

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Series: Family Life?
Message Title: The "Be Little" Family
Speaker: Pastor Kevin Myers
Date: October 18, 2009

Icebreaker:

What was your family position when growing up (Oldest, youngest, somewhere in-between)? And how did this impact you?

Message Overview:

Samuel, the High Priest, was sent to David's Family to anoint the next King for Israel (I Sam. 16 and 17). Jesse, David's father, presented all his sons, starting with the oldest. Samuel was very impressed when he met Eliab, the oldest, and believed that he must be the next king. However, God told him that he was looking at the heart, not at the outside, and that he has chosen the youngest son of Jesse.

As Pastor Kevin (PK) explained, this event could have been the source for envy, coveting, and comparing between the family members, an 'ugly elephant' that lives in today's families as well. PK talked about two important steps to call out this elephant.

1. Let's be candid: Belonging to a family and belittling out of jealousy can't co-exist.

Belittling often is an effort to hide the real elephant, which is jealousy because of other's (assumed) successes or advantages. However, as PK made clear using the example of Baseball, belonging and belittling can't co-exist. Your family should be a safe place, just like the bases for a Baseball player are. Dysfunctional families live a life between the bases and family members have to look somewhere else for a safe place.

2. Let's be courageous: Laugh at yourself instead of belittling others.

Belittling is no laughing matter. Families (and your Church family as well) simply can't survive if belittling is the dominant scheme. Words can hurt more than physical impact, and tongues can start a fire (James 3:5, James 4:11). We, therefore, should not take ourselves too seriously and build up those who are in our families rather than tearing them down. Or as PK suggested, "Shower the people you love with love!"

Discussion:

(Leaders: Do not attempt to cover every question provided in this study guide, but rather review the complete list, selecting a mix of questions that work best for your group, mixing scripture research/discussion as well as personal application of the teaching principles.)

Let's be CANDID

- Our society values some gifts and talents higher than others. What are some qualities that will receive praise from people? What does God look for most? (See also 1 Samuel 13:14)
- Read 1 Samuel 16:6-7, 12-13; 17:28-29. These are the few verses that give us insight into Eliab's life. What can we learn from them about his personality? Can you imagine what was going on in his heart that led to the words of 1 Samuel 17:28?
- Compare the family you grew up in with David's family. How was it similar or different? Where did you experience jealousy or participate in creating an atmosphere of envy and coveting? In what ways was growing up in your family a safe place to be?
- How does jealousy and envy lead to ungratefulness and blindness? Why does this often end in belittling? How does God view ungratefulness (see 2 Timothy 3:1-5)? When you belittle someone, what does that tell about you and your heart?
- God has given each person talents and gifts, but not everyone has received the same amount. Read (or give a short summary of) Matthew 25:14-30. Why did the one who got the least do nothing? What was he scolded for? What does God want us to do with our gifts and abilities? How should we look at other people's talents? In what ways does ungratefulness distort our ability to see others for who they are?
- PK compared the family to a baseball diamond. Living in a safe family is like being on a base, whereas a dysfunctional family is similar to being between the bases. Where would you presently locate your family? In what ways is your family working towards creating an atmosphere of belonging? Where do you feel like you are failing or contributing towards dysfunction in your family?

Let's be COURAGEOUS

- Belittling is no laughing matter. Read James 3:5-6; 4:1-3, 11. What power do words have? Where does negative talk come from? Where have you experienced not only sticks and stones can break your bones, but also that names can seriously hurt you over a long time?
- How do you handle it when you hear belittling or demeaning pet names within your family? How do you react when it happens among the kids? What can you do if your spouse is not a believer and does not agree with you on a no-tolerance policy for belittling (or maybe even adds to the belittling)?
- PK encouraged families to appreciate the differences and celebrate uniqueness of one another. Share ways in which you have done this in your family. What are some other ideas how this could be lived out?
- Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 12-20, and 27. What does Paul say about the church and how gifts and talents are different? Why is belittling in the church family just as destructive as in your own family? How can we avoid belittling in the church?
- In what ways are you able to laugh at yourself? Share a story where you failed at something but were able to turn it around and laugh at yourself.

- PK encouraged us to shower those we love with love. 1 Peter 3:8-13 gives us reasons and shows us ways to love one another. How can you live this love within your immediate, extended, and church family? What are some practical ways to shower others with love?

Wrap-Up:

Share one specific action you plan to take within your family or for you personally to help your family become a safe base.

Throughout the Week: (Optional)

(Leaders: Share these optional exercises for further study and growth with your group.)

- 1) Memory verse: Romans 13:8: *"Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law."*
- 2) Take some time to consider the questions PK asked at the close of the message: In my family life, am I building people up or tearing them down? Where am I belittling and am I willing to own it and stop it? Where am I taking myself too seriously?
- 3) Take some time to learn more about David by reading the appendix and reading 2 Samuel chapters 1 through 5.

Appendix

Timeline of David's Life

David's Family Growing Up (birth to 17 yrs)

1041 BC David was born in Bethlehem, son of Jesse (1 Samuel 16:1), the youngest of eight boys (1 Samuel 16:10-11).
As a young shepherd boy he was anointed by the prophet Samuel to become king (1 Samuel 16:1-13), because he was a man after God's heart (1 Samuel 13:14).
For a while David was in the service of King Saul as a harp player to calm him down, when evil spirits would torment him (1 Samuel 16:14-23). David also became one of King Saul's armor-bearers (1 Samuel 16:21).
Still a young boy David defeated the Philistine Goliath (1 Samuel 17).

David Between Families (18-30 yrs)

After this victory David became a high rank in the army and was very successful and highly praised by the people. He became friends with King Saul's son Jonathan and married King Saul's daughter Michal. But King Saul started becoming jealous of him and tried to kill him (1 Samuel 18).
In the following years David was on the run most of the time, trying to keep safe from King Saul. He was aided by Michal (1 Samuel 19:11-17) and Jonathan (1 Samuel 20).

While fleeing from King Saul, he gathered men around him (1 Samuel 22:1-2) and was still a successful warrior (1 Samuel 23:1-6). On two separate occasions, David could have killed King Saul, but spared his life (1 Samuel 24 and 26). He also took care of his family (1 Samuel 22:1-2) and married two more wives, Abigail and Ahinoam (1 Samuel 25:42-43).

During these years David often asked God what to do (e.g. 1 Samuel 23:2,10; 30:7-8), but also made some bad choices, when he decided on his own (21:10-15 – his stay with the Philistines in Gath).

The years as a fugitive ended when King Saul and Jonathan died in a battle against the Philistines (1 Samuel 31:1-6).

David's Early Family Life (King of Judah) (30-37 yrs)

1011 BC After grieving the death of King Saul and Jonathan, David became king over Judah (the southern part of Israel) and reigned from the city of Hebron. He was in constant war with the northern part of Israel, who was reigned by Ish-Bosheth, a son of Saul (2 Samuel 1:1 – 3:1).
During that time, six sons were born to David from six of his seven wives (2 Samuel 3:2-5).
Ish-Bosheth's reign became weaker and he even lost the commander of his army, Abner switched sides to go with David, but was murdered by Joab (David's commander) for personal reasons (2 Samuel 3:6-39). After reigning for seven and a half years, Ish-Bosheth was murdered (2 Samuel 4)

David's Family Life from Jerusalem (King over all Israel) (37-70 yrs)

1004 BC David became king over all Israel and conquered Jerusalem. He made Jerusalem the capital of Israel and enlarged it (2 Samuel 5:1-12).
Over the course of time, David took more wives and concubines who gave birth to many sons (2 Samuel 5:13-15 – in this list, the sons of Bathsheba are also included, although they were born at a later date).
David had the ark of God brought to Jerusalem. God made a covenant with him and promised him that his house and kingdom would endure forever (2 Samuel 6-7).
In the following years David had many military victories (2 Samuel 8, 10). He also showed integrity by the way he treated Jonathan's son Mephibosheth (2 Samuel 9).
David committed adultery with Bathsheba, had her husband Uria murdered and he then married her (2 Samuel 11). After their son was born, the prophet Nathan confronted and rebuked David about his sin. David repented, but their son died (2 Samuel 12:1-25).
Anmon, one of David's sons raped his half-sister Tamar. David did nothing about it, so after two years Absalom (Tamar's brother) had Anmon killed. Absalom fled and stayed away for three years before he was allowed back to the city of Jerusalem. But it took another two years for Absalom to be allowed to see his father David (2 Samuel 13-14).
After many years, Absalom rebelled against his father King David and built up his own followers. He let himself be called king. David had to flee together with many of his supporters. Absalom not only took some of David's concubines for himself; he also tried to fight against David. But God's hand was over David, so that his people had victory and Absalom was killed (2 Samuel 15-18).
David's reign was restored, but the following years were still rather turbulent (2 Samuel 19-21, 24). Although he followed God's lead concerning the Gibeonites

(2 Samuel 21), David went his own way again in the census (2 Samuel 24). Later on he could fight off the urge of his son Adonijah to want to become king, by making Solomon king (1 Kings 1).

971 BC

David died at the age of 70 and Solomon became king over Israel (1 Kings 2:1-12).