



Christian Home & Marriage Week February 13 – 20, 2021

THEME:

**I WILL GO WITH MY FAMILY
UNITY IN COMMUNITY**

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Dear Members:

The Family Life Ministries Department is inviting all churches to celebrate Christian Home and Marriage Week from Sabbath February 13 to Sabbath February 20, 2021. We have provided three sermons and Children's Stories for presentation on the 13th, 17th & 20th February, 2021. We have also supplied four (4) Family Life Ministries Seminars for the churches that would conduct the programme for the entire week.

Sabbath February 13, 2021	Wednesday February 17, 2021	Sabbath February 20, 2021
Who Will Go?	Grandparents' Legacy	Barriers to Family Wellness
CHILDREN'S STORIES		
Fayeza's Story	Who Created the Dinosaurs?	Forgiveness Story

Living in the middle of a pandemic is no laughing matter.

Dictionary.com defines a pandemic as: *"(of a disease) prevalent throughout an entire country, continent, or the whole world."* While the memory of 2020 includes dark moments for many of us, good things also emerged from the presence of COVID-19. For many, it was an opportunity to slow down, enjoy more family time, and an occasion to take stock of where we were in our relationship with God. Still, for millions around the world, it meant higher levels of family abuse, being infected with this horrible virus causing excruciating pain and despair, including the agonizing sorrow of the death of millions of persons from various social classes around the world.

In the midst of these incredibly distressing and harrowing realities, the people of God are even now being called to share the good news of salvation with a dying world in need of a Saviour. Yet, an integral part of the call is to show concern for the temporal needs of those we serve. This Family Emphasis Week material is a call to our families **"TO GO!"**. I pray that during this period, as the messages are presented, that the *signs of the times* help us to sense the urgency of the hour and, like Isaiah be able to also declare with conviction, **"I WILL GO!!!"**

Yours sincerely,

WAYNE SAMPSON

Director

Men, Family and Prayer Ministries.

I WILL GO WITH MY FAMILY | UNITY IN COMMUNITY

WHO WILL GO?

BY WILLIE AND ELAINE OLIVER

THE TEXT

“²⁸ What do you think? A man had two sons. And he went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work in the vineyard today.’ ²⁹ And he answered, ‘I will not,’ but afterward he changed his mind and went. ³⁰ And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, ‘I go, sir,’ but did not go. ³¹ Which of the two did the will of the father?’ They said, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you. ³² For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him. And even when you saw it, you did not afterward change your minds and believe him.’” Matthew 21:28-32

I. INTRODUCTION

Raymond Loewy was an immigrant who disembarked in Manhattan in 1919, imagining New York City would be a stylish and classy place. When he disembarked, he was disenchanted. What Loewy found was an untidy product of the industrial age—massive, loud and complex. Loewy went on to become a prominent industrial designer who grasped an essential norm about human aspiration and drive. So, what was Loewy’s top secret? He perceived that consumers are of two minds between two divergent forces: a curiosity about new things and concern about anything *too new*. As a result, *they are attracted to products that are bold but also immediately understandable*. Raymond Loewy believed that people want things that are “**Most Advanced, Yet Acceptable**,” a phrase that can be shortened to **MAYA**.

Loewy believed that people often vacillate between curiosity about new things and anxiety about anything too new. So did Jesus. In the temple in Jerusalem, he asks the chief priests and the elders, “Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?” (v. 25). The people love John because his baptism is new and thrilling. In the eyes of Jesus and the people, John’s baptism is clearly Most Advanced. People are at ease with John because he comes out of a long line of Hebrew prophets, and his baptism is embedded in religious tradition. John is **Most Advanced, Yet Acceptable**. Because of this, the priests and elders are unable to come to a conclusion, and they say, “We do not know” (v. 27).¹

In today’s text, Jesus appears to understand this same idea. Our topic today is titled, **Who Will Go?** Let us pray.

II. EXPLICATION AND APPLICATION

The context of this narrative finds Jesus at His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, at the cleansing of the temple in Jerusalem, and with a fig tree He cursed because it had leaves but no fruit. The storyline continues with the chief priests and elders of the temple challenging the authority of Jesus to teach and questioning the audacious social situations in which He participated. In vss. 24-27, Jesus engages the leaders in a conversation about where the baptism of John came from, which immediately becomes a trap for them.

While the clashes between Jesus and the religious leaders increase, He presents a number of parables meaning to revile their narcissism, materialism and self-satisfaction. These thought provoking parables are meant to explain the remarkable swap taking place in response to the coming of Messiah. Essentially, Jesus is rejected by the leaders of Israel, while at the same time being accepted by the untouchables and the underclass of His day. The unfortunate theme running through the narratives of the Gospels, though, is that those assumed to be among the saved are lost, even as *sinner*s who accept Messiah are saved. And in that vein, we can hear the desperate existential cry of the thief on the cross: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” (Luke 23:42).

In the middle of this Ancient Near East dialectic, we find the parable of the man who had two sons. By making use of parables, Jesus allows His hearers to reprove themselves without being aware of how they got there. It is a lot like when Nathan, the Old Testament prophet, who got David, the King of Israel, to become outraged with his own behaviour before knowing whom the prophet was speaking about. A parable made it much easier for King David to be outraged by the behaviour of the perpetrator in the story (2 Samuel 12:1-15), only to have the Prophet Nathan say to him: “You are the man” (vs. 7).

It is this genre of storytelling that Jesus employs with the leaders of Israel when he tells them the parable of the man who had two sons. *What do you think?* Jesus asks. He begins his conversation with them by employing the Socratic method—“a form of a cooperative argumentative dialogue between individuals, based on asking and answering questions to stimulate critical thinking and to draw out ideas and underlying presuppositions.”² Effectively, the story is about the two sons the father sends to work in his vineyard. Yet, Jesus means to show these church leaders who did not believe John’s baptism was from God, how they discredited themselves when the publicans and prostitutes not only believed in John’s baptism but embraced it for themselves.³

Ellen White sheds light on this incident by sharing (DA, p. 594-595):

“In His contest with the rabbis, it was not Christ’s purpose to humiliate His opponents. He was not glad to see them in a hard place. He had an important lesson to teach. He had mortified His enemies by allowing them to be entangled in the net they had spread for Him. Their acknowledged ignorance in regard to the character of John’s baptism gave Him an opportunity to speak, and He improved the opportunity by presenting before them their real position, adding another warning to the many already given.”⁴

So, the father goes to the first son and says: "... 'Son, go and work in the vineyard **today**.' And he answered, 'I will not,' but afterward he changed his mind and went. And he went to the other son and said the same. And he answered, 'I go, sir,' but did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?' They said, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, 'Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you' (vss. 28-31).

The parable—of course—symbolizes two kinds of people: the kind that does better than they promised—represented by the first son; and the kind that promises more than they deliver—exemplified by the second son. To be sure, both sons had the same father, demonstrating that God is the Father of all humankind. Yet, there are considerable differences among human beings, including among those who belong to the community of believers.⁵ Some are faithful; others, unfaithful. Some are kind; others, unkind. Some are patient; others, impatient. Some are agreeable; others, miserable. Some are generous; others, stingy. Some are loving; others, indifferent. Some love the truth; others, falsehood. Some are givers; others, takers. Some live to smile; others to frown. Some love unconditionally; others, are haters. Some are optimists; others, pessimists. Some love righteousness; others, unrighteousness. Some live in the sunshine; others, in the shadows. Some love Jesus; others, Satan. Some are heaven-bound; others, hell-bound. Yes, indeed! There is only one Father, but huge differences among His children.

Both sons received the same command to *go and work in the vineyard today*. It is the same command we all are still receiving from the Father today. One command comes from Exodus 20:9 that says, "Six days you shall labour, and do all your work." The other command is found in Matthew 28:19 that states, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." God means for His children to be industrious, to make a good living in some worthy enterprise that makes a difference in the temporal lives of people to help build up His kingdom. God also intends for His children to *work* in His vineyard for the salvation of souls. The call to work in the *vineyard* requires present obedience. The directive **today** carries urgency with it. The Father doesn't say go to the vineyard when you get a chance. The Father doesn't say go to the vineyard when it is convenient. The Father doesn't say go to the vineyard next week or next month. The Father says, *go and work in the vineyard today!* There is authority and affection in the command of the Father. The Psalmist affirms in Psalm 10:13, 14, "As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust." The command is urgent and at once benevolent and filled with love.⁶ The command is not meant to harm us. Rather, to involve us intimately in His mission of saving humankind.

Ellen White describes the story of Jesus' piercing question to the rabbis and their subsequent answer by disclosing (DA, p. 595):

"The priests and rulers could not give a correct answer to Christ's question, and thus He obtained their opinion in favour of the first son. His son represented the publicans, those who were despised and hated by the Pharisees. The publicans had been grossly immoral. They had indeed been transgressors of the law of God, showing in their lives an absolute resistance to His requirements. They had been unthankful and unholy; when told to go and work in the Lord's vineyard, they had given a contemptuous refusal. But when John came, preaching repentance and baptism, the publicans received his message and were baptized."⁷

As already noted, the two sons behaved very differently. One son did better than he indicated. His response was bad, but his deeds were good. At first, he inappropriately answered his father by saying *I will not*, to the command of his father to *go and work in the vineyard today*. Who speaks to his father in that way? While excuses are bad blatant denials are worse. Yet, such hasty rejections are not unusual when responding to the call of the gospel. Refusing the call of the gospel is not uncommon, because we were “born in sin and shaped in iniquity” (Ps. 51:5).

These individuals don’t mind coming to church but find it difficult to share the good news with their neighbours, co-workers, or friends. They believe that communicating the good news is not their spiritual gift. Working for the Lord is very difficult for them. They are afraid to be seen as religious fanatics or freaks. They don’t mind going to potluck after church. They will even bring a vegetarian meatloaf or a vegan casserole to share with the group. But don’t ask them to share a track with someone on the street or pray for a neighbour in need. No sir! It’s not what they do. This is outside their comfort zone.

Still, it is truly exceptional and magnificent when a person allows the Spirit of God to fill them with a vision for mission and transforms their hearts from fear to holy boldness. It is what the Apostle Paul is referencing when he states: “And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:11). The truth is, we can all be changed if we allow God to do so. This was the experience of the first son. His was his ‘better late than never’ kind of involvement. The first son repented and immediately went to work in his father’s vineyard. To be sure, the only evidence of repentance is obedience. This is why the first son who said no, eventually answered his father’s command and went to work in the vineyard. It is the benevolent heart of the father who could have disinherited the son for his wrongheaded behaviour. But, the Father—God—waits on the son to be remorseful for his past conduct and is ready to forgive, ready to bless, ready to accept the son in a new relationship with Him.⁸

Ellen White goes on to describe the response of the second son by saying (DA, p. 595-596):

“The second son represented the leading men of the Jewish nation. Some of the Pharisees had repented and received the baptism of John; but the leaders would not acknowledge that he came from God. His warnings and denunciations did not lead them to reformation. They ‘rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.’ Luke 7:30. They treated his message with disdain. Like the second son, who, when called, said, ‘I go, sir,’ but went not, the priest and rulers professed obedience, but acted disobedience. They made great professions of piety, they claimed to be obeying the law of God, but they rendered only a false obedience. The publicans were denounced and cursed by the Pharisees as infidels; but they showed by their faith and works that they were going into the kingdom of heaven before those self-righteous men who had been given great light, but whose works did not correspond to their profession of godliness.”⁹

The second son’s initial response to his father was positive, respectful, and even showed great esteem for him. His answer was good, but his actions were bad. Like the two sons, we all receive the call to go, although the specifics of the call are not the same for everyone, yet we are all given the privilege to respond.

The second son is what we would call a schmoozer—a fast talker—someone who always wants to leave a good impression. This is a person who has a lot of style but no substance. He gives his father a title of respect, recognition, and regard. “I go, sir,” he responded to the command of *son, go and work in the vineyard today*. While it is appropriate for children to speak respectfully to their parents—a part of the requirements of the fifth commandment in Exodus 20:12 that affirms, “Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.” Obedience is even better. The second son gave an answer that seemed from the heart. It is the kind of answer we should always give when we receive a request from God.¹⁰ Yet, we must go beyond simply being polite. We must do as He commands His power and grace.

The conundrum in this segment of the narrative, however, is the contradiction between what the second son said he would do and what he actually did. *He did not go*. This is like so many in intimate relationships, even in marriage. They promise to do great things but often fall short. They promise to love, honour, and cherish in sickness and in health but don’t quite get there. They promise to be kind and patient but are unkind and impatient instead. They promise to do anything for you but won’t make the commitment to get the children from school because they are simply too busy, they say. Like the second son, many of us show piety and dedication to God by praying lavish and articulate prayers in public but find it very challenging to do something in private. We have good intentions to venture out of our timidity, but something always comes up. Much like the people in the story of Luke 14: 16-20:

“¹⁶ But he said to him, ‘A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. ¹⁷ And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now ready.’ ¹⁸ But they all began to make excuses. The first said to him, ‘I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.’ ¹⁹ And another said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.’ ²⁰ And another said, ‘I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.’”

These people are like the fig tree Jesus ran into in Matthew 21:19; they have lots of leaves but no fruit. You cannot say yes, then do nothing. You cannot hear the command and not respond. We can’t just have lots of leaves but no fruit. There is a reason we are children of the Father. 1 Corinthians 6:20 says: “For you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.” Additionally, the Apostle Paul declares in Ephesians 4:1: “I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.” 1 Peter 1:15 submits: “but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.” The Old Testament prophet offers in Jeremiah 29:13: “You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart.” Hebrews 10:36 proclaims: “For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.” And in 1 Corinthians 15:58 the Apostle Paul enunciates: “Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.” Don’t be afraid! Say yes to His command. *Go and work in the vineyard today!*

III. CONCLUSION

Unlike the two brothers who seemed somewhat schizophrenic in their responses to the father’s command to *go and work in the vineyard today*, when we think of an exceptional and vigorous answer to the father’s directive, what instantly comes to mind is the compelling and exuberant

response given by Isaiah in his dialog with God recorded in Isaiah 6:8 that states: “And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here I am! Send me.’” God asks: “Who will go?” Isaiah answers: “I will go!”

In the process of Isaiah’s reflection on his unfitness for the work God is calling him to perform, one of the seraphim of God flies towards him and touches his mouth with a live coal from the altar, not to scorch him, but to purify him and expunge his sin. Cleansed by God’s grace, empowered by God’s authority, made ready by God’s promise, Isaiah becomes aware of the reality that he has been given the aptitude, capacity and competence to worship the God of heaven in spirit and in truth. Isaiah becomes cognizant of the ability, facility and power he has received to become one of God’s extraordinary emissaries. This is the point at which Isaiah announces with conviction, “Here I am! Send me.” “I will go!!!” With unmistakable assurance Isaiah responds with all of his being, with all of his conviction, with all of his strength to the order given by the father in Matthew 21:28-30 to his two sons. Without equivocation, without hesitation, without saying one thing and doing another; Isaiah responds, “I Will Go!!!”

A similar invitation is being made today by the God of the universe who made you and me. The call is no ordinary call. The call is not for the halting or hesitating. The call is not for the faltering or tentative. The call is not for the uncertain or stumbling. The call is an extraordinary, exceptional, remarkable call. The call is for everyone who believes in Him to *go and work in the vineyard today*. As the time of the end draws near, the call for workers takes on new urgency.

The call is to develop better relationships with one another, so that energized by loving those closest to you, God may use you with power and joy to reach those who don’t know Him yet. This is the reason John 13:35 declares: “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” To be husbands or wives who love this way; to be fathers or mothers who love this way; to be sons and daughters who love this way; to be aunts and uncles, grandparents and cousins who love this way, you have to do what the Apostle Paul counsels in Colossians 3:12-14, where he says:

“¹²Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”

When we learn to love like this in our marriage and family relationships; in fact, when we learn to love like this in all of our relationships; when the call comes from the father, ***who will go work in my vineyard today?*** We can all be ready and willing to say, ***I will go!***

Brothers and sisters, God our Creator who authorized, certified and qualified Isaiah is longing to do the same for anyone who is humble enough and willing enough to be used by Him to call sinners to repentance and to become a part of His kingdom of grace. If you are going to be like one of the two brothers of Matthew 21, be like the first brother, change your mind, and allow the God of the harvest to use you mightily to share the good news of salvation with anyone who would hear, so you may help hasten His coming.

Illustration:

For decades, the Nissan auto company exported cars to the USA under the Datsun name. One of the hot cars of the 1970s was the Datsun 240Z, a sleek and graceful coupe with a powerful 2.4-liter, single-overhead-cam engine. But over time, the Nissan people decided that they needed to strengthen their global image. People in America were buying Datsuns, not realizing they were truly Nissans. So, they decided to rebrand. Beginning with a major ad campaign called “The Name Is Nissan,” they made their company name as familiar as their rivals Honda and Toyota.¹¹

Today, Jesus wants to rebrand you from being ambivalent to being certain; from being lukewarm to being hot. From having a mediocre marriage to building a great one. From not being sure you want to respond to His call, to knowing there is no better way to live each day for Him. As you allow Jesus to rebrand you today, may you find yourself as a MAYA (Most Advance, Yet Acceptable) specimen and be able to declare like the transformed father of Mark 9:24, “I believe; help my unbelief!” And by so doing be able to respond to the command of the father, “I will go!” Yes, “I will go!!!”

May God bless you to this end is our prayer.

NOTES

¹ MAYA Jesus (2011, October, 1). *Homiletics Online*. Retrieved August 6, 2020.

[https://www.homileticsonline.com/subscriber/](https://www.homileticsonline.com/subscriber/btl_display.asp?installment_id=93041062&item_id=93061183&keywords=MAYA)

[btl_display.asp?installment_id=93041062&item_id=93061183&keywords=MAYA](https://www.homileticsonline.com/subscriber/btl_display.asp?installment_id=93041062&item_id=93061183&keywords=MAYA)

² Socratic Method (n.d.). *Wikipedia*. Retrieved August 6, 2020. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socratic_method

³ Henry, M. (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁴ White, E. G. (1940). *The Desire of Ages*. pp. 594-595. Pacific Press Publishing Association.

⁵ Henry, M (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁶ Henry, M (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁷ White, E. G. (1940). *The Desire of Ages* (pp. 595). Pacific Press Publishing Association.

⁸ Henry, M (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson.

⁹ White, E. G. (1940). *The Desire of Ages* (pp. 595-596). Pacific Press Publishing Association.

¹⁰ Henry, M (1994). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible: complete and unabridged in one volume*. Peabody: Hendrickson.

¹¹ Rebrand: Life in the Spirit (2017, July 16). *Homiletics Online*. Retrieved August 6, from

https://www.homileticsonline.com/subscriber/btl_display.asp?installment_id=93041047&item_id=93060939&keywords=rebrand

BARRIERS TO FAMILY WELLNESS

BY LINDA KOH

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THE TEXTS

“Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.”
Proverbs 22:6

“⁴ Hear, O Israel: ⁵ The Lord our God, the Lord is one! ⁶ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁷ And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁸ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁹ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.” Deuteronomy 6:4-8

In the beginning, God instituted the family when He created Adam and Eve. He told them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it” (Genesis 1:28). It is through the family that we are to pass on our faith; that we are to teach our children the word of God (Deut. 6:4-8). Unfortunately, many families today are facing challenges in accomplishing this goal. In fact, families face many barriers.

Some barriers that threaten family wellness are obvious—violence, drugs, alcohol, pornography, and abuse. But our world today also put other roadblocks that are not so easily recognized. Families may escape the obvious barriers yet never realize they have succumbed to other less obvious barriers to their family that are equally damaging. This morning we will look at three major barriers that undermine our family health and wellness.

BARRIER #1: TOO BUSY WITH LIFE

Life today is one mad rush, thus eating up our time with our spouse and our children. For many families, with both parents working and building their careers, it is no wonder that we lost the essence of what makes family life work—being loved and sharing the love. Can you imagine back in 1996 (over two decades ago) when Tom Eisenman wrote his book, *Temptations Families Face*,¹ life was already too busy. Hence, he urged us to recover in our families the meaningful community experience the Bible describes as **koinonia**.

Koinonia from the Greek word **KOLVWVIA** means fellowship, communion, sharing, and participating. That means in our family we are sharing life at the most intimate levels. It is participating in each other's lives in a wholesome and nurturing way, learning to support and care for one another.

A. WHAT ARE THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO BUSYNESS IN LIFE?

- The indiscriminate pursuit of money and material things
- Job security as an outward sign of productivity and company loyalty
- Acquiring material things for our kids to make them happy
- The necessity of work at multiple jobs to make ends meet
- Finding self-fulfilment by doing many things
- Being a super-mom to everyone around
- Showing our importance, value, or self-worth

Busyness intrudes on all of us because we want everything – and more. We have become slaves to what we want, not what we need. We have become possessed by our activities – our getting and spending and doing. Isn't that part of the disease that infects many families? That we live beyond our means, getting caught up with materialism and greed. That we have become so busy and involved with things outside of the home. Don't you think we need to re-set our priorities and follow them?

STORY

Paul worked for the largest bank firm in the world. He was an executive on the way up, fast. Over a 5-year period he moved his family 7 times. Each move brought Paul a higher salary, greater prestige, more power and acclaim. And each move also brought more of the things he felt would make his family happy—fancier cars, bigger and more attractive homes, and an abundance of life's accessories.

The 7th move was to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The family arrived on Monday and met the moving van outside their new home. Tuesday morning, Paul immerses himself in his new job. But on Thursday afternoon, he was called home from work immediately. The neighbour heard the car running in their closed garage and called the police. The garage was thick with fumes and exhaust. Paul's wife had committed suicide. Paul realized that he had been getting messages from every direction, but he had refused to listen. He was a man on a mission. And it cost him the most important thing in life to himself and his four

children. After his wife committed suicide, Paul refused further promotions. He spent more time with his family. After 5 years he married again, quit his work as an executive and dedicated his life to leading marriage enrichment seminars. Now he devotes himself to preventing young men and women from making the same mistakes he made.²

B. COUNSELS AND WARNINGS

The Bible has given us a strong warning about the love of money in Ecclesiastes 5:10:

“Whoever loves money never has money enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with his income.”

The wise king Solomon also adds his counsel about money in Proverbs 23: 4, 5:

“Do not wear yourself out to get rich; Have the wisdom to show restraint. Cast but a glance at riches, and they are gone, for they will surely sprout wings and fly off to the sky like an eagle.”

The Bible is not against money. It warns us against the love of money and covetousness. Solomon, the richest man on earth, also warns us against coveting riches. Riches are fleeting and elusive. You bank on them, and suddenly, they are gone.

Ellen G. White gives similar warning in Manuscript 40, 1898:

“Those who have a competence are in continual danger of thinking that money and position will ensure them respect and they need not be so particular. But self-exaltation is but a bubble. When God gives people prosperity, they are to beware of following the imaginations of their own hearts, lest they endanger the simplicity of their faith and deteriorate in religious experience.”

Ellen White counsels explicitly against fathers acquiring wealth at the expense of their children:

“The father’s duty to his children should be one of his first interests. It should not be set aside for the sake of acquiring a fortune, or of gaining a high position in the world. In fact, those very conditions of affluence and honour frequently separate a man from his family and cut o" his influence from them more than anything else.”³

Let’s look at what the Bible teaches us about how to slow down and concentrate on the health of our family. The Bible ranks healthy relationships as the most important thing in life. A Jewish religious lawyer asked Jesus (Matt. 22:36), “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied (Matt. 22:37-40):

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”

A loving relationship with God is of first importance, but loving relationships with others is second. The Bible is all about these two important relationships. Yes, you can make a pile of money, but if family relationships are broken, your life will be empty. A poor man with a loving family and good friends is far richer than a rich man who is poor relationally.

So how do you get your head above the water of busyness? Parents may have to say “No” to heading the church’s fundraising committee or leading choir practice on a weekday. You can’t afford to be too busy with work or personal interests to the neglect of spending time with your children. Do you realize your daughter has become a teenager and wants to talk about girl-boy relationships? Is your son isolating himself most of the time with his PlayStation game? Your children need you; they don’t need all the material things you lavish on them!

“Train up a child in the way he should go; And when he is old, he will not depart from it”
(Proverbs 22:6).

BARRIER #2: EXCESSIVE USE OF TECHNOLOGICAL GADGETS

Technology is everywhere, and it is not going away. Children, teenagers, and adults are keeping their eyes glued to a smartphone, tablet, or notebook. In fact, dependency on social media, gaming, or other platforms to function can **become** the new and unhealthy «norm. » The greatest concern parents have is that their children and teens are getting addicted to all these gadgets—they just can’t spend a day without them!

FCD Prevention Works, an international Non-Profit Substance Abuse Prevention Organization gives a good definition: “Technology addiction can be defined as frequent and obsessive technology-related behaviour increasingly practiced despite negative consequences to the user of the technology.”⁴

Barna Research Group completed a study about the influence of technology in families, releasing the findings in a new digital report, *Family & Kids*. The use of technology has shaped parent-child relationships in striking new ways. Commenting on the findings, David Kinnaman, president of Barna Group expressed that:

“Technology is shaping family interactions in unprecedented ways, but we seem to lack a strategic commitment to the stewardship of technology. The Christian community needs a better, more holistic understanding of how to manage existing and coming technological

advances. Parents, tweens and teens need more coaching and input in order to face the countless choices they make regarding how technology affects their attention, interests, talents and resources.”⁵

According to many parents, the key challenges of technology in the family are:⁶

- Balancing our family’s physical activity with online activity
- Limiting my children’s time with the use of technology
- Filtering what kinds of content my child watches, reads or plays
- What my child is exposed to by their friends
- Finding time for our family to be together without technology

Such challenges require that parents take action to teach their children how to balance their time in the use of electronic devices by limiting screen time each day, removing all gadgets at bedtime, etc. Moreover, parents need to exercise wisdom and firmness in teaching children how to make wise choices concerning the type of video games and entertainment they get involved in, as well as who they chat with on social media. With such a deluge of negative pictures and messages on the internet these days, it is imperative that parents foster in their children good self-control to practice Psalm 101:3: “I will set nothing wicked before my eyes.”

BARRIER #3: DIMINISHING FAMILY TIME

In his new book, *“e Tech-Wise Family: Everyday Steps for Putting Technology in Its Proper Place*, Andy Crouch explores the important role of the family in shaping young people’s values and character for the long-term. Drawing from the research the Barna Group conducted for his book, it shows clearly that the family plays a significant role and continues to be the institution that is central to shaping an individual’s identity, values, religious faith, ethnicity, and career.⁷

Another study reported in the *International Journal of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, September-December 2015, pages 128-135 that parents who are highly involved with their adolescents play a critical role in preventing and reducing youth-at-risk behaviours.

If the family plays such a pivotal role in a child’s life, families more than ever need to be proactive in enriching family time and family togetherness. Carve out family time for worship and prayer. Spend time in fun and meaningful communication. Go on a hike, a bike ride, or ice-cream night! Participate in community service and outreach together. When families spend time together and get connected (gadgets off), it keeps the relationship alive between parents and their children and teens.

Giving your children the attention they need also means that you are willing to sacrifice pleasures and personal conveniences for the sake of your children’s well-being. The Bible says: “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house,

when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up” (Deuteronomy 6:6,7).

Ellen White also strongly urges parents to do the same in *Adventist Home*, p. 192: “Give some of your leisure hours to your children; associate with them in their work and in their sports and win their confidence. Cultivate their friendship.”

On a similar note, Ellen White advises parents to have a good parent-child relationship as found in *Child Guidance*, p. 496:

“With *loving interest*, they should teach them day by day what it means to be children of God and to yield the will in obedience to Him. Teach them that obedience to God involves obedience to their parents. *€is must be a daily, hourly work. Parents, watch and pray, and make your children your companions.*”

Jochebed knew she only had a few years to raise Moses before he would return to Pharaoh’s palace as the grandson of Pharaoh. She spent every moment they have together, teaching Moses to love and obey God. Her time spent together with young Moses resulted in raising a spiritual champion whom Hebrews 11:24-26 clearly identifies:

“By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasure of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.”

CONCLUSION

God is in the business of building families for his glory. Families are important to God. In the midst of our chaotic, busy lives in this world frequently interrupted with electronic devices and gadgets, we need to *stop* and take time to connect with our family and with the Lord. We need to follow the advice of Psalm 46:10: “Be still and know that I am God.” With the power of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures to remind us, and determination, we can break patterns and barriers that keep us apart from our families.

We must regularly put our lives on *pause* to rebuild family closeness and to spend time with our children (with gadgets off). However, the devil wants us to be so busy with our careers, ministries, social media, and extracurricular activities that we miss the precious moments of bonding with our children and family. Pray for power and determination to make a change! Jesus has promised: “My Grace is Sufficient for You, for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

NOTES

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BARRIERS TO FAMILY WELLNESS

I WILL GO WITH MY FAMILY | **UNITY IN COMMUNITY**

GRANDPARENTS' LEGACY

BY CLAUDIO & PAMELA CONSUEGRA

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THE TEXT

“¹³ So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son. ¹⁴ Then the women said to Naomi, ‘Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! ¹⁵ And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him.’ ¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. ¹⁷ Also the neighbour women gave him a name, saying, ‘*Ėere* is a son born to Naomi.’ And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.”
Ruth 4:13-17

[The following story is personal to one of the authors. You may choose to read it as history, or tell a story about your own grandparent’s legacy to you].

In 1920, the Seventh-day Adventist church sent a missionary to Colombia, South America. He was put in charge of the evangelistic outreach, particularly through literature evangelists, or colporteurs, as we used to call them.

The missionary was Pastor Max Trummer, of German descent. He travelled throughout that beautiful South American country teaching, training, and baptizing new converts. Many times, he was miraculously delivered from fanatical mobs that were bent on killing him.

You can read about him and his experiences in the book, “Heretic at Large.”

After the Trummers had carried on the work in Medellin, the second-largest city in Colombia, and the outlying districts for several years, the mission board asked them to start similar work in the department or state of Santander.

Accordingly, they moved to the capital city of Bucaramanga, where they began holding Bible studies.

As soon as they had the Afanador family well established in the Bible truths and faithfully keeping the seventh-day Sabbath, the Trummer family walked an hour each Sabbath morning to attend Sabbath school in this family's home.

Don Fernando Afanador, and his wife, Catalina Perez, were the first converts into the Seventh-day Adventist Church, in the city of Bucaramanga, in the predominantly Catholic country of Colombia, South America.

It was in their home where the first church met until the group outgrew their humble home and moved to the first church location in the 1930's.

In 1934, Sister Catalina Perez was taken to the only hospital in the city because of complications with her pregnancy.

At the time, the hospital chaplains were Catholic priests, and most nurses were nuns. She was told she needed to have a caesarean section but first, she would have to have confession with a priest and receive communion from his hand before she could have surgery.

When she refused to do so, they hung a large crucifix from her back until she would do so, and for three days she was denied all medical care until she, and the baby she was carrying, passed away.

Catalina Perez was the first Seventh-day Adventist martyr in the city of Bucaramanga, Colombia.

I don't share this horrible story with anger or criticism of the Catholic church. At the time, people of other faiths, in a predominantly Catholic country, were considered apostates and even heretics.

I share her story of uncompromising faith because, as a result of her commitment to the God she had given her life to, members of her family learned to believe, serve, and love Him.

And today, the Seventh-day Adventist Church continues to grow with every baptism and reach many people who inherit Sister Catalina Perez's faith in God. I recently learned this story about Sister Perez.

I have wondered what would have happened to the newly established Seventh-day Adventist Church in Bucaramanga if she had given in to their demands and had given up her faith. She and the baby she was carrying might have survived, but what about her own faith?

And what about her husband, Brother Fernando Afanador, and their other children? What about their faith?

Brother Fernando Afanador and Sister Catalina Perez had two sons and three daughters. Fernando Jr. died of tuberculosis as a teenager...but he died with his faith in God intact. Their other son, Enrique Afanador, passed away just several years ago, in his seventies, of Parkinson's disease...but he died with his faith in God intact.

One of Brother Fernando Afanador and Catalina Perez's daughters was a beautiful young lady, Cecilia Afanador...she was my mother.

You see, Catalina Perez, the first Seventh-day Adventist martyr in Bucaramanga, Colombia, was my grandmother. I never met her since I was born a couple of decades later.

But her decision marked my mother's life, and my life, forever. My mother's generation, my generation, my children's generation, and the next generation are the beneficiaries of my grandmother's faith and her sacrifice.

Her example of faith, her endurance to the end, and her love of God give us an undying GRAND view of God.

I am humbled to live under my grandmother's shadow and look forward to meeting her in eternity.

[End of story]

The impact of grandpas and grandmas in history is impossible to calculate.

Their legacy for generations to come has no price.

The Bible tells us about grandparents who played a key role not just on their own grandchildren's lives, but over entire nations.

King Hezekiah was one of the best kings Israel ever had.

Of him, it is written:

³And he did *what was* right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done. ⁴He removed the high places and broke the *sacred* pillars, cut down the

wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan. ⁵ He trusted in the LORD God of Israel, so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor who were before him. ⁶ For he held fast to the LORD; he did not depart from following Him, but kept His commandments, which the LORD had commanded Moses. ⁷ The LORD was with him; he prospered wherever he went. And he rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. 2 Kings 18:3-7

King Hezekiah was one of the best kings Israel ever had. Sadly, his father, King Ahaz, was one of the worst kings Israel ever had. But his grandfather was Jotham. The Bible tells us two very important things about Jotham:

³⁴ And he did what was right in the sight of the LORD; he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done. 2 Kings 15:34

⁶ So Jotham became mighty because he ordered his ways before the LORD his God. 2 Chronicles 27:6 (NASB)

King Hezekiah took after his grandfather Jotham rather than his father Ahaz.

And the result was victory for the kingdom of God.

Because of the powerful influence of grandparents, there is always hope!

Your legacy has no equal!

Even if one generation goes astray, the influence of godly grandparents can bring the next generation back to God.

Your legacy goes for generations to come, starting with your own grandchildren.

GRANDFATHERS

Let's think for a moment what a grandfather can do to bless his grandchildren.

Genesis 48:1-22

Jacob is about to die, so Joseph took his children, Jacob's grandchildren, to him.

You remember the story.

Manasseh was the oldest and Ephraim the youngest, and Jacob was supposed to place his right hand on Manasseh, and his left hand on Ephraim – at least that's how Joseph

placed them in front of Jacob – but instead, Jacob put his right hand on Ephraim and his left hand on Manasseh.

**I. From this story, we can learn
four things grandfather Jacob said to his grandchildren:**

1. Jacob told them his testimony (vs.3)

“God Almighty appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan and blessed me.” In verse 16 he goes on to tell them about his own personal encounter with God (vs.16)

“The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil”

He told them about the God who had sustained him all those years (vs.15)

“God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day.”

Have you told your grandchildren your testimony?

Have you told them about your encounter with God?

Have you told them how God has sustained you all these years?

2. Jacob told them about God Himself. (vv.15-16)

¹⁵ And he blessed Joseph, and said: “God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, The God who has fed me all my life long to this day, ¹⁶ The Angel who has redeemed me from all evil... Genesis 48:15-16

He told them God’s name.

He told them how God had provided for his needs.

He told them about God’s promises and how they were fulfilled.

3. Jacob told them the four-fold promise of God (v.4).

⁴ Behold, I will make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will make of you a multitude of people, and give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession. Genesis 48:4

a. *God promised them Prosperity.*

“Behold, I will make you fruitful.”

b. *God promised them Growth.*

“I will multiply you.”

c. *God promised them they would be a great Nation.*

“I will make of you a multitude of people.”

d. *God promised them they would have their own country, their own land.*

“I will give this land to your descendants after you as an everlasting possession.”

4. *Jacob told them about their grandmother (v.7).*

7 But as for me, when I came from Padan, Rachel died beside me in the land of Canaan on the way, when there was but a little distance to go to Ephrath; and I buried her there on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). Genesis 48:7

Jacob wanted his grandchildren to know about their grandmother.

Even though she had passed away, he did not want them to forget about her.

He wanted them to know her and love her through him.

II. From this story, we can also learn four things grandfather Jacob did for his grandchildren:

1. *Jacob adopted them (vs.5)*

“Now these two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh . . . are mine.”

You see, Joseph’s sons were half Hebrew and half Egyptian, but by this act, Jacob made them completely members of Israel, and heirs to the promises.

2. *Jacob kissed and hugged them (v.10).*

Jacob showed his affection, his love for them.

3. *Jacob laid his hands on them (vs.14).*

Then Israel stretched out his right hand and laid it on Ephraim’s head, who was the younger, and his left hand on Manasseh’s head, guiding his hands knowingly, for Manasseh was the firstborn. Genesis 48:14

The word “knowingly” means Jacob knew what he was doing; he did it on purpose. And by laying hands on them, he was passing God’s blessings through him on to them. He was God’s instrument, God’s conduit.

4. *Jacob blessed his grandchildren.* (Heb.11:21)

“By faith Jacob when he was dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph.”

III. From this story, we can also learn four things grandfather Jacob gave his grandchildren:

1. *When Jacob adopted them, he gave them his name* (vs.16).

“Let my name be upon them, and the name of my father, Abraham, and Isaac.”

2. *Jacob gave them God’s promise for their future* (vs.16)

“Let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth” (v.16).

So, he blessed them that day, saying, “By you Israel will bless, saying, ‘May God make you as Ephraim and as Manasseh!’”(v. 20).

3. *Jacob gave them his love.*

4. *Jacob gave them an example of worship.* (Heb. 11:21)

“Jacob . . . worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff.”

IV. From this story, we can also learn four lessons for grandparents:

1. Grandparents should be concerned about the spiritual condition of their grandchildren.
2. Grandparents shall be a spiritual example.
3. Grandparents should give their testimony.
4. Grandparents should bless (naturally and spiritually).

GRANDMOTHERS

The Bible speaks of the role Jacob played and that Jotham played.

But the bible also speaks of the role godly grandmothers play in the life of their grandchildren.

An 8-year-old wrote,

“A grandmother is a lady who has no children of her own, so she likes other people’s boys and girls. Grandmas don’t have anything to do except be there. If they take us for walks, they slow down past pretty leaves and caterpillars. They never say ‘Hurry up.’ Usually, they are fat but not too fat to tie shoes. They wear glasses, and sometimes they can take their teeth out. They can answer questions like why dogs hate cats and why God isn’t married. They don’t talk like visitors do, which is hard to understand. When they read to us, they don’t skip words or mind if it is the same story again. Everybody should try to have a grandma, especially if you don’t have television, because grandmas are the only grownups who always have time.” Unknown

The Book of Ruth comes to a happy ending with Grandma Naomi holding grandson Obed in her lap, and everybody singing her praises.

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. ¹⁴ Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! ¹⁵ And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him.” ¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. ¹⁷ Also the neighbour women gave him a name, saying, “There is a son born to Naomi.” And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David. Ruth 4:13-17

From the life and experience of Ruth, we can learn several lessons too.

1. First of all, we can learn that grandchildren bring renewal. (Ruth 4:15)

Please remember that Naomi had lost her husband and her two sons – very painful experiences!

When she returned to Israel, she was in so much pain that she asked her friends to stop calling her Naomi, which means “pleasant,” but rather to call her Mara, which means “bitter.”

But when she held that healthy, kicking, screaming little boy – baby Obed – her bitterness was changed back to pleasure.

The women said about little Obed:

¹⁵ And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him.
Ruth 4:15

This little guy was the energy booster to old Naomi.

There is something about a grandchild that can change the whole outlook on life and bring hope and joy.

Listen to Proverbs 17:6:

⁶ Children's children are the crown of old men... Proverbs 17:6

The Contemporary English Version captures this sentiment better when it states:

⁶ Grandparents are proud of their grandchildren...Proverbs 17:6 (CEV)

Isn't that the truth?

Your children may have kept you poor...but their children will make you rich.

They renew your spirit!

They give you a whole new role in loving and serving.

Until this scene where Naomi becomes a grandmother...her life has been one trial after another.

Life had become a real burden!

She had seen her family suffer in a drought.

She had to leave her home and move to a strange land.

She had suffered the loss of her husband and both sons.

She had to endure the life of poverty and despair.

She had to bear the responsibility of caring for Ruth...trying to get her established in a home of her own.

Naomi had had very little joy in this story!

But it all changed when she became a grandmother.

All tears are wiped away!

There is a spirit of praise and joy!

Now her whole future looks bright!

Why?

Because she has a grandson.

Becoming a grandmother has changed her mind.

She is in a state of renewal.

Dr. Lewis A. Coffin in his book *"e Grandmother Conspiracy* wrote,

"As soon as a person becomes a grandparent he or she undergoes a radical personality change -- stern fathers become cooing grandfathers: crabby mothers melt and crawl on the floor, sing lullabies, and cram cookies and cookies and cookies down their sweet little grandchildren's throats, take them to the ice-cream store, bake cakes and pies for them, and stand back admiringly as the little ones swell, tweet their obese little cheeks approvingly, and raise a terrible hue and cry if anyone tries to interfere."

In fact, grandparents often become a problem to their children because they allow the grandchildren to do what they forbid their own children to do.

Grandparents have changed from when they were parents.

They now value a relationship with a child higher than things!

The reason grandparents tend to spoil grandchildren is because of this renewal in the minds of the grandparents.

They are so grateful for the new joy and pleasure of life that they say thanks by being overindulgent.

The Grandparent-grandchild relationship is dominated by having fun together.

The fun is mutual.

Most grandparents get more laughs from their grandchildren than they do from comedians.

One of the reasons grandparents are often more fun than parents is because they have more time.

Parents are so loaded down with responsibility that they don't have the time for fun with their children.

Time is one of the treasures of life.

Grandparents have learned to use it more wisely.

Time together with grandchildren is one of the most fun experiences of life.
But notice how suddenly the story of Ruth and Boaz comes to an end.
Their romance has dominated the stage for most of the book.
But when Ruth gave birth to that baby boy, she and Boaz left the stage.
Now the spotlight focuses on Grandma Naomi.
There is not one more scene about the parents!
The star now is Grandma Naomi.
All the praise and rejoicing now revolve around her.
Naomi has a comfort for her old age.
Naomi has a grandson, and they say she has a son.
This is a powerful revelation of just how vital a role grandparents play in the life of a child.

2. Secondly, we can learn that grandparents are the roots.

I'd like you to notice how the book of Ruth ends – (4:18-22)

¹⁸ Now this *is* the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; ¹⁹ Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; ²⁰ Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon; ²¹ Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; ²² Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.
[Ruth 4:18-22](#)

Do you know where else in the Bible you find these people mentioned?

Matthew, Chapter 1.

In the genealogy of Jesus.

Every person in the bloodline from Abraham to Jesus was a grandparent.

The genealogy that comes at the end of the book of Ruth is a list of people, all of whom became grandparents.

Obed, Ruth's baby boy, became the grandfather of King David.

And you may say, who cares?

Who cares about the grandparents of George Washington, or Abraham Lincoln, or Martin Luther King, Jr., or any other famous man or woman?

Apparently, God cares!

Because the book of Ruth tells us that all these people were grandparents and great grandparents of David, the greatest king of God's people.

God cares about genealogies and roots.

And so, God cares about grandparents.

God has designed human life in such a way that grandparents play a major role on what happens in history.

It's because of their special love and influence on grandchildren.

Even parents who fail their children can become such successful grandparents that the family tree is healed and restored, as one that bears fruit for God's kingdom.

The book of Ruth traces the roots of David, the king of Israel.

And we know that he had a special relationship with God!

Where did David's faith in God come from?

David's Grandpa was Obed.

And his Great Grandma was Naomi!

We don't know if Naomi was still alive when David was a little boy.

But can't you imagine that little David was told about Ruth's story and the faith of his Great Grandma Naomi?

Don't you think he was told about how God took care of her through all the trials and troubles she faced?

I think David's faith came from his roots!

One of the things we know about young pastor Timothy is that his Christian faith had its roots in his grandmother.

[I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. 2 Timothy 1:5 \(ESV\)](#)

What grandparents are can make a big difference in many lives.

You...Grandpa and Grandma...can make a difference!

SO...Grandparents take time to teach your Grandkids about Jesus!

Give them roots of faith!

Teach them about God and spiritual things.

Guide them toward good marriages by modelling a good one.

Be consistent and follow through on things.

Play with them.

Tell them that you love them often.

Don't pressure them too much to excel.

Believe them and believe in them.

Share your life, the good and the bad, that they might learn from you.

Let them see how Christ has worked in your life and how He continues to work, even though you may have failed miserably as a younger person.

Point them towards heaven as your time on earth is most likely shorter than theirs, let them know how the family can all live together forever.

If I may paraphrase today Paul's words to Timothy, I'd say to your grandchildren:

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that dwelt first in your grandfather and grandmother and now, I am sure, dwells in you as well. 2 Timothy 1:5 (ESV)

Do you want that said about your grandchildren?

If you are a Grandparent...please stand!

[Close with a special prayer for the grandparents in the congregation and for their legacy]

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CHILDREN'S STORIES

Use *Children's Stories* as part of
Adventist Family Ministries special
emphasis weeks. Please adjust the use of
props and materials with what you have
at hand. The key is to engage with the
children in your church family.

SABBATH FEBRUARY 13, 2021

I WILL GO WITH MY FAMILY | **UNITY IN COMMUNITY**

FAYEZA'S STORY

BY MICHAEL ROHM

Michael Rohm is a communication specialist for
Adventist Development and Relief Agency International in Silver Spring, Maryland, USA.

THE TEXT

“Deliver me from my enemies, O Lord! I have fled to you for refuge.” Psalms 143:9 ESV

PROPS

Picture of a refugee camp, and Fayeza to show children as you describe the camp and tell the story.

It was HOT. Everyone was sweating. In the dim lighting of the single room, faces could barely be seen. The air was heavy under the black tarp roof stretched across bamboo poles, and only the small electrical fan planted in the dirt floor, its wires split and frayed, moved the hot, still air. That room and the one adjoining it, a bare kitchen separated by a piece of plastic, was all that belonged to Fayeza and her family in the refugee camp where they lived.

This wasn't always where Fayeza lived. Just three months before, Fayeza's family of four owned a spacious wood house with separate rooms for the children and two bathrooms for the six-member household. But now they lived in a refugee camp. The whole family sleeping on the floor in the same room, sharing two latrines, or toilets, with 70 other families.

Fayeza remembers comfortable nights in her own bed. She remembers her families' farm – the cows, goats, and chickens grazing among the ripe fields, ready for harvest. She was feeling very sad that her family had to leave their home. Because of the current unrest, it was no longer safe to stay on their family farm. They had to flee before the enemy army came through their village, and they had to keep moving as the military moved from village to village.



Fayeza and her family made it to the banks of a river that was on the border with the neighbouring country. With the army close behind, they joined other families, already at the river, each desperate to cross the river to safety. Fayeza's father told the family they would be safe if they could just get across the river, but the river was much too big to swim across.

Miraculously, Fayeza's father secured a boat passage for the family. Despite the fast approaching army, the terrified family crossed the river to safety. They met some people on the other side of the river who told them how to get to the refugee camp where they

could stay. Many families had fled their country and ended up here. It was not that nice, but at least they had shelter, access to food, and most importantly, safety and freedom from persecution.

ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency) and other aid agencies are helping families like Fayeza's. ADRA helps to provide food and shelter to many families. They are so grateful to ADRA for helping them. Although they are thankful for a place to stay and food to eat, Fayeza wants to go to school, and Fayeza's father wants a job. This is the biggest challenge in the refugee camp. Children miss their old schools and friends. ADRA understands this and is why they started a campaign called, "*Every Child, Everywhere, In School*". Every child should have the opportunity to an education. Some of our offerings go to help families like Fayeza's family. We hope that one day soon, Fayeza will be able to attend school, and her father will have a job to support his family.

Let's pray for refugee families like Fayeza's family and thank God for keeping them safe. That they can learn about the God who delivered them because He loves them. Just like it says in Psalms 143:9, "Deliver me from my enemies, Oh Lord! I have fled to You for refuge."

Close with prayer.

I WILL GO WITH MY FAMILY | UNITY IN COMMUNITY

WHO CREATED THE DINOSAURS?

BY BENJAMIN STREIT AND STEPHANIE MOLINA

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THE TEXT

¹⁵ Look at Behemoth, which I made along with you and which feeds on grass like an ox.
¹⁶ What strength it has in its loins, what power in the muscles of its belly! ¹⁷ Its tail sways like a cedar; the sinews of its thighs are close-knit. ¹⁸ Its bones are tubes of bronze, its limbs like rods of iron. ¹⁹ It ranks first among the works of God, yet its Maker can approach it with his sword.” Job 40:15-19 NIV

PROPS

Pictures of Dinosaurs

“In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth.” Everything you see around you, from the twinkling stars in the night sky to the fireflies winking merrily in your backyard. From the mountains looming still and solemn in the distance, to the tiny yellow wildflowers nodding bravely in the field. All of it was created by God, the same God that created you and me and everything else. He created the grass and the trees, the rivers and lakes, the clouds and moon and sun, and the very rocks under your feet. He spoke, and they appeared. But the things we can see around us today were not the only things he made. Because you see, someone a very long time ago decided not to obey God’s commandments, and because of that choice, God’s beautiful creation began to fall apart. What we can see today, no matter how beautiful, is just a tiny shadow of what once was.

Dear friend, if only you could have seen it! Forests the like of which our world has never seen. Deserts green and vibrant with life. Stars, so numerous the sky itself seemed to be glowing. And the animals! The animals that lived back then were completely unlike anything we have alive today. A lot of them were much bigger; there were more of them, and more different kinds, too. If you saw them today, you might be afraid of them, because they were so big and so strange. But God didn't make them to scare people – He made them because they were beautiful. God wanted us to see just how amazing He is through the amazing things He created. It was only man's sin corrupting God's handiwork that made some of them fierce and dangerous and scary. So, God let them fade away – because they were *too* big, *too* marvellous for humanity's wretched, sinful mind to appreciate.

I ask you – if they're all gone, how do we know they existed? How do we know what they were like? We know because they left pieces of themselves behind – memories hidden in the rocks themselves that tell a story of a time when incredible creatures roamed the earth. If you were to explore the wild places of the world, where the rocks tell the stories of the past more surely than any historian with a pen, you might find bits of their bones sticking out of the ground. Or, you might find their crumbling footprints set in a rock that was once mud. People have found the bones of these ancient creatures for centuries. In China, they were called “dragon bones,” and people thought they could cure diseases if ground up and eaten. In Europe, people thought they were the bones of giants, like Goliath. But they were actually the remains of animals unlike anything alive today – what we call “Dinosaurs.”

There were hundreds of different kinds of dinosaurs that lived all over the world. Some were large, some were small. Some walked on two legs, some on four. Some ate meat, some ate plants, and some ate both or something else entirely. The biggest ones were enormous – they could look into the upper window of a six-story building. ***Argentinosaurus (Ar-jen-teen-oh-sore-us)*** was one such dinosaur. It was more than a hundred feet long from the tip of its nose to the tip of its tail and weighed as much as ten

elephants! It ate leaves from the tops of trees with its very long neck and lived in what is today called South America. It must have been incredible to see something that huge when it was alive! It must have looked like a mountain just got up and went for a stroll. It was so big that all the other dinosaurs it lived with look small, even though many of them were still bigger than a pickup truck.

Other dinosaurs were less enormous but just as strange. The ***Spinosaurus* (Spy-no-soreus)** was as long as a semi-truck, lived in rivers and hunted for fish, otters, or crocodiles. It had an enormous sail on its back and long, toothy jaws to snag slippery prey. The ***Parasaurolophus* (Pahruh- sore-oh-low-fuss)** had a hollow crest on its head through which it could blow air like a trumpet. It ate plants and could chew its food very well; It could even eat tough things like wood and bark. The ***Amblopteryx* (Am-bop-tare-icks)** was a tiny dinosaur the size of a pigeon that lived in trees and ate bugs and berries. It had wings made of skin, like a bat or a real-life dragon, to glide from tree to tree like a flying squirrel. And there were many others, some even weirder than these. And the other animals they lived with were no less bizarre – lizards the size of school buses that cruised the oceans hunting sharks, giant short-necked giraffes with horns like moose antlers, lizard-like creatures that flew with their feet, and dragonflies as big as seagulls.

Sadly, none of these creatures are alive today. But if you'll listen, if you'll wander in the wild places of the world and watch for the signs, you might find memories of these incredible creatures that still whisper of the majesties of God and of the magnificent world He created. Although sin separated us from the best parts of God's creation, He wouldn't allow them to disappear completely. When you read the Bible, you'll find God Himself tells us about them in the book of Job 40:15-19 NIV:

“Look now at Behemoth, which I made along with you, and which feeds on grass like an Ox. What strength it has in its loins, what power in the muscles of its belly! Its tail sways like a cedar; the sinews of its thighs are close-knit. Its bones are tubes of bronze, its limbs like rods of iron. **It ranks "first among the works of God."**

That sounds a whole lot like an ***Argentinosaurus*** to me!

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 17, 2021

I WILL GO WITH MY FAMILY | UNITY IN COMMUNITY

FORGIVENESS STORY

BY DAWN JACOBSONXVENN

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THE TEXT

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

PROPS

Laundry basket with a few clothes, including a child-size sweater at the bottom.

Raise your hand if you have helped your family do laundry? I can see we have lots of helpers here today. Maybe you help put your dirty clothes in the hamper (*hold up laundry basket*). Perhaps you help sort the clothes to be washed, help wash the clothes, put them in the dryer, or hang out on a clothesline to dry. Maybe you help fold the clothes and put them away.

There are many steps involved in having nice, clean clothes to wear. Look at what you are wearing right now. You are looking pretty good to me! I want you to tell your parents with a big smile on your face, “*thank you for the nice clean clothes.*” OK?

Today, I want to tell you a story about a lesson learned while doing the laundry.

Mrs. Venn had been washing clothes for many years, and she was pretty good at that job. You might already know this, but some clothes are exceptional, and you must wash them by hand, and layout to dry. Other special outfits, like fancy dresses and suits, must be sent to the dry cleaners.

How do you know what clothes need special treatment? (let them answer.....) Well, there is usually a tag on the clothes that gives you instructions on how to care for it (*show a label on a shirt in your laundry basket*).

One day, Mrs. Venn was rushing to get a load of laundry done before she had to leave for an appointment. The clothes finished washing in the washing machine, so she quickly tossed the wet clothes into the dryer, and while they were drying, she finished getting ready.

Before she left for her appointment, she went to the dryer to pull out the clothes and quickly fold them. She began pulling them out of the dryer, one by one (*pull out pieces of clothing from the basket, one by one*). Suddenly she noticed something...and gasped...her husband's wool sweater was in the dryer! She was in such a hurry that she mistakenly put her husband's wool sweater in the dryer instead of laying it out to dry! A wool sweater must be washed by hand, and it should NEVER be put in a dryer! What do you think happened to her husband's sweater? (*Let children answer then pull the small sweater out of the laundry basket*) Does this sweater look like it would fit a grown man? NO! "OH, DEAR," Mrs. Venn thought, "What will my husband think when he sees that his favourite sweater is ruined?" How do you think Mrs. Venn was feeling? (*Let children answer*) Yes, she was sad that she had ruined the sweater and mad at herself for making such a careless mistake. After all, she knew better! She had been doing laundry for many years.

Mrs. Venn knew she needed to go to her husband and let him know what happened and how sorry she was about shrinking his favourite sweater. How do you think Mr. Venn felt? (*Let children answer*) I certainly know how I would feel if someone had ruined my favourite sweater...I would be VERY UPSET, and it would be hard for me to forgive them. But you know what? When she showed him the sweater, told him how sorry she was, and asked for forgiveness, do you know what happened? Mr. Venn looked at his sweater, then he looked at his wife, and he smiled. He told Mrs. Venn that he forgave her. He also said to her that he loved her more than the sweater. WOW!

Do you think that Jesus was in Mr. Venn's heart? Yes! I think so too!!!

That experience helped Mrs. Venn to understand better what it truly means to forgive and what it feels like to be forgiven. It also helped her to understand the Bible text in 1 John 1:9 *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

Because I love Jesus, I confess my sins to Him---and because HE loves me, HE forgives me!

Love is a powerful thing!

Let's pray