

Home Improvement Series: Building Healthy Relationships

Part Seven: “How To Fireproof Your Family”

Pastor’s Dale and Cathi Campfield - August 8th, 2010

Intro:

Matt 28:19 *“Go and make disciples of all nations...”*

ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration and connection groups. To grow... which is expressed in our Path to Discipleship. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

We’re currently in sermon series entitled, “Home Improvement”. This series is all about Building Healthy Relationships. I would encourage you to be following along with us in our WARRANTY booklets. The WARRANTY is filled with four scriptures from God’s Word each week for you to memorize.

Our two theme texts are...

Philippians 2:2

“Live together in harmony and love, as though you only had one mind and spirit between you.”

God’s ideal for your relationships, whether you’re married or not (even if you’re not married you’re going to get a lot out of this series because it’s about relationships) is harmony, intimacy (love) and unity (one mind). The reality is that a lot of our relationships are disharmony, conflict and disappointment.

Ephesians 4:3

“Make every to keep the unity of the Spirit.”

The family is under attack. In fact, God is all about family and the devil is all about dividing the family. God created the family, the devil wants to destroy the family. It’s no wonder we see the stats that 3 out of 4 marriages in the church end up in divorce.

The family is under attack, and the attack isn’t coming from man, but from the devil. We only have one enemy, and it isn’t man – it’s the devil. Therefore, we must be able to guard our families, to Fireproof them if you will. When something is fireproof, it means that it can’t be burned.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego... We’re fireproof. They were thrown into the fire and not a hair on them was affected by the flames. They withstood the fire. Can your family withstand the fires of the enemy?

That’s what we’ll deal with today. “How to Fireproof Your Family”

Ephesians 6:16

“In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one.”

Illus: AN UMBRELLA

It is a device with a folding frame of metal rods covered with material and a handle, held over the head to protect one from rain. Hence, it is a shield from the harshness of the weather. It prevents the direct rays of the sun from scourging the person or thing under it. It also prevents the rain from wetting the person or thing under it. As it works physically in a positive way to shield a person, so also, does the spiritual umbrella helpfully shield a person from attacks.

I am reminded of the story told in the Bible, which is an historical fact not just a story, of Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. The families that once lived in Jerusalem were now “in the open” if you will, no walls surrounding them. The heritage of his families, the city they lived in, now in ruins. Think of it as if it were your families, and having no protection from the enemy. No “umbrella” no covering to fight off the enemy.

It takes work to build the walls of protection for your family. It takes work to make sure the hedge of protection is around your family. It takes work to make sure the flaming darts, arrows of the devil will be extinguished when thrown at your family.

When Nehemiah began to rebuild the walls, the enemy attacked him and the people. When you work on establishing the walls of protection around your family, the devil is going to fight against you as well. But the walls must be built. The umbrella must be in tact.

Nehemiah says it like this... **Nehemiah Chapters 1 – 6**

Chapter One

3They said to me, “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.”

4When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

Chapter Two

2so the king asked me, “Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart.”

I was very much afraid, **3**but I said to the king, “May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?”

⁴The king said to me, “What is it you want?”

Then I prayed to the God of heaven, ⁵and I answered the king, “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it.”

Chapter Three – *the walls are being rebuilt*

Chapter Four

¹When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, ²and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, “What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?”

³Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, “What they are building—if even a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!”

⁶So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.

⁷...they were very angry. ⁸They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. ⁹But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.

¹³Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. ¹⁴After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, “Don’t be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes.”

¹⁷...Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other.

Chapter Six

¹⁵So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. ¹⁶When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.

In looking at this true story, we see that God will do the fighting for us; but we have to do our part. They held in their hands the materials to do the work and swords to fight against the enemy. They worked on rebuilding their walls. So now, what can we learn and what steps can we take to rebuild the walls around our families? What can we do to establish the protection, making sure our families have been “fireproofed” from the enemy?

I have a few suggestions that will help you build your walls, to fireproof your family...

To Fireproof Your Family

Suggestion #1: Call on God

Making prayer a priority; you must have times of prayer together. You’ve heard it said a family that prays together, stays together. In your family, everyone may not buy into this, so start with those that do. If you’re living on your own, pray by yourself. If you have a roommate, pray with them. Our homes should be place of safety, a place of prayer.

Suggestion #2: Create an Environment

Create a Safe Environment; your home should be a safe place – a place where love and acceptance is the norm. A safe place where trust is a factor and family members can rely upon each other. Your home should be a place where you can go to when you’re having a bad day and just want to relax; a safe environment.

Suggestion #3: Consult an Expert

There will be times in your lives that you need more help than what you can do on your own. It takes humility and a lower of your pride to ask for help. But if you need the help and don’t ask for it, you’re leaving a door open for the enemy. It’s also very easy to live in denial, that you don’t need help. When you need it, get some help!

Suggestion #4: Construct a Vision

Constructing a vision for your family, or to develop a Mission Statement for your family.

The Campfield Family Vision

The Campfield family will have unconditional love for God and each other; making sacrifices and forgiving each other; working together to serve others; relying upon God for strength at all times; walking in obedience to God and those in authority over us. To respect each other’s time, rights, property, personality and bubble space. Not having the gimmies, but rather the desire to meet the needs of others. To have fun with each other in all circumstances and not get upset with each other for goofy reasons. To protect each other and stand up for one another in the face of our friends and foe. To live by the fruit of the spirit and not the fruit of the flesh; setting aside times of fasting and praying, together seeking the Lord for wisdom and guidance. Compromising and not

antagonizing, avoiding procrastinating in all that we do. We shall remember who we are at all times: We are Campfields and we are God's children!

Suggestion #5: Celebrate Good Times

Throw a party every now and celebrate the successes of your family. A family that can party together in a healthy way can stay together in a healthy way. Throw a family meeting, when everyone thinks they're in trouble, and throw a party instead!

Suggestion #6: Clean your house

(spiritually) Set the Environment. Everything from attitude to artifacts to music; go through your house and discern if you have something in your home that is opening a door to the enemy.

Illus: Montana lady seeing "imps".... D and D stuff in the house.

Suggestion #7: Champion each Other

To champion something means to be a warrior, to protect and fight for someone. You need to champion each other. Champion the cause, stand up for, be there for your family members.

Suggestion #8: Cling to the Word

God's Word is a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path; without it, your family will suffer. The family must be based upon the Word of the Lord. I encourage you as a family to make sure that God's Word has a priority in your home. To read it. To live by it. To digest it. To cling to it.

Have you ever met someone who was clingy? That means they just won't go away. It's time for you to be clingy to the Word of God; you just won't go away.

Conclusion:

And as you do these things in fireproofing your family... You watch... you wait... you'll see! A healthy, protected, Godly relationship will begin to come forth in your family!