

CREW Bible Study

Youth XP3 Message Series – FAMILY MATTERS – Week 4

- **BOTTOM LINE:** It matters to have more people than your family.
- **GOAL:** To help students understand that widening their circle of family to include a few significant friendships and mentors is helpful.
- **SCRIPTURE:**
 - *Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan had taken a great liking to David and warned him, "My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there. I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I'll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out. – 1 Samuel 19:1-3*
 - *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching. – Hebrews 10:24-25*

MESSAGE

Remember those first few weeks of the coronavirus pandemic? We were all quarantined inside our homes, trying to keep COVID-free. Was it just you and your immediate family spending all of that "quality time" together back then? You, your parents, your siblings, your pet...and that was it? We were all told to keep to ourselves, to restrict who we were with, where we went, and what we did.

Eventually, some of the restrictions lifted a bit and people started to expand their circle. Did you? Did you have a "quaran-team?" Did you have a small group of friends that you could hang out with in person, trusting that they were following the same COVID guidelines as you?

Widening the circle from just immediate family to include a few close friends was helpful for many at that time. It lessened the stress of being isolated. It felt good to share the burden of what was happening. And it still does.

Spending time with just a small group of people is recommended to control the virus. But you know what? Regardless of COVID, that small group of people is a really good thing to have. People outside of your family that you can trust. People outside of your family who let you be yourself. People outside of your family who have your back and you do the same for them.

There's a story in the Old Testament of the Bible about two friends who had this kind of friendship. They both came from pretty crazy families, so when we talk about needing a small group to trust, these guys knew all about that! God brought them together, widening the circle for them at a time when they needed it.

In the book of 1 Samuel, chapter 18, we hear about Jonathan, the son of Saul who was the current King of Israel. And David, who was anointed by the prophet Samuel to be the future king. In any other situation, David and Jonathan would have never been friends. They really should have been rivals since they both had a claim to be the future king. Jonathan was in the bloodline of the family and would have been up next. But David was chosen by God and anointed to claim the throne. And when that happened, he came to live in the king's palace.

Despite all of the drama that could have come between them, David and Jonathan became close friends and they made a pact with each other to always be there for one another.

Although King Saul initially was impressed with David as his successor, he eventually became incredibly jealous of David. And Jonathan heard that he had plans to kill David. Listen to this in 1 Samuel, chapter 19, verses 1-3....

Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan had taken a great liking to David and warned him, "My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there. I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I'll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out.

So, Jonathan talked to his Dad about all of the good things David had done. And surprisingly, Saul changed his mind! Verse 6 says.....

Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath; "As surely as the Lord lives, David will not be put to death."

Unfortunately, a bit later on, Saul changed his mind again. But the big point here is that Jonathan came through for David. Even though David was in line for the throne, taking what would have otherwise rightly been Jonathan's place, Jonathan was an incredible friend to David.

- He cared about David.
- He looked out for David's life, for his future and his wellbeing.
- He saw potential in David's life.

All of us need people like that in our lives. People who care about us and accept us no matter what. People who we can text when we've had the best week ever, or when life isn't going so well at all. People who care about us enough to tell us when we've done something we shouldn't have, or need to rethink the choice we made. People who see something bigger in us than we see in ourselves. And as followers of Jesus, people who will encourage us in our relationship with Him.

Can family do this? Absolutely! But it's good to widen the circle a little bit outside of family to fill in the gaps that happen sometimes. It's good to have people in your life who care about you like family even though they aren't related to you.

This is one of the reasons why Jesus established the church. So often we think of "church" as a building. But that's not what Jesus meant by this word. He meant "church" as a group of people uniquely connected by a love and commitment to Jesus and what He taught in His messages. Jesus established the church because He knew that we needed other people in our lives.

The writer of Hebrews in the New Testament says it this way in chapter 10, verses 24-25....

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

So, what does this look like in your life right now?

1. **Focus on who.** Who are the people you can seek out to widen your circle of family? Who are the people that look out for your best interests and see potential in you? Who will be honest with you when you need it? Who encourages you to follow Jesus? Do you already have these people in your life? If not, ask God to show you who these people are.
2. **Make them a priority.** David and Jonathan made a pact with each other. They made each other a priority in their lives. If we want people to be involved in our lives, and vice versa, we need to make them a priority. Be with one another, for one another.

Widening your circle with a few people who feel like, act like, and love like family can set you up for a better future. And they can push you to make life with your own family better too. Family matters, and it matters to have more people than your family.

FAMILY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. During the early days of the COVID quarantine, who did you spend time with? Did your "quaran-team" include anyone outside of your immediate family? If so, how did you determine who would be "safe" to hang out with?
2. Do you ever find yourself wanting to be a part of someone else's family? Why?
3. When you hear the story of David and Jonathan, do you relate to any aspect of their friendship?
4. Jonathan cared about David. He looked out for him and saw potential in him. Is there someone besides your family members who does this for you? Do you do this for someone else?
5. What do you think of when you hear the word "church"?
6. Read Hebrews 10:24-25. What does this description of the church imply?
7. David and Jonathan made a pact with each other. They made each other a priority in their lives. If we want people to be involved in our lives, and vice

versa, we need to make them a priority. Be with one another, for one another. Who have you neglected to make a priority? What needs to change in order to do this?

8. Our small groups in CREW Youth Ministry are meant to help widen the circle of family. Are you involved in a small group? If not, email pbentley@vbumc.org to get connected in one.