

## Session 2: My Family in God's Big Story

### **Objectives:**

- Explore foundations of family discipleship and how it is core to the completion of God's mission
- Discover ways that your family has been blessed to be a blessing
- Learn how to disciple through intentionality and consistency
- Discover what a mission-minded family looks like

**Time:** 1 hour, 1 hour and 45 minutes with translation

### **Materials:**

- Bible
- Session 2 handout for every participant
- Family Map Sample Part 1 from Teaching Aids folder
- Everyday Moments and Objects from the Teaching Aids folder
- Clock Sample from Teaching Aids folder
- Blank piece of paper for each participant
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils

### **Getting Ready:**

1. Cut out the 8 to 12 word cards of everyday objects and moments. **Option:** If you would like to substitute or add additional objects or moments that are region- or country-specific, write the words on similar-sized card.
2. Pass out the Session 2 handout to participants before the session begins.

## Introduction

Our God is a God of vision.

We see this clearly in His story. Today, God is still carrying out the same vision He initiated at the beginning. The strategy has shifted, but the vision has never wavered.

Families are a vital part of God's vision. Parents have an important role that impacts both the present and the future.

God's mission, His global covenant made to Abraham thousands of years ago, is still being fulfilled today. However, Abraham is no longer living on this earth. He was just one man who lived at a particular time in history.

What was Abraham's role in this big story of God redeeming the peoples of the world?

Let us go back to the beginning of God's story and see what God instructed Abraham to do.

## The Role of Families

On your handout, find the section titled "Discussion Questions." Get together with one or two people sitting next to you, read the referenced verses, and answer each question. I will give you 8-10 minutes to discuss the four questions.

1. *Read Genesis 12:2-3. This is the global covenant God made with Abraham. God told Abraham to do one thing. What was it?*
2. *Read Genesis 18:18-19. What must Abraham do in order for God's promise to be fulfilled?*
3. *Recall what we learned in session 1. Who else did God make this covenant with? (Genesis 26:2-4; 28:13-14)*
4. *Read Psalm 78:1-7. How are generations part of God's strategy?*

(After 8-10 minutes, call the participants' attention back to the front.)

In Genesis 12:2-3, God gives Abraham a singular instruction. What was it? (Invite a participant to share the answer to question 1. Answer: Be a blessing)

As God was establishing His global mission through Abraham, He told Abraham, "I'm going to bless you, and you will be a blessing." Abraham's responsibility was to take what God gave him and use it to be a blessing. He was blessed to be a blessing to the peoples of the earth.

According to Genesis 18, what else was Abraham expected to do in order for the promise God made to him to be fulfilled? (Invite a participant to share the answer to question 2. Answer: Disciple and lead his children/household.)

Abraham was to be a blessing, and to disciple his children to go and do likewise!

From what you read in questions 3 and 4, why was discipling his children so important? (Invite a participant to share the answer using what he discovered from questions 3 and 4. Answer: God's mission would be passed down generationally.)

One of God's primary strategies in fulfilling his promise to Abraham was generational faithfulness!

As we learned in Session 1, God created a main identity among the Israelite people.

He was not called the God of the sun, the moon, and the stars.

He was not called the God of grace, peace, and forgiveness.

Although God was and is all those things, He identified Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

God's global, world-redeeming covenant was made to this family, and He desires to accomplish His purposes through families and generations.

God's generational plan of fulfilling His promise to Abraham continues through families today.

Like Abraham, each one of us, individually, is to take what we have been blessed with - our time, talents, and treasures - and be a blessing. As parents, you are to disciple your children to know God's story, to understand His mission, and to go and do likewise.

This is core to raising and equipping a generation of life-long, world-changing followers of Jesus.

## Blessed to Be a Blessing

Let us go back to a question we asked in the first session: What if God has put your family right where you are for such a time as this in His big story? (Briefly pause to allow for reflection.)

What if your family could play a vital role in seeing God's mission fulfilled among the remaining 2.7 billion people on earth who do not know the goodness of God? (Briefly pause again.)

If you are a follower of Jesus, then you do not need to wonder if it is possible to accomplish God's mission. It is! God is inviting your family into His story and blessing you so that you can be a blessing to the nations of the earth.

What that looks like will be different for each family in this room because each of our families is unique. God formed your family. He gave you your children. There is purpose in who you are, where you live, and what you have been given.

### Family Mapping Activity, Part 1

Maps are useful tools that help us see the big picture of where we are and where we can go. They give us details on the things around us that we might not ever know are there.

If our families are blessed to be a blessing, then we need to understand where we are-what blessings do we already have- and where we can go-how we can use those be a blessing - from our homes to the nations.

Today, I want each of you to draw a map of your family's world. Using the blank piece of paper that we will give you, draw a map of your family, including who you are, things you do, the places you go, and those around you.

Consider what blessings your family has and ways you can be a blessing. Here is a sample map to give you some inspiration for what to draw. (Hold up sample family map, use as reference for the following examples.)

- What giftings and abilities does your family possess? For example, on our sample family map, Sister is a gifted singer, and Mom is able to cook well.
- What opportunities does your family have? On our sample family map, Dad has the opportunity to go to work each day and earn money.
- Who are the people around your family? On our sample family map, Mom welcomes neighbors into the home, and Brother gets to play soccer with other children from the community.

On your handout, find the Family Mapping section. Use the three questions you see there to help in creating your map.

Draw your family's giftings, abilities, resources, and opportunities on your map. Start with your home in the center, and move out from there. Be sure to include the people in your community as well.

Your map does not need to include detailed drawings. It just needs to capture how your family's gifts, abilities, and opportunities. I will give you 10-12 minutes to work on your map.

In Session 7, we will come back and add to this map. Remember to leave space on your map for those additions, and remember to bring your map with you to the training next time.

If you are here with your spouse, work together. If you are here as a leader and you are not a parent, draw a map for yourself. You, too, have been blessed to be a blessing!

(Pass out blank sheets of paper and crayons or colored pencils, if available. Make yourself available to assist and answer questions. After 10-12 minutes, call the participants back together for discussion.)

#### Discussion

Now, I would like you to gather with one or two people around you and answer the question at the end of the "Family Mapping" section of your handout. (Allow 3-5 minutes for sharing in small groups.)

(Listen in on a few groups to hear how they are processing the activity. When time is up, call the participants' attention back to the front.)

## Living it Out

Acts 17:26 tells us,

*"From one man He made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands." (Acts 17:26)*

It is no mistake that God has appointed your family to live in this time in history. It is no mistake that He has gifted each member of your family in the ways that He has.

As you look at your family map, it is likely that you noticed specific ways that God might want to use your family's blessings to bless the nations.

Just as Abraham was to be a blessing, and to teach his children to do likewise, we are called into the same role as believers.

Galatians 3:14 tells us that God,

*"redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles..." (Galatians 3:14)*

If we are called to be a blessing and teach our children to do likewise, how will we do it?

It will require that we mobilize our families towards God's purposes through ongoing discipleship.

What do we mean by “mobilization”?

To mobilize means to make ready for active service, and to release for use. Mobilization equips believers and releases them to be used in God’s kingdom.

Mobilization requires ongoing discipleship.

Discipleship is not a program, a curriculum, or a set of rules, but it is the daily living out our faith alongside of our children. It requires that we intentionally model our faith, and it requires that we do it consistently.

#### Intentionality

Discipleship can happen in the everyday moments of your life.

In Deuteronomy 6:6-9, God says:

*“These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”*  
(Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

We are to make the person and purpose of Christ a part of everyday life.

You can intentionally bring meaning into the times you already spend with your children ... walking to school, driving across town, eating dinner, waking up, and bedtime routines.

If you consistently bring God's purposes into these everyday moments, over time, it can shape the way that your children see the world.

As you are driving or walking down the road, be intentional to pray over the city and the people you see on the streets.

When you see a news report of tragedy in another part of the world on television, take a moment to stop what you are doing, locate the country on a world map, and talk to your children about how your family could bless this nation.

As you walk through nature, notice the objects around you. If you see a pile of sand, point it out and teach your children about the Bedouin tribes of the Arabian Desert who do not know Jesus.

At dinnertime, introduce a meal from another country. Spend time at the table discussing the people from this country and God’s desire to bless them.

#### Group Activity

Let us try a fun activity together.

I want you to break up into groups of seven to ten people and choose one brave leader. (Allow participants time to break into groups.)

Can each of my leaders stand up?

You, Leader, are now the proud parent of the seven to nine beautiful little children sitting around you.

(Pass out one Everyday Moments or Object cards to the leader/parent in each group.)

For some of you, your sons and daughters have brought you an ordinary, everyday object. Here is your chance to use it to teach them truth about Jesus and His love for the world.

The rest of you parents are sharing an everyday moment with your children. Think of how you would intentionally use it to teach your kids and grow their understanding of God and His purposes.

Explain and share your thoughts with them as you would with a child. And children, do not be afraid to ask mommy or daddy questions!

I will give you three minutes. Ready? Begin.

(After three minutes, allow two groups to share their truth, one group who had an object and one who had an everyday moment.)

Do not underestimate the importance of ordinary, everyday moments where God is clearly at work.

It is not about adding another activity to your already full schedule, but about inviting your children to see God's extraordinary purposes through everyday moments.

It is when we intentionally take advantage of everyday moments that God shapes the hearts of our children and reveals His purposes for them.

### Modeling

God wants to use us to shape the hearts of our children, but it will be much easier if we let Him shape our hearts as well.

Deuteronomy 6:4-6 says,

*"Hear O Israel the Lord our God the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts." (Deuteronomy 6:4-6)*

Before we impress the truths of God on the hearts of our children, we are to love God and have His Word on our own hearts.

An important factor in discipling children is to authentically live out your faith both in front of and with them.

Modern education calls this "modeling." Early rabbis like Jesus called this "discipleship."

It is in the "showing" or in the demonstration of the Christian life that our children see faith with their own eyes.

As your children watch you grow in the things of God, they will see what it looks like to be a true follower of Jesus.

Live a life of humility, grace, and faithfulness.

Be willing to admit when you make a mistake and seek forgiveness from your children.

Love God with all your heart, mind, and soul in a way that is visible for them to see.

In addition to helping our children see what a life of following Jesus looks like by living out our own faith, we also must model what it means to make God's purposes our own and central to our family life.

Demonstration and experience are the keys to developing a heart for the purposes of God in our families.

Be an example to your children of living for God's purposes and experience God's heart for the nations together.

If you are burdened for a Buddhist friend at work, share your heart with your family, tell them your coworker's name, and invite them to join you in praying for him.

If you are raising money for a Bible translator in an unreached people group, talk about your project in front of your children. Invite them to think of ways they could help.

Allow your children to experience your way of loving people and allow them to participate. They will embrace your compassion for a lost and dying world, and they will see what His story is really all about.

### Consistency

Lastly, we must be consistent.

If discipleship is "daily living out our faith alongside of our children", then it must require that we do it "daily".

In whatever ways we choose to intentionally model living out God's purposes for our children, we must make it a habit.

It is better to do one small thing every day for one hundred days than to do one large thing only one time.

Our children's faith and character development will be strongly influenced by our consistency.

## Making the Most of Our Time

God desires for your family to find your place in His story. He has blessed you in specific ways, He has given you the tool of discipleship, and He has appointed this time for your family to grow in together.

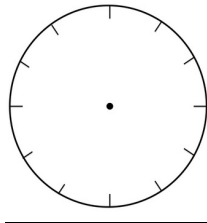
The time that He has appointed your family is a gracious gift from Him. So, why not steward it well?

Parents, as you seek to consistently and intentionally model faith for your family, an enemy called busyness would love nothing more than to distract you, and cause you to feel overwhelmed by the task that God has created you for.

In the world that we live in, filled with activities, endless piles of work, and pressing demands, how do we redeem the time that God has given us?

### Clock Activity

On your handout, find the page that has a blank clock on it (hold up your handout to show them where this is).



Outside of the time you spend working and sleeping, reflect on the various activities that consume your time--church activities, time with your children, sporting events, dinner with friends, cooking, cleaning, reading, or watching television.

Divide your clock into segments representing how much time you spend on each of these activities.

(Show the sample Clock Teaching Aid.) For example, maybe you spend 20% of your time on church activities, 30% of your time with your children, 10% of your time at the market or grocery store, 20% of your time cooking and cleaning, and 20% of your time watching television.

Do not worry about getting the time exactly right. This is only meant to give you a visual. (Allow five minutes for this activity, then call the participants' attention to the front.)

As you look at your clock, are there areas that reflect God's desire to consistently disciple your family? Do these areas include His global purposes? Are there areas that God could redeem?

If not, this activity is not meant to shame you. Instead, the hope is that God might inspire ideas for how you can maximize the time that He has given you.

It may mean that some activities need to be reduced or taken out of your day, or it may just mean that God wants to intentionally bring His purposes into some of your already-existing activities like your rest time, commuting time, or cooking time.

Ultimately, it is not about adding one more thing to your family's schedule, but it is about using the time that you have been given to truly live out your part in God's story.

## The Mission-Minded Family

No matter what specific part you play in God's story, it should ultimately revolve around God's mission.



God desires that your family would embrace His mission, and that you would see yourself as a mission-minded family.

What does it mean to be a mission minded family?

A mission-minded family has a growing relationship with Jesus, and knows that His salvation has changed their identity.

A mission-minded family has a heart desire for God to be glorified in every part of their lives. They look for ways to bring His purposes into both the spiritual and seemingly non-spiritual parts of the week.

A mission-minded family knows that their giftings, resources, and time are not their own ... but that each of these things is a blessing given by God for His glory.

A mission-minded family learns about the 2.7 billion people who are still unreached with the gospel, and actively seeks out ways to partner with God in sharing His love with them.

A mission-minded family is aware of what God is doing in the world, and finds delight in partnering with Him in His story.

## Conclusion

Your family has a part to play in God's story.

God has always desired to use generations to bring about His purposes on the earth, and He desires to do that in this generation.

He has given you tools to disciple your children in an ongoing and intentional way, and He has given us the promise that His purposes will be fulfilled.

As you reflect on the map of your family's world, and the clock of your family's time, take a moment to imagine how God might be wanting to use your family in His story.