

Sunday

Week 7. Restoring Peace With the Family

As children, the support system for survival is usually the family. So much of what we believe about ourselves and about others, our thoughts, our behavior, our ideals, and our feelings come from these young life associations. Thus, the responsibility to shape and nurture children usually falls to the family, our parents.

Later, after growing up, when things go wrong, we look back on our upbringing and find our parents guilty – guilty of being human.

In reality, the relationships between parents and children are complicated by how the parents themselves were reared, by the history of emotional traumas, use of alcohol, anger, grief, guilt, blame.

“The steps of faith fall on the seeming void, but find the rock beneath.”

John Greenleaf Whittier

So, we are reared by people struggling with their own personal issues, struggling to bring order to their own lives. It's no surprise that what's passed on to children is often less than positive. And, often the child is short changed emotionally when there is no display by the parents of love and affection, of hugging and kissing, and by few good words of affirmation and encouragement.

The psychology of the past invites the recreation of painful childhood experiences as a means of catharsis. But, the more you hold on to a thought from the painful past, the less you can experience the joy of the present. So, we may get stuck to some past injustice. This situation is, of course, a setup for forgiveness.

Consider. It's easy and it may be so, for example, that your mother is to blame for almost everything that's gone wrong in your life.

But, that judgment is, of course, short of the mark. You do not have access to all her true stories of motherly love – that nurturing spirit that seeks to promote and protect life.

So, painful family issues will remain with you until you put them in perspective and until you deal with them. Your happiness is influenced by the relationships you build with your parents, in spite of their inadequacies.

Once you take honest inventory of yourself and turn your family conflicts over to God, you will judge the past actions of your mother with grace, compassion, and forgiveness.

Thereby you accept that we are each other's keeper and that you can do unto your own children as you wished that your parents had done unto you.

Monday

Week 7 – Day 1

Morning Prayer

Theme: Ask God to heal our families

Evening Prayer

Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit As A Source of Great Family Life

When you are dealing with family members and you also want to walk in peace, the question of what you should do is crystal clear.

Your mind is the home of all bad thoughts, so the differences arise from the thoughts to which you are attached – blame, shame, guilt, anger, fear, etc.

So, pray for the family member – intercede.

True intercession involves bringing the family member who is evoking such strong emotions, before God, until you are changed by the Holy Spirit in your attitude toward the family member.

What say?

Right, until your attitude is changed.

You may believe that intercession is doing the work that your family member needs to do.

Not so.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, you bring the other person's circumstances and problems before God. Thus, don't substitute doing, for interceding. And don't pray for the family member to be simply "patched up" as you believe they should be. Let God do God's work. Your work is to bring the person to God through Intercessory Prayer and let God create.

Wrapping Up

It's time.

Tuesday

Week 7 – Day 2

Morning Prayer

Theme: Ask God to heal our work communities

Evening Prayer

Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit As A Source of Sisterly Love

The absence of loving attitudes and practices is at the root of all family discord.

But, because love is the very purpose of our existence, we can return to the practice of loving at any moment we wish to do so. Our capacity to love is not watered down except by the way we think. When we believe that love is given only when we're good, this attitude carries over to how we get along with each other.

But, God's grace is all giving. So we don't have to earn love, search for love, or struggle to find love – it's there. It is.

We need only to believe that love flows through us from an inexhaustible source.

Thus, love is a living force. It does mighty works. It heals us. It restores peace within our families. It brings order to our world.

Learning to be more loving toward your parents, toward your brothers and sisters, toward your husband or your wife, and toward your children is the most valuable thing you can ever do.

Love casts out fear. It helps us feel happy and whole. In order to live peacefully and harmoniously, our life's work must include the decision everyday to love everyone unconditionally, starting with ourselves. Then, let it spread.

Wrapping Up

It's time.

Wednesday

Week 7 – Day 3

Morning Prayer

Theme: Ask God to heal our living communities

Evening Prayer

Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit As A Source of Possibilities

Your thoughts are the seeds that grow the conditions of your life. Whatever you wish to achieve awaits your calling it forth, including healed relationships within your family.

The things that we don't honestly want in our lives have a way of creeping in through our holding negative images, ideas, and thoughts in our minds and then affirming them with our words.

A thought becomes a concept, an intangible seed of energy. This energy is intelligence, responsible intelligence. The way we use our intelligence, the form it takes, the concepts we shape, the words we use, will either grow our families possibilities or will doom them. Thus, your potentialities will be actualized.

The Bible says that whatever we intend will become ours through bringing it into the light, which will show us The Way. Check out Job 22:28.

Thus, our every idea, word, action, creates a vibration that reverberates into the universe, creating a pathway through which that same vibration returns to us, manifesting as an experience, which becomes a memory. Each of us should be determined to get the best and most good memories possible out of every day we have together.

Pray for the Holy Spirit to help you work through any negative thoughts you have about yourself or about your relationship with others (especially your family).

Wrapping Up

It's time.

Thursday

Week 7 – Day 4

Morning Prayer

Theme: Ask God to heal our nation

Evening Prayer

Theme: Changing what is, through the power of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit As A Source of Purposeful Prayer

Prayer is not natural. It is learned. If you never prayed again would you suffer? Or, would the great consequence of your quitting prayer be that the life of Jesus would suffer, because prayer is the nourishment of the Holy Spirit. So, is prayer a means whereby we get more stuff? Or, is prayer simply a means whereby we get to know God better? Is prayer the only way we can get in touch with the truth and reality of God – as it applies to the individual lives of everyone in your family?

The Bible says – in the words of Jesus – “When you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your father who is in the secret place . . .” (Matthew 6:6)

Does this make sense in this day and age with our crazy schedules? When we have received the Spirit does it make sense to apply the rules of common sense to prayer?

Consider. We’re seeking peace within the family. The mark of approval when you obey God is peace - deep, immeasurable peace. When the arrival of peace is slow – as evidenced by confusion instead of clarity, diffusion instead of unity, complexity instead of simplicity – God knows and cares.

So, begin praying in secret and watch and anticipate how Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, will point out the road blocks and give solutions.

Wrapping Up

It’s time.

Friday

Week 7 – Day 5

Morning Prayer

Theme: Ask God to heal the world

Evening Prayer

Fundamental Friday(A review of the Spiritual Foundations of Change)

Principle #7 - Prayer, through keeping you connected to God will reinforce Godly habits. (Acts 14:23; Romans 12:12; Philippians 4:6; Col. 4:2)

The real reason for prayer is intimacy of relationship with Jesus. And, so, we have to be careful to not use prayer as a trick to cover up what we know we ought to do. So, when you pray, keep your eye on Jesus and not on the habit you want changed. Thus, when you're not talking to Jesus, be sure you're walking with Him. This is how bad habits are paralyzed and Godly habits take over. When it's time to talk – talk. All time is the time to walk – so – walk. Thus, the hands of Satan are tied.

Wrapping Up

It's time.

Saturday Eating Realities

Week 7

Never eat to fullness.

I doubt if since starting the Diet you have ever finished a meal and felt miserably full. The impulse from your stomach to your brain signaling it is full takes 15-20 minutes. So, if you are eating quickly and without limits, by the time you feel full you have eaten about twice as much as your body needs. Spiritually that is GLUTTONY. Medically it is destructive. The body cannot process and metabolize all of that food so it is stored as fat and glucose leading to obesity, high cholesterol, and diabetes.

Pay attention to how much you have eaten at each meal over the past week. Notice that while eating enough to satisfy your bodily needs, you have not eaten to fullness.

Saturday's Message

Week 7

"Our Greatest Thirst"

Psalm 42

When I was a boy at home in Catawba County, we always had a big garden over in the bottom land. The garden was a long way from the house and sometimes on a hot summer day we would borrow my Grandfather Yount's horse and wagon so that we could haul the tools (and the four (4) boys) to and from the garden. Some days my three older brothers would take turns plowing the horse. It was not fair to the horse, because they took turns and rested frequently, but the poor old horse was constantly at work. Sometimes old Red got so hot that I wondered if he could go on. And then, when the work was done, the old horse was hitched up to the wagon and had to pull all the tools and four (4) boys over the rough farm road and back to the house.

About half-way between the garden and the house there was a fast running branch where flowed some of the most refreshing water a boy ever put his feet in. The branch was down in a valley. Going from the garden to the house we crossed over a railroad track, went down a steep hill to the branch and up a long, steep hill on the other side.

Old Red made that trip so many times that he knew the way without having to be guided. He knew exactly where that refreshing water was running there in the branch, and when we got to the railroad tracks one boy would take a firm grip on the reins and another boy would start applying the brake shoes to the back wheels of the old wagon. Old Red had worked hard, he was thirsty, he knew where the refreshing waters were and when he got to that railroad track he knew he had it made. Just down the hill was the life-giving, life-refreshing water. It took a tight grip on the reins and strong pressure applied to the brakes to hold old Red back and keep him from running so fast that he turned the wagon over. But when he got to the water there was a sudden stop. We never did try, but I don't guess you would have made old Red move with a horse whip. He stayed there drinking up in great gulps the refreshing water flowing in that branch. He drank until his thirst was completely satisfied and then with renewed energy and vigor he pulled the wagon up the hill on the other side of the branch and on to the house.

In Psalm 42 the inspired Psalmist is writing about thirst. The thirst about which he is writing is even more intense and burning and stronger than the thirst which old

Red experienced after a hard morning's work in the fields. He is writing about what I like to think of as mankind's greatest thirst. He is writing about spiritual thirst. His concern is with his own personal thirst and the universal thirst of mankind for the living God.

Three (3) powerful spiritual truths are emphasized in the verses of this Psalm.

1. Strong emphasis is placed on the degree and the intensity of the writer's spiritual thirst. This fact is clearly revealed in verse 1 and the first part of verse 2: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God."

Notice the spelling of that word "hart" in verse one – not HEART but HART. In Webster's dictionary the word HART is defined as "a male deer, especially when he has passed his 5th year and the crown antler is formed." In his mind the Psalmist pictures a deer which is dying of thirst diligently searching for the refreshing and life-giving waters of a brook. The deer which the Psalmist sees is so thirsty that he is literally panting as he searches here and there for that water.

The degree and intensity of that physical thirst which the deer is experiencing is the degree and intensity of that spiritual thirst which the Psalmist is experiencing. With his soul perishing for spiritual water the Psalmist literally pants like the deer and cries out: "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God."

The Psalmist is not alone in his condition of spiritual thirst. Deep down inside every person created in the image of God has that degree and that intensity of spiritual thirst. With their lips many people do not express it, but in their heart and mind they say over and over again: "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God."

2. In Psalm 42, strong emphasis is also placed on the urgency of satisfying that intense and burning spiritual thirst. This urgency shines through in the last part of verse 2 where the Psalmist asks this soul-searching question: "When shall I come and appear before God?"

The Psalmist could not answer that question, no other person could answer it for him. He knew that one day he was going to stand before God in judgment, but only God knew exactly when that time would be. But in his heart the Psalmist knew that he was not ready to appear before God in judgment until his spiritual thirst had been satisfied.

What was true of the Psalmist is true of us today. We must face God in judgment. When we do not know. And we are not prepared for that time of divine judgment until our spiritual thirst is satisfied like the physical thirst of the deer or of old Red was satisfied when they drank the refreshing water from the brook.

3. The Psalmist found IN GOD complete satisfaction for his spiritual thirst. In verse 5 and again in verse 11 the Psalmist writes: "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance."

Again, what was true of the Psalmist of old is true of us today. The separation by the centuries of time between the Psalmist and us does not alter the fact that spiritual satisfaction is found ONLY in God who made the Psalmist and us for Himself.

This is the message and the invitation which God spoke through the prophet Isaiah and said: "Ho, every one that thirsts, come ye to the waters . . ."

This is the message and the invitation which God spoke supremely through His only Begotten Son Jesus Christ who said to the Samaritan woman at the well and who says to us today: "If you know the gift of God, and who it is that says to you, give me to drink, you would have asked of him, and he would have given you living water." (John 4:10)

This is the message and the invitation of John chapter 7 verse 37 where we read: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried saying: 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.'"

When I was serving as pastor of a Baptist church in the eastern part of North Carolina, we scheduled a series of revival services for the fourth week in June. It was a hot, dry summer. This was in tobacco land and the tobacco was literally burning up in the fields. The farmers were working from daylight to dark trying to irrigate the tobacco. Some of the farm ponds were pulled down so low that some fish died.

The series of services started on Sunday morning. Rev. Frank Taylor was the evangelist. Frank preached with spiritual power, extended the invitation and asked me to stand at the altar and receive those who made decisions. At first no one came forward. My eyes fell on one of our young men who had about 15 or 16 acres of tobacco in the field. It was evident that he was having a spiritual struggle. He was trying to sing and could not. He was trying to stand still and could not. Finally, he literally threw the hymn book on the pew and came

almost running to the altar and with tears in his eyes he made a firm recommitment of his life to God and to God's service.

That man was my neighbor and Sunday afternoon he shared with me something about the struggle he was having during the singing of the invitation hymn. I don't recall the exact words but here is the essence of what he said to me: "Preacher, my tobacco is burning up in the fields, literally dying of thirst. I made up my mind last week that I was going to revival services Sunday morning and night but, unless it rained, I was not going any more. I decided that I was going to spend the week watering my dying tobacco. But in that service this morning God spoke to me and I decided that the old tobacco could dry up – could literally die of thirst and fall over in the field, but my soul was not going to dry up spiritually. I'll be at every service and I'll have thirsty people with me."

Did we have a revival? Not before or since in my life have I witnessed the degree and quality of that experience of spiritual renewal in the lives of people and in a community.

With the hymn writer my friend could say:

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
"Behold, I freely give
The living water, thirsty one,
Stoop down, and drink, and live."

And with the hymn writer my friend could say:

I came to Jesus and I drank
Of that life-giving stream:
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him.

Remember the invitation of Jesus who said: "If any man (person) thirst, let him come unto me and drink." (John 37:7)

Are you thirsty?

Reverend Phillip R. Morrow Sr.