

DEEPER

Daily Bible Study

Adult Sabbath School Lesson
Podcast, Study Notes, and Teacher Helps

Families of Faith

2019, Quarter 2, Lesson 11

Sabbath (June 8): Families of Faith

“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1). When an individual lives by faith, their experience with God can be inspiring, motivating, and a force for good in this world. When an entire family lives by faith, their experience can change the world. Consider the stories of people like Noah, Abraham, and Moses. God called each of them as individuals, but He also called their families to support them, to make the same sacrifices they did, and to live in faith with them. After all, Noah built the ark with his family, Abraham didn’t move to Canaan alone, and Moses had the help of his brother Aaron and sister Miriam. Today God is searching for families who are prepared to live in faith—ready to follow His leading even when they can’t clearly see what that will mean or where it will lead.

Discussion Questions:

- What experiences has God led your family through in which you have had to exercise faith? More specifically, in what ways has your family had to trust God for His solution and leading when the answers were unclear to you? (Answers will vary.)
- Looking back on those experiences, what lessons did they teach you about God? Are you glad that He led you through those faith-building experiences? (Answers will vary.)
- Read Philippians 2:15. In what ways do you now understand the faith-building experiences that God has led you through as part of His purpose to make Philippians 2:15 a reality in your family’s life?

Sunday (June 9): “Hold Fast What is Good”

This world is full of evil, more so as time marches on and we approach the second coming of Jesus Christ. Yet, the Bible counsels us to “hold fast” (1 Thessalonians 5:21) the things that are good in our lives and in the world around us. Given this advice, interacting with the culture that surrounds us on a day-to-day basis can be a challenge and an opportunity for the Christian. Certainly, we need to follow our role model Jesus Christ as we seek to navigate these sometimes-muddy waters of deciding what is good, what should be held onto, and what should be discarded. In today’s study we will investigate how Jesus interacted with His culture, and what this means for us today.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Matthew 11:19. What did the religious leaders accuse Jesus of? (Eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners, and being a drunkard and a glutton.) Which of these were true, and which of them were false? (Jesus was a friend of sinners and tax collectors, but we can be sure that He was not a glutton or a drunk.) Why was Jesus accused of these things? (Because He interacted freely and compassionately with those in these more despised classes of society.) What

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lesson(s) can we learn from this aspect of Christ's life? (The Christian's standard of what is good and bad in society, and what should be "held fast" and what should be let go, may be very different from how other people see it.) What do you think Jesus saw as being "good" in this situation? (Answers will vary. He certainly didn't approve of everything the tax collectors and sinners did, but He loved them and their spiritual welfare enough that He was willing to mingle with them and associate with them.)

- Read Matthew 5:27,28 and 19:1-9. What did Jesus accept as good about the current cultural attitude toward marriage? (Not much! A man in Christ's time could divorce his wife for even petty offences, and the result was that people moved in and out of marriage frequently.) Is the situation in our Western culture much different today? (No.) What did Jesus say regarding marriage that sounded very counter-cultural in His time, as it does today in our time? (Jesus said that the only biblical ground for divorce is adultery.) In this respect Jesus was "holding fast" to the original "culture of marriage" that God set up in Eden.
- Read Matthew 22:15-22. What was Christ's attitude about paying taxes? (He said that taxes should be paid to the civil government, just as tithe and offerings should be given to God.) What was Christ "holding fast" to in His answer to the Pharisees? (Jesus was upholding the legitimacy and authority of civil government over the Christian, even when that government, such as Rome was, can be abusive and anti-God.) Why do you think Christ gave this counsel? (Answers will vary. See Romans 13:1,2 for one possible answer.)
- Read John 18:36. In His answer to Pilate, what did Jesus say that must have shocked and confused the worldly and ambitious Roman governor? (Jesus said that His kingdom—the object of His energy, time, thoughts, and prayers—was based in heaven, not here on earth.) Is this a counter-cultural statement? (Yes. Most people in every culture are focused on themselves and what they can get out of this life, here on this earth. The idea of working and living toward an invisible kingdom that offers no earthly reward in terms of money, power, and prestige, is beyond many people's comprehension.) What was Jesus "holding fast" to in this answer to Pilate? (Answers will vary. Jesus had placed His highest value on establishing a spiritual kingdom that would rescue people from sin. This was worth holding onto even if it meant His death.)
- How would you summarize the example of Christ's life for the Christian family today that is trying to "hold fast" the things that are good? (Answers will vary.)

Monday (June 10): The Power of Culture on Family

The Bible is full of stories about God's people who, in spite of their best intentions—or because of their willful decisions—found themselves dealing with unnecessary problems because they had compromised with their surrounding culture. In today's lesson we will look at just a few of those stories and seek to understand lessons for ourselves today.

Discussion Questions:

- Read or refer to Genesis 16:1-3; 35:1-4; Ezra 10; and 1 Kings 11:1. What common denominator do you find in all of these stories? (In each story, people that professed to love and serve God became affected by their culture to some degree or other.) How would you describe the impact that this compromise with culture had on the families of Abraham, Jacob, Solomon, and the Jews in Ezra 10? (In every case, the impact of accepting cultural norms and customs was negative for God's people.) How did God respond in each of these stories? (God convicted them of the wrong they had done, and showed them what needed to be done to correct, so far as possible, the mistakes that had

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been made.) What reason(s) for hope do you find in these stories? (Answers will vary. God will do all in His power to correct us when needed and lead us back into a closer relationship with Him.)

Tuesday (June 11): Sustaining Families Through Seasons of Change

Perhaps no family in earth's history has passed through a greater "season of change" than did Noah's family. Imagine the shock they must have had when they first looked out of the ark after it finally came to rest after months at sea. In today's study we will look at a few keys that enabled Noah and his family to successfully weather this stormy season in their lives.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Genesis 8:15-19. What were some of the changes that Noah and his family must have encountered when they left the ark? (They were the only people living in the world, the physical features of the earth were completely different so that it was unrecognizable, the climate of earth was different, and for the past half-year or so they had lived through a series of miracles that defied the imagination.)
- Read Genesis 6:5. What was the condition of the world before the flood? (Men's hearts and thoughts were only evil continually?) What do you think this means? (Answers will vary.)
- Read Genesis 6:9. Why did God choose Noah? (Noah was "just" and "perfect.") What do you think this means? (Noah, like Enoch, walked with God. His life was devoted to living by faith in, and obedience to God. He made a conscious decision to live differently than those trapped in the sinful culture of the world.) What lesson(s) can we learn from this? (Answers will vary. We should live with the same devotion to God as did Noah.)
- Read Genesis 6:14-16. What did God instruct Noah to do, and how detailed were the instructions? (God told Noah to build an ark, and gave him precise details in regards to its dimensions and basic construction.)
- Read Genesis 6:22. Did Noah follow God's instructions? (Yes.) What lesson can we learn from this? (God has given specific instructions and warnings to His people today, too. We should prayerfully strive to follow God's leading as did Noah.)
- Read Genesis 7:7-10. What did Noah and his family have to do after they entered the ark? (Wait for seven days.) Do you think this was easy? (Probably not.) Why do you think God delayed the rain for seven days? (Possibly He was trying to test and build their faith in Him.) How important is learning to wait and trust on God in our lives? (Very important!) What story or experience can you share about a time when you have needed to exercise patience and faith for a fulfillment of God's promise or leading? (Answers will vary.)

Wednesday (June 12): Toward a First-Generation Faith

Hebrews 11 contains an inspiring account of individuals and families whose personal faith in God enabled Him to work in and through them in incredible ways. How can we obtain this same quality of faith in our families today? In today's lesson we will look at Christ's counsel to the Laodicean church, that, if followed, will produce a vibrant "first-generation faith" in us.

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Discussion Questions:

- Read Revelation 3:15-17. What are some of the pitfalls that can prevent us from living with “first-generation faith”? (Being “lukewarm” in our faith, assuming that we are spiritually OK and are in “need of nothing,” and refusing to acknowledge that we are in fact “wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.”)
- Read Revelation 3:18. What counsel does Christ give to those that are trapped in this spiritual lethargy? Identify the three things Jesus says, and then discuss how they might be applicable in a family situation.
 - 1. Gold tried in the fire. What kind of riches is Christ speaking of here, and why can it only be obtained after it has been tried in the fire?
 - 2. White raiment. What is Christ promising here when He says that we may be clothed and the shame of our nakedness will not appear?
 - 3. Anoint our eyes with eyesalve. What kind of sight is Christ referring to? Again, how might this apply specifically to families?

Again and again has the voice from heaven addressed you. Will you obey this voice? Will you heed the counsel of the True Witness to seek the gold tried in the fire, the white raiment, and the eyesalve? The gold is faith and love, the white raiment is the righteousness of Christ, the eyesalve is that spiritual discernment which will enable you to see the wiles of Satan and shun them, to detect sin and abhor it, to see truth and obey it. (Testimonies, vol. 5, p. 233)

- Read the following statement from the book *Evangelism*: “The work to be done calls for sacrifice at every step of advance. The workers are to come forth from trial, purified and refined, as gold tried in the fire” (Ev 631-632). What is the connection between willingness to sacrifice for Christ and obtaining a “first-generation faith”? In what ways might families be called to sacrifice for Christ today? (Answers will vary.)

Thursday (June 13): Twenty-First Century Runners

On Tuesday we looked at Noah’s family as an example of a family that survived an incredible season of change. Today we will look more closely at their experience and look for lessons that can help us, and our families today, to be effective heralds of the gospel.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Genesis 7:4. How did God present Himself to Noah? (As the Creator.) Why was this so important? (The antediluvian world, with the exception of Noah’s family and a few other faithful families, had forgotten that God is the Creator. Many of the evils in that age were the result of failing to acknowledge God as the Creator [compare Romans 1:18-32].)
- Read Revelation 14:7. What are we called to remember and do today? (Worship God as Creator.)
- Read Genesis 6:22 and 7:5. What else characterized Noah’s relationship with God? (Noah obeyed all that God commanded.)
- Read Revelation 14:12. What will continue to identify God’s people today and at the end of time? (Obedience to God’s commandments.)

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- Read Genesis 6:7. What testimony from God did Noah believe in and cling to? (He believed the prophetic testimony of the Spirit.)
- Read Revelation 12:17 and 19:10. What testimony will God's people today also believe in and cling to? (God's people today will also accept, believe, live, and share the prophetic messages God has given to us.)
- Read 2 Peter 2:4,5. What else is Noah called in this passage? (Noah is called a preacher of righteousness.) What do you think that means? (Answers will vary.) Should we be living the same way? (Of course!)
- Read Genesis 7:23 and 1 Peter 3:20, 21. In what ways does Noah's experience passing through the flood help us understand the change in our lives that should accompany baptism? (Answers will vary.)
- Read Genesis 6:14 and 7:13,16. Why did God ask Noah to seal the ark? (To make it watertight on the inside and the outside. Interestingly, the Hebrew word translated as "pitch" in Genesis 6:14 is most often translated "atonement" in the Old Testament, and it literally means "to cover.") In what ways did God "cover" Noah and his family? (Answers will vary.)
- Read Revelation 7:1-3. What promise is given to God's servants at the end of time? (He will "cover" them with the seal of God.) How important is obtaining this promise to you and your family? (It should be very important!)

Friday (June 14): Rejoicing in the Lord

Families of faith will naturally spread the joy of Christianity to all those that they come in contact with. When Jesus Christ dwells within a person, and within a family, His joy and peace and confidence in the Father will be displayed in the words, actions, and thoughts. We close this week's lessons by looking at this aspect of rejoicing in the Lord.

Discussion Questions:

- Read Psalm 16:11. What is the only source of true and lasting joy? (The presence of Christ.) When Christ is living in a family, how will that reality be evidenced to others? (Answers will vary.)

If we do represent Christ, we shall make His service appear attractive, as it really is. Christians who gather up gloom and sadness to their souls, and murmur and complain, are giving to others a false representation of God and the Christian life. They give the impression that God is not pleased to have His children happy, and in this they bear false witness against our heavenly Father. {SC 116.1}
- Read Luke 12:29 and Hebrews 3:12. What is one thing that can prevent us from rejoicing in the Lord? (Doubt and unbelief.) What are some of the dangers of doubt and unbelief? (Answers will vary.)

All this is harming your own soul; for every word of doubt you utter is inviting Satan's temptations; it is strengthening in you the tendency to doubt, and it is grieving from you the ministering angels. When Satan tempts you, breathe not a word of doubt or darkness. If you choose to open the door to his suggestions, your mind will be filled with distrust and rebellious questioning. If you talk out your feelings, every doubt you express not only reacts upon yourself, but it is a seed that will germinate and bear fruit in the life of others, and it may be impossible to

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counteract the influence of your words. You yourself may be able to recover from the season of temptation and from the snare of Satan, but others who have been swayed by your influence may not be able to escape from the unbelief you have suggested. How important that we speak only those things that will give spiritual strength and life! {SC 119.1}

- Read Matthew 6:31-34. What is another thing that can prevent us from resting in faith in God? (Worrying unnecessarily about the necessities and cares of life or making them our highest priority in life.) What is Christ's advice in regards to this? (Seek first the kingdom of God.) In what ways can Christ's advice be practically implemented by families? (Answers will vary.)
- Read 1 Samuel 7:12. What is yet another key to rejoicing in the Lord? (Remembering how God has helped and guided in the past.) What experiences has your family had in the past where you know that God has guided and helped? (Answers will vary.)

We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and his teaching in our past history. {9T 10.3}