

The Gathering Growth Guide

We are Family // Part 6 // Family means we're protected

Paul Jenkins

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Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring with a break from Community Groups during the. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family as you prepare to attend your Community Group.

USE THIS GUIDE TO PREPARE FOR THE COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION!!

Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

Message Summary

After 5 weeks of learning what it means that "We Are Family," it's important that we wrap up the series with perhaps the most important benefit of all: family means we're protected, and being protected gives us peace. As wonderful as it is to be accepted, connected, expected and corrected, all of those work themselves over time, and not all of that time will be spent being at our best. We ALL need time to grow into the family members God has called us to be, and protection gives us that. As the Big Idea puts it: **Security is the soil of maturity.** Here are 3 reasons why we can feel secure in the family:

1. **The unseen army of God:** It is so easy to feel overwhelmed by all of our failures, isn't it? Once, the servant of Elisha felt overwhelmed, too, by a countless army that was intent on killing him and Elisha! But God opened that servant's eyes to see that there was an unseen army that was FOR him that far outnumbered the seen army that was AGAINST him. Whether or not we see it, God's word is clear that an army that protects His family surrounds us!
2. **The unrelenting mercy of God:** As any parent knows, even the most loved children makes mistakes, and often with huge consequences! Our enemy know this, and tries to use that shame and guilt against us so that he can "steal, kill, and destroy" the plan of God in our lives. How does God protect us from that unrelenting attack of shame? By offering us unrelenting mercy! In fact, EVERY SINGLE DAY there is new mercy for that day! Knowing that God doesn't offer leftover mercy is such a peaceful truth, and that provides us with security to mature, even when growing includes making big mistakes.
3. **The unmovable family of God:** Something happens in a family when all the kids finally grasp that the Father loves them all equally: they find the ability to love each other without fear! Paul prayed that the Ephesians would understand God's love (Ephesians 3:17-18) because he knew the truth of Psalm 133: unity leads to peace in the family (oil was a sign of peace)! Knowing that we are a part of a family that believes the best even when we are at our worst gives us the margin we need to mature.

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- Think back over the highlights of the "We are Family" series: family means we are accepted, connected, expected, corrected and protected. Which of these has been the most helpful for you? Which has been the most uncomfortable? Why?
- How do the following Scriptures about God's protection give you peace? Isaiah 41:11-14; Isaiah 52:12; Deuteronomy 33:27; Exodus 14:13-14; Psalm 35:1-3; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; Psalm 62:1-8
- Read John 10:10 and Ephesians 3:14-19, then discuss the following statement: "The only way Satan can rob us is by convincing us that God doesn't love us." Why do you think understanding God's love for us is such a powerful defense against our enemy?
- One study in Metro Boston found that young children in families who moved 2 or more times a year were more likely to be hospitalized than children in more secure situations. Why is security crucial to maturity? What insight does Psalm 40:2 provide?
- As we bring this series to a close, what are some practical ways that your group can live out what we've learned about being a family? Take time to pray with each other as a family.