much stronger you will be in the end. If you only intend to get there, don't be surprised when you look back and see no one is following you because you gave them no direction to truly follow, you just kinda aimed at something you didn't truly believe in yourself.

Today's scripture is still just as profound as when Jesus originally said it. The harvest is plentiful, you have been cultivating the soil, and it is now ready to begin planting seeds. But the problem is that the workers willing to follow through continue to get smaller and smaller. Remember your dedication you made and hold true to the lives that each of us has been called to nurture. AMEN

Today's Scripture: Matthew 9:35-38

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:35-38 NIV)

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VII. We will be faithful to the ideals and values of our family.

Two are better than one... if one falls down, the other can help him up. A cord of three strands is not easily broken. From Ecclesiastes 4:9-10,12b

VIII. We will not take joy from one another.

Above all things put on love, which holds everything together in perfect harmony. Colossians 3:14

IX. We will speak the truth in love.

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer. Psalm 19:14.

X. We will be grateful and content with the blessings God has bestowed on our family. Learn to get along happily whether you have much or little... for we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us.

Philippians 4:11,13



## Family Faith Connection Week 5 Day 4

Scripture Reference: Matthew 7:24-29

### SPIRITUAL AUTOBIOGRAPHY



\*Read today's Scripture Verses:

Today is going to be a very personal day. Coming off a time with talking about personal family moments, I want to encourage you to know that this may be a long process. In trying to understand your actions and why you do the things you do, you may need to honestly take a journey backwards. In doing so I am going to share with you a basic part of why Phase 1 family ministry is so important to me. Here is a part of my autobiography.. A part of my journey and understanding why my passion is for the family.

Growing up, I always considered my family to be a godly family. We always went to church as we were supposed to do, and I thought that everything was ok. Growing up in my family, I continued to come into the realization that as long as my family went to church everything would be ok. Being in a military family, it blew my mind that the more we moved, the more I felt my family fall away from God because they began to pull away from church. I began to see my perfect family begin to crumble under a lot of the pressures of life and I continued to hold on to the thread that if they would just come back to church, everything would be ok. But see this is where my false sense of hope began. I continued to equate the fact that church is the only place that could fix my family. We were building our foundation on something other than God. Church became our God and I don't mean that in a negative way. I am saying that we only sought God at church, and when church was over, we did like many people and families do.. We left God at the threshold and never took Him with us. We never opened our Bibles at home and only prayed when we made the time to sit around the table and eat together. So it was no surprise when I look back at my family, that things began to unravel. Because instead of taking God into our home, we left Him either at the church or at the front door as we just didn't fully let Him in the house. My family was a godly family, but we never allowed God to take full control of our lives.

So you can see why my heart is so passionate about moving God from the church into our homes. As you read the scriptures today, realize that the house on the solid rock was the ones who were willing to take God in their hearts everywhere they went. So when struggles and cracks begin to form, those with solid foundations hold the test of time. On the other hand, those who only do "church" and forget to fully take God with them, they completely fall apart and when the stress cracks in the home begin to grow, they have a foundation built on sand, and they quickly find their lives sinking struggling to keep their head above water and continuing to question why is this happening to us... We went to church.. Yes you did, but you forgot to take God with you as you left.

So today, here is how the spiritual autobiography works. Begin writing down your story from birth until present day. Mention everything that caused you to grow, change, struggle, move etc. include in your timeline, people who were inspirational in your walk, it may be a parent, grandparent, coach, teacher, preacher, stranger, etc.. Share how they helped to mold your walk. Talk about the setbacks and struggles that completely tested you and maybe even caused you to question your journey. This is your story, and it's crazy to think how your story not only has influenced your life and your journey, but also you will be surprised to see how your choices, issues, strengths, and decisions have now influenced and transferred your values, morals, and perceptions to your family. It has no length, mine was between 20-30 pages double spaced. Once you start writing, things you never really thought of will pop back in your mind.

You may find some of the same realizations I did that common things continued to happen throughout my life, and I was only able to see it when I was able to stop and deal with my story.

In seeing my story, I was able to realize my faults and my flaws in which I continued to overlook. I realized that God has to get out of the church and as He stands at the door knocking, we must remember to open the door and let Him in. I cannot wait to hear how God opens your eyes and helps each of us to see our passion we have been overlooking because we have failed to read and know our own story. AMEN

**Today's Scripture:**

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law. (Matthew 7:24-29 NIV)

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So today, I just want you to spend time rethinking this daily process. Are you doing it so that you will find a quick fix for your family, or are you slowly going through Phase 1 in hopes of understanding that it is not the sprinter but the one that trains for the marathon that wins the race. With each stage you will begin to see small changes that will enhance you and your family...but as you are beginning to see, everything has to start at home.. meaning we have to deal with issues we are having first before we can expect a transformation to occur any where else. Ask, Seek, and Knock... It starts with YOU! Don't skip the process, because if you do you will open a door that will lead to another path. Be patient and allow God to work through you and your issues that you will begin to reveal in your spiritual autobiography.

With your family today, determine if you are living your life too fast paced to honestly stop and enjoy what God is saying to you. Go back and make a daily timeline for each day and see where and what you put the most emphasis in on a daily basis. It's hard to ask God for something that many of us are not willing to put the time and effort to seek to find. He is standing at the door and knocking... Why are you still not letting Him in DAILY! AMEN

**Today's Scripture: Matthew 7:7-8**

**7** "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. **8** For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.



Today we start by looking at our lives. Have we been able to go back and learn from our past, look to those who were in those leadership roles to keep us moving forward and see where their life lessons have given us the brace that we needed at the time to grow? Have we placed the stories of wisdom and their teachings in our hearts and carried them around in such a way that we pass on that same trait or knowledge on to our family. When Solomon wrote here, he was challenging us to hold the teachings from our families to heart. It is our heritage and legacy that whether you know it or not has been passed down for generations and now lies on your hands. My dad taught me how to change a tire, fish, drive, tie knots, grill, shoot, check electricity, roof etc. he passed valuable knowledge that helped me in my time of need. I saw, I learned, and hopefully one day I'll have the opportunity to pass on other things to future generations that they will hold close to their heart as a part of our family legacy.

Sometimes we in all of our wisdom cannot see the benefit of the lessons others more knowledgeable are able to teach us. Humbly I pray each of us will lean not on our own understanding and allow God to teach a few things in regards to our family as well. As far as homework today.. Make a list of the things you want your children to learn from you before they move on to the next stage of their lives when we no longer seem important. Lol but make a list of life lessons you want to pass on to your family and then one by one begin teaching them. The support you may be giving may be needed more than you know and more than they realize they need. You are the brace that helps keep them strong even if they feel as though they can walk it alone. Keep fighting for your family, keep planting the seeds, because eventually they will take root and grow and give them the opportunity for a longer life... One with eternal ramifications. May God be one of the first things your family takes root in and passes on.

### **Today's Scripture:**

My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. (Proverbs 3:1-6 NIV84)



and do his best towards God or satan is going to find a way to deter you and cause you to stumble and fall. Immediately following this advice, a few verses down the chapter, Cain is so angry because he was not chosen to be worthy, his anger and sin literally consumes him and he goes on to commit the first murder recorded in the Bible. Now I am not saying that you are going to murder someone if you do not do or give what God is asking for us to give. What I am saying is that if we do not set aside our best many times and we end up giving only what is left over and that is passed on to our children because if they see that it's only the leftovers you are giving they will do the same if not less. After 2 generations, many fail to give at all.

What I am asking is that you and your family set aside three stations of tithing. First, financial. You may not be able to give 10% which many believe is what scripture tells us, but start somewhere. If you give your children allowance, have them set something aside that they can give to start that process. Second, as you are doing your devotional time, encourage them to continue to start finding a time each day they can spend with God, other than just the family time. They need to begin moving in this direction as well. Finally in their prayer time, encourage them to begin praying either as soon as they wake up or right before they go to bed. Have them put it on a card to remind them every day, with their weekly scripture verse. The more you demonstrate it in your life, the more they will begin doing it in their life. Help them establish their time with God as well as the time together as a family. We are mid way through Phase 1, and I am excited about many of the stories I am hearing about God's movement, and I am seeing this because you have been willing to tithe your time with your family. Keep it up... It will only continue to get better!

### **Today's Scripture:**

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. **3** In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the Lord. **4** And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering, **5** but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. **6** Then the Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? **7** If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it.”

## Family Faith Connection Week 6/Day 3

Scripture Reference: Isaiah 26:3-4



### CURVE BALL

\*Read today's Scripture Verses:

Have you ever had your schedule set, your calendar ready, your day planned and low and behold there comes the curve ball. Everything changes and you say to yourself, "Man, I didn't even see that coming". Well that happens to me on a daily basis. I have learned to hold true to the phrase that I must ALWAYS be "Flexible". So crazy enough I am going to ask you to be "flexible" too. I know that many of us really have a hard time when people put us in awkward situations or try to stretch us beyond what we feel like we should be stretched, but I hope that you have seen that things have started to get better for you and your family through this time.

Reaching the midpoint of our first phase, I would like to hear back from you. Please... The only way that we can continue to see if we are on the right track or if we are completely missing the mark is to have feedback, a few short words that I would like to use, anonymously of course, to encourage others to join in this journey. I say all of that because I really do want to see where God is leading our families and how many are really take an opportunity to reach out and spend time building their foundations.

We see that with the scripture that is being used today. We will keep our minds at peace, and you know that is one of the hardest things to do... at least for me. Since becoming a parent it seems as though I find myself in prayer a lot more for my family. I guess when it was just me, I didn't really worry if I got hurt or injured, because I knew what was going on with me. Now having a family, I find myself constantly asking for God to help me find the peace to know that teachers, coaches, drivers, other parents, etc... are also providing a great environment for my family to learn and to stretch. I pray that God continues to show me new ways to reach my family in helping all of us see God in a better way and continue to have a desire to want to grow stronger and closer as a family. It's like daily Satan is trying to throw me a curve ball of doubt, which I am happy to say... GOD hits right out of the park.

So, this week, spend some time getting some feedback from your family. Words of encouragement or words of how we can improve. This model is completely set up to be a great opportunity for families to grow closer and understand where we need to reach more. The curve ball can come from many different directions and at any time.. However I will tell you.. it will also come and possibly humble you beyond all recognition.

Understand this, we will continue on this journey every day.. we will continue to walk on a solid foundation built and established by GOD.. because as we continue to watch God grow us, we must be able to first allow Him to humble us to the point of our foundations. God continues to throw me curve balls in my life and I am really excited to see just what might possibly happen next. Unfortunately for me, it always seems as though my vision is in hindsight instead of in the moment. In the moment I continue to seek God's wisdom, but in hindsight I am able to watch as the ROCK continued to guide me and grant me peace all along the way.

Final Thought: Are you at peace? I will tell you this... here is the final curve ball of the day... You will gain nothing from this study unless you honestly humble yourself and give it all to God. This Phase 1 study is not going to change your life for a short time... it is designed to change your families for generations. I know that that is hard to understand, but for me, it blows my mind to see that it took 4 years for me to get to the point where I am today. There is no quick fix.. I had to break my heart and my mind and my soul back down to the foundation... then God was able to rebuild it and lead me here! During the time I fought it every step of the way... in hindsight I'm humbled because once again God knocked it out of the park. AMEN

Today's Scripture:

**3 You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you. 4 Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord, the Lord himself, is the Rock eternal. Isaiah 24:3-4**

## Family Faith Connection Week 6/Day 4

Scripture Reference: James 4:7-10



### WASHING HANDS

\*Read today's Scripture Verses:

You remember when we always had to go and wash our hands every time we walked into the house it seemed. Now, I mean actually going to the sink and wash our hands with the community bar of soap and the shake your hand drying process. There was no such thing as hand sanitizer, and no one really worried about passing germs from one person to another. I mean I remember probably eating more dirt than I knew because even after I washed my hands they were never clean enough. But every time I went to the bathroom or came into the kitchen I was quickly directed to my grandparents sink to wash my hands because that was the thing I was supposed to do.

Today we are focusing on the traditions that our families have passed down from generation to generation. As we look at the things we do in our lives, I want you today to make a list of those traditions you still keep that you have grown up with from your family. It may be food you eat on Thanksgiving or things you do at Christmas.... Whatever the tradition, I would love to hear and see what You have brought down from your families to pass on to your future generations... Why? Because just like the washing of my hands, there are things that I remember growing up that made an impression on who I am. I remember the many different things that continued to mold and shape my attitude and desire to win or to compete. Legacies that I now find passing on to my family, and others I have changed in hopes of allowing them the opportunity to grow as well.

In our scripture today, we see that that is exactly what James was writing about. He quickly gives us the advice to come close to God by getting rid of those things that continue to cause us to stumble. To resist the things that are so easy to do and find a time to hold on to God. He encourages us to "wash our hands", or in other words, to get things right with God before we come and sit at the table with our families or with our personal time with God. James encourages us to try and get rid of our prideful lives and in complete humility offer our hands, hearts, minds, and souls to God.

Finally today, I have included the words to one of my old favorite songs that was sung by Steve Green. As I Reread the words it continues to remind me why I started this Phase 1 journey with you.. I too want to allow my family the opportunity to see God I their lives not just for my daughters, but also for future generations to see that GOD is the center of everything we do and that only by HIM washing us thoroughly will be truly clean. AMEN

### **FIND US FAITHFUL**

We're pilgrims on the journey Of the narrow road  
And those who've gone before us line the way  
Cheering on the faithful, encouraging the weary  
Their lives a stirring testament to God's sustaining grace

Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses  
Let us run the race not only for the prize  
But as those who've gone before us  
Let us leave to those behind us  
The heritage of faithfulness passed on through godly lives

Chorus:

Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful  
May the fire of our devotion light their way  
May the footprints that we leave  
Lead them to believe  
And the lives we live inspire them to obey  
Oh may all who come behind us find us faithful

After all our hopes and dreams have come and gone  
And our children sift though all we've left behind  
May the clues that they discover and the memories they uncover  
Become the light that leads them to the road we each must find

### **Today's Scripture Verse:**

**Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.  
(James 4:7-10 NIV)**



Now the third part of the definition really makes me excited about the potential of what our Phase 1 family COULD be if we are honestly willing to move forward and be faithful. Produces a TOTAL effect that is greater than the sum of the individual elements contributions... WOW! Pretty much hit it out of the park... DID YOU MISS IT? Read it again... Produces a TOTAL effect that is greater than the sum of the individual elements contributions. In other words, when you begin working together in prayer and in reading of God's Word TOGETHER, you will be able to move further, go deeper, grow closer, and change your entire family on a greater level than when you just assume that everything you do as individuals under the same roof is enough!

God created the family to DEVOTE THEMSELVES to meeting TOGETHER. God did not determine that as long as one person is reading a scripture in one room, and another person is praying in the living room would be enough. Now don't get me wrong that is good, but it is in the INTERACTION of each person that produces the GREATER opportunity than if the family is completely divided.

In Paul's closing remarks to Titus, he is encouraging him to help the people of Crete to understand they must all work TOGETHER! Cities, communities, churches, and families cannot function ALONE. It is in the cooperation and interaction between each of the elements that something PRODUCTIVE gets done.

Final Thought: Have you hit the wall yet? Have you found Satan wedging into your family and once again separating the power of your family? Has routine and the world once again pulled you from your ability to interact each day with your family? If you answered yes to ANY of these questions...STOP...DROP...AND PRAY! Wherever you are, whatever you are doing, STOP...DROP...AND PRAY! The World is set on causing you to believe its ok to pull apart from the greatest power God had given us... Our family! Synergy only occurs when ALL the elements come together... Without that cohesive bond all you are doing is putting out a lot of energy for a return that will leave you wanting more and questioning even more. Fight for your family... Fight for the one thing God gave us as a reminder of His AMAZING love on a daily basis. Not everyone in this world has these moments and these freedoms to pray, read, and even eat together... Why do we take them for granted. AMEN

#### Today's Scripture:

Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives. (Titus 3:14 NIV)

## Family Faith Connection Week 7/Day 1

Scripture Reference: John 3:16-17



### HISSTORY

\*Read today's Scripture Verses:

I will be honest, I am completely blown away by the fact of what is going on in the midst of our country. What blows me away more is that there is so much that could be done but with politics, coronavirus, and natural disasters, we are watching our country split apart at the seams. I really just wanted for us to think about the state of the country as a whole. In my brief life span on earth, I have been blown away that the older I have gotten the worse everything seems to be. I remember in school, they always taught us that the reason we study history was in hopes of not repeating the mistakes of our past, and unfortunately it does not look as if they is going to be the case for the near future.

History is something that is designed to show us the good and the bad, the positive and the negative, the mistakes and the grace of God. In watching our stories continue to unfold with our families, I am always encouraged to go back and see where God has been able to carry me from the last debacle to the present. Many times I continue to see where my failures became another chapter in HIS STORY of grace and mercy for my life. FYI no I did not spell that wrong... I spelled it that way on purpose.

Today I just want you to go back and have a conversation with your family about HIS STORY... About why it is so important that they know that Jesus came and died by His own choice..because He loved us so much that He was willing to come and sacrifice it all. But more importantly I want you to reveal to them the second part of the story... That God did not send Jesus to condemn us...but to save us. God had a plan all the way back in Genesis when sin entered into the world. He knew that based on our history... He would be able to tell HIS STORY.. and it has the greatest ending of eternal life. So share the GOSPEL... Share HIS STORY with your family and you just might be surprised that it might actually change history in the life of your family as well. Below I have included the poem footprints in the sand to also help illustrate the power and love of God. Enjoy Week 7... May HIS STORY be seen in you.

**Today's Scripture:**

**16** For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. **17** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.

John 3:16-17

FOOTPRINTS in the Sand

One night a man had a dream. He dreamed  
he was walking along the beach with the LORD.

Across the sky flashed scenes from his life.

For each scene he noticed two sets of  
footprints in the sand: one belonging  
to him, and the other to the LORD.

When the last scene of his life flashed before him,  
he looked back at the footprints in the sand.

He noticed that many times along the path of  
his life there was only **one** set of footprints.

He also noticed that it happened at the very  
lowest and saddest times in his life.

This really bothered him and he  
questioned the LORD about it:

"LORD, you said that once I decided to follow  
you, you'd walk with me all the way.

But I have noticed that during the most  
troublesome times in my life,  
there is only one set of footprints.

I don't understand why when  
I needed you most you would leave me."

The LORD replied:

"My son, my precious child,  
I love you and I would never leave you.  
During your times of trial and suffering,  
when you see only one set of footprints,  
it was then that I carried you."



In our families I am asking that you do the same thing. Phase 1 is a desire to put off all of the stuff that has gotten in between us and our families and replaced the solid foundation of God. We need our hearts to spend time being detoxed from all of the things the world has continued to corrupt it with. 24/7 God is always watching and waiting to hear from us. 24/7 God is always waiting for us to give Him full control and direction for our Family. 24/7 it seems as though we try and find a way to push Him away. WHY?

By week 7, you have now come into a full understanding that God has given you a family... what you allow God to do with you and your family is now your decision.. and yes you will have to face the consequences of that decision 24/7. COME BACK TO THE FAMILY.... COME BACK AND SPEND TIME SEEING GOD... He is all around you... In their tears, in their laughter, in their screams, in their love, their prayer, their joys, and their sadness. God is ALL AROUND YOU 24/7... and if you cannot see Him... Just look in the eyes of your husband/wife/children. If God knit you together and gave you a heart for Him... That means God is with us 24/7... Even though we cannot comprehend it now... it's the story that continues 24/7. Just open your eyes and see GOD and stop being blinded by the world. AMEN

**Today's Scripture:**

I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the Lord. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart. Jeremiah 24:7



I say all this because for many of us we too are looking for God to come into our lives and the lives of our families in this huge sign of power and force. We are waiting for that moment when God is going to show up as the amazing power we expect Him to be and our families are going to be automatically fixed. Then when everything passes and we are still standing on our mountains looking at all of the destruction that these storms in our lives have caused... We begin to complain, make excuses and even deny that God loves us in the first place. We start to slide back into our old life because the changes have not occurred fast enough and by golly it is just too much for me to spend time "EVERY DAY" with our family.. Then in that moment when we think all is lost and that life is just going to have to move on... we hear that whisper. In the sound of our children, in the cries of the needy, in the still small voice.. God shows up.

Today, I am asking you to stop and write down what is causing you to struggle... What winds.. or earthquakes... or fires are destroying the things that are all around you and you don't even know it. What are you honestly asking God to do in your life and the lives of your family that you continue to block because of the circumstances that surround you. God asked Elijah to drop everything and wait on His voice.. I am asking you to do the same... Over the weekend listen for the whisper of God. And once you hear it... write down what it is telling you to do. Hopefully we will all realize that still small voice is God... and hopefully we will stop trying to hope that things will change overnight. As mentioned before this journey is a life marathon not a sprint and we are only in the first stage. But we have to also realize if we keep on the current path we are on... those forces of destruction will eventually overtake our lives if they haven't already. Enjoy your family time this weekend...AMEN

### **Today's Scripture: 1 Kings 19:11-13**

**11** The Lord said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake. **12** After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. **13** When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"



Homework for today is to watch tv. Yeah, I know, but honestly watch tv and see how the world is beginning to define family. It seems as though anything and everything is permissible as it pertains to family. Find a show that actually defines the traditional family as one established on strong Christian values living together in a nuclear family setting where parents are seen as strong, intelligent examples and their children mind their parents and strive to be godly examples to their friends. It's probably sad to say it may be impossible to find that show... The last one I actually remember was the Cosby show, and it continued to break barriers because of its' depiction of a two parent family that actually had morals.

The writer of today's verse continues to encourage us to know as long as we stay firm on the foundation that God has created for the family, there will be another viral takeover. Except this "virus" will actually restore the family back to its' proper place in the eye of the world. But that virus must feed off a "living organism". That means that you and your family must provide the opportunity for it to thrive and grow in a loving environment dedicated to replicating the life lessons we all have learned.

God forms this foundation... It is unshakeable.. And through the power and love of God it will become an all consuming fire that will not stop. It will continue to build families dedicated to God's word in hopes of rebuilding a connection that has been destroyed by the world. God's kingdom is unshakable, let's praise and worship Him because of the blessings of our families. Consume us and let's go viral!

### Today's Scripture Verse:

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire." (Hebrews 12:28, 29 NIV) *Tuesday, October 30th End Week 7*



## Today's Scripture Verse:

The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me back and forth among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones live?" I said, "Sovereign Lord, you alone know." Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you, and you will come to life. I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.'" So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath; prophecy, son of man, and say to it, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.'" So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet—a vast army. Then he said to me: "Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.' Therefore prophecy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: My people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.'" (Ezekiel 37:1-14 NIV)



*Today, I am asking all of us to try and think in the same way. What are the things that we are doing in our lives that can be used to reach the world. First we start with ourselves, and next we start with our close family and then continue to our extended family. There is a common thread amongst all of us whether we want to admit it or not. As fish swim in families, they continue to teach each other how to survive. It is a common trait amongst close families... unfortunately, it is the loners that really seem to have all of the issues. Without proper training or warning, they bite at the first thing they see and it may end up being the last bite they take.*

*As Jesus reached out to these men, we continue to see that God is doing the same thing with us. He is calling us to be the ones on the other side of the booth that as soon as they cast their poles, we provide for them a gift that is going to last them for eternity. I still love the adage, Give a man a fish, feed him for a day... Teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime. What I am asking you to do is the same thing.. Teach your family to fish... both literally and spiritually. Take some time and teach your family how to have fun going to the lake or creek or river and literally fishing. Explain to them the importance of today's devotion, and then sit down and teach them to be a fisher or men. It is very important for us to understand both of those roles. We can either give our families the little bit that they need to survive for a day... or we can teach them how to fish for eternity. The choice is ours... I just hope that we all choose to spend our time teaching our families how to survive and not biting at the bait the world is dangling in front of them... because just like the fish... it might be the last bite they take as well. AMEN*

**Today's Scripture Verse: Mark 1:16-17**

**16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."**



*Let's now take a look at the second part of today's verse. If we are able to receive the hope of Christ, we are then able to move forward in the process of helping others to see the mystery revealed. Being directed by God, we are to present others before God. In other words we are to teach, discipline, love, walk with, encourage and listen to everyone in our family in hopes of building a stronger family unit for God. We are called as members of the body of Christ to continue to incorporate that same grace, mercy and love that has been given to us through the life, blood and death of Christ. No where have I read this in scripture, but what if we were judged based on those that we were able to lead in a relationship with Christ. What if we were given specific eternal ramifications based on the way we were able to pass on the love and story of Christ to our sons and daughters. How would we measure up? If that was true, how much harder would we be willing to work at making sure our lives were more of an example as well as the lives of our families.*

*It is time that we reveal the mystery that is within us. It is time we stop allowing others to take think that we are OK when inside our families are truly falling apart. As it is with the church, the reason we continue to stumble, fall and not grow is because we have unconfessed lives that we are unwilling to reveal to God. We are continuing to hide behind the mask of who the world sees and in some cases, falsely revealing our lives to our families as well. One day, all will be revealed, and I pray that many of us will have already dealt with our issues with God. As the song starts... "Teach your children well... God will give you the strength and power to take off the mask and take full acceptance of the mystery that God has placed in our lives. The time is now for us to earnestly begin to pray for this same mystery to be revealed in our families as well.*

*Final thought: I don't know about you... but in this process my daughter has started asking very good questions about God in trying to unravel the mystery. In us and through our wisdom and teaching, God is starting to work in her life and maybe soon God will be revealed in her heart, mind and soul. We are beginning to see the seed begin to sprout, and the hope begin to take root. All because we have given our family to God and been willing to take the time to teach, admonish, and help to reveal the wisdom God has so given to us. It is an unending cycle that continues to give me the energy that can never quit, and that is the real reason I am always excited about my God, my family, and my calling. I'm not saying we do everything right...far from it, but we are willing to be open to learning from our mistakes in HOPE for the GLORY that will follow. AMEN*

### **Today's Scripture:**

**27** To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. **28** He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. **29** To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me. Colossians 1:27-29



*Today, this is what I am asking you... Have you ever moved away from your hometown and gone back and noticed that almost nothing has changed. The same or now new people are still living the same way and doing the same thing and they think everything is ok... But you coming back home, have a new perspective and you make the quote, "This is a nice place to visit but I really wouldn't want to live or raise my family here." You are able to see things with "NEW EYES". I say all this because what kind of home are we living in? In our homes, schools, and communities, are we just accepting that life is to be lived in the same way, with no change?*

*This week I want you to set aside an extra hour. I know you are thinking, how in the world of my busy schedule can I find an hour to put aside. Your "HOME" work is to take that extra hour and once again spend the day together doing something OUTSIDE. Get outside the home and gain a new perspective about your family. So that you will begin to try and see things with new eyes. It is difficult to come home again. Even with our families, many times we find that our children don't want to come home but go somewhere else to spend the night or play and hang out, because home has become the norm and they are dying to see the rest of the world. We have to find a way to continue to challenge them to desire to make their home a better place in which they want and desire their friends to come and learn about God. We have to get out of the normal life we have been living because we are too tired to fight against the system. It is time we create a home that is filled with so much love and excitement that our families have a desire to come and tell everyone about their homecoming every day. I hope that we are able to make it a lifelong experience instead of just a moment once in a while when we celebrate Jesus at Christmas or Thanksgiving. Let God COME into your HOME and live there forever. AMEN*

**Today's Scripture: Luke 4:14-28**

**14** Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. **15** He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him. **16** He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, **17** and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: **18** "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, **19** to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."**[f]** **20** Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. **21** He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." **22** All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. "Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked. **23** Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself!' And you will tell me, 'Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'" **24** "Truly I tell you," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. **25** I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. **26** Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. **27** And there were many in Israel with leprosy**[g]** in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian." **28** All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. **29** They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. **30** But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

## Family Faith Connection Week 8/Day 4

Scripture Reference: Colossians 3:23-24

### COOKIES



*\*Read today's Scripture Verses:*

*As we continue toward the end of our 2nd month, there is a lot that we have to understand before moving on to the final leg of Phase 1. The whole process has been about YOU. Yes, I know that you might question this statement, but Phase 1 has been used to basically reintroduce us to our families again. In understanding the need for so many of us to reconnect because for such a long time we have completely missed the opportunity to grow as a family. Now, also understand it is not the point that you have not been around your family, but in truth we have all been allowing the world to raise our children in hopes that our small time with them would give us a chance to influence them for the better.*

*This past weekend, we made cookies. Now, I know that you may think this is crazy, but we did, we made cookies. It was as if our family had discovered this amazing new bonding time together. I mean don't get me wrong, we have made cookies before, but for the first time our daughter was VERY ADAMANT about being a part of the process. She would help in the pouring, the mixing and the scooping out of the batter onto the cookie sheet. It was amazing to watch as she looked like a little person now and not my little girl. She had such a strong desire to help because she is getting to the point where she wants her identity to matter as a member of our family. It literally blew me away. What blew me away even more is that she washed every, pot, pan, dish, and cup that was in the sink as well. WHERE DID MY DAUGHTER GO? LOL*

*So this is what I am also bringing to light about us... In our journey together, we are trying to recapture these amazing moments. Phase 1 is helping us all to reconnect with these amazing blessings that God has given to us. These members of our family that we continue to just take for granted for such a long time. See just like the cookies that we made this weekend, our families are going through some of the same process. We are ingredients into this amazing design that God has created under our roof. Some of us are the flour that gives our family a solid foundation... other members of our family are the eggs that help to pull things together... some of us are the extra ingredients that we add such as butter, creme, vanilla, chocolate, etc.. to make things seem a little more interesting... and yes some of us are the NUTS that cannot be explained. However, we are all mixed together and under the extreme heat of God's love, we come together to form an AWESOME masterpiece.*

*In Today's scripture we see that we are called to work together with all of our hearts. As a member of our families, we are asked to find a way to continue to mold things together. I don't care how your family was created... all I know is that God has had a hand in your families life every step of the way. But now God is calling for us to take the reigns and help our families to see the importance of serving together. When Paul wrote these words, he continued to encourage the faithful to stand firm the course in which God was directing them. As am I with the Phase 1 Journey you are on today. Continue to make your family a priority, and I will be honest, you definitely should be seeing some sort of change in your environment if you have been faithful to serve.*

*Just like the cookies, yes we can eat the dough... in fact many of us would rather eat the dough, but the process cannot be completed until it has went through the test of fire. So is true with our families as well. We can continue to allow the world to train our families and we just sit back and question how things got the way that they did, or we can make a choice to continue this fight to see the family as our mission field. We will be tested and we will be tried, but as we continue to watch our family mesh together, the end result will be something that will continue to pass down the line for generations to come. You cannot make a cake without breaking a few eggs... the same is true about our lives. We are going to make mistakes... we are going to continue to falter, but it's through the trying times that we are able to see the hand of God revealed.*

*I am not going to tell you that you need to go and bake cookies.... however, by the end of phase 1 I hope you have really started to put into action a time to pray for and with your family. I hope that you have been able to establish a weekly quiet time/Bible study time, and that you have found yourself yearning to find new ways to introduce the love of God with your family. These ingredients are a necessity if the journey is to be successful. Just with any good cookie, it takes time and effort to make a cookie from scratch to the end result. Don't buy the pre-packaged deal... spend time getting your hands dirty and building a memory that will continue to last a lifetime. AMEN*

**Today's Scripture:**

**23** Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters,  
**24** since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Colossians 3:23-24

**Family Faith Connection End Month 2**  
**Scripture Reference: Esther 4:14**  
**DELIVERANCE**



*\*Read today's Scripture Verses:*

*So today we have come to the end of month 2. You have been able to witness your family begin to join together in a weekly time of prayer. Now is the time to change the game. In understanding the concept of Phase 1 families, we must continue to push the envelope and find ways to draw our families closer. We must continue to define the goals in which God is setting before us on a daily basis. In this moment, I am asking that you search for the moments of deliverance...and no I am not talking about a movie from the '70's about a group of guys that went down that Chattooga river, but an opportunity to encourage your families to see what they have been willing to remove from their lives that has had such a large hold on them for such a long time.*

*Now, here is also where we once again get honest. For some of us, we are still just going through the motions in order to check our time cards and say that we participated but we really did not get involved. One of the hardest things that we have to admit is that we just cannot find a way to honestly stop and spend time with God. In a conversation with many of our students the other night, I asked them why it was so hard to spend time in God's word... Many of them gave a lot of good answers, but the one that really stuck out the most was the one that said because it is so accessible. I had to stop and think about that for a moment... Then it really did hit me... The reason that we are so nonchalant about studying God's word is because we are so comfortable in our lives. We have never truly been threatened to lose the opportunity to study God's word so we just take the Bible for granted because it will always be there for us...or so we think.*

*It almost makes one wish to see what would happen if for just one day, we, as a country, outlawed every Bible and the study of Christianity would be punishable by death. We have confined ourselves to allowing the Bible and the study of God's word as a commodity instead of a desire that runs our lives. In the moment of our greatest need, it seems then and only then do we turn back to the Word that could have helped us many stages before we ended up where we are now. In other words... I firmly believe that our families, our church, our community and our nation is in need for DELIVERANCE.*

*We have lost the passion of the ones who struggled to give us the freedoms we have in this country today. We live in an age of entitlement where our children believe just because they exist we are to give them everything they want and we forget to give them the foundations that they need. Growing up as a small child, I remember chores that had to be done before anything was rewarded. I remember the amazing ideals handed to me by my grandparents that everything was a "gift" from God and not something I wanted because I couldn't have it. We need to stop the travesty that we are teaching our families and pray for DELIVERANCE before we wake up one day and ask "WHERE DID WE GO WRONG?" The scarier part is that many of you may already be asking that question today.*

*As we look to the scripture today, I am showing you a time in which one so person had to drop who they were and realize the necessity of remaining faithful in order for God's people to be DELIVERED. Queen Esther was married to King Xerxes, one of the greatest conquerors of his time. In doing so, Queen Esther was living her life, almost forgetting that she was from a Jewish family who was about to be wiped out. One of her family members came and told her of the travesty that was about to occur to her people, and*

*below you will find his challenge to her as Queen. God had placed her in the place of authority in this time for the opportunity for her to save her people...her family from complete destruction. She was challenged to use her position of authority to go and save them or remain silent and watch as they would fall and God would remove His blessing from her life.*

*Maybe that is where we are today. For too long we have just stood silent and allowed the country that we hold so dear to fold down into itself. Maybe God is calling us...at this point and time in our lives to take a stand against the oppression that the world has placed in our lives by completely removing God from almost any other aspect of our lives. Maybe God has given us this final chance to take a stand for our families before the time will come that we will no longer have that option...I don't know, but one thing I do know is that "FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS".. we need deliverance from all of the crazy things our country has created. We have moved so far away from the God-centered country we were created as.. and moved into this place of accepting all things as long as it does not effect me now. Slowly and steadily we are finding ourselves accepting more and more things that God has completely said that we should stand against, and slowly and surely we are watching our country, our community, our churches and our families begin to fall apart... and we ask why?*

*After 2 months on this journey... have you found freedom from the things in life that have continued to tell you that you don't have time for your family? Have you taken the opportunity to fall in love with just spending time with the ones that God has given you the chance to influence on a daily basis, or has success up the corporate ladder been more of a goal? Have you traded your family foundations for a lie that Satan has continued to tell us all, that the more money you have the better your family will be? Have you stopped just for one moment and asked for God to DELIVER your family back into HIS hands. DELIVERANCE does come with a price... DELIVERANCE is not easy, because one of the first steps is humility from our pride and willingness to admit that we have truly never understood the reason we needed to be DELIVERED in the first place. Stop and take a good look in the mirror then do the same with your family. What do you see? Who do you see? If nothing else... it gives you a chance to see the real reason we need REAL CHANGE..and we have to move FORWARD. Deliver us from EVIL.. AMEN*

**Today's Scripture:**

*For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this?"*