

## Identity Wars study 4 – The Family Kingdom

Can you recall a special time in your life when being with your family created precious memories? What is it that makes being together with family so special? *Traditional food, stories, laughter, singing, seeing relatives that you haven't seen for quite a while, gifts.*

What does the term *family ties* mean to you?

The family circle was designed by God as a place of safety,

- a place where we would always find comfort and where our true identity would always be known.
- You are usually yourself around family, accepted for who you are, even if you make mistakes.

The family name. What is it about our family name that inspires us and gives us a sense of identity? *Charles Brookes = pulled over by a highway patrol officer for speeding. Asked, 'What is your name, son?' When told, the officer replied, 'Your father has a good name around here. You should protect the honour of that name.'*

Jesus opened for us a vital picture of the kingdom of God when He taught us how to pray.

- Matt 6:9 *Our Father, which art in heaven ...*

Why didn't Jesus say, 'Dear God' or 'Your hallowed Majesty' or 'Dear King'? (And how come nobody in old Testament addressed God as "Father"?)

- Jesus was laying the foundation for our understanding of the kingdom of God: that it is a family kingdom. The implications are far-reaching.

The first time the Father speaks to the human race is in Matthew 3:17. What is significant about His words at the baptism of Jesus? Who was Jesus before His incarnation? What had He accomplished?

- *Creation, opened the Red Sea, given the law in awesome splendour from Mt Sinai and led Israel into the Promised Land. In His divine fullness, He had demonstrated before men and angels that He was the great I Am, the Word of God and Prince of Heaven,, able to accomplish great things.*

But here at the baptism, God lays out the foundational principal of His kingdom with His words to the observers at the baptism when He proclaimed, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

At the time of His baptism, Jesus was beginning His public ministry as Emmanuel – God with us – as one of us. In His introduction of His Son to the world, God could have used many different titles.

- He could have introduced Him as 'Creator of heaven and earth: listen to Him' or 'This is your King: obey Him' – but He didn't.
- In introducing Jesus to the world He proclaimed Him as His Son, in whom He was well pleased.

This statement lays the foundation of two key elements of the relationship kingdom of God

1. "This is my Son" = Identity
2. "Whom I love; In Him I am well pleased" = Value

Compare how significance and worth are determined in the two kingdoms: God's kingdom and Satan's kingdom. The contrast between the two is profound.

God's kingdom is founded on our **relationship to Him.**

Satan's kingdom is founded on our **own successful performance and achievement** as judged by ourselves and those around us.

In the kingdom of God, He is our Father, and we are His children. This is our identity.

- We are known by whom we belong to, not by what we do.

What is it that God wants for us? He wants us to know Him, He wants us to be close to Him, He wants us to receive His blessings, and He wants us to be filled with his love, and to have the assurance that He accepts us as His children. This is the value he wants to instill in us. Jer 9:23,24

Do not be afraid, for you are worth more than many sparrows. Mat 10:29-31  
Because God is eternal, how enduring do you think His love for you is?

Jer 31:3 "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee."

**Based on the never changing fact that you are His child whom He loves, nothing can stand in the way of your eternal value.** You are the child of God, and that's that! Do you believe it?

In Satan's kingdom your value can fluctuate based on your performance, your position or your possessions.

- I.E. Stocks market after Oct 19 1987; Sept 11, 2001; GFC of Sept 2008; extremely volatile, totally insecure, bound to fluctuate from growth to crash.
- People's opinions of us can also rise and fall like the stock markets. Rumours, lies, and circumstances may change, and so will people's opinions of us.

We need a more certain foundation of our value than the opinions of people caught in the performance thinking kingdom (which is more corporation than family).

When our value is tied to possessions and circumstances or opinions, we are on the roller coaster ride of insecurity. We will struggle and risk falling into the trap of thinking that our value has evaporated, and depression will set in. This is the nature of Satan's kingdom.

Safeguard your identity and value. How?

When asked the great commandment Jesus replied, Matt 22:37-40

These two great commandments are designed to safeguard our identity and value as children of God. They are a summary of the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are a formula to protect relationships. Therefore they are relational in nature: as is God's kingdom.

- The 1<sup>st</sup> four protect or relationship with our Father, the 2<sup>nd</sup> six protect our relationship with others. If we do sin against others, we will be scared they will sin against us!
- Love is the currency of God's kingdom. Spend it freely and it will return to you in bucket loads. Matt 10:8 'Freely you have received, freely give.'

What is sin? 1 John 3:4.

- Fundamentally sin is selfishness. It is sin which destroys our relationships, identity and value. Wow!

When your value and identity are gone what do you have left? Why are so many young people depressed or suicidal? Can you see why God hates sin? It leaves us empty and vulnerable to Satan's attacks. Sin robs us of our true identity and value. God wants to restore them to us, and restore us to His family kingdom.

Mark 5:1-20 How do you think the man with the unclean spirit felt after his meeting with Jesus? New attitude! Why?

Acceptance means everything when you've experienced rejection.