

When it comes to family, it's not uncommon to have a whole mix of emotions. There's so much goodness in God's intention for families and yet, we find broken people who make messy, complicated families. Like it or not—our families dictate many of the ways we live in our own communities and families later in life. Consider the devotionals this week as an opportunity to explore what is in your box and what you have put in the boxes of your family.

*New to daily devotionals? Here are a few tips for this week:*

- Family is complicated you may need to adapt the definition of family to fit your own life—you might think of your spouse and children, your family of origin (in which you were raised), your broader community of whom you associate as family, or a mix of many things. Don't feel like you're required to stick with one "version" of family through this series.
- A word of warning: When we uncover things about our families, we can often feel tempted to reveal them to others. Remember that not everyone in your family may be ready to hear your realizations. So, go slow and perhaps start by sharing your insights with trusted people outside of your family and always move forward in prayer and communicate with grace.

### **Monday, January 7th**

Read Colossians 3:16-17

*"Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."*

Psalms 38-10-11

*My heart throbs; my strength fails me, and the light of my eyes—it also as gone from me. <sup>11</sup> My friends and companions stand aloof from my plague, and my nearest kin stand far off.*

In the message last weekend, Paul talked about what is in our box. Our boxes are past memories and experiences that shape who we are and how we live. In what ways does your family reflect the ideals of these passages? How have you seen yourself and your family reflect these ideals over time? In what ways might your family need to continue growing in positive ideals? How can you lead by example well?

Spend time praying Colossians 3:16-17 over your family asking the Holy Spirit to intercede.

### **Tuesday, January 8th**

Read Genesis 12:1-3

*The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.*

*<sup>2</sup> "I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.*

*<sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

Consider the blessing and call that God places on Abraham's family—that their offspring, family, parenting skills, and faithfulness would be a means to bless the entire earth. We are all part of a bigger story and a profound legacy. What fears do you have? What safety and security do you feel?

Do you believe God might have the same intentions for your family? Do you believe that your family has a calling to make such a spiritual impact?

Those who have come before you have left you as their legacy. You too are creating a legacy. Take some time to think about and journal some of the things that have been put in your box that are positive and negative. Love for people, anger, compassion, excess in some area, work ethic, anxiety.

### **Wednesday, January 9th**

Read 2 Timothy 1:5-6

*<sup>5</sup> I am reminded of your (Timothy) sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also. <sup>6</sup> For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God*

What did Timothy's mother and grandmother put in Timothy's box? What might have been difficult in that role? What was rewarding?

Have you had a similar experience of a family member passing on their faith? If yes, how are you continuing that tradition in your family today? If no, how might you offer that to your family now?

Take some time to consider what you are putting in the box of those who are part of your family - faith, fear, love, acceptance, judgment, etc. What changes could you make to put in more positive and less negative in their box?

## Thursday, January 10th

Read Mark 3:31-35

*<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. <sup>32</sup> A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you."*

*<sup>33</sup> "Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked.*

*<sup>34</sup> Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! <sup>35</sup> Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."*

How do you interpret Jesus' response to his family? Do you think he is being dismissive of his biological family? Do you think he is being radically inclusive to the family of God? Perhaps a mixture of both?

Maybe your biological family was not all it was meant to be but you are finding healing and a place of belonging within the family of God. Take a few minutes to write a note or text a brother or sister in Christ who has put some positive healing stuff in your box.

## Friday, January 11th

Spend time praying this blessing over your family, past or present, or another family that you feel close to.

*Father God,  
Shine Your light upon my community of people I call family.  
Give us Your strength to overcome the things that lead us away from  
You and protect us from the temptation live apart from You in the  
future. Lord, bring us together as You might have us be.  
Show Yourself to those who need to see You.  
May the love that binds us only grow stronger as we live out the calling  
You have laid out for us.  
Grant my family forgiveness for the sins we have committed and lead  
us to forgive one another.  
May our lives testify the goodness of who You are to one another and  
to the ends of the earth.  
Bless us, Lord.*

Consider sharing what you learned this week with a trusted Christian friend who will simply listen without judgement or advice. Perhaps someone in your small group.

# FAMILY

it's complicated

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