



Family is a Greenhouse Where Love Grows in Grace

Week of August 12, 2018

These Digging Deeper questions can be used the week following the Sunday message. You can use these questions for personal growth and development, or as a guide for your family or Connect Group discussions.

Message Recap:

Read Ephesians 4:29-5:1

A life of servanthood begins at home. Families grow in the greenhouse of Jesus where we offer God's grace and love to each other. This only happens through God's grace and when his grace is accepted. Jesus brought us into his family. We are given the choice to accept and change or continue to live relationships that are CURSE-filled (Controlling, Unforgiving, Reactive, Shaming, and Ego-driven). We are God's children given a warm embrace by Father when he adopts us into his family as equals. We share the same inheritance as Jesus. This is what we have to look forward to! Begin to acknowledge your place and who you are in God's family. Then apply it to your own family. Be a chain-breaker for you and your family and lead your life on the path of grace received and then given to others.

Pray

Dear God, thank you for adopting us and giving us what is not fair. In receiving your grace, change our hearts and minds to be willing givers of grace like you. We know that we are adopted children, co-heirs with Christ. Help us live our identity and give your grace to others. Amen.

Getting Started

- In today's popular reality TV culture, where have you seen grace-filled relationships and where have you seen CURSE filled relationships? Which is more common and why?
- We all know family = complications. Tell about a time you or someone else has been the "craziness" in your family.

Digging Deeper

1. Think about the statement, "No one gets out of this world alive." How does that make you feel? Explain.
2. What adjectives describe the plants in your family greenhouse? For example, are they thriving? Wilting? Bug infested? Some growing while others are drying up?
3. How does accepting God's grace change us? What does that acceptance mean for loving others?
4. Discuss the aspects of a CURSE-filled life (Controlling, Unforgiving, Reactive, Shaming, and Ego-driven). Which of these aspects do you see in your life today?
5. Jesus brought us into his family and he can change you and your family. What role does counseling play in helping make those changes? How about prayer?
6. In taking on God's grace to give to others, we shouldn't allow what others think to matter. What does that mean? How easy or difficult is this? Why?
7. Read Ephesians 4:29 together. Within your family, how can you tangibly demonstrate this verse on a daily basis? How could this change your answer to questions #2?

Living Jesus

Your family is important and God calls you to give his grace to your earthly family in the same way he gives you his grace. Examine your behavior toward your family. Take time today to identify one behavior that you can change from withholding grace to giving grace. Or take the "30 Days of Family" challenge. (Find it at sevenrunner.info.) See what God does when you make a change or take this challenge.

What's Your Story?

It can be hard to love and extend grace to our families. Our thoughts include, "But you don't know my family," or, "You don't know what he/she did." Have you experienced this yourself or witnessed someone else who put these thoughts aside and extend grace anyway? What was the outcome?

>> Go to SevernRunner.info and choose the Stories tile. Then follow the link provided to share your own story; we will even connect you with a writer to help you.