

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Series: Family Life?
Message Title: Two Family Secrets
Speaker: Pastor Kevin Myers
Date: November 22, 2009

Icebreaker:

Throughout our Family Life series, we've had some fun with the idea of the "elephant" – the pretense and sin we don't talk about in our families – being the family pet. Today, we finally smashed the symbolic elephant to smithereens! Did you put the "Fine Family" elephant window clings on your car? Why or why not? If so, did they prompt any comments or questions from others? Where did you notice other cars with elephants in the window? (Surely you didn't see any rude or reckless driving behaviors demonstrated by 12Stone families, right?)

Message Overview:

This week, we completed our Family Life series and take a last look at lessons we can learn from the family life of King David. Pastor Kevin (PK) reminded us that throughout the ups and downs of David's life, he was called a man after God's own heart. He enjoyed the favor of God on his life in a unique way.

David knew two key secrets to family life, and effectively smashed two elephants. David's family was:

- **Formed in Dependence on God, smashing the elephant of Driven-ness**
- **Focused on Giving, smashing the elephant of Getting**

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.)

Families should be formed in Dependence on God, not Driven-ness

- Read II Samuel 8:11-12. Do you think there's a direct link between David's string of military victories and his practice of dedicating his prizes to the Lord? Since we don't exactly have ceremonies for dedicating our "plunder" to God these days, how can we demonstrate submission of our own achievements and rewards to Him?
- Read each of the following passages: Psalm 7:1, Psalm 8:1, Psalm 9:9-10, Psalm 18:1-3 and I Chronicles 29:10-14. In the midst of a very busy life, David consistently took time to reflect on

and acknowledge his dependence on God. He carried his context with him. David viewed all events in his life – from success to tragedy -- from the perspective of surrendered dependence on a powerful and loving Father. How about you? Do you frame the events of your life in a context of dependence on God? Are you making time to reflect on the glory of God daily?

- Like the people who walked past a great musician performing in a Washington, D.C. metro train station, we all have things to do and places to be. The “driven-ness” of a fast-paced life can be the elephant in marriages and families that keeps us from knowing the peace of a family life that’s centered in God. What does it take to get your attention in the middle of your busy life? What makes you stop in your tracks, “lean against the wall”, and appreciate the beauty of God?

Families should be focused on Giving, not Getting

- Read about David’s kindness toward Mephibosheth in II Samuel 9:1-3 and 9-13. In a time when kings often destroyed everything that had belonged to a previous king, including their family, David went out of his way to find someone from the house of Saul to whom he could show God’s kindness. How often does your family ask, “Is there anyone to whom we can show God’s kindness?”
- Read the words of Jesus in John 13:34-35. How do you think The Church (as a whole) is doing with our obedience to Jesus’ instructions to love each other as He loved us? Would you say The Church is well-known in the world for our unique, sacrificial love for each other? Are there particular areas where we need to do a better job of demonstrating love for our brothers and sisters in Christ?
- Throughout scripture, God repeatedly instructs His people to take care of specific groups of people: widows, the fatherless, the poor, etc. This Christmas season, 12Stone will demonstrate our love and care for single mothers and their children within our church family in specific and tangible ways. Think about the single moms you know. (If you’re a single mom, think about the *other* single mom’s you know.) What are some of the unique challenges they face? What could you do that would help them feel loved and encouraged?

Wrap-Up:

Pray about what God would have your family give as part of the special offering to bless single moms and their children this Christmas season. Your small group may also want to consider “adopting” a single-parent family in the community to bless.

Remember to pray for the 500 to 600 single mothers and their 800 to 1000 children who are part of the 12Stone family. Pray that they would know that they are loved, that they are part of a family, and that they are not parenting alone. Pray that they would be blessed and encouraged by the kindness of God, shown through His people.

Ask God to drive Dependence and Giving deeply into the DNA of our families.

Throughout the Week: (Optional)

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

To memorize:

"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."
John 13:34 (NIV)

As a follow-up to the Family Life series, a list of recommended books about parenting is below as a resource.

Appendix – List of Recommended Parenting Books

Here are a few parenting books that can be helpful for further study:

By James Dobson:

The New Dare to Discipline
The New Hide or Seek: Building Confidence in Your Child
Bringing Up Boys: Practical Advice and Encouragement for Those Shaping the Next Generation of Men

By John Rosemond:

Ending the Homework Hassle
Teen-Proofing: Fostering Responsible Decision-Making in Your Teenager

By Gary Thomas:

Sacred Parenting: How Raising Children Shapes Our Souls
Devotions for Sacred Parenting: A Year of Weekly Devotions for Parents

By Meg Meeker:

Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters: 10 Secrets Every Father Should Know