

# “Kingdom Principles of Better Families”

**Introduction: Starting ‘Better Families’ series. Who here wants a ‘worse’ family? Who here wants a ‘better family’? You’ve come to the right place!**

## **TENSION/COMMON GROUND**

Disclaimer # 1: Preaching this series does NOT mean we have it all figured out or that our families do not need to get ‘better’! Preaching this series because we ALL know we ALL have room for improvement when it comes to being family. None of us have ‘being family’ perfected. We all have room to grow when it comes to loving and relating to our families the way God would have us love and relate.

Disclaimer # 2: No magic bullet to ‘fix you and your family’ in 4 weeks! Not gonna be Roses, sunshine & unicorns at the end of this series, but we hope things will be better...Families don’t get messed up in one day, and it’s gonna take more than one day to get ‘better’ - being family isn’t a sprint (whether you like it or not); it’s a marathon, and it’s a process, it takes time, and it’s worth our time to get things right

While families don’t come with instruction books, the Bible is the closest and best thing we’ve got. All of us are wired by and learn about what it means to be ‘family’ from our family of origins, and that can be a good thing, or a not so good thing! Some of us may have needed to be re-wired a bit, so to speak, and that’s ok! Because whether we grew up in a highly functional family, or not, it’s never too late to get **better!**

“Better”: “more excellent or effective type or quality

- Synonym: “head and shoulders above” (where we are currently)
- Antonym: worse - we know we don’t want to be worse, and not wired to be satisfied with where we are or ‘status quo’; hence, we want to be ‘better’!

“Family” is no longer just defined as a mom, dad, 2.2 kids and a picket fence

Can be: [use background images]

- a mom, dad, 2.2 kids and a picket fence
- Single parent - mom or dad with one or more kids
- A couple - no kids
- Grandparents raising grandkids
- Blended family
- Interracial family
- Families with children with special needs
- Foster or adopting family
- A church (good to apply what we learn today to church family, as well)
- And more

Working definition of “Better Family”: A ‘Better Family’ is a family (whatever the makeup) that chooses and strives to be ‘more excellent’ together by following Jesus and applying Kingdom principles to family dynamics

Bottomline: **Worship Note:** A ‘Better Family’ is a family that **follows Jesus**

Obviously, following Jesus is a choice; it’s a decision no one else can make for you; best decision we can make. In our Scripture today we see Joshua - one of the Lord’s General’s - makes a ‘stake-in-the-ground’ decision to serve and follow the Lord.

**Joshua 24:14-18 (NIV)**

**14 “Now fear the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. 15 But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”**

**16 Then the people answered, “Far be it from us to forsake the Lord to serve other gods! 17 It was the Lord our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. 18 And the Lord drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the Lord, because he is our God.”**

Joshua made a decision, then gave the families of Israel the ability to make their own decisions as to who they were going to serve, who they were going to follow. Whether we realize it or not, we make that decision every day - are we going to serve and follow the Lord, or are we going to serve and follow the ourselves or someone else, or the powers of this dark world. Whether we realize it or not, every day, we all choose to serve and follow something.

**Worship Note:** We all **choose** to serve and follow **something**

Our greatest recommendation we could possibly make to you is to choose to serve and follow Jesus.

I choose to serve and follow Jesus. What about you? We wholeheartedly believe that that one decision has made and will make us better, and our families better.

What does it mean to follow Jesus? Primarily, it means letting Kingdom Principles (Principles of the King) shape and direct every facet of our lives.

And again, A 'Better Family' is a family that chooses and strives to be 'more excellent' together by following Jesus and applying Kingdom principles to family dynamics

**What are some of those principles? There are a lot of Kingdom Principles, but we've landed on 5 that we feel are super significant to becoming Better Families - so here are five "Better Families Kingdom Principles"**

**Worship Note:** 'Better Family' Kingdom Principles:

1. Obedience [Deuteronomy 30:16]

○ **Deuteronomy 30:16 (NIV)**

**16 For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.**

○ **We need to be obedient to the Lord and to what Scripture says, and as we will see throughout this series, Scripture has a lot to say when it comes to family dynamics**

○ **Friendship with God is obedience**

■ **Doing what he says in moment**

■ **If you haven't done the last 4 things not a 'friend of God'**

**Worship Note:** 'Better Family' Kingdom Principles:

1. Obedience [Deuteronomy 30:16]

2. First Fruits [Proverbs 3:9-10]

○ **Proverbs 3:9-10 (NIV)**

**9 Honor the Lord with your wealth,  
with the firstfruits of all your crops;**

**10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing,  
and your vats will brim over with new wine.**

○ **We need to give God our first fruits, but as we'll see in the rest of this series, there are some 'first fruits' principles that apply to our families, as well.**

○ **Explain Tithe**

○ **Time, Money, Children (Hannah and Samuel)**

**Worship Note:** 'Better Family' Kingdom Principles:

1. Obedience [Deuteronomy 30:16]
2. First Fruits [Proverbs 3:9-10]
3. Forgiveness [Colossians 1:13-14]
  - Colossians 1:13-14 New International Version (NIV)
  - **13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**
  - Jesus died for the forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness - or lack thereof - continues to be one of the things that gums up the works of most families...
  - Immediate, if you know your brother has something against you leave your gift at the altar and go get reconciled -Jesus

**Worship Note:** 'Better Family' Kingdom Principles:

1. Obedience [Deuteronomy 30:16]
2. First Fruits [Proverbs 3:9-10]
3. Forgiveness [Colossians 1:13-14]
4. Sowing and Reaping [Galatians 6:7-9]
  - Galatians 6:7-9 (NIV)
  - **7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.**
  - When it comes to our families, the principle of 'sowing and reaping' undoubtedly applies
  - You get what you sow
    - Bitterness, resentment, anger
    - Love, Peace, Joy, Self-control (Fruits of the Spirit)
    - Often what we sow, grows...

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4. Sowing and Reaping [Galatians 6:7-9]

## 5. Abiding [John 15:5]

- John 15:5 (ESV)  
5 I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.
- Before you can be grafted to the Vine you must be cut off from the old life
- The branch gets nothing, nutrition flows through the branch to the fruit
- The Vine cannot produce without the branch
- The Vine has joy, the branch has joy and the needy get fruit
- Prayer

As mentioned before, families don't get messed up in one day, and it's gonna take more than one day to get 'better'. ..it takes awhile for Kingdom Principles to get into us and to start impacting our actions, so that in times of pressure and stress, our fleshy, natural reactions don't come out, but the Kingdom Principles inside us come out.

God's got this - it takes awhile, but God is with us as we learn and grow and strive to love our families to the best of our ability along the way.

### Closing

Same choice before you today that was before Joshua and the families of Israel - who will you serve? We all follow and serve something. Will you serve the Lord? Follow Jesus. Gonna put your stake in the ground, or just gonna hold onto it?

In order for your family to be better, you have to better; you have to make a decision.

God is doing God's part; He wants us to be better; His grace is there to help us; We have to do our part, choose Jesus