

Session #3

Community Temperature Reading

Pre-Reading: Poem by Jonathan Walton

Poetry is my release
my shield from all grief
my refuge to which I retreat when this world is too much for me
Phrases on pages are the language my mind speaks
metaphors and similes
poetic elements I just breathe.
My name is Jonathan Walton and I want to tell you about my genogram.

A Genogram is a map of our family looking back.
We take note of the values and stakeholds
The do's and don'ts of our households
of our cultures
And then you compare it to the Gospel.
Because there are some things our family hold dear that don't agree with
the family of Jesus
In fact there are some actions and practices that we hold closer than the
love of Jesus and a Genogram helps us see them.

I come from a family where some want Jesus, taught me to love Jesus and
for these I am deeply grateful.

I also come from a culture that ducks emotions, stuffs emotions because
someone told us if you put emotions low enough surely they would die. But
they don't.

Because emotions are like the plates under oceans and when they shake
they cause earthquakes and cause tsunamis in our lives.

So when there's infidelity and cheating, abuse, murder and drug dealing – I
looked around and all of the feelings were gone. Stuffed under couches,
behind handkerchiefs and in coffins.

Three lies became laws in my heart: get of it, move on, be a man.

Get over it, move on, be a man.
Get over it – be emotionally absent.
Move on – it's okay not to be present.

Be a man – get married and then sleep with as many women as you can.

Get over it – what you feel isn't important.

Move on – teach others to stuff it too.

Be a man – life is all about you.

Then, I did my genogram – looking three generations back on both sides.

Taking notes on the truths and the lies. Premature deaths and amazing lives. Seeing things I was told not to look at and seeing blessings for the first time.

Get over it – but now I can't.

Move on – where do I go?

Be a man – I actually don't know what that is.

There are systems in my family that cause emotional poverty
poverty of being and community that if I perpetuate will be present in my
marriage and my children...and get worse.

and if I want that to change then I need that change to begin in me.

Get over it – no, I'm going to therapy.

Move on – no, I'm going to counseling.

Be a man – okay, I'll be like Pete, Rich, Phil, Redd, Greg, Jason, Chris,
Ray, Orlando, and David.

Strong, vulnerable, steadfast and meek to teach boys to actually become
men so they don't stay adolescent like I was.

Yes, I am my father's son but I'm also Our Father's son and because of His
first begotten son, my wife and coming son will know the love his Father
and Our Father too.

So, poetry is still my release

But God is my shield

and He holds my grief

He is my refuge and retreat

When this world is too much for me

His phrases on His pages are His messages of freedom to me.

I exchange my life for His and receive His Holy Spirit

The mighty rushing wind is all I want to breathe.

(Taken from: emotionallyhealthy.org)

Daily Office

Introduction

When someone begins the journey of following Jesus as his disciple, they enter into a new family, the family of Jesus. One of the great gifts we are given in this new family is the gift of forgiveness. Our sins are wiped clean and are no longer held against us. But this side of heaven our sins are not erased from our histories. We are given a new start, and we come like babies drinking milk and life then becomes a journey of maturing into what Christ says is true about us.

We come into this family with brokenness and wounds from our past. We come in with patterns of behavior from our families that are both helpful and harmful. God's intention is to redeem our lives, but first we need to become aware of what needs to be redeemed.

Being a disciple then, must include honest reflection on the positive and negative impacts of our family of origin as well as other major influences in our lives.

This is the hard work of following Jesus, we do it under the covering of his grace and mercy. The extent to which we can go back and understand our own histories and how they shaped our behaviors will impact our ability to break destructive patterns and grow in loving God and loving others.

Growing Connected

Handbook to Renewal Day by Day Debrief: What obstacles, difficulties, or success did you experience in meeting with God this week using the daily resource?

In your group share what was considered "success" in your family growing up. How did that impact you?

Bible Study

Have someone read Mark 3:31-35 (Below)

Then Jesus' mother and his brothers came. Standing outside, they sent word to him, to summon him. A crowd was sitting around him and they said to him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are outside looking for you." He answered them and said, "Who are my mother and my brothers?" And looking at those who were sitting around him in a circle, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

Describe the qualities of those circled around Jesus in the house.

How do you hear Jesus' words, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother."

Video Part 1: Genogram your Family

A genogram is a visual tool to help us look at the history and dynamics of our family over three to four generations

The purpose: To become aware of and to break the sinful patterns in my family of origin in order to live my God given purpose in the world.

Two truths about families:

1. The blessings and sins of our families has impact over generations. What happens in one generation often repeats itself in the next.
2. When I become a disciple of Jesus I am birthed into a new family and culture.

We look at our families not to put them down or to dwell on the negative but to get an accurate and honest picture of what was healthy and unhealthy in how we did life.

Discuss

What are one or two insights you learned regarding how your family has impacted who you are today?

Video Part 2: Genogram your Family

Just like the Israelites were given the Ten Commandments when they were in the wilderness we are given “Family Commandments.”

Key Principle: We can only change what we are aware of.

Examples of unbiblical family commandments:

Examples of Unbiblical Family Commandments

1. MONEY
 - a. Money is the best source of security.
 - b. The more money you have, the more important you are.
 - c. Make lots of money to prove you “made” it.
2. CONFLICT
 - a. Avoid conflict at all costs.
 - b. Don't get people mad at you.
 - c. Loud, angry, constant fighting is normal.
3. SEX
 - a. Sex is not to be spoken about openly.
 - b. Men can be promiscuous; women must be chaste.
4. GRIEF AND LOSS
 - a. Sadness is a sign of weakness.
 - b. You are not allowed to be depressed.
 - c. Get over losses quickly and move on.
5. EXPRESSING ANGER
 - a. Anger is dangerous and bad.
 - b. Explode in anger to make a point.
 - c. Sarcasm is an acceptable way to release anger.
6. FAMILY
 - a. You owe your parents for all they've done for you.
 - b. Don't speak of your family's “dirty laundry” in public.
 - c. Duty to family and culture comes before everything.

7. RELATIONSHIPS

- a. Don't trust people. They will let you down.
- b. Don't ever let anyone hurt you.
- c. Don't show vulnerability.

8. ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHER CULTURES

- a. Only be close friends with people who are like you.
- b. Do not marry a person of another race or culture.
- c. Certain cultures/races are not as good as ours.

9. SUCCESS

- a. Is getting into the "best schools."
- b. Is making lots of money.
- c. Is getting married and having children.

10. FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

- a. You are not allowed to have certain feelings.
- b. Your feelings are not important.
- c. Reacting with your feelings without thinking is okay.

Individual Activity

As you look over the unbiblical family commandments, circle two or three commandments that have most negatively impacted you.

Choose one commandment that you would most like to change. Put a star next to it. For examples of biblical family commandments see page 22.

Discuss

Reflect on the two experiences (The Genogram and Unbiblical Family Commandments) and complete this sentence: "I am beginning to realize..."

Biblical Family Commandments Examples

1. MONEY
 - a. Remember you are a steward of God's money. It belongs to him.
 - b. Be generous as God enables you.
 - c. Live within your means and do not go into unnecessary debt.
2. CONFLICT
 - a. Do not avoid conflict; learn to negotiate differences.
 - b. Allow God to mature you through conflicts.
 - c. Eliminate dirty fighting tactics (e.g. attack, blame, passive-aggressiveness, appeasement).
3. SEX
 - a. Receive your sexuality, maleness or femaleness, as a beautiful gift from God.
 - b. Preserve the preciousness of sexual intimacy for the covenant of marriage.
 - c. Do not use people or let yourself be used.
4. GRIEF AND LOSS
 - a. Our griefs and losses are important to God.
 - b. Pay attention and wait on him in our losses.
 - c. Grieving our losses, instead of ignoring them, leads to maturity and compassion.
5. EXPRESSING ANGER
 - a. Explore the hurts and fears behind anger.
 - b. Do not stuff or project anger, but use it to assert yourself.
 - c. Do not let the sun go down on your anger.
6. FAMILY
 - a. Thank God for sovereignly placing you in your family of origin.
 - b. Leave the sinful patterns of your family, country, and culture.
 - c. Learn to "do life" differently in the family of Jesus.
7. RELATIONSHIPS
 - a. Repair ruptured relationships as much as possible.
 - b. Respect each person's individuality for healthy togetherness.
 - c. Receive God's love in order to give love to others.
8. ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHER CULTURES
 - a. No one is inferior or superior in God's family.
 - b. Each culture offers a redemptive gift to the world.
 - c. Racisms, ethnocentrism, classism and sexism do not belong in God's family.
9. SUCCESS
 - a. Become the person God intends and do his will.
 - b. Learn from your failures.
 - c. Live in brokenness, depending upon God.
10. FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS
 - a. Pay attention to your emotions as a gift from God.
 - b. Prayerfully and carefully think about your feelings before you act on them.
 - c. Experience your emotions in order to love others well.

Conclusion:

Personal Action Step

Review your genogram at least once during the next week, asking the Holy Spirit to show you other insights he might have for you.

If it is appropriate, meet with a trusted friend to share insights from your genogram.

Practice the Community Temperature Reading and Stop Mind Reading and Clarify Expectations Skills.

I plan on practicing Stop Mind Reading and Clarify Expectations:

Handbook to Renewal Day by Day: Use days 6-10