



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Family Matters / Week 3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

WORSHIP

STORY

GROUPS

HOME

BOTTOM LINE

When your family changes, your mindset matters.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students understand that change is inevitable, but God is constant and His presence can comfort us in uncertain times.

SCRIPTURE

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, A time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 NIV).

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze (Isaiah 43:2 NIV).

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- Let's start today with an obvious statement: Things change.
- These are changes that are, for the most part, expected. But there are also changes that are *unexpected*.
- Unexpected changes have a way of disrupting our lives. And that's what we're going to talk about today.

TENSION

- We all want something that stays the same no matter what—some place, person, or group that we know will be there for us when nothing else feels secure.
- For many of us, we've always considered family to be that thing for us. For others, family has never been a safe or secure place.
- For ALL of us, there's the idea—either from our own experience or a belief that we have—that family *should* be a constant.
- So, when change happens in a family, it can be much more difficult to deal with.
 - Maybe your parents got divorced.
 - Maybe you had a parent pass away.

- Maybe it was something smaller.
 - Maybe you got a new addition to the family.
 - Maybe a sibling went away to college.
- No matter what our experience is with change, something about it happening in our families makes it more difficult.
- How can we be best prepared for the inevitable changes that happen in a family?

TRUTH

- When you look at the Bible, you might be surprised to see that a lot of the writers were helpful when it comes to dealing with change.
- The writer of the Old Testament book Ecclesiastes—who many people believe was King Solomon—had a lot to say about change.
- In the passage we're going to look at, Solomon is writing about some things he's observed in his lifetime. And that includes change. (*Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 NIV*).
- Solomon is letting us know that everything will change at some point or another. It's inevitable.
- But the truth is that when we *know* things will change—both in our families and the world around us—we can be prepared to deal with it.
- Instead of fighting change and pretending like things will always stay the same, we can open our hands and give up control.
- In this life of constant change, God also makes a promise to us. And unfortunately, the promise *isn't* that He's going to make all the difficulty go away.
- In the book of Isaiah, we learn about a message that God has for His people. (*Isaiah 43:2 NIV*).
- When everything around them was changing, God wasn't. The same is true for us. In every single moment and season of change—including family change—God will be with us.

APPLICATION

- So, since we can't stop change and we can't control people, what *can* we do?
- We can change the way we look at change.
- When your family changes, your mindset matters.
- Here are a few steps to help you work on it:
 - Understand that change will happen.
 - Know that God is with you.
 - Trust that God can use the change to change you.

LANDING

- Without question, change is difficult. *Especially* when it comes to family.
- Just you're not alone because God is with you. And you're not alone because you have a small group to talk to about all of this.
- Let's ask God for the strength and grace to help us get our mindsets in the right place!



TEACHING SCRIPT

Family Matters / Week 3

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BOTTOM LINE

When your family changes, your mindset matters.

INTRODUCTION

1.5 MINUTES

Let's start today with an obvious statement...

Things change.

Think about it...

- You probably don't listen to the same music you did three years ago.
- Your wardrobe is probably different than it was in 5th grade.
- You look different than you did when you were a little kid.

These are changes that are, for the most part, expected. *No one* expects to look the same way they did in elementary school!

But there are also changes that are *unexpected*. Changes that feel like they show up out of nowhere. And unlike changes in fashion trends and musical taste, these types of changes can be a little more difficult to deal with. For example...

- Maybe you've had a **friendship** that changed. There was a person who was close to you that you trusted, but something happened to take you and that person in different directions. And now you don't know if that friendship will ever be the same.
- Maybe it was a **group of friends** that changed. You had a crew that you felt a part of—you felt like you were *in*—and now you feel like you're *out*. And now you're dealing with the new normal of trying to make new friends and figuring out how to deal with the hurt and confusion of losing the old ones.
- Or maybe you changed **location**. You moved to a different neighborhood, town, or state, and now you're figuring out that landing in a new place isn't easy to navigate.

Unexpected changes have a way of disrupting our lives. And that's what we're going to talk about today.

TENSION

4 MINUTES

There are so many possibilities of unexpected change life can throw at us...

- An injury, sickness, or health challenge
- Unexpected financial challenges
- Getting cut from the team or failing the class

Like the famous philosopher Lauv said, “Changes, they might drive you half insane...” It doesn’t matter how old you are, how much money you have, where you live, if you’re famous or not, unexpected change affects all of us. And because of that, we need some sense of stability. We all want something that stays the same no matter what—some place, person, or group that we know will be there for us when nothing else feels secure.

For many of us, we’ve always considered family to be that thing for us. For others, family has never been a safe or secure place. **But for ALL of us, there’s the idea—either from our own experience or a belief that we have—that family *should* be a constant.** Even if it’s not, we expect it to be.

So, when change happens in a family, it can be much more difficult to deal with. And maybe you’ve experienced this...

- Maybe your parents got divorced. You thought your parents would be together forever, and there didn’t seem to be anything wrong. But then suddenly, they split up.
- Maybe you had a parent pass away. Whether it was expected because of an illness, or totally unexpected, there’s no preparing for that kind of loss.
- Maybe it was something smaller. Like, one of your parents got a new job and had to move away for a while. And now the routine of seeing your mom or your dad has completely changed.
- Maybe you got a new addition to the family. And with a new baby brother or sister, the way you feel like you’re treated in the family is different. Sure, you’re still loved, but you no longer get the attention you’re used to.
- Maybe a sibling went away to college. You’re happy for them—and honestly, there’s more peace in the house without them around—but the truth is, it has changed your family dynamics. And you actually miss the normalcy of fighting over the bathroom, sharing clothes, and the way your older sibling held things together.

No matter what our experience is with change, something about it happening in our families makes it more difficult. So, the question is, if avoiding change isn’t possible, how do we get better at handling it? Is there a way to navigate change in our family so that it doesn’t cause us to become bitter or cynical? How can we be best prepared for the inevitable changes that happen in a family?

TRUTH

7 MINUTES

When you look at the Bible, you might be surprised to see that a lot of the writers were helpful when it comes to dealing with change. In fact, the writer of the Old Testament book Ecclesiastes—who many people believe was King Solomon—had a lot to say about change. Solomon was an ancient king of Israel, and God blessed him with incredible wisdom. In fact, he is commonly known as the wisest man who ever lived. You may be thinking, “I’m glad that an ancient king from a place that I’ve never been was wise. But what does that have to do with change in my family?” I’m glad you asked. In the passage we’re going to look at, Solomon is writing about some things he’s observed in his lifetime. And that includes change. Check it out...

There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak, A time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 NIV).

It's a very poetic way of saying, "Everyone get ready: *change is coming*. It IS going to happen. Nothing stays constant. The things you're experiencing today will look different tomorrow. This is the world we all live in, so we might as well get used to it."

In some ways, this seems kind of depressing. I would love to hear that there's a way that I could make change less painful. Or even better, if there was a way that I could keep change from happening at all. But that's not what Solomon is saying. In fact, he's saying the exact opposite. He's letting us know that everything will change at some point or another. It's inevitable.

But the truth is that when we *know* things will change—both in our families and the world around us—we can be prepared to deal with it. **Instead of fighting change and pretending like things will always stay the same, we can open our hands and give up control.**

God is fully aware of everything that changes in our lives. He knows that good and bad will show up our lives, and neither will last forever. But in this life of constant change, God also makes a promise to us. And unfortunately, the promise *isn't* that He's going to make all the difficulty go away.

In the book of Isaiah, we learn about a message that God has for His people. Not everyone agrees on when Isaiah was written, but most people believe that it was written during a time of trouble for Israel. They were either in captivity to Babylon, or coming out of exile in Babylon. In other words, their world was falling apart. They had been forced to leave their homes and live in a land with people who spoke a different language, worshiped different gods, and were hostile to their way of life. Everything that felt safe, secure, and stable, all of the sudden *wasn't*. And in the midst of that, this is what God said to His people...

When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze (Isaiah 43:2 NIV).

Imagine the comfort that must have brought the people hearing it. When everything around them was changing, God wasn't. The same is true for us. **In every single moment and season of change—including family change—God will be with us.** He is walking through the difficulty with us. We are never alone. God is never caught off guard by the changes in our lives. And if He has promised to be with us, then that must be exactly what we need.

APPLICATION

3 MINUTES

We can't control the people in our families. And as much as we want our families to be stable and constant, it doesn't always happen. So, since we can't stop change and we can't control people, what *can* we do?

Well, we can start by focusing on our mindset, thinking, attitude, and perspective. We can change the way we look at change. Think of it this way...

When your family changes, your mindset matters.

When someone in your family moves *out*, your mindset matters. When someone moves *in*, your mindset matters. You can't control the external circumstances, but you can work on your attitude and perspective. You can remember that God is with you even when they're not.

Here are a few steps to help you work on it...

- 1. Understand that change will happen.** This is why the passage in Ecclesiastes we talked about earlier is so powerful. "There's a time for everything." Change is bound to happen. Understanding that doesn't make change easy to handle. But at least now we know that it's a reality of life that everyone deals with.
- 2. Know that God is with you.** Like it says in Isaiah, whether you "pass through the waters" or "walk through the fire," God will not leave you alone. And whatever change you face in your family, He will be right there with you, helping you and comforting you.
- 3. Trust that God can use the change to change you.** God can use our time of transition and adjustment to grow us in ways we may have never expected. God can do something in and through our time of change. But we have to think long term. However bad it feels right now, it won't feel this way forever. When we have a long-term view, we know there's something *after* this—we just might not see it yet. God isn't done yet.

And if we can begin to see change this way, we can embrace it as something that can take us somewhere good. Change has the potential to be something that causes us to grow, mature, and become more of who God designed us to be.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

Without question, change is difficult...

- A new season
- A new house
- A new town
- A new stepmom
- A new normal

Whatever it is, it's not easy. *Especially* when it comes to family.

Just know that you're not alone. You're not the only one dealing with change. Like Solomon said, it's bound to hit all of us. You're not alone because God is with you. And you're not alone because you have a small group to talk to about all of this. And if you're having a particularly hard time dealing with a certain change in your life right now, don't be afraid to ask your small group leader for a little one-on-one time to talk about it.

When your family changes, your mindset matters. So, let's ask God for the strength and grace to help us get our mindsets in the right place!



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS