

HOME ALONE

MESSAGE NEXT STEPS

GOD'S FAMILY

DECEMBER 12

Family can be the source of great joy and great pain. When so many of us come from dysfunctional families, we can learn new family dynamics where forgiveness rather than bitterness and kindness rather than cruelty become the way we relate with each other.

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own, and get together with your running partner, life group, or friends and family to talk through what you are learning.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some Christmas traditions that you look forward to doing each year?
2. What stood out to you from the message?
3. Read **Romans 10:9 & 13**. Have you ever done this? If so, when did you first decide Jesus was your Lord? If not, what holds you back?
4. Read **Colossians 3:1-17**
 - a. Make some observations about this passage (What does the text say):
 - Who is talking?
 - What is the circumstance?
 - Any repeated phrases?
 - What surprised you?
 - What stood out to you?
 - b.) Make some interpretations (What does the passage mean)
 - What questions do you have?
 - What do you think is going on in this passage?
 - What do you learn about the nature and character of God as you read this?
 - What do you learn about yourself or the world around you?
 - c.) Now make some applications (what's my response)
 - How do you respond to what you are reading?
 - What is the central truth that you could put into practice from this?
 - Who could you share this with for the sake of encouragement?
5. Reread **Colossians 3:12-13**. Which of the character traits listed here do you struggle most often to "clothe yourself with"? Why do you think that is? God wants to help us grow in character as we stay connected to him.

6. We aren't called to live a life where we merely don't kill or steal as the standard. We are to be set apart - our lives should show others the beauty and light of Jesus. Often we don't do this because we are living in bitterness caused by unforgiveness. Dr. Martin Luther King said, "Forgiveness does not mean ignoring what has been done or putting a false label on an evil act. It means, rather, that the evil act no longer remains as a barrier to the relationship. Forgiveness is a catalyst creating the atmosphere necessary for a fresh start and a new beginning."

- What people or situations are you holding on to that are a "barrier to relationships" in your life that could turn into a catalyst for a new beginning if you forgive?

KEY SCRIPTURE

Romans 10:9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Romans 10:13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

Colossians 3:1-17 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. What are some of the things you learned from your parents which they learned from their parents which are actually dysfunctional? God's new family gives you a place to unlearn those things. Spend time this week answering the questions below. Talk to God and at least one trusted friend about your answers.
 - What are some things you need to unlearn?
 - Who are those you look down on?
 - What are some of the behaviors that used to be bad habits, and now are just part of life?
 - What are some of the mindsets that you know are not from God, but they tend to be your default view of the world and how you make decisions?
2. God's Family can help us with the above areas. Ask yourself these questions and write down your answers:
 - Who are some of the people in your life who follow Jesus and whose life represents Him well?
 - Are you learning from them? If not, how could you change that?
 - Are you serving beside them? If not, how could that change?
 - Are you asking them questions? Are you letting them invest in you?