



GETTING STARTED

> *As your group time begins, use this section for very brief review prior to showing the video to help get the conversation going.*

Let's do life together!/Opening Discussion: How was everyone's week? Has your LIFEgroup made plans to meet during the summer or maybe serve together? Does anyone feel led to multiply your group and become a LIFEgroup Leader?

Our Subject Today: We are going to talk about blended families and the fact that we all are in a blended families. Most of all, blended into the family of God.

VIDEO NOTES/QUESTIONS

INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY / OBSERVATION: Matthew presents "Messiah" Jesus whose kingdom would last forever. Although rejected by his own people due to his paternal relationship being misunderstood, Jesus offers grace and shows favour to those who faithfully seek to know Him.

INTERPRETATION: See Commentary on pages 5-6

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Read Matthew 13:53-58

1) It is encouraging to see in these Scriptures that Jesus was from a blended family and was questioned because of his background. Take a moment as each member shares about their background and if you are from or in a blended family. Why did Jesus' family background make any difference?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: Remember a blended family occurs in many different situations: adoption, foster care, divorce, remarriage, marriage, death of a spouse and remarriage, and most of all adopted into God's family. Jesus' background: they knew Jesus in His home town, grew up with Him, knew His parents, brothers and sisters, and now look what He is doing??? They were confused.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)**Read *Romans 8:1***

2) Why do we carry past pain or sin when the promise in this verse is given to us? Discuss this statement - "Strong families are built on a strong relationship with Jesus".

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: Time spent with Jesus and putting Jesus first in our life will help us overcome the past. As we embrace the grace He gives us, we must then extend it to others and ourselves.

Digging Deeper— Read *Isaiah 43:18-19* - "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland."

Read *Exodus 14:11-13*

3) Why did the Israelites want to go back to Egypt? Why do we desire to go back to something in our past that is not good for us and not trust God for the present? How does this relate to having a crockpot life? Why does unforgiveness connect us to the past and affect our lives today?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: We are a very impatient people, microwave like - I want something and I want it now. Give everyone in your relationships time and the space needed to adjust, this is where the blender does not work in relationships. Also, I must let God break the cord of unforgiveness in my life - forgiving others and myself.

Read *Matthew 19:5*

4) Why is it so important to put your marriage first above all other relationships (other than Jesus)? How does that make you a strong family?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: Marriage works best, family works best, even blended families work best when Jesus is number one and your marriage comes next. Remember becoming one is a physical and a spiritual event!

APPLICATION QUESTIONS (cont.)**Read Matthew 22:37**

5) Relationships with others take time. How long does it take to build a relationship with God? What does it mean for you to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: Heart represents the total core of a persons identity; it is the source of your words, thoughts, and actions. Soul refers to a person whole living person, including - heart, passions, hungers, perceptions, thoughts, and emotions. Mind is defined as embracing the will, intentions, mental intelligences, determination and purpose. Strength refers to physical energy and function. The call to love God is not with only a an act of a physical muscle, but with everything we have for the honor and glory of God. Let's love Christ a little more every day and minimize ourselves.

Read Romans 8:15-16

6) Put into words what it means to you personally to be adopted into the blended family of God and to be called a child of God. Do you ever have difficulty getting along with members in the family of God? Discuss this statement: *Evangelism is a blender and Discipleship is crockpot.*

SUGGESTED ANSWERS / DIGGING DEEPER: Romans 8:17a "and if children, then heirs — heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ..."What does it mean to be "joint heirs with Christ"? John 1:12 "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God," Evangelism is like a blender—it happens when you accept the Gospel of Jesus Christ and experience eternal life, Discipleship is like a crockpot—it takes time, growing and growing through sanctification, becoming more like Jesus. As we all grow together in the family of God to be more like Jesus, we become more like each other, with a greater understanding and compassion for one another as well as a respect for how God created us as individuals—alike yet different—full of God's grace by His creative beautiful design.

SUMMARY (My Take-Away for This Week)**POSSIBLE SUMMARY:**

- God can help me in my blended family, relationships take time
- Trust and love in a blended family takes time
- I must cut the cord of unforgiveness, forget the past and live for today

WORK OUT (This Week's Assignments)

- Encourage each other who are in a blended family ~ meet for coffee or a meal and discuss your challenges
- Plan for your LIFEgroup to get together during the summer for a party, to have fun, or for serving together. Keep your community together and strong!
- Who will multiply? One sign of a healthy/successful LIFEgroup is a group that multiples by sending someone out to start a group (If you are interested, contact Pastor Bob or stop by the LIFEgroup Center in the Worship Center lobby).
- Interested in joining FFC? - Attend DiscoverFFC on Sat. June 9 at 6:15 pm or Sun. June 10 at 11:15 am (sign up at our website - <http://www.fishhawkfc.org/discoverffc/>)

MY NEXT STEPS FROM THE WEEKEND WORSHIP

1. Today, I will look into the resources listed in the Worship Guide to get more information about how I can move forward in my life/relationships.
2. This week, I will pray for all families and marriages, but especially the stepfamilies within our church and within my circle of influence.
3. Today, I will cut the cord of unforgiveness from past sins and resentments.
4. This week, I will connect with a pastor and talk about making sure I am a member of the blended family of God.

HOW MY GROUP CAN PRAY FOR ME THIS WEEK

> [Record Group Prayer Request Here:](#)

COMMENTARY

Question 1.

Matthew 13:53-58. The people's amazement increases because they know the members of his family, who seem ordinary enough. Residents of Nazareth probably also remember Jesus' childhood and young adulthood, which were apparently not particularly distinguished.

Verses 54b-56 are even somewhat disparaging, inasmuch as Jesus' up-bringing would point out that he had received no formal rabbinic training. "Carpenter's son" recalls Joseph's occupation. In light of the wording of the questions about the rest of his family, one would have expected the crowds to ask, "Isn't his father the carpenter?" This, coupled with the lack of reference to Joseph anywhere in the Gospels or Acts following Jesus' infancy, has suggested to many that Joseph may be dead by this time, but no one knows for sure. Mark's account shows that Jesus had practiced Joseph's trade prior to his baptism and public ministry (*Mark 6:3*).

Though they do not yet support him, James and Jude (the abbreviated form of Judas) will later distinguish themselves as Christian leaders (on James, see *Acts 15:1-29*) and as writers of inspired epistles. Only here does Matthew indicate that Jesus had an unspecified number of sisters as well. (Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, vol. 22, The New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992])

Question 2.

Romans 8:2. The first verse sets forth one of the most important truths of the Christian faith. The opening word, "therefore," leads us to expect some result that flows logically from the preceding text. Romans 7:25 teaches that freedom from the power of the lower nature has been provided by God through the atoning work of Jesus Christ. Therefore there is no longer any condemnation at all for those who are "in Christ Jesus," that is, who have been made one with him by faith in his redemptive sacrifice.

The just penalty incurred by the sins of the human race was paid by the death of Christ. The unfavorable verdict has been removed. Now all those who are in Christ are the beneficiaries of that forgiveness. *It follows that if condemnation as an objective reality has been removed, there is no legitimate place for condemnation as a subjective experience. To insist on feeling guilty is but another way of insisting on helping God with our salvation. How deeply imbedded in human nature is the influence of works-righteousness!* (italics added) (Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, vol. 27, The New American Commentary [Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995]).

Question 3.**Exodus 14:11-13.**

Terror turned Israelite elation and triumph into sarcasm and accusation. They considered Moses responsible for their impending doom, and themselves helpless victims. Their assessment gave no thought to any third option besides death or servitude in Egypt. By not considering the Lord's involvement, the Israelites resembled faithless Pharaoh.

The command *Don't be afraid*, given as a word from the Lord to his people or an affirmation of confidence before battle, has many parallels (*Nm 21:34; Dt 1:21, 29; 3:2, 22; Jos 8:1; 10:8, 25; 2Ch 20:15, 17; 32:7; Neh 4:14*). Moses gave no defense of himself but focused instead on what the Lord would accomplish. (Dorian G. Coover-Cox, "Exodus," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax [Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017])

COMMENTARY

Question 4.

Matthew 19:5. God instituted the first marriage in the garden of Eden when He gave Eve to Adam as a wife (*Gen. 2:18-25*). That later marriages were to follow the pattern of the first is indicated by the concluding divine instruction (see *Matt. 19:4-6*): “This is why a man leaves his father and mother and bonds with his wife, and they become one flesh” (*Gen. 2:24*). A unique unity between Adam and Eve was seen in that the two became “one flesh.” The oneness of marriage separated the couple from others as a distinct family unit.

If man’s chief purpose as the image of God is to glorify God and enjoy our relationship with Him forever (*Ps. 73:28; 1 Cor. 10:31*), clearly this is the chief purpose of marriage. Paul explains in *Eph. 5:21-33* that the marriage relationship is to be patterned after that of Christ and the church. An inference to be drawn from that is that a husband and wife are to display in their relationship the nature of our relationship with Christ, our divine Husband, as His bride, the church. This same principle may also be inferred from the OT, where the marriage relationship was one of the key analogies used to describe Yahweh’s relationship with Israel (e.g., *Jer. 2:1; 3:6; 31:32; Hos. 1-3*).

Marriage is also God’s unique gift to provide the framework for intimate companionship, as a means for procreation of the human race and as the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards (R Ray Clendenen with Kelly Brent R., “Marriage,” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* [Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003]).

Question 5.

Matthew 22:37. Jesus drew his answer from the most memorized and recited passage in all the Jewish Scriptures: *Deut. 6:4-5*. Jesus quoted the Septuagint almost verbatim, but he substituted mind (*dianoia*) for the similar sounding “might” (*dunameos*). We are to take this list as an emphatic way of saying, “Love God with everything you are in every way possible.” But it was not without significance that our Lord deliberately substituted “mind” here rather than some other term. Christians need to take a lesson from this. We should learn to *think* critically and biblically.

Jesus emphasized his answer by identifying this commandment as the first and greatest commandment. This commandment was greatest because of the statement in *Deuteronomy 6:4* which preceded it: “Yahweh is your God, Yahweh alone” (paraphrased). To honor Yahweh as the one true God is to love him exclusively, from among all others who claim to be gods (Stuart K. Weber, *Matthew*, vol. 1, Holman New Testament Commentary [Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000])

Question 6.

Romans 8:14-17. 8:14 The leading of God’s Spirit is his providential sanctification (*Ps 23:3*). It is common to all believers, it is constant, and it will bring the believer to glory (*Rm 8:17*). The leading of the Spirit is not mystical direction or ecstasy. It is the Spirit’s empowerment for mortification of fleshly desires (v. 13).

8:15-16 The Holy Spirit is not an agent of bondage but is instead the means of our adoption into God’s family. By the Spirit we have a consciousness that God is our Father. It is the mark of a Christian to cry out to his Father in prayer. The Spirit also gives us assurance of our status and therefore of our salvation. *Abba* is an Aramaic word meaning “father.” Jesus used it in prayer to God the Father (*Mk 14:36*).

8:17 All God’s children are his heirs and coheirs with Christ. We are joined to him in suffering but also in our future destiny. As he is in glory (*1Tm 3:16; Heb 1:3; 2:7, 9-10*) so we will be glorified with him (Paige Patterson, “Salvation in the Old Testament,” in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax [Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017]).

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