

Sermon Study Guide



#11: Failures and Failings

HOME: Finding Redemption in the Messiness of Life

June 21, 2020 | Dr. Stephen G. Tan

In this series we look at the life of Jacob to help us identify the sin issues that cause messiness in life and dysfunction in the family, and how we can find redemption in these messes.

Reflect

Was there a time when a loved one's failings caused problems and heartaches for you and your family? How did it affect you?

Read and Discuss

Scripture

Genesis 33:18-34:31

Discussion Questions

After a heart-warming reunion between Jacob and Esau, tragedy happens. In this part of Jacob's life we see five areas of failure that can cause dysfunction in the family:

1. **Failure to set boundaries (v. 34:1-2).** As parents, what boundaries have you set for your young or adult children to reduce the chances of them falling into a terrible situation? If you are an independent adult, what personal boundaries have you set for yourself to protect you from harmful and messy circumstances?
2. **Failure to take the right action (v. 34:3-7).** What happens when parents fail to rebuke and discipline their children "because of love"? How could being a passive member of the family lead to dysfunction in family life? Think of a situation wherein how you act will significantly have an effect on you and/or others around you (i.e. your child is being bullied or a bully; anomalies in the workplace; cheating classmates, etc.). What significant guidelines do James 4:17 and Isaiah 1:17 provide in doing the right thing?
3. **Failure to tell the truth (v. 34:8-24).** Lies and deception create problems and complications which are hard to control. In our Asian family culture, it is quite common to see issues being swept under the rug rather than admit there are problems and dysfunctions in the household. Are there any "family secrets" that you should be upfront with to your

children (taking into consideration their age, of course)? Why is it always beneficial to always be truthful, done in love, in all your relationships even if the truth hurts?

4. **Failure to control emotions (v. 34:25-29).** What happens when you fail to control your emotions, especially pent-up anger? What could an angry person be capable of saying or doing that he/she may eventually regret when the anger subsides? What happens if that person has justified that anger in his/her mind? Read Galatians 5:16-24. How does the Holy Spirit help you in this situation?
5. **Failure to identify confused priorities (v. 34:30-31).** In the family culture you grew up in, what do you hold in highest priority? Why are most people, even Christians, so absorbed in taking care of their reputations that they neglect to care for the needs of their families? Read Matthew 6:33 and Luke 12:34. What is the outcome if the priority of your life is to glorify God and honor Him in the way you live?

Respond

In Walk: No family is perfect, but when we demonstrate Christ-likeness and honor God in our homes, then the way we treat each other would be glorifying to the Lord. This also is true for our other relationships (friends, classmates, co-workers). What actions can you do or what attitudes do you need to develop in order to demonstrate Christ-likeness towards your family members (or friends, classmates, co-workers)? Commit to start today.

In Prayer: Heavenly Father, it is sobering to realize that my failures as a member of my family can devastate not only me, but my whole family as well. May You give me wisdom on how I should deal with failures and failings in my family. May the Holy Spirit fill my heart and my family's as well so that our problems will not get out of hand, but will be resolved with Your help. May my priority be to glorify You in my life, so that the things I say and do will be honoring to Your name and edifying to others. In Jesus' name. Amen.