Honor the class and speak encouragement.

CHOP IT UP

Family
- Psalms 68:5-6

'Father to the fatherless, defender of widows—this is God, whose dwelling is holy. God places the lonely in families; he sets the prisoners free and gives them joy. But he makes the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.'

'Father of the fatherless and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation. God settles the solitary in a home; he leads out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.'

'Father of orphans, champion of widows, is God in his holy house. God makes homes for the homeless, leads prisoners to freedom, but leaves rebels to rot in hell. Father of orphans, champion of widows, is God in his holy house. God makes homes for the homeless, leads prisoners to freedom, but leaves rebels to rot in hell.'

*When thinking of family, what comes to mind after reading this scripture?

*In the neighborhoods we serve, what does the general family dynamic look like?

WHY DOES THE CITY NEED FAMILIES?
*There is a sharp disconnect between what happened in the New Testament church and what is happening in the church today. It would be easy to blame this disconnect on fragmented institutions, ungodly leaders, the culture, and so on, but let’s use this opportunity to examine our own lives. The truth is, the first-century Christians were the superhumans of their day, and the world stood in awe of them. Here are just a few of their exploits found in Scripture:

No one in their communities lacked anything—no one had physical needs of any kind, and there was no one on government assistance (Acts 4:33–35). Entire cities came to Jesus in a moment, and the gospel swept through entire regions in a matter of years (Acts 9:32–35, 19:10).

*Studies have shown - The benefits of a strong family structure.
- Support & Comfort in both times of joy and distress
- Strong protective factor against mental illnesses & increases our mental well-being

*Many of us are aware of the effects of our broken family structures. (For the benefits, just add family)
- 43% kids in U.S. are fatherless. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 19.7 million children, more than 1 in 4, live without a father in the home.
- 90% homeless and runaway children are from fatherless homes
- 80% rapists motivated displaced anger
- 71% pregnant teens lack a father
- 63% youth suicide
- 85% show behavior disorders
- 90% teen repeat arsonists live with only mother
- 71% high school dropouts come from fatherless homes
- 7% teens patients in chemical abuse centers
- 70% of youth in the juvenile system
- 85% youth in prison grew up in fatherless homes
*Where is the church in all of this?*
I’m convinced that we’re just as broken as those who we serve.

“Just because our soul is saved doesn’t mean our wounds are healed”.

(Discuss importance of discipleship with Spirit & Soul)

**Our Responsibility is to make sure We are Healthy:**

*Quote:* “We can fake it till we make it or keep it real till we heal” - Jadyn Myhre

*Talk about dealing with our own personal family wounds.
*We must do in order not to leak out negative family wounds on those around us.
*We: When we heal, we can bring healing to those around us.

*There is no perfect family. We must always pause, reflect and make sure we are being intentional about reflecting God's design and purpose for being a family. The positive impact has the power to encourage right thinking, challenge wrong thinking and present change to our future.*

*Simple Prayer: Attitude of Christ, Fruit of Spirit and Love of the Father.*

A PRAYER EXAMPLE FOR RELATIONAL HEALING

*Almighty Creator and Father God, I humbly come before you now asking you to forgive me from all my sins. Set aright my heart towards you. I admit all my sins, weaknesses, and shortcomings, please cleanse my heart and spirit from all impurities. I respond to your invitation for an intimate relationship with you. Teach me so that I may know your heart and show me your ways.*

I ask You now to heal all my wounded relationships — family, extended families, friendships, and those relationships at school, work, business, church, and ministry. I forgive them _______ (mention names and offenses) and forgive me also for all my sinful judgments and reactions towards them ___________ (mention your sinful reactions for each person).

Cleanse all of us now Lord and restore our relationships. Speak to me now and to them and I entrust to you each person that you will also heal them and they will forgive me as well. I declare blessings for them _______ (mention blessings for each person) and I thank you for all the good things they have done for me and for my benefit _______ (mention each wonderful thing from each person).

By the blood of Jesus, cover us and heal us. Continue doing your work in our hearts until you set and appointed time for us to meet face to face and restore the relationships. In humility, sincerity, and purity of heart, I trust you. I ask for protection for these relationships being restored that the enemy will not enter to steal, kill, and destroy and will not retaliate and do backlash to any one of us. I plead the blood of Jesus to all of us and I declare Psalm 91 over our lives.

_In Jesus’ name. Amen.*

**COMMUNITY AND FAMILY ENGAGEMENT**

*Family is key to the development of a healthy us and healthy city. We must create a space for meaningful and long lasting impact within our neighborhoods. Genuine relationships do this.*

God is not passive about families.
- Can anyone relate to this thought? **Being physically present but emotionally absent.**

1. Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means
2. Caring for orphans and widows in their distress and
3. **Refusing to let the world corrupt you.**
   - James 1:27

*Look how the beginning of the book of Wisdom begins.*

“My child, listen when your father corrects you. Don’t neglect your mother’s instruction.”
- Proverbs 1:8 NLT

*How do we Prioritize the idea of Family when a lot of our ministry and success models are driven on entertainment and numbers… (idea share) what we do or what can we do?*
SHAWANA FAMILY STORY:  
The Perspective and the Giant Sticky Tab Activity:  
MODELED - MY EXPERIENCE - ADJUSTMENT I CAN MAKE

PERSONAL REFLECTION TIME

Q. What does your current family look like and what are 3 ways to improve it?  
(explain) Not settling for “I did it better than what I saw my parents doing when I was growing up”.

- What do we need to make that happen?
- Who do we need to make that happen?
- When do we need to make that happen?

*family  
[faemli] noun

Family are the people in my life that bring life’s greatest blessing. They are the group of people that dream, laugh and always protects each other. Family can be counted on, is always present and not only is there in the good times but also in the biggest challenges that life can bring. Family is the most precious gift. The honest people in my life that help me become better. The people I serve and love the most. My family is the stable and safe place in my life, that best reflects the love of God for me and over me.

WHAT DO WE LEARN WITHIN OUR FAMILIES?

Why do Cities need Families? Family is important because it provides Love, Support and gives us a Framework of values.

Family Brings
•DIRECTION  
•CORRECTION  
•PROTECTION

It’s within these intentional and genuine relationships spaces that we become who we are created to be. The reality is, we will have and continue to have dysfunction, unless we confront and challenge our learned behaviors.

- Vulnerability  
- Teamwork  
- Socialization  
- Support  
- Affective Nurture - Love  
- Respect  
- Adventures  
- Listening  
- Forgiveness  
- Wrong & Wright  
- Provides for Needs  

- Safe Place  
- Framework of Values & Worth  
- Love God & People  
- Encouragement  
- Worship  
- World View  
- Emotional Support  
- Security  
- Healthy & Innocent Affection  
- Confidence & Security  
- Inheritance

The influence of the family is an important gospel foundation.
- Compare it to the foundation of the highest skyscraper  
- Compare it to the roots of the tallest tree  
- Compare it to the engine inside a high performance vehicle

*If we want the people around us to be successful, then we must rethink about the foundational fundamentals that make people successful. Faith - Family - Work
*We have to be ok with Philosophy of:
Quality over Quantity and being ok to maximise everyone’s moments that are created with those you work with and serve.

CREATIVE WAYS OF ENGAGEMENT (Pick 1 or 2 to share out loud)

**INVEST In PEOPLE**
*Don't have an agenda. Holistic layers of Discipleship. If it’s not genuine, no compassion & no empathy, how do you handle hard times.

**START with a FEW**
*Start with 2-3. Look at people through the eyes of Jesus.

**Do LIFE TOGETHER**
*Prerequisite to being salty, appealing, able to model Christianity. Much of our culture is biblically illiterate. We have to understand it and live it out, putting it into practice. Our posture towards being a family within our relationships, marriages + w/ our kids & our singleness. Even in our failures, model healthy Christianity.

**HELP them GROW**
*Understand, grow in grace & knowledge. Learn side by side, Maturing in our Faith & Life. Learn from a lot of pain & be gracious with people. Have to teach, bring correction in a loving and honest way. Help them become obedient to scriptures.

**MOTIVATE to IMITATE**
*I watch you and you do. Model a posture of imitation seasoned with prayer. Continue to Disciple & Mentor. Some of the people we disciple go far beyond us, "rejoice in that"!

**JESUS is our MODEL**
*Posture of Prayer, Dependency of Holy Spirit to do His work. Seek Him in Prayer It's His ministry-we partner with Him in the Sacred Spaces of Life.

**ENDING THOUGHTS | ENCOURAGEMENTS | QUESTIONS**

*Be more like a family than an organization.

*Always make room at the table - Everyone has a place and voice. Think about legacy and building up the next generation. In 5 to 10 years what should we and shouldn't we be doing?

*The awakening for our cities very well could be in the Acts 2:42 idea of family.
  - We see the need for regular rhythms and being relational driven vs. entertainment and event driven.

**ENDING PRAYER** pg. 71 of bk of common prayer; A Franciscan Blessing

May God bless you with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships so that you may live deep within your heart.

May God bless you with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people, so that you may wish for justice, freedom, and peace.

May God bless you with enough foolishness to believe that you can make a difference in this world, so that you can do what others claim cannot be done.