



## Thermal Nuclear Family Week One

### Opening Prayer:

God, while we know relationships can be complicated, you invite us to engage in relationships for our sake and the sake of others. Help us to hear what you have to share with us today so that we can engage with others in a life giving way.

### Talk It Over:

Families often experience a level of tension that arises from a gap that lies between how things really are and how we'd like them or expect for them to be. Even in the best of families, there is often a gap between the real and the ideal that we must learn to process, face, and work with.

- Share a strength or two you appreciate within your current family dynamic.
- Share a weakness, challenge or frustration you have within your current family dynamic.

### Read Matthew 22:36-40

When Jesus came to teach us about God's kingdom he made it clear that love was central to the heart of God and Jesus' mission. Hearing Jesus' high call to love others well can leave us feeling like the ask Jesus laid out is simply unattainable or unrealistic. It can be easy for some of us to just give up, not try, and simply embrace our broken or dysfunctional reality. Even though Jesus' message included messages of inclusion for all, forgiveness, and grace, we often think God expects us to love perfectly in order to honor, experience, and follow him. Going even further, sometimes we often expect others to love us perfectly too. Jesus' full message made it clear that while God desires for all us to know God's ideals and to strive towards God's radical love, but God meets us right where we are and works with our current realities.

- Have you ever experienced a time you wanted to love someone else more than you were able to? What sparked the desire to love more? What did you do with that desire? Share about that experience.
- Looking at your whole life, in what ways are you grateful you've grown in your capacity to love others over the years?
- Looking at your current reality, in what ways do you want to love others more? In what ways do you want others to love you better?
- Have you ever given up hope on someone changing and later been surprised by their transformation?

### Here is a Summary of New Testament Teaching on Family:

- Husbands, love your wives and serve them.
- Wives, submit to your husbands.
- Children, obey your parents.
- Fathers, don't exasperate your children

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- Prior to this week's talk, what statement listed above was the most confusing, challenging, or difficult for you to hear?
- Prior to this week's talk, what was your experience with these biblical ideas? Had you heard them? Had they made sense to you? Had they been modeled well or abused?

**Read Ephesians 5:21 (NIV)**

A key principle God invites every family to embrace is mutual submission. The idea is that everybody submits to everybody and everyone is looking to serve one another, out of reverence to Christ. We can contribute to building a home marked by mutual submission by asking others: What can I do to help? How can I leverage who I am, what I have, and what I can do for your benefit?

- Have you seen anyone model this sort of attitude before? Share about that person.
- In what ways did the family you grew up with model or not model this?
- What about your current family? Is the idea of mutual submission modeled in a healthy way? Share about your situation.

**Read Proverbs 11:25 and Luke 6:38**

Jesus made it clear that "by giving we receive". The idea of mutual submission is one built on Jesus core idea to live generously for your own good and the good of others.

- What keeps you from living generously?
- What sorts of ideas, reminders, or tools have you used to help you remember the invitation of generosity?

**Closing Prayer:**

God, help us to be generous to the needs of others and to be open to the idea of mutual submission. We want to be people who love others well.

**Extra Challenge:**

This week intentionally try to ask every family member: What can I do to help you? Put a reminder in your calendar, phone, task list, car, or bathroom mirror to remember.