



Family Values (Part 8)
Healing Broken Families
Charles Billingsley

I'm honored to be back with you. I am a big fan of this church. I'm a huge fan of your pastor, Ted, and his family. When he asked me to come and instead of leading leading worship to speaking with you, I was greatly honored. I get to do that at my church about once a month as well, so it's just really good to be with Ya'll. We are in this family values series, and he asked me if I would close out the series with a fairly heavy topic. Today, we are going to talk about healing broken families or doing what we can to heal broken relationships in our lives. I was like thanks, Ted, for such a heavy topic, but that's okay. I actually have enjoyed studying this, I'll be honest with you, I am not a trained counsellor, I'm not a psychologist by any means, but when you go to scripture, you can find a whole lot of help from the Bible on just how to live your life, including fixing or healing broken relationships. We just sang the words – Jesus is our healer and he's the one that can obviously pull these things back together.

One thing I thought before we get into the actual outline is for you to meet my family. My wife is going to be here for the next service. She didn't come to the early service. She's not a big fan of seven am sound checks. But this is my family. That's my son Caleb on the left. He's 26 years old now and as you can tell, he sort of looks like me, with way less body fat percentage. And then on the far right is my other son, Cooper, and he just got married to that beautiful brunet there. Her name is Emily and they've been married for a year now. So that's exciting. They have two kittens, so I'm the proud grandfather of two cats now. and then the beautiful blond there in the middle is my wife, Shay. We've been married for 32 years now. We're no different than any other family. We have problems, we have issues that come up. We have situations and I'm sure we have some sort of dysfunctionality in some area of some shape or form because I'm a little quirky and weird and so is everybody else. In fact, families are like fudge – they are mostly

sweet, but they are always sprinkled with a few nuts. In fact, it's kind of funny because Hollywood tends to glorify this stuff, don't they? You can turn on the television, watch television shows all day long that have to do with families. Remember that show *Eight is Enough*? Or the *Brady bunch*? How about *Family Ties*. *Full house*. That's a good one. And of course, now the more modern ones like *Modern Family*. That's a strange one. And then we also have *Yellowstone*. That's all about a family. They all hate each other. There's another family that is very prominent in society today, the *Kardashian*. There they are. There's a lot of surgeries there. You talk about dysfunction now. That's a lot of dysfunction.

It tends to be that Hollywood tends to glorify this. And then of course there's always the housewives that are in in virtually any city you want to choose now. We actually had to airbrush that photo because well, none of these people ever wear clothing but it's kind of like Hollywood, we just sort of glorify this stuff and we're obsessed with their dysfunctionality and that's what draws viewers back. We want to see the fights, we want to see the problems, we want to see all the issues going on. By the way, I wouldn't recommend watching any of these shows because they are full of immorality and trash and you get to discover just how strange some of these people are. Yet it keeps drawing us back.

I think it's because we are obsessed with dysfunctionality, but also because we see a little bit of our families in some of the lives of these very same people. Maybe we even identify with certain characters or situations that arise in some of these episodes.

And then, of course, there is the all time greatest dysfunctional family and that's the Royal family. The whole world follows them. The whole debacle with Harry and Mega and then, of course, the escapades of Prince Andrew. But it goes all the way back, hundreds and hundreds of years, even to like Henry the 8th who had six wives and murdered two of them... well, had two of them put to death. But we are fascinated by all of this because every family is dysfunctional to a certain point or broken in one way, shape or another. And every family encounters conflict with one another at some point. Even in the Bible, there are all kinds of examples of broken and dysfunctional families.

The life of David alone. Between him and his sons and his many wives, they are the poster children for dysfunctionality. Isaac and Rebeca, their sons Jacob and Esau, who ended up hating each other because Jacob was such a conniving and scheming cheat. And then of course, Jacob then gets the whole thing turned on his head when he thinks

he's marrying Rachel and ends up waking up the next morning and he has actually married Leah. That still has to rank as one of the most bizarre stories in all of history.

You can go all the way back to the beginning of time to Adam and Eve and you will find that it all started there.

So, for the next few moments, I just want to give you five simple points that hopefully will help you in this journey of trying to find healing for a broken family, or a broken relationship. Maybe you're single, but you still have relationships with others, so I pray that these five points for you this morning will be applicable to all of your lives, not just for those of you who are married.

So, let's go back to the beginning. And let me just start with the first point. And that is this: We always have to embrace the truth. The truth about ourselves, the truth about our situation, the truth about others in our relationships.

We tend to ignore the truth by either running from it or by transferring the blame. And when you go back to the very first family that ever was, Adam and Eve, you find that is exactly what happens as a result of the very first sin in the bible. You remember the story. Everything is perfect through the first two pages of scripture. Everything is absolutely perfect. They are in paradise; they are in Eden. And all you have to do is flip one page over and all of the sudden, everything falls apart. You know the story. The serpent approaches Eve in the garden, tells her that God is not telling her the whole truth. He undermines God's word and then he tells her, "No, no, no you'll just be as smart as God if you eat from the tree of knowledge. The truth is what happens is they eat from the tree of knowledge; they are going to develop a conscience. Before that, everything was just pure. sure enough, he talks her into taking from the tree and then of course she looks at Adam and he's like, "Okay, I'll take it to." And so, she gives him a piece of the fruit and he takes it. And that's what started the whole deal.

Now, you get to Genesis 3:8 and let me just read this for you. this is what happens. So, they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden... I love this phrase: In the cool of the day, and the man and his wife (Adam and Eve) hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. They were embarrassed. They knew they had messed up. They didn't want to be found by God. Verse 9 – But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" As if he didn't know. He said, I heard the sound of you in the garden and I was afraid because I was naked and I hid myself. God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of

which I commanded you not to eat? And Of course, God already knows the answer to that too. Adam said, “Well it was the woman that you gave me. she’s the one who gave me the fruit to eat. So, then the Lord said to Eve, “What is it that you have done?” And the woman said, “It was the serpent. The serpent made me do it.” So right here in the very first passage of all of creation, you discover that these two excuses for ignoring the truth have been going on for thousands of years. We either run from it or we transfer the blame. It’s always someone else’s fault. Adam and Eve were forced by God to admit their guilt. They were confronted by God, and they had to face the truth. But they deal with it by first trying to hide and then they try to transfer the blame, and both of these mechanisms are a way of avoiding the truth.

Now many a family has broken apart by people trying to just simply hide their sin or blaming others for their own shortfalls. In fact, you may be here this morning and there’s a secret sin in your life that you’ve been hiding. But you can rest assured that God, at some point, will come walking in the cool of your day and you will be forced to deal with it in the light, because you cannot hide your sin from God.

And the reason God wants you to deal with it in the light is because he wants to restore you. because God knows the truth about you and he knows the truth about me. and you know the truth about you and your family, but we work really hard at ignoring it sometimes, convincing ourselves that it’s something different. It’s called denialism. Denialism is this psychology phrase of human behavior and it basically is this – it’s a person’s choice to deny reality as a way to avoid a psychologically uncomfortable truth. It’s way easier just to ignore it than to have to deal with it, folks, truth is truth and at some point, if you are ever going to be restored, you have to deal with the truth. We’re good at ignoring it. for instance, credit cards, credit cards give you this feeling that you can just pay for something and not have to worry about it because it’s not really money, but it is money because you get the bill about 30 days later and realize oh I really do have to pay for this.

People who suffer from addictions, the number one step of helping somebody overcome an addiction is for them to get to the place where they actually admit that they have one, So, sometimes the truth hurts, especially if it’s something we discover about ourselves. The truth is the door that God can use, if he’s been knocking on it maybe for years that God can use to open up this pathway of restoration. Sometimes we don’t even understand ourselves at times why we do the things we do, say the things we say. It’s because our old nature is drawn to sin, and that sin makes us miserable, and then we try to cope and that leads to more mistakes and then we begin to deny the reality of our

situation or look to blame somebody else. And when you couple denial with a modern mindset of relativism, which basically means that we have this privilege now to make up our own truth, which is what society does about a whole lot of things. Then you've got a really bad combination. The combination of denying the real truth, combined with you making up your own truth is really dangerous, and it's really where we see a lot of society today.

If I wake up tomorrow morning and suddenly, I feel like a monkey and I walk about all week saying, "Hey, I'm a monkey." I may think I'm a monkey, I may feel like monkey, but the truth is I'm not a monkey. There is a difference between truth and reality and me telling myself a truth.

Let me tell you something folks, there is either the truth or your truth. Your truth is not a truth; it's simply an opinion. There is THE truth and THE truth comes from the power of God's word. So, be very careful when you're trying to create your own truth and also deal with THE truth because the combination of trying to do both is very dangerous

Jeremiah reminds us of this in Chapter 17: 9 of his book. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick. We can't understand ourselves. So, beware that when you start to tell yourself that the situation you're in is one way or another, get with somebody who can be an accountability partner with you, get into scripture, get with a pastor or somebody and help them help you confront the reality of your situation because we have proclivity to lie to ourselves about it. If you want to know the truth about yourself, all you have to do is ask your spouse, she'll tell you or he'll tell you, or your closest friends. So, you have to confront. It's hard, uncomfortable and yet it's necessary. So, don't run from the conflict because conflicts are never going to resolve themselves. They may lie dormant for years, but until they are dealt with, they never truly go away. You have to face it eventually. Some of us have been in the same conflict for years. Nothing is said, but it's always there, we've just learned how to live around the pain, but folks, conflict delayed can become conflict multiplied, so embrace the truth of the situation and start the conversation today, which brings me to my next point.

Start talking to each other. If you want to resolve a conflict and try to start down the road of healing a broken marriage or a broken relationship, or a broken partnership, then at some point, the conversation has to begin. So, you embrace the truth of the situation, now we need to talk about it. And there are certain things we need to do to make sure

that we talk about it in the right way. First of all, I would suggest to you that you make the first move, even if you're not the one who did the other person wrong. Maybe they wronged you. I would still suggest to you, as a believer, that you make the first move. Here's why: because until you do, you will never be able to worship properly or even give any offering properly, according to scripture.

What did Jesus say in Matthew 5: 23 24? He said, So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and then go, first to be reconciled to your brother, and then come back and offer your gift.

Jesus is saying, "Look, you're never going to be right with me until you are right with that person, so go ahead and have the conversation now. It's going to save you loads of heartache later. The reason we don't is because we are fearful but make the first move.

Some of you may need to leave this service honestly and walk over to somebody in the room and talk to them about a situation that's even happening right now or some of you may need to go home and call your mom or your dad or your son or your daughter or your relative or your business partner and make things right, even if you're not the one that did the wrong. And before you do, ask God to fill you heart with love for that individual and in so doing, your fear will subside over the conversation because perfect love casts out all fear, the Bible says.

The next thing I would suggest to you is don't just make the first move, but remember to speak the truth, but speak it in love, always in love. So, that's means you need to lay down a few ground rules. Decide in the front end of the conversation that there are certain words that will not be said, certain buttons that won't be pushed. And it's kind of funny because every time I'm about to argue with my wife and we start talking about the ground rules, we end up not arguing at all. In fact, on our honeymoon, we decided, 32 years ago, that we were just never going to use the word divorce. It was just not going to be an option. So, we knew, going in, from day one, no matter what happens, I don't have the option of leaving this woman. If she leaves, I have to go with her, that's how it goes.

We decided a long time ago we just don't say words like Divorce. We've used murder a few times but not divorce. So, when you're having this conversation, don't use words like I just want to end it all or I give up or let's get divorced or I'm going to take a knife and stab you. Things like that are not healthy. But have the conversation now. Don't delay

Ephesians 4 reminds us not to go to bed angry. Don't let the sun go down on your anger, it says. Not all conflicts are going to be resolved in just a few minutes or one conversation. I understand that. Some conflicts are very, very deep. But at the very least, you can restore your relationship. Maybe every conflict isn't resolved immediately, but restoring the relationship is the beginning of resolving the conflict.

Rick Warren said it this way. *It's always more rewarding to resolve a conflict than to dissolve a relationship.*

Isn't that true. So, you make the first move, start the conversation in love and then also start by listening.

You know, we don't always have to do the talking. I don't know about you, but most of the time, I believe what we do in conversations is we listening to that person, but we are not really listening. All we are doing is waiting for them to shut up, so I can say my piece.

Everybody wants to be heard, they want to be understood, and they want to be respected. If you start by listening, it may just relieve a whole lot of conflict simply because you now fully understand the other person's side.

So, have the conversation and have it in person. Do not send an email, especially an angry one. Do not send it in text. If you have to write it down, go ahead and write it down but wait 24 hours to send it because you'll wake up tomorrow morning and I promise you that you will be glad you didn't send it because you worded things way too harshly

The other problem is when you send it in an email or text, people can read it over and over again, they can send it to one of their buddies and let them read it, they can send it to so and so and then all of the sudden, this is a group fight that really is nobody else's business, but it's also read over and over again and they misconstrue ideas over the tone and over the language and they can dream up all kinds of things. But if you sit down in person and show that person, with a spirit of love and a heart of gratitude and love towards them, they will see it in your body language that you're not trying to continue the conflict. That you are actually trying to resolve it. That's because 55 percent of your communication is through your facial expressions. I can communicate a lot just by raising my eyebrow. 70 – 90 percent of your language is through your body language. People don't listen to what you say half the time; they are listening to what you do. So when we are finger pointing, when we're having tight lips and scowls and glares and arms crossed, it sends a very deep message, but this also sends a message.

So, it's your body language, it's your facial expressions, it's everything about those things that actually help resolve the conflict more than just your words, which is why I would suggest you would actually sit down face to face if you can.

So, anyway, there is a lot more to that, but here's the bottom line. When you have these conversations and talk to each other, pray that God would give you the right words to say, in the right way, with the right attitude, with the right tone, with the right body language, and at the right time.

Remember, attack the issue, not the person.

Proverbs 15:1 reminds us a soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. So, do it without distraction, put down the phone, turn off the television or computer, try not to have that conversation late at night, meet in a neutral location, and then just talk in genuine love.

We can disagree peacefully, and we can walk hand in hand without seeing eye to eye

So learn how to dwell together in unity even if you are not completely unified in everything. By the way, that's partly what makes relationships beautiful. I say tomato, you say tomato. Let's not call the whole thing off. Let's actually embrace our differences. By the way, it's the fact that you say tomato and I say tomato that attracted me to you in the first place. Now, it's the one thing that drives me crazy about you. That's how relationships tend to go. Maybe we ought to go back and look at our differences and actually embrace them

Let me give you one more word before we move on. Learn how to say I'm sorry. Not I'm sorry you misunderstood... Just say I'm sorry. It takes a lot of humility to do that, but you will rarely, if ever, see two unselfish and godly people get a divorce.

So, embrace the truth, talk to each other, thirdly, trust each other. Folks, Trust is earned not assumed. In order for your family or your business partner or your spouse to really trust you, then you have to prove yourself trustworthy. When your relationship is based on distrust, it really means it's based on fear. And this, in turn, makes you distant or it makes you defensive and it sometimes can make you demanding. I think a lot of times the most demanding people in the world or the most controlling people in the world are also the most insecure. It's because that insecurity is based on distrust. Maybe they were abused in the past or they were rejected or they were disrespected or whatever it

might be. But it led them to a place where there is no vulnerability or weakness that's allowed to be shown, because now we need to control the situation. And that's awful to see that in so many lives but it's so very, very common, isn't it?

Deep problems arise in relationships where trust has been broken. Betrayal is a killer of any close relationship. So, make sure that you are the kind of person your family or spouse or business can trust. And by the way, you are the only person you can control. So, you become a person of trust, and you might find that those around you want to do the same. Once trust is lost, it takes a long time to get back. Trust never comes back instantly; it grows back slowly like a plant that's watered over time.

Adam and Eve broke their trust with God. He can no longer trust them to obey his commandments, so he cast them out of the garden and the disfunction began.

It's a terrible thing as a parent to not be able to trust your child, but it's also a terrible thing as a child to not be able to trust their parents.

So, no matter what kind of relationship you are in or what kind of relationship you are dealing with that might be on the verge of breaking, trust is of utmost importance. We must develop trust in one another.

And then, sometimes, inevitably, that trust is going to be broken in some way shape or form. Maybe it's something as simple as "hey I'll be home at six" and your not until 7. But whatever it might be, at some point, forgiveness is going to be required. Which is my next point.

Learn to forgive one another. Embrace the truth, talk to each other, trust one another and then be willing to forgive one another.

The way to get forgiveness is to give it. We have to have a forgiving spirit. Not only is it commanded by Jesus, but if you don't, it's going to rob us of our joy. It will hinder your worship; it will create a seed of bitterness that can last a lifetime and the real loser in this situation then becomes you. Forgiveness is not condoning what has been done, rather it means you are determining to let it go, you're removing the situation from taking up space in your head and in your heart where it's been dwelling rent free. And this will set you free from the chain of bitterness that kept you bound for so many years.

Lewis Smeed, a theologian, said it this way: To forgive is to set the prisoner free and to discover that the prisoner was actually you.

So, set your heart toward forgiveness and watch God set you free.

Here's a phrase I don't want you ever to forget: If you want to live, forgive. There's a wonderful story about Corrie Ten Boom the famous, later became missionary. In her early days with her family, they were doing everything they could in Holland to rescue Jews who were being swept out of their country, out of their homes, and delivered into the hands of the Nazis and placed in all these concentration camps during the Holocaust as you are well aware. Because they were trying to save the Jews, Corrie ten boom and her sister and her family were arrested as well. They were also thrown into a concentration camp named Ravensbruck, where there she lived, striped down naked, starving, full of disease, it was there that her sister died. But somehow, some way, God chose Corrie Corrie ten boom and she lived through that horrific experience and the war ended and just a few years later, she found herself back in Germany, speaking in churches on the subject of forgiveness.

She said, "I finished speaking one night in Munich and as the crowd was dispersing, I noticed one man was coming against the grain of the crowd and coming towards me. She said, "My heart froze. She said, "Everything in me just stopped because I immediately recognized that man as one of the guardsmen who had been a guard at Ravensbruck who had abused all of us, who had beaten us, who had starved us. Everything in my heart hated this man. She said he came up to me and he threw his hand out toward me and he said, "Fraulein, thank you for your talk on forgiveness today because after the war, I gave my heart and my life to Christ and he has forgiven you, but if it's true what you say Fraulein, that God will forgive you and cast your sin as far as the deepest oceans, I would like you then to forgive me as well. Here's what she said in response." She said, I knew I had to do it because Jesus commands that we do it, Jesus says if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your father in heaven forgive your trespasses. She said I knew I had to do this, but she said it was at that moment that she realized how much bitterness and hatred she had toward this man. As I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart because forgiveness is not an emotion, I knew that too, but forgiveness is an act of the will and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. So, I knew I had to do this, I had to forgive this man, but I just couldn't bring myself to do it. So, I prayed. I said, Jesus, help me. I can lift my hand, I can do that much, you have to supply the feeling though. And so woodenly, mechanically, thrust my hand into the one outstretched to me. and when I did, an incredible thing took place.

A current started in my shoulder, raced down my arms, sprang into our joined hands and then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes. It was then and only then that I was actually able to say, I forgive you brother I truly do, with all my heart. You see, it's in those moments when we really forgive somebody that the weight of a thousand pounds on our shoulder finally leaves. The truth is we must forgive because we have been forgiven. Forgiving is a choice. Aren't you thankful Jesus chose to forgive you.

So Embrace the truth, talk to each other, trust each other, forgive each other and finally, let God do the work.

God specializes in healing the broken. God specializes in making things that are dead come alive. The true greatest commandments in all of scripture are that we love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. And then love our neighbor as ourselves.

We love God, we love each other. When you look at the vertical of that loving God and the horizontal position of loving each other, you realize that it makes a cross. It's at the very intersection of those two things... when you're right with God and you're right with man, there comes a peace that passes human understanding. And it's at that very intersection that we find the secret to healing broken families and that's simply the restoring grace of God. There's a particular type of art that the Japanese that makes. I'm a big fan of their culture.. It's a fascinating culture over there. One of the particular styles of art that they use is a process called Kintsugi. I don't know if you've ever heard of it or not, but here's what happens. When a valuable bowl or vase breaks, the Japanese don't throw it away. They send it to a Kintsugi artist. Instead of hiding the crack they carefully put the pieces back together, using a very special lacquer mixed with gold. A real piece of this pottery is incredibly expensive mainly because not only is it real gold, there's not a single duplication of any single piece of Kintsugi ever made in history because every broken, shattered vase creates a new design. So instead of hiding the cracks, they carefully put the pieces back together. Every fracture, every shattered edge, every broken piece is all filled with this beautiful gold lacquer

When they are finished, something really amazing happens. That bowl that was once shattered and damaged and almost thrown away actually becomes more valuable than it was before it was broken. The cracks tell a story of gold and that that gold declares that which was broken has been fully restored. I want you to think about your families for minute. Every family has cracks. Every family is broken in some way, some in small ways, but some in very deep ways, betrayal, addiction, divorce, abuse, years of silence. And

many people believe the lie that once something is broken, it can never be whole again. But God is not in the practice of disposing of anyone. He's in the business of restoring. So, where we see damage, God sees a testimony waiting to happen. Genesis 3 with Adam and Eve shows a family that was broken apart because of sin that entered, blame that followed, shame that appeared, relationships were fractured but God didn't walk away from Adam and Eve, he came walking in the cool of their day not to destroy them, but to restore them. And ever since that moment, God has been in the business of gathering broken pieces. And throughout scripture broken marriages, broken parents, broken children, broken Kings, Broken lives. God just keeps rebuilding. And then one day, God took all the brokenness of humanity and placed it on the shoulders of his son and broke him as well. On a cruel rugged cross called Calvary. It's at that cross where the worse fracture in human history became the greatest healing ever offered. Jesus didn't hide his scars after the resurrection. He kept them because healed wounds tell a story

Maybe this morning, your family life is shattered, your relationships are broken, trust is gone, words were spoken that you can't take back. years have passed and there's this distant feeling among you. Would you please remember this. If you don't hear anything else, broken never means finished in the eyes of God. God specializes in putting families back together, not by pretending cracks never existed, but by filling them with his grace. And sometimes the gold that God uses to heal a family is simply one person willing to begin, one person embracing the truth, one person starting the conversation, one person choosing to trust again, one person offering forgiveness, one person letting God do the work that only he can do

And maybe God brought you here today because you are meant to be that person. I believe God can heal your broken family. And I also believe God can be the catalyst of that process to begin.

God, we give our families to you. Heal that which has been broken, put back together that which has been shattered. We know that you have the power to do it, so Lord, may we work like it depends on us and pray like it depends on you. It's in your hands now Lord, we love you.

It's in the name of Jesus that we pray.