

Youth Bible Study

Sunday, January 23, 2000

What has your family done for you lately?

When you read the title above, did you say to yourself, “Lots! My family provides me with food, protection, love, support, education, clothes and all sorts of stuff. I mean, if it wasn’t for my family, how would I get to hockey practice or to this weekend’s concert?” Or did you think more along the lines of: “Not much. We spend more time yelling at each other than listening, no one understands me, and what I say, do or look like is never good enough. Sometimes I would rather have no brothers or sisters and maybe a different set of parents.”

Okay, whichever scenario you find yourself in (or if it is somewhere in between depending on the day) this Bible study is for you. One of my favourite things about the Bible is that it does not tell us about a bunch of perfect people whom we are supposed to act like. No way! It tells about the lives of people who sinned, especially in family situations. Thankfully, God’s Word also tells us about how He forgave people for the stuff they were sorry for, and He promises to do that for us today. So, let’s look at some specific situations in the Bible and in our own lives.

First, some examples of family problems in the Bible. Review the rivalry in Joseph’s family beginning at Genesis 37:2. First of all, his dad played favourites so that ticked his brothers off. After a series of events, we read that instead of killing him, the brothers sell Joseph into slavery. (Genesis 37:18-28) A few chapters later, Joseph is second-in-command over all of Egypt and he could take some serious revenge on his brothers. What does he do instead, and why? (See Genesis 45:1-15.)

Read about Moses, Miriam and Aaron in Numbers 12. (Yes, the whole chapter! It is only 16 verses!) Wow! You would think that Moses would get defensive but instead he asks God to have mercy on his sister. Not our usual reaction when one of our siblings gets jealous and starts bad-mouthing us, or cutting down our friends or the choices we make.

Even Jesus had problems with His family. In John 2:1-5, Mother Mary volunteers Him (without asking first) to help out with a wine shortage at the wedding in Cana. His brothers thought He was “out of His mind” in Mark 3:20-21.

Try to think of two more instances in the Bible where families were having a rough time. Be sure to figure out how God made something good come of the situation in the end.

Now let's shift gears to a couple of positive family examples in the Bible. After all, families were God's idea in the first place! Flip in your Bible to the book of Ruth and read through the first chapter. In verses 15-17 we see how strong a family tie had become, and how Ruth is converted to her mother-in-law's faith in God. The story ends well; Ruth marries again and has a baby boy who will be the grandpa of King David, which places them in Jesus' family tree.

Our most important family for today's Bible study is Timothy's. In the Apostle Paul's second letter to a young pastor named Timothy, he says, "I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also" (2 Timothy 1:5). This passage tells us of the greatest gift that family can share with one another. Most likely Tim's mom and grandma not only talked about God's love, they must have lived out their faith in very obvious ways for Timothy to take hold and want to become a pastor. God had given the gift of faith to Timothy and blessed him with a family life where he grew in the understanding and exercising of his faith.

Look up the words of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 where God gave His people instructions to show how important it was to pass on to the next generation the love of God and His commandments. What a huge task God gave to our parents. Some of you might be parents in the next 10 years and this will be your job. Scary thought maybe!

Finally, take a look at your family when you go home today. Instead of asking the question that began this Bible study, ask, "What can I do for my family, for my church, and for others to express my thanks to God?" Please pray for your parents and brothers and sisters. Find ways to express your repentance, forgiveness and love to them. Look at the faith that is (or is not) shared by members of your family and take an active role in being a Christian brother or sister to your family members. Encourage others when they show God-given talents. Don't hide your gifts, use them in a way that gives thanks to God. Maybe even plan to serve in some way at your church this week and in the years to come because you are loved by God more than you can imagine. We need each member of the body of Christ to tell others of the forgiveness and hope that we have for families, friends and those we will never meet in this lifetime.

Close with prayer!



Prepare for Action – RSVF 2000 is a recruitment initiative of Lutheran Church–Canada which asks members of congregations to identify men and women whom they believe have the gifts and talents for church work vocations.

LUTHERAN CHURCH-CANADA
ÉGLISE LUTHÉRIENNE DU CANADA

Faith & Family Word Search

O C u P s e v e i l e b J e s u s p u H
 N c v Q l P z d P b p y P b M h t i a f
 T X e O J m F w D e u t e r o n o m y π
 W H z l L H s s e n t i w l s e v o l H
 w C i y p i h s r o w E F r e P C f b r
 f s t h U P C D y l i m a f s H a y B b
 o i p S W H U Σ β Σ O p z u l a β u n r
 r s a e A g p Á Q t s Z e g U L p v l o
 g t b x g l † h J χ Σ K β s F B i Σ n t
 i e P Á S L d L q Q W A F O s i h F a h
 v r Y X g r a n d p a r e n t s s T c e
 e n e r d l i h c e L o i s A m r i o r
 n T o b b Y c k u h G K F W o r e m n U
 e U r h d a e c i n u E ú i n i d o f j
 s B l n e C h g o o r l Á B B c a t i j
 s R u t h Á e g a r u o c n e G e h r f
 f r i e n d s L j t J o s e p h l y m i
 Z L l S t t s C i S F y o F w O l p a g
 B v h l π d p a r e n t s l b i D C l H
 b I L e e r u t a m R H e j C G n R M t

Deuteronomy

Eunice

Jesus

Joseph

Lois

Moses

Paul

Ruth

Timothy

baptize

believe

brother

children

confirm

encourage

faith

family

fight

forgiveness

friends

grandparents

leadership

love

mature

parents

sister

teach

witness

worship