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to flourish*

GENDER IDENTITY IN LIGHT OF GOSPEL IDENTITY

STUDY  
GUIDE

# WEEK 3: FATHERHOOD AND MOTHERHOOD

## 1 THESSALONIANS 2:7-12

Family is the most foundational building block of human existence. Before the dawn of creation, God existed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It follows, therefore, that when God set-up the world, He created image-bearers who were not solo individuals but reflected the very nature of God himself, a family! God would reflect his own nature in creation by forming Adam and Eve to exist as a human picture of the God who is family. Adam and Eve would relate to God the way a child relates to a Father, which reflected the Father and Son relationship within the Trinity.

God's first command to Adam and Eve post-Garden was to "be fruitful and multiply" and grow their family by bearing children. Children were a gracious gift to Adam and Eve, yet they carried with them the sinful nature inherited from their parents (Psalm 51:5). The task of parenting therefore would carry with it a weight of responsibility to disciple children well (Deut. 6:4-8). The rest of the story of the Bible is a display of many peaks and

valleys in the realm of parenting, with plenty of family dysfunction.

Understanding the roles of fathers and mothers, therefore, is essential to grasping the meaning of human nature. The family was created to reflect God's glory and each member of the household was created to be a blessing to one another. Yet we also know that in a sinful world, brokenness in family life aches more than perhaps anything else. When a father abandons his family, when a mother overburdens her children, when children dishonour their parents, another generation suffers the consequences.

Yet the Gospel offers good news for each and every father, mother, child and family. Through the death of Jesus on the cross, family dysfunction and sin can be overcome. Fathers can be redeemed to reflect God the Father's leadership and character. Mothers can be forgiven and restored to reflect the meekness and gentleness of Christ. And children can turn from rebellion to obedience by the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **MEMORY VERSE**

**Deuteronomy 6:6-7**

*And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.*

## **BIBLE READING PLAN**

<b>MONDAY</b>	<b>DEUTERONOMY 6:1-25</b>
<b>TUESDAY</b>	<b>1 SAMUEL 1:1-28</b>
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<b>PROVERBS 4:1-27</b>
<b>THURSDAY</b>	<b>MATTHEW 3:13-27, JOHN 5:19-24</b>
<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>EPHESIANS 6:1-4 COLOSSIANS 3:20-21</b>
<b>SATURDAY</b>	<b>2 TIMOTHY 1:3-7; 3:10-17</b>





# POST SUNDAY STUDY CONTENT

1. Ice Breaker: What are some of the common images of fatherhood in our culture today? What about motherhood?

2. Read 1 Thessalonians 2:6 – 12. Paul is describing his pastoral intentions to a church he cares deeply for. In the process Paul discusses some ways that he behaved as a mother and as a father to them. In doing so, Paul gives us some helpful images of motherly and fatherly qualities that are worthy of his emulation as a pastor. What motherly qualities did Paul emulate when relating to the Thessalonian church (1 Thess.2:6-8)? What key words or concepts jump out about the qualities of a Godly mother?

3. What fatherly qualities did Paul emulate (v. 9-11)? What key words or concepts describe the qualities of a father?

4. The qualities listed by Paul are not simply personality traits, but are unique qualities of how men and women ought to relate to their children or people under their spiritual care. As you assess your life, in which of these qualities do you need the most growth?

5. Paul says that he acted as both a mother and a father when shepherding the Thessalonian church. When are there times it is appropriate for men to take on a more motherly role? When are there times it is appropriate for women to take on a more fatherly role? When might it be inappropriate?

6. If you are not a parent of your own children, in what ways can you function like Paul and become “like” a father or mother to kids, youth or younger adults than you?

7. As a group, think of Biblical examples of fathers and mothers and discuss where you see these qualities or lack of in each.

8. Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Ephesians 6:1-4 and Colossians 3:20-21. What primary responsibility has God given to parents in the raising of their children?



