

Bible Families

April – June 2020

April 1	Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel and Seth	a. God designed family as a launching pad for marriage b. God expects us to be responsible for family
April 8	Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael	a. The situation of the blended family b. Learning to put God before our family
April 15	Isaac, Rebecca, Jacob and Esau	a. Parenting without prejudice b. Dealing with family strife
April 22	Jacob, Rachel, Leah, and sons	a. Jealousy and envy b. The things that destroy families
April 29	Manoah, Wife, Samson	a. Seeking ways to successfully raise children b. Trying to guide adult children
May 6	Naomi, Ruth and Boaz	a. The relationship of inlaws b. Supporting extended family
May 13	Hannah and Samuel	a. Dedicating your children to the Lord b. The hurt of those who have not
May 20	Eli and Sons	a. The importance of discipline b. Not neglecting family serving God
May 27	David, wives, sons	a. Good men raise evil sons b. The damage of sexual desire
June 3	Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manassah	a. What we provide to follow b. When evil men change
June 10	Joseph, Mary and their children	a. Being a family God approves b. Caring for your parents
June 17	Zebedee, Joanna, James and John	a. Family discipleship b. The dangers of strong personality
June 24	Timothy and Lois	a. Difficulty of a single parent b. Passing on Faith

BIBLE FAMILIES	CLASS 1: ADAM, EVE, CAIN, ABEL AND SETH
READING	GENESIS 4
MAIN POINTS	
<p>POINT 1 - God’s creation of the family began with the institution of marriage in Genesis</p> <p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What is an institution? What institutions has God created? How to they interact with each other?</i> 2. <i>How does God define a marriage here?</i> 	
<p>POINT 2 – Genesis 2 reveals that at least one purpose for a family is for parents to prepare their children for marriage. Specifically, it reveals that children are raised to become marriage partners for others.</p> <p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>How do we prepare children for marriage as a family or as a congregation?</i> 	
<p>POINT 3 - When God questions Cain as to His brother’s whereabouts, Cain’s response is “<i>am I my brother’s keeper</i>”? This question seems to tell us something important: God was suggesting that Cain did have an obligation to his brother. As the Bible progresses, we are told more and more that another important purpose of the family unit is to take care of one another.</p> <p>1 Timothy 5:8 <i>But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.</i></p> <p>Parents are to care for their children – Manoah and Samson Children are to care for their parents and grandparents – Joseph and Jacob Cousins care for cousins – Mordecai and Esther Nieces and Nephews to Aunts and Uncles – Abraham and Lot Adoptive relationships – David and Mephibosheth</p> <p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What is a “household”?</i> 2. <i>In what ways can we teach the importance of caring for our family?</i> 	
<p>POINT 4 – Cain’s conduct towards Abel is the central theme of the account. We are told later (Hebrews 11) that the point here is that Abel offered God what God desired and Cain offered God what Cain desired. That mindset led to the murder of Abel.</p> <p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What personality characteristics do you see in Cain that drove his actions?</i> 2. <i>What do we make of God’s warning to Cain?</i> 	

BIBLE FAMILIES	CLASS 2: ABRAHAM, SARAH, ISHMAEL AND ISAAC
READING	GENESIS 16-17,21
MAIN POINTS	
<p>POINT 1 – One of the great blessings of God are children (Ps. 127:3). Yet many in the Scriptures and the world today are denied this blessing. We need to recognize this difficult circumstance.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <p><i>1. What ways are there in which we can be sensitive to those who cannot or have not had children?</i></p>	
<p>POINT 2 – One of the most important part of this part of Abraham’s life is to see how Abraham failed to trust God. Abraham and Sarah tried to bring about God’s promise by their own means.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <p><i>1. What are some examples in family behavior where we might be tempted not to trust God’s way?</i></p> <p><i>2. What were some of the consequences of Abraham and Sarah’s decision?</i></p>	
<p>POINT 3 – Abraham and Sarah had an interesting marriage. Scriptures tell us Sarah is a model of submission (1 Peter 3:6). Yet when her emotional struggle peaked, she pushed a bad idea on her husband. Abraham too was weak in this moment, accepting Sarah’s suggestion rather than insisting on being patient with the Lord. Then later Abraham refused to restrain Sarah as she mistreated Hagar. We need to see this as an important lesson: spiritual integrity is necessary for family stability.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <p><i>1. When Sarah put forward her suggestion, what should Abraham have done?</i></p> <p><i>2. What might Abraham have been thinking when he accepted Sarah’s suggestion?</i></p> <p><i>3. What are other decisions that might be made in a family that cause instability in a similar way?</i></p>	
<p>POINT 4 – As time progressed and Isaac came, Ishmael’s place was resented by Sarah. Ultimately, Sarah cast out Hagar and Ishmael permanently. This we are told was the will of God. Yet it is a lesson to us of the difficulties that arise with families that are “blended”. Many families are constituted both in Scripture and in the church of members who are “step” family. We need to appreciate and deal appropriately with these situations.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <p><i>1. Sarah’s behavior (not considering the divine influence) is questionable. What other ways might this situation have been handled?</i></p> <p><i>2. What are some of the issues that families may deal with in a step-parent/step-child situation?</i></p>	

BIBLE FAMILIES	CLASS 3: ISAAC, REBEKAH, ESAU AND JACOB
READING	GENESIS 24, 25, 27
MAIN POINTS	
<p>POINT 1 – ISAAC AND REBEKAH’S MARRIAGE: In Genesis 24 we see how Isaac and Rebekah were brought together. We have already said that marriage is the beginning of the family. Isaac and Rebekah are a great example of how to select a mate. First, to go to the place where you will find that Godly companion. Second, to trust God in His part in this process.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Where do we go to find a spouse from “my country”?</i> <i>2. How do we learn to trust God as Abraham’s servant did?</i> 	
<p>POINT 2 – ESAU SELLS HIS BIRTHRIGHT: Jacob and Esau are an important story of brothers. They each reflect something important for us to consider; Esau as the Christian who falls away (Heb. 12:15-17), and Jacob as the person who desperately desires the blessings of God. While God may have rejected Esau for being worldly, it does not mean that Jacob did right to take the birthright as he did.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Was the birthright stolen (Gen. 26:36) or sold (Gen. 25:31)?</i> <i>2. What character flaws do you see in Esau? What character flaws do you see in Jacob?</i> <i>3. Why would God have any approval of Jacob in the selling of the birthright?</i> 	
<p>POINT 3 – THE PROBLEM OF FAVORITES: One of the issues worth exploring is the dilemma of having “favorites”. We know that Jacob will later have a favorite wife and a favorite son. In that instance the damage to the family is clear. Here we see Isaac favor Esau and Rebekah Jacob. This later leads to the strife between Jacob and Esau. Favoritism is hard to define; there will be family we identify with or engage with easier than others. There is behavior that we want to encourage or discourage. This must be different that favoritism.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. What is favoritism? What is the difference between favoritism and recognizing proper conduct? What problems does it create in a home?</i> <i>2. What reasons are inferred for Isaac and Rebekah’s favoritism?</i> <i>3. How is the lesson of the prodigal son (Luke 15) an example of handling relationships properly?</i> 	
<p>POINT 4 – THE DECEPTION OF JACOB AND REBEKAH: The plot to deceive Isaac is a matter of great controversy in Scripture. It accomplished the purpose of God, but not is a godly way. It should be noted that the plot to deceive Isaac began with Rebekah.</p> <p>It is interesting to note that Rebekah is more or less not discussed again; her nurse Deborah’s death is mentioned, but not hers.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. What family issues are created when we work to deceive one another?</i> <i>2. Are there good reasons to deceive one-another?</i> <i>3. How do you think this impacted Isaac and Rebekah’s relationship?</i> 	

BIBLE FAMILIES	CLASS 4: JACOB, RACHEL, LEAH AND CHILDREN
READING	GENESIS 29-31, 37
MAIN POINTS	
<p>POINT 1 – JACOB LEAH, RACHEL, BILHAH AND ZILPAH: The family of Jacob is a story of turmoil. Murder, attempted murder, incest, rape, and enslavement are the pivotal points of the record. Jealousy and envy are often the prompters for these incidents, as well as uncontrolled emotions (lust, anger, etc.). We are all familiar with the courtship of Jacob and his wives (all 4). One aspect we might consider for our study is the characteristic of “marrying into a family”.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Is it lawful today to have more than one husband or wife (polygamy)? Why or why not?</i> 2. <i>In what ways do we accept the family of the person we marry? What problems arose in Jacob’s relationship with Laman and his sons?</i> 	
<p>POINT 2 – THE GREED OF LAMAN: Laman is an interesting person. He (not his father) negotiated Rebekah’s marriage. Later he cheated Jacob of his wages (31:7) by constantly changing the flocks he was to receive. His daughters accuse him of squander (31:15). In the NT we are told that we should labor for our employers as though for the Lord (Col. 3:22-25). Family does not give an excuse to cheat, nor is it permission to avoid work.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What did God do for Jacob when Laban was mistreating him? How is this still true today?</i> 2. <i>What are some ways some cheat family? Why do people cheat family when they wouldn’t cheat others?</i> 	
<p>POINT 3 – STRIFE BETWEEN BROTHERS: The problems between the sons of Jacob is well known. We have spoken before of the problems in having “favorites”. This strife was not among juvenile boys but among adult men. Even as adults we often fight and hold bitter thoughts towards family. In Joseph’s case that led his brothers to do a terrible wrong to their father and brother. God “hates” strife between brothers (Prov. 6:17), and in the NT is clear He will not accept it among the brethren of Christ.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Where might the strife between Jacob’s sons have been rooted?</i> 2. <i>What are some New Testament commandments that are designed to avoid strife (hint – Matt. 18)?</i> 3. <i>How was the hate of Joseph’s brothers manifested before they sold him (hint – 37:4)?</i> 	
<p>POINT 4 – THE IMPORTANCE OF FORGIVENESS: Perhaps the most important lessons from Jacob’s family in Godly conduct is that of Joseph. In our family study we will consider the forgiveness of Joseph. His willingness to overlook his brother’s wrongs (when he was in a power to avenge) is nothing less than a divine foreshadow of Christ.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What are the characteristics of the wrongs the brothers did against Joseph?</i> 2. <i>Why does it sometimes seem that familial wounds are the hardest to forgive?</i> 3. <i>What did Joseph consider that made him able to forgive his brothers (hint Gen. 50:19-20)?</i> 	

BIBLE FAMILIES	CLASS 5: SAMSON'S FAMILY
READING	JUDGES 13-15
MAIN POINTS	
<p>POINT 1 – SEEKING HOW TO RAISE CHILDREN: When the Angel of the Lord appears to Manoah's wife (and then Manoah), they ask some of the most important questions any parents can ask: <i>"What will be the boy's rule of life, and his work?"</i> In other words, what is the purpose of this child's life? His parents did not see him as their blessing alone, but as a God given responsibility. Consider the parable of the talents in Matthew 25; Manoah and his wife understood that God had given them something they were responsible to return.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What are some common "purposes" people in the world direct their children to? What ought we in Christ purpose our children to pursue?</i> 2. <i>What sacrifices are necessary by family to ensure that these needs are met?</i> 2. <i>In what ways can we aid in the purpose of any or all of the children of our congregation?</i> 3. <i>How is it that parents who purpose to raise Spiritually minded children are blessed?</i> 	
<p>POINT 2 – MAKING WISE VOCATION CHOICES: Manoah asked what "vocation" or "work" would be set for the life of Samson. This question might either apply to his spiritual purpose, or to the means which he would support himself in life. Either point is important; in Samson's case they were the same. We have said repeatedly that the purpose of family is to launch the lives of children. One of the great failures of a family is to fail to prepare someone for a vocation and purpose in life. Work is one of the most important decisions we make (after our commitment to God and choosing a spouse). Spiritual guidance is desperately needed in these decisions.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Why do some parents fail to prepare their children for a vocation?</i> 2. <i>How can we guide young and adolescent children in pursuing a wise vocation?</i> 3. <i>How does Paul's admonition "do not become slaves of men" (1 Cor. 7:23) come into consideration of a vocation?</i> 	
<p>POINT 3 – GUIDING ADULT CHILDREN: After Judges 13 we read about the works of Samson's parents in his life as an adult. Specifically, his parents are mentioned in his choice in a wife. Here is an interesting situation; they are trying to encourage him NOT to marry a Philistine, but instead an Israelite, and yet God has determined that this should play out in a manner contrary to their will. It is important that we note that they cannot force him to accept their (wise) advice. This is a lesson to us of our ability to impact the lives of adult children. There are two important lessons here. First, we must accept that we become mere advisors to their lives after a certain point. Second, we need to prepare a foundation for that role early on, before that time has come.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What are examples of parents who fail to successfully move into a role of advisor?</i> 2. <i>How do we lay a groundwork for the transition to the role of advisor (hint - Eph. 6:4)?</i> 3. <i>How can we make our adult children desire our advice?</i> 	

BIBLE FAMILIES	CLASS 6: RUTH, NAOMI AND BOAZ
READING	RUTH 1-4
MAIN POINTS	
<p>POINT 1 – NAOMI’S GRIEF: Elimelech was a descendant of Judah from Bethlehem who moved his family to Moab in the time of a famine. His sons married Moabites, and then he and the sons later died. This left his widow Naomi and his son’s widows. When she returns to Bethlehem, Naomi sees her condition as something that was brought on her by God.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Where were the blessings of Israel located (geographically)?</i> <i>2. What errors and sins did Elimelech commit?</i> <i>3. What parallel can we draw to leaving our “Israel”?</i> <i>4. What kind of person must Naomi have been for her daughters-in-law to follow her?</i> 	
<p>POINT 2 – RUTH’S CHOICE: Ruth was a Moabite, of whom it was said “no Moabite shall enter the assembly of God” (Deut. 23:3). Yet she chose to leave all of her land behind her to follow Naomi. This devotion might have been based either in a faith in God or a love for Naomi (both are mentioned). Ruth made the choice to leave everything she knew and follow her mother-in-law to a land that potentially would force her to leave. She created a reputation for herself that “all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence” (Ruth 3:11).</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. What Christian principle does Ruth reveal?</i> <i>2. Why is it that in-law relationships are often strained?</i> <i>3. How can we work to make these relationships more purposeful and meaningful?</i> 	
<p>POINT 3 – BOAZ’S CHOICE: Boaz is a kinsman of Naomi. He is wealthy, and is a Godly man. His reputation is that of generosity and integrity. What impresses him is Ruth’s behavior to her mother-in-law. He decides that it is his desire to redeem Ruth (the inheritance of her deceased husband). It is important to see that this was considered a wise decision, although on the face of it it was one most people did not want to make.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. What characteristics made Ruth a “bad” choice for a wife?</i> <i>2. Why was Ruth a good choice for a wife?</i> <i>2. How might Boaz’ mother influenced this decision (Matthew 1:5)?</i> 	
<p>POINT 4 – GOD’S BLESSING: Boaz chose a foreign woman (whom he would have to redeem) for her Godly conduct, and Ruth chose an older man for his Godly conduct. This marriage would become one of great blessing to both, giving them the great-grandson David, and ultimately the line of Christ.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. How was Naomi vindicated? Why is this important?</i> <i>2. Why would the blessing of Boaz in 4:12 be compared to Judah and Tamar?</i> 	

BIBLE FAMILIES	CLASS 7: HANNAH AND SAMUEL
READING	1 SAMUEL 1-2
MAIN POINTS	
<p>POINT 1 – SUFFERING FROM A LACK: Hannah’s name meant “grace” or “favor.” Hannah suffered because she was barren. God promised to bless his people when they were in the land, and one of his forms of blessing was children. Consider what it might indicate if a woman did not have children (Hannah might be seen at fault since her husband had other children). Consider how this might impact her sense of self-value and how others might have looked at her.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Was Hannah’s husband a good comforter? Was his double portion to Hannah important (Deut. 21:17)? How could he have been better?</i> 2. <i>Why is self-esteem important in the home?</i> 3. <i>Do we sometimes judge others unfairly for their lack of success in the home (i.e. divorce, fallen children)?</i> 	
<p>POINT 2 – PRAYER IN THE HOME: An important point in this lesson is the difference between how Hannah approached her problem and how Sarai approached it. Hannah teaches us much about prayer and promises and praise. In prayer she reveals ideas about what acceptable prayer looks like. In promises, she makes clear that she had “bargained” with God and would keep her word. In praise by the glorious song of Hannah in chapter 2.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Hannah prayer silently. What important idea does this teach us?</i> 2. <i>Hannah bargained with God. Is this acceptable?</i> 3. <i>Hannah prayer for the king (1 Sam. 2:10). Why is this important?</i> 	
<p>POINT 3 – DEDICATING OUR CHILDREN TO GOD : Hannah made a very important promise to God. She promised to “lend” or “dedicate” her son to God if God would listen to her. When the time came she did just that, bringing him to be raised in the tabernacle. Perhaps this is the most important lesson from Hannah. In a sense, all children are dedicated to God. We need to consider that this is the best thing that we can do for and with our children.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What requirements did Hannah establish for her son (1:11) ?</i> 2. <i>How might someone dedicate their children to God today?</i> 3. <i>What is the purpose of such a dedication?</i> 	

BIBLE FAMILIES	CLASS 8: ELI AND SONS
READING	1 SAMUEL 2-4
MAIN POINTS	
<p>POINT 1 – CALLING OF A PRIEST: Eli is a unique man in Scripture. Not many priests (it is presumed Eli is the high priest) were also judges of Israel (Samuel was also a priest). It seems that he did so in righteousness, accepting God’s will when it came from Samuel. As a priest, he had the additional duty of raising sons who would take his place.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Why do we need to understand Old Testament priests?</i> 2. <i>According to Hebrews 5:1, what is the work of a priest? How are we who are priests of God still offering these things?</i> 3. <i>What are some of the positive attributes of Eli?</i> 	
<p>POINT 2 – ELI’S SONS AND DISCIPLINE: 1 Samuel 2 details the sins of the sons of Eli. Instead of taking the offerings after being sacrifices (Lev. 10:14), they were removing the best for themselves, and abhorring the sacrifice of the Lord. They also were committing fornication with the women serving the tabernacle. Eli rebuked his sons, but they did not listen. We are told that this was because God desired for them to die. We consider the parallel of this with Eli’s ancestor’s brothers, Nadab and Abihu.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What are some other sins that came because people wanted to eat something? Why might that relate to the temptation of Jesus?</i> 1. <i>How would you summarize the nature of the sins of the sons of Eli?</i> 2. <i>Why is the sin of desecration (making something holy into something common or profane) such a terrible sin? How can we commit this sin today?</i> 	
<p>POINT 3 – DEDICATION TO GOD ABOVE ALL: As a priest of God, Eli’s first responsibility was to God. As priests of God, our dedication is to God above all else. Often times we let our affections for family, for work, for country, or for pleasure take the place of our dedication to God. God wanted Eli’s house destroyed not as a matter of hatred, but as an example to us today (1 Cor. 10:11). We need to understand that if they were put to death for such matters, how much worse our punishment will be for this sin (Heb. 10; 29). We need to see this as a family issue; within the home, it should be known that God comes first. This is the lesson of the house of Eli for the priests of God today.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What sacrifices do we make today?</i> 2. <i>What was at the heart of the corruption of the sons of Eli (2:12)? Why is this a family matter?</i> 2. <i>What is the purpose of such a dedication?</i> 	

BIBLE FAMILIES	CLASS 9: DAVID'S FAMILY
READING	1 SAMUEL 25, 2 SAMUEL 3,11-15
MAIN POINTS	
<p>POINT 1 – THE WIVES OF DAVID: Polygamy is a messy part of the Old Testament. God made it clear that it was NOT His original design (Gen. 2:24 with Mat. 19:5). Yet this became part of the Law of Moses (e.g. Deut. 21:15). God would tell David that He gave him his wives (2 Sam. 12:8). David's wives consisted of Ahinoam, Abigail, Maacah, Haggiith, Abital, Eglah, and Bathsheba. Michal also might be included in this list. David's relationship with Abishag (1 Kings 1) does not seem to be a marriage. Of all of these wives, we are most familiar with Abigail and Bathsheba. It is Abigail that seems the most remarkable as a wife of virtue.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. What characteristics of Abigail as the wife of Nabal are worthy of emulation?</i> <i>2. Abigail's husband was Nabal, which means "fool"? How did God deliver her from this situation?</i> <i>3. What reasons can you see as to is it important to understand the Law of Moses and polygamy?</i> 	
<p>POINT 2 – THE HOUSE OF DAVID: A great lesson for us is the long reaching effects of sexual immorality in a family. We consider that fornication can sever the marriage covenant (Matthew 19:9). But it also leads to great strife in a home. When David was confronted over his sins with Bathsheba, he was cursed that his family would fall apart. Later, when Absalom rebelled, it is Ahithophel (Bathsheba's grandfather) who joins that rebellion. The sexual immorality of David led to the deaths of Uriah, an unnamed son, and it might be seen indirectly to the deaths of three more of his sons. Sexual immorality is not merely a private sin between two people, but a deadly affliction to all (1 Cor. 6:18).</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Solomon described sexual immorality in what way in Proverbs 6:27? What is ironic or compelling about Solomon saying this?</i> <i>2. How do other types of sexual immorality (such as lust/pornography, refusal of intimacy, etc.) also damage a home?</i> <i>3. What are important principles we can apply to avoid the destruction of sexual immorality?</i> 	
<p>POINT 3 – THE CHILDREN OF DAVID: David's children are a source of great grief. His son Amnon raped his daughter Tamar, and David did nothing. His son Absalom avenged and killed Amnon, and David refused to see Absalom. Absalom rebelled against David and tried to take his kingdom, and David did not want to act against him. David was a strong king, but a weak father.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. How should David have handled Amnon? How should David have handled what Absalom did to Amnon?</i> <i>2. How should David have handled the rebellion of Absalom (per the Law of Moses Deut. 21:18)?</i> <i>3. How was David "weak"? Why is weakness in the home so dangerous?</i> 	

BIBLE FAMILIES	CLASS 10: AHAZ, HEZEKIAH, MANASSEH AND JOSIAH
READING	2 KINGS 18-22
MAIN POINTS	
<p>POINT 1 – THE FAMILY OF AHAZ: We have already witnessed a generational roller coaster of good and bad with the family of Eli, Samuel and David. We are told with Eli that he directly caused this; with David it is implied. There is no clear reason for Samuel’s sons to be wicked (1 Sam. 8:3). One line of David is particularly interesting; it is Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh (and Amon) and Josiah. In this generational grouping we have two of the greatest Kings (2 Kings 18:5, 2 Kings 23:25) and two of the worst kings (2 Kings 16:23, 2 Kings 21:16). Amon, Manasseh’s son and Josiah’s father, reigned briefly (and was called evil). Finally, though not part of this reading, we can consider too the failure of Josiah’s sons. Yet perhaps the most remarkable part of this “roller coaster” was Manasseh’s repentance later in life (2 Chron. 33:12).</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. While we have seen some children stray because of parenting, what other factors (apart from parenting) contribute strongly to children growing up to be faithful?</i> <i>2. What might we consider when we see Godly people come from ungodly homes?</i> <i>3. How old was Josiah when his grandfather Mansseh died?</i> 	
<p>POINT 2 – MANASSEH’S REPENTANCE: Manasseh’s repentance is a remarkable testimony to change. But what we often do not consider is how someone’s repentance impacts a family. To be clear, there is no mention of how Manasseh’s change of heart affected his family, but we know it must have to some degree, and we know how it impacted Jerusalem. Perhaps a good consideration of this is found in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15). There we see that the brother who remained was bitter because of his brother’s repentance. Sometimes family are the ones who want others to change the most, but are the least able to overcome the past.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. What might have been some of the hardest things to forgive for the family of Manasseh?</i> <i>2. In the parable of the Prodigal, why might the brother have been bitter?</i> <i>3. Why is it hardest to forgive those closest to us, and what are some ways we can learn to forgive in these relationships?</i> 	
<p>POINT 3 – JOSIAH AND A GODLY GRANDFATHER: There is no direct or inferred explanation of Josiah’s righteousness. His mother most likely deserves this credit. But let’s pretend that it might have been the influence of his grandfather, who was righteous at the end of his life. This allows us to use it as a point of consideration to the importance we have with extended family relationships. Often we see this extra-generational righteousness (perhaps Samuel and his grandson Heman). It reminds us that we still have the opportunity to be Godly influences to our grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and other extended family members.</p>	
QUESTIONS	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. How do grandparents exert their influence on grandchildren? Can they over-exert themselves?</i> <i>2. Another example of influence to relatives is Mordecai and Esther. How did Mordecai influence Esther when she needed to make her important decisions?</i> 	

BIBLE FAMILIES	CLASS 11: JOSEPH, MARY AND FAMILY
READING	MATTHEW 1-2, LUKE 1-2, MARK 6
MAIN POINTS	
<p>POINT 1 – THE FAMILY OF JESUS: Jesus had been prophesied to come for thousands of years. His arrival was still a shock, especially to those of the family to whom He came. Jesus’ family (and step family) is important. His mother was a descendant of David by his son Nathan, and his (step) father was an heir to the throne of David through the line of the kings of Judah. His mother’s sister is inferred to be Salome, the mother of the Apostles James and John (John 19:25, Mark 15:40), making them Jesus’ cousins. Mary was also kin (in an unclear manner) to Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, making them relations as well. Finally, two of Jesus’ brothers (he had four brothers and at least two sisters per Mark 6:3) were prophets of the church, giving us the New Testament books that bear their names, James and Jude.</p> <p>An interesting consideration in particular is that of Joseph and Mary. While we often downplay Mary to contrast against her veneration by some, it is important to note that she is one of the most praised women of Scripture (Luke 1:28,42). Joseph too has many virtues as a father and husband. It is worth considering that when the Heavenly Father made a choice of who would be the parents of His Son in the flesh, He chose these two.</p> <p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Why is it important to know about Jesus’ family?</i> <i>2. What are some of the characteristics of Joseph that made him an excellent father?</i> <i>3. What are some of the characteristics of Mary that made her an excellent mother?</i> <i>4. We are told repeatedly that Jesus was without sin (missing the mark) while in the flesh. What part did His parents play in this, particularly in his infancy and childhood (consider Luke 2:22, 2:41)?</i> 	
<p>POINT 2 – JESUS AND HIS FAMILY: Joseph is not personally seen again after Jesus reaches adulthood; it is presumed that he had passed away, as Jesus’ mother Mary was usually with Him (and is one of the more noted disciples). But at the same time, we are told His brothers did not believe (John 7:5), and even tried to restrain him (Mark 3:21).</p> <p>There is one particular point worth noting from John 19:26-27. As Jesus was dying on the cross, He passed the care of His mother Mary to John (his cousin). This is important to consider; Jesus saw that the responsibility He had to honor His earthly father and mother as significant enough to take these precious moments and devote it to that obligation.</p> <p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. What happened to cause Jesus’ brothers to change from disbelief to belief (Acts 1:14, 1 Corinthians 15:7)?</i> <i>2. Why would the care of Mary pass to John and not to His brothers? What does this tell us about application of 1 Timothy 5:4?</i> <i>3. Why are family sometimes the hardest to convince of the Gospel?</i> 	

BIBLE FAMILIES	CLASS 12: ZEBEDEE, SALOME, JAMES AND JOHN
READING	MATTHEW 4, 20, MARK 3
MAIN POINTS	
<p>POINT 1 – THE FAMILY OF ZEBEDEE: Sometimes we do not explore the family relationships of the disciples and Apostles of Jesus. Peter and Andrew were brothers (Matt. 4:18). James the Lesser and Thaddeus/Judas were brothers (Luke 6:16), and their parents Alphaeus and Mary were devote disciples (Matt. 27:56) to whom Jesus appeared after resurrection. Our focus is on the family of Zebedee: Zebedee, his wife Salome, their sons James and John. Based on the combination of Gospel accounts of the death of Jesus, we conclude that Salome was Mary’s sister. We are presuming (an unnecessary inference) that Zebedee was a disciple of Jesus.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. What characteristics or attributes are present when an entire family are disciples of Christ?</i> <i>2. At the time of Jesus’ death, who seems to be the most devote of this family?</i> 	
<p>POINT 2 – STRONG PERSONALITY: In Mark 3:17 Jesus gave the nickname “Boarneges”, “Sons of Thunder” to James and John. It is not certain if this is a reference to their father or their own personality. In Luke 9:53-56 we see them ready to call down fire on a village for not receiving Jesus. James and John seem to have a strong personality here, but by the end of the New Testament John is thought of as the Apostle of Love. We all know people we would identify as having a strong personality; perhaps we ourselves do as well. Sometimes this is a difficult thing to both control and deal with in others.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. What is meant by the term “strong personality”? Is it a bad thing?</i> <i>2. What should we do when we know we have such a personality?</i> <i>3. Did John change his personality by the end of the New Testament?</i> 	
<p>POINT 3 – NEPOTISM IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN: In Matthew 20:20-26 Salome approaches Jesus and asks that her sons might hold places of honor in the kingdom. Jesus refuses to grant this honor, and a controversy is created among the disciples. We see here that there is no place for favoritism in the kingdom of heaven (James 2:1-6). Yet at the same time, there are obligations that we have for family (in the flesh) that are meant to be fulfilled that others may not have (1 Tim. 5:3-11). This can be a difficult balance; we are to love God above all others, and we are to love the family of God, but we are also to care for our own. We cannot neglect these relationships, and yet sometimes they require our attention more than other things.</p>	
<p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Why did Jesus’ cousins or brothers receive places of honor in the kingdom? Why is this significant?</i> <i>2. What is nepotism? How can it be manifested in the church?</i> <i>3. What balances must be struck to both love the brethren and take care of our own?</i> 	

BIBLE FAMILIES	CLASS 13: TIMOTHY, LOIS AND EUNICE
READING	ACTS 16, 2 TIMOTHY 1
MAIN POINTS	
<p>POINT 1 – SINGLE CHRISTIAN PARENT HOMES: Timothy is a person of great importance in the New Testament. He was an evangelist in a number of churches, including Ephesus. We first meet him in Acts 16 in Lystra. His mother was married to a Greek, and it is clear Timothy had not been raised conforming entirely to the law of Moses (i.e. circumcision). But he was well spoken of, and he accompanied Paul throughout the rest of Paul’s life. He is mentioned in twelve New Testament books, and was the co-author of six books. In 2 Timothy 1 Paul declares that the source of Timothy’s faith had been first in his grandmother Lois, and then in his mother Eunice. Because Paul does not mention his father in that passage we can presume his father was NOT the source of his faith.</p> <p>There are a variety of types of single Christian parent homes. These parents can face some of the most difficult circumstances of parenting, either pursuing a godly home on their own or even doing so in the face of adversity in the home.</p> <p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. What circumstances arise that can create a home where only one parent is raising Christian children?</i> <i>2. What unique hardships are faced by single Christian parent homes?</i> <i>3. What are some things that members of the local church need to know about single Christian parent homes?</i> 	
<p>POINT 2 – THE GOAL OF CHRISTIAN PARENTING: In 2 Timothy 3:14-17 we read that Timothy had been instructed from his youth as to the Scriptures. This implies that it was his mother and grandmother who did the teaching. Paul stated that Timothy needed to remember from whom he had learned the Scriptures. In part this probably means Paul (2 Tim. 1:13, 2:2), but the immediate context also draws in his mother and grandmother.</p> <p>Lois and Eunice nicely define the goal of Christian parenting: to develop a faith that is worth imparting. We often suggest that we each need to create our own faith, but in 2 Timothy 1 Paul declares that the faith of Timothy was first in Lois and then in Eunice. Thus Lois gave her faith to her daughter and then to her grandson, who has shared it with us today.</p> <p>QUESTIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. What does 2 Timothy 3:15 suggest in regards to 1 Timothy 2:12?</i> <i>2. How can we ensure our children “know” the Scriptures from their childhood?</i> <i>3. What ways can a grandmother (or grandfather) influence Godly grandchildren?</i> 	