

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Family Matters / Week 4

Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

JAMES 1:17 NIV

DAY 1

God is a Father who loves to give good gifts to His children. But if we're being honest, it doesn't always feel that way, does it? Sometimes we look around, and wonder where all the good and amazing gifts God promises to give us actually are! Maybe that's because life feels difficult and good things hard to find. Or maybe it's because we're too focused on what we don't have to see the gifts God has already given us. One of the best things you can begin to practice in your life is gratitude.

Take notice of the good things in your life and thank God for them. Maybe it's your family, a close friend who feels like family, a home you feel safe in, a small group you trust. Whatever it is, write it down! Make a list of three things you are grateful for and as you write them down, thank your Father for giving them to you.

We love because he first loved us.

1 JOHN 4:19 NIV

DAY 2

Loving others isn't always easy. And sometimes, it feels like loving your family is the most impossible thing on the planet! Siblings can be annoying. Parents seem unfair. Or maybe someone in your family treated you poorly, and you're angry. Here, John tells us the reason we love isn't because we feel like it. It isn't even because someone deserves it. We love because God loved us first. When our love for others is rooted in the fact that God loves us first, our love for others has no limits. It comes easier.

Great love should flow through you as a response to greater love that came for you. **So today, go out of your way to love someone in your family because God in Christ loves you.**

He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.

EPHESIANS 1:5 NIV

DAY 3

Everybody wants to know that they belong somewhere. It's one of the deepest longings of the human heart. There seems to be no feeling worse than the feeling that leads us to believe we have no place to belong. But do you know what happens when we put our faith in Jesus? We get adopted into the family of God! Your Heavenly Father looks down at you and sees you as a son or a daughter. He invites you into His family—a place where you will always belong. There is nothing you can ever do to change that. So be encouraged today that God sees you exactly as you are. He loves and invites you to have a place with Him.

In His family, you have a place to belong. **Take time to talk to a family member, trusted friend, or Small Group Leader about what it means to belong in God's family.**

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into **a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.

1 PETER 1:3-4A NIV

DAY 4

Have you ever hoped for something that never became a reality? Maybe you hoped for an "A" on your test, but got a "B" instead. Or you hoped your favorite team would win, but they lost in the last second. Or maybe you even hoped things would change in your family, but things stayed full of drama and conflict. Usually when we hope for something, it's wishful thinking. We have no idea if it will actually turn out the way we planned or wanted.

We have a God who is worth placing our hope in. It's a living hope centered on the fact that Jesus is who He says He is and will do what He promised to do. **Think about a few situations in your life where you could use more confidence. On an index card, write "Hope in Christ" and keep it in your wallet, purse, backpack, or in a pocket. Take it out and read it when you feel like you need a reminder of the hope and confidence you have in Christ.**

Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; **he is the faithful God**, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.

DEUTERONOMY 7:9 NIV

DAY 5

Has anyone in your life ever let you down? They didn't come through like they said they would. They said they would show up, but they didn't. They said they'd keep your secret, then went and gossiped. They promised not to hurt you, but they still broke your heart. When people let us down, it breaks our trust in them. But you know who will never let you down? God! He is perfectly faithful; He always has been. That doesn't mean life will always go the way we want it to go all the time. But it does mean we know God is faithful. He showed us His love when He sent Jesus to die on the cross.

This week, identify one area where you struggle to trust God. Ask Him to help you trust Him more. Pray that you'd believe He will never let you down.

Jesus Christ is the same **yesterday and today and forever.**

HEBREWS 13:8 NIV

DAY 6

How do you feel about change? Your answer might depend on the type of change! Upgrading to the newest iPhone? Getting to drive yourself to school? Moving into a bigger room? Those are changes we can get behind! But starting a new school? Having your parents get divorced? Losing a close family member? That kind of change we'd rather not face. The reality is, life is full of change, but change isn't always easy. So when we're facing change for better or for worse, one thing we can remember is that Jesus never changes. His character, His love, His grace, His presence in our lives—that will always be the same. His promise to always be with us never changes.

So in the midst of trying to cope with change in your home or family, find hope in the fact that Jesus stays the same. Write out this verse to help you focus on the One who never changes.

"By this everyone will know that **you are my disciples**, if you love one another."

JOHN 13:35 NIV

DAY 7

When memorizing Scripture, it is important to also understand how it applies to your life. Take a few moments to write down what you think this verse means in your life as it relates to your family, friends, and others around you.