

THE BIG IDEA: When we stress expectations, we can expect less stress.

The Take-Off

If you've been with us for each week of our "We are Family" series, then you'll remember that we've learned that family means we're accepted, connected, and expected, which gives us a place, power and purpose. You also know that today is week 3b because we didn't want to rush talking through family expectations, and before we even continue, let's establish once again that all families have expectations. They just may vary from family to family, but all of us expect and are expected. That's something a sweet little 2 year old learned the hard way this past week. His dad is Andrew Hawkins, a wide receiver for the Cleveland Browns. Unfortunately, his son's favorite players are Mohammed Sanu and A.J. Green of the Cincinnati Bengals. The fallout went viral this week on Instagram. [show video] Apparently, you're expected to say your dad is your favorite player! We've all got expectations in our family, and God's family is no different. Last week we looked at the first 3 of 6 expectations that God lays out for us in the Bible: we're expected to show encouragingly, to grow steadily, and to know increasingly. This week, let's look at the last 3:

1. We're expected to row faithfully

- a. No, we're not going to start singing "row, row, row your boat," but I do want you to get an idea in your head about what it takes to go somewhere together.
- b. I'm not the most outdoors-y guy, but I do know that the worst way to row is individually or not proportionately.
- c. If everyone is rowing whenever they want and in whatever direction they want, that boat's going nowhere!
- d. I love the picture we find in Ephesians 4:14-16
 - infants get tossed around by waves
 - mature family members grow up and form one unified body going in one unified direction
 - it all happens because - as we see at the end of verse 16 - "each part does its work"
- e. And we're not just rowing however or whenever we want - but we can be counted on to serve with each other
- f. I can only give myself wholeheartedly to rowing (serving) if I can trust that you also are giving yourself wholeheartedly to the same
- g. Matthew 25:21 - faithfulness is the key that unlocks the door to greater things
- h. "Well I'm free to do what I want!" - Yes, we're free, but Galatians 5:13 says we're free to serve, and that's because the One who freed us was a servant (Mark 10:45)

2. We're expected to sow sacrificially

- a. Yes, this is the part about money, and before everyone freaks out and heads for the exits holding their wallets, let me say that the expectation of sowing (contributing) to the family is a universally agreed upon principle.
- b. We saw this last week, but let me refresh your memory with the picture none of us wants to see after we've been out doing yard work on a hot summer day. [PICTURE OF MAN ON COUCH]
- c. Everyone agrees that families need members to be more contributor than consumer, especially as we mature.
- d. God takes contributing seriously, the same that any of us as parents of over-consuming children would.
 - Malachi 3:10 - God allows our faith in giving to test His faithfulness in giving back
 - For everyone who freaks about the 10% tithe, let Proverbs 3:9-10 sink in: it's what we do FIRST that reveals what we honor MOST
 - 2 Corinthians 9:7 - whatever we give, we give from a heart that's honored to be able to honor God
 - Cheerful giving doesn't mean easy or faith-less giving. It means joyful giving even if the giving costs us.
 - Hebrews 12:2 shows us this in the life of Jesus - He was a joy filled giver on the cross

3. We're expected to go courageously

- a. After all of these expectations have been met, can you think of one of the most important that's still left?
- b. Right, they need to leave!
- c. We don't want the church family to resemble families in Italy where 48% of 18-39 year olds are still at home!
- d. They've even got a name for it - "bamboccioni" - which sounds awesome but means "big baby!"

- e. Maybe you've seen the movie "Failure to Launch" or maybe you've lived it, but it's not normal for kids to grow up and not go out!
- f. In fact, one Italian family had to bring in lawyers to evict their 41 year-old stay at home son!
- g. Here at The Gathering, we believe the Bible when it says that each of us were made to make a difference, and so being a part of this family means we expect everyone to not only go, but go courageously.
- h. Here's why we can:
 - Matthew 28:18-20 - we've been given a mission and the authority to do it
 - Acts 1:8 - we've been given the power to accomplish the mission
 - Ephesians 2:10 - we've been uniquely equipped for the mission
 - Matthew 24:14 - we've been given a way to evaluate the mission

The Landing

So, after a 2 week flight about how family means we're expected, everybody make sure your seat backs and trays are in their full upright position, and let's land this plane of expectations.

We know that family means we're expected to show, grow, know, row, sow and go.

But that can seem overwhelming, and so let's walk off the plane with a few closing thoughts.

First, remember the Big Idea from last week: **When we stress expectations, we can expect less stress.**

This is what helps us relieve that "angst" we talked about of not knowing how we're doing.

It will also help if we remember one last "-ow" word.

We expect all of this to flow naturally.

There's no sense in rushing it, pushing it or pulling it. We don't need to force it anymore than I need to make my kids grow. It happens naturally (or, in the case of the church, supernaturally) because that's the way God designed it.

So we expect. We raise the standard and raise the grace that we all need to meet it.

And the result is we grow in all of these areas and increasingly find that we're ready and equipped to confidently take on the mission God gave us to see a lost world redeemed to its purpose in Christ.

So when this plane touches down and we're all grabbing our carry ons and exiting the plane, the question we need to answer is, "what's our next step?"

Here at The Gathering, we want to help you take those next steps, and we believe that by helping you see the expectations and holding you accountable to the expectations, we're playing the role that God gave to us as a church to equip you to do excellent ministry for Him.

That's why Presidents don't leave their underwear on the floor, right? Because someone in their lives expected more.

As members of this family, none of us should be walking out the door this morning without grabbing a card in front of us and checking off the next step that we need to take as a contributor in the family.

When God builds His church like that, we'll find ourselves walking relentlessly and courageously in unity toward the mission of taking the gospel to those who are far from Jesus.

According to Matthew 16:18, when we do that as a family, there is nothing that can stop us, even the very gates of hell itself.