

Reconnect: God Time Week 2 – The Power of the Blessing

These scriptures are selected to help you gain a deeper understanding of who Jesus is. You can read them each day or listen to the daily audio that is sent to you. They are intentionally designed for you to engage in your time alone with God. You will find them complementary to the teachings on the weekend (gatherings) and to the LIFE Group materials.

Some tips:

Use a Bible that is easy to read. The ESV or The NLT are both good translations. Use a prayer journal. After you read the passages jot down what “jumped out” at you while reading. Then take a few minutes to write a prayer response to what you have read.

There are only five days of reading provided so if you miss a day you have time to catch up. Do not get legalistic! If you miss a day or even a week...God still loves you!

Monday: Luke 14:12-15

Tuesday: Matthew 6:27-33

Wednesday: Jeremiah 17:5,7-8

Thursday: Psalm 118:14-16

Friday: Genesis 1:28

Diving Deeper

Jesus on Families – The Power of the Blessing

John 14:15 – If you love me, keep My commands.

Families are faced with so many issues, difficulties, hurts, and conflicts, that it becomes a challenge to stay true to God. The true blessing comes when we follow Jesus and through Jesus we understand the importance of working together as a family, sharing burdens, and build trusting relationship that help to develop virtues and provide the framework to overcome challenges.

Many families get wrapped up in the idea that family is about being best friends with one another. Sometimes parents demand obedience but show no love to their children. Last week we looked at what Paul said about “tenderly” love and a love that is centered on the Cross. This week let us go one step further and see how Jesus prepared His disciples for the difficulties they faced and apply that to how we can honor God through our family life.

When we think about Jesus, we see that His radical approach to preparing His disciples for the difficulties and dangers they were to face is in direct contrast to how the military prepares for the rigors of war. While their preparation is so different, their objectives are the same. Obey and keep the commands. When it comes to military preparation, we immediately think of “boot camp” or even Navy SEAL training. Just looking at what it takes to become a SEAL is undaunting. For six months, aspiring SEALs are forced to crawl through mud for hours, tie complicated knots under water and endure hypothermia and sleep deprivation in which 70% of the recruits drop out during the first week. There is no love here as they are mentally and physically challenged to be the best they can be so that when the time comes, they will be able to stay the course and keep the commands of leaders. Jesus expects us to be obedient to the same extent as a Navy SEAL, but He approaches it from a completely different perspective. He says that if we love Him, then we will keep His commands. We will be obedient because we do love Him, and we find that love makes obedience easy. We do not have to be yelled at, pushed physically and mentally beyond what we can endure, or shamed in front of others in order to become obedient. Why? Because love makes obedience easy. It is the delight of love to do what Jesus desires when our heart grows dull and obedience becomes difficult. The proper response for us is not to grit our teeth and tough it out, but to think of the enduring love that Jesus displayed on the cross at Calvary. Know the depth, the width and the height of God’s love, and realize that when we love to that extent, then obedience becomes something that is a part of who we are and is easily attainable. We obey not out of obligation or duty, but because of our love for Jesus, and in that way, we keep what God commands with joy and fervor rather than dread. When we apply this kind of obedient love to our families, God is honored and our families flourish.

1. Can you say that your family life exemplifies this concept of obedient love?

2. How do you deal with the challenges that are faced when each of your children are so different?
3. Does your family life bring joy to God?
4. If you truly love someone, wouldn't you do whatever you could to please them?
5. How can you truly love and discipline at the same time? What balance do you seek to impose on your children – Navy Seal type training or a Jesus centered obedient love training?