



FIGHT

FOR YOUR FAMILY

DECLARING WAR ON OUR SIN

JAN 30 - MAR 1

(1) "Pride"

HIGHLIGHT: *Romans 12:1-3 NLT*

H

Below are excerpts from the overall passage for use with the APPLICATION and RESPOND. It will be beneficial for the group to read the whole passage to understand the entire context.

1 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. **2** Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

3 Because of the privilege and authority God has given me, I give each of you this warning: Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us.

EXPLAIN

E

The purpose of this section is to deepen everyone's understanding of the Word.

Patrick Morley, in *Man in the Mirror*, recounts the tragic deaths of Dr. Phil Littleford and his twelve-year-old son, Mark. They had finished a successful fishing trip in Alaska and started to take off in their seaplane. Too late, they discovered one of pontoons had been punctured and was filled with water. The extra weight threw the plane into a circular pattern, and within moments careened into the icy morning sea and capsized. They all began to swim for shore, but the rip-tide countered every stroke. The two men alongside Phil and Mark were strong swimmers and they both made shore. They last saw Phil

and Mark as a disappearing dot on the horizon, swept arm-in-arm out to sea. Phil could have made the shoreline, but that would have meant abandoning his son.

Then Morley asks, “What father wouldn’t be willing to die for his son? If we are willing to go so far as to die for our children, why is it that we often don’t seem willing to live for them?”

The tag line for the FIGHT FOR YOUR FAMILY series is *Declaring War on our Sin*. Yes, we will fight for our family. But the “enemy” is not always the other person. Sometimes we are the ones sabotaging our families (or any other relationship in which we find ourselves) with noxious sin—often unrecognized, maybe more often just ignored. This week we look at “pride”—perhaps the root of all other sins since it puts us in opposition to God (see James 4:6).

Romans 12:1-3

When reading Romans 12 it doesn’t take long to realize that Paul has moved from the realm of *formal* theology (the doctrine and teaching) to the realm of *functional* theology (the effect that the doctrine and teaching should have on my living)—in this case, healthy relationships. A healthy family (or any relationship) begins with *me*, not the other person. I need to peel back the veneer and see what’s underneath my skin.

v.1 The issue here is WHO’S IN CHARGE? Have I **given my body to God**? There’s no doubt as to the importance of this decision—I **plead with you**. You cannot effectively fight for the health of any relationship without starting here—who has the reins of your life? Have you “willfully reserved the totality of [your life] for the Lord’s good purposes” (Chuck Swindoll)? If you haven’t done that, you will be inclined to live your life according to the “selfish ambition of your heart” (James 3:14). While there has to be that one definitive decision to **present [myself] as a living sacrifice (ESV)** based on **what God has done for [me] (the mercies of God [ESV])**, I must repeatably affirm God’s ownership of my life because living sacrifices have a tendency to crawl off the altar. So, if I’m going to fight successfully for my relationships I have to make this relationship with God a “sold out” one—the **kind [God] finds acceptable. That’s truly the way to worship Him.**

v.2 The issue in v.2 is WHO AM I? Am I the one who **copies the behaviors and customs of this world**, or the one who **lets God transform [me] into a new person**? The “world” Paul is speaking of is not the physical, geographical location of where we live. It is the “anti-God” philosophy of Satan that surrounds this planet and attempts to squeeze us into its mold. It is *this* world that destroyed Eden and corrupted the planet. It is *this* world that made the crucifixion necessary. It is our friendship with *this* world that makes us “enemies of God” (James 4:4) and empties us of the “love of the Father” (1 John 2:15-16). It is *my* devotion to the behaviors and customs of *this* world that serves as a catalyst for turmoil in my relationships.

I don’t have to work at being part of the problem. It will happen unless I make the conscious decision to **let God transform [me] into a new person by changing the way [I] think**. This is the power of Christ living in me (Galatians 2:20). It is the only way to effectively fight for our families (Romans 8:6 and Colossians 2:8-10).

So, who am I? Friend of the world (destroyer), or friend of God (builder)? Molded by the anti-God, secular world, or transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit? Allowing God to change the way I think will make

me a champion in the fight for my family. Only He can change this deceptive heart of mine (Jeremiah 17:9) into one that is **good and pleasing and perfect**.

v.3 The issue for us in v.3 is AM I READY TO FIGHT FOR MY FAMILY? We are called to make an honest evaluation of ourselves—**don't think you are better than you really are**. Paul was originally **warn[ing]** these relatively new Roman Christians against the danger of **think[ing] [they were] better than [they] really [were]**. It seems that this warning was tied to “spiritual gifts”—and the potential pride they could generate in people. Paul talked about this extensively in 1 Corinthians (1:10-13; chapters 12 and 14). Warren Wiersbe says, “Nothing causes more damage in a local church than a believer who overrates himself”—whether in regards to spiritual gifts or building relationships. Paul reminds us that whatever gift we may have, whatever role in life we play (mother, father, husband, wife, supervisor, laborer, teacher, student, friend)—these are all good gifts given by God (Rom. 12:4-6) to be used to build up people, not to put on display for “bragging rights”. Gifts are not our trophies. Gifts are given by God (grace, not because of merit) so that we may be *His* trophies (James 1:16-18). Pride destroys relationships. **Evaluate yourselves honestly**. Whatever the relationship—family or otherwise—remember that that other person is loved by God just as much as He loves you (2 Corinthians 5:16-18). That's the way you truly fight for you family.

APPLY

A

Be comfortable with some silence as people think back to the sermon or reread the text. Answer honestly. You don't have to answer every question.

1. What stuck out to you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text?
2. Share an example of your pride causing damage in a relationship (family, work, etc.).
3. In multiple places, God commands us not to love or copy the world (Romans 12:2; James 4:4-5; 1 John 2:15-17, etc). What are some implications this has for you and your family?
4. What do you think about most often? In the morning and evening, to what does your mind naturally turn?
5. What are some of the ways that God has changed the way you think? Be specific! As a group, pray a prayer of thanksgiving for God's work in your lives.

RESPOND

1. In verse 2 Paul says, "Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think." List a specific behavior, thought pattern, or worldly custom that may be a struggle for you. (Some examples: lying, gossip, discontentment, laziness, love of money, watching movies/series that celebrate sin, sex different from God's plan, etc.). How can you surrender this to God this week? Be specific. Create an action plan to help with this. It may take radical amputation as Jesus talks about in Matthew 5:27-30. Share this with someone in your life group so that they can help and pray for you.
2. As we grow in our love for God, we should begin to look more and more distinct from the world. That's what it means to be holy (set apart, *different*). A growing love for God will change the way we love and treat others (including our families and even our enemies), it will change the music we listen to, it will change the shows we watch, what we do/post/search for on social media, the way we party/celebrate, how we spend our time, the way we give advice, and so on. In what one of these areas can you focus your attention in order to change? This week, journal and pray about that one area. For example, if you watch a series on Netflix, Hulu, or some other streaming service that celebrates sin, why are you still watching it? Journal about that and pray for God's help in changing.