

Identity Wars Study 5 – Family Crisis

[Note on the section below: This is Gavin Devlin, the original writer's experience, regarding his family crisis. It is a catalogue of divorce and abandonment, and is used to set the scene about how people who haven't had parents will find it hard to be parents when they have their own children, having had no example. In the book, the point is made that divorce utterly flips and confuses a person's life. I would suggest you use your own experience. Something like – my parents had issues, but when I realized what they went through growing up, it made more sense...]

Before I could blink my dad was gone. The trauma of the past few weeks had ended in the unexpected. Dad had left home ... never to return. Everyone knew mum was struggling and had already walked out twice; but now it was dad. He hadn't shown any signs that anything was wrong. Why did he go?

This left mum suicidal, full of shock, anger and grief, and us kids wondering what in the world was going on? Our safe place, our familiar surroundings, had fallen victim to a crisis. The pain was deep. I asked dad 40 years later how was his relationship with his father. His reply was somehow expected. He said, 'Some things are too painful to think about.' Wow! What had he been hiding all those years? A few weeks later, and my dad was gone: succumbed to cancer.

I thought about my family heritage. Grandad and his brother were fostered out several times into several different homes: Never seeing his dad again after the age of two. Taken away from their mother and handed over as a ward of the state, by request of their father, the two boys identity was blurred from early life. My dad obviously struggled to have a relationship with a man who hadn't had his own father or mother to raise him. The pressure must have got too much for him! My dad also walked out on his family. Why is it that history repeats itself so hurtingly?

Mum lost her dad as a 9 year old just after WW2. Then her husband walked out on her, leaving her to raise the kids alone. What kind of emotions, what kind of distrust, what kind of emptiness do these kind of upheavals leave a person to battle against? How can kids grow up with a sense of belonging when everyone and everything around them is in a constant state of flux?

I know for a fact that my family is not the only family to have issues, struggles and uncertainty.

The stability and comfort of the family, which God designed for it to provide, have been under attack by Satan from the beginning. No wonder most of us are hurting. With the destruction of the family comes the destruction of identity. The greatest victims, of course, are the children. An emotional roller coaster is frightening, but to jump off mid ride is devastating. We just hold on, hoping that it will all end, somehow, and we will still be in one piece physically and emotionally.

Statistics: Jim Conway surveyed hundreds of adults who were children of divorce.

- Unhappy 72%
- Felt powerless. 65%
- Felt alone. 61%
- Were afraid. 52%
- Were angry. 50%
- Felt abandoned. 48%
- Felt personally rejected 40%

- Felt worthless 30%

Being subject to divorce as children left these adults with the following issues:

- Constantly seeking approval 58%
- Block out some of their past 54%
- Judge themselves too strictly. 53%
- Take themselves too seriously 47%
 - Overact to situations over which they have no control 42%
- Still having trouble with relationships 40%

Is it any wonder God says, "I hate divorce!" Malachi 2:16

There are no winners when family relationships break down. It doesn't matter who is at fault: no one wins. The results are always devastating. Take Heaven for example. Did you know the family of heaven has been through a relationship breakdown?

- Yes, heaven was torn apart from the inside when God's first created son, Lucifer, divorced His Father.
- Unfortunately, and it is always the case, every angel in heaven was forced to take sides. As unfair as it is, it is the reality of separation when two parties are loved by everyone around them. We can't be in two places at once, so we have to choose one.
- Especially is it hard when the two parties have completely different value systems, and we have to choose which one we want to belong to.

How do you think God felt when He first made Lucifer?

How would the God of love act towards His son when he began questioning His relationship to Him?

Why would Lucifer turn against His Creator and Father?

The battle became ugly. Lies, deceit, anger and rebellion entered heaven for the first time. Lucifer's purpose was hidden from the other angels, but God knew his intention.

- John 8:44 tells us what was in Satan's heart from the beginning.
- Calvary was Satan's will fulfilled - the destruction of God's only begotten Son.
- Satan's destiny was sealed in the death of Jesus on the cross. As he judged so he would finish. His condemnation of Jesus to death will end some day in his own self condemnation and death. Ezekiel 28:18

How do you think God will feel on that day when His first angel, and all those who have followed his ways, perish? 2 Sam 18:33 gives us an insight to parental love that flowed from the Father in heaven into the heart of King David.

- Absalom's story of rebellion 2 Sam 18:1-15
- What was Absalom's relationship with David? What was Lucifer's relationship with God?

Stepping outside the safety of value by relationship leads to emptiness and a bitter end.

- Pride sets up an attitude where forgiveness can not be received.
- All offers of love are seen as attacks instead of gestures of reconciliation.
- Worthlessness compounded with pride are self destructive.
- The rebellion just intensifies and someone always suffers in the end.

Lucifer wished to return to his exalted position but pride kept getting in the way (didn't actually think he was wrong).

- He couldn't believe he could be forgiven. This forced him to openly rebel whatever the cost.

- Forsaking his sonship, he was left emotionally bankrupt with feelings of worthlessness, insecurity, fear, emptiness, jealousy, pride, self-justification, arrogance, rage, anger and a controlling spirit.
- Forsaking his sonship, he had to redefine who he was, and fill the blanks with something else. The only thing left for him, when value through relationship had been tossed on the scrap heap in his own mind, was to replace it with performance: the 'I'll show you' syndrome.

Having rejected the sonship he was created with, and refusing to bow down in worship and thanksgiving to the One who gave him life, he now became the attention seeker who wanted everyone to worship and adore him. Not because he is a life giver but because he has power to perform and manipulate things to his own end. Failure to comply with his desires leaves us as targets of his rage.

How sad that an angel of glorious beauty and privileges would throw it all away for a misplaced desire to be like God.

- He tragically ended up becoming the antithesis of God: for everything God is, Satan is not.

[This part can be shared or not shared, check first if you think it works]

Consider the words of this song from the movie called the City of Angels.

Verse 1

Spend all your time waiting for that second chance, for a break that would make it okay
 There's always some reason to feel not good enough, and it's hard at the end of the day.
 I need some distraction or a beautiful release, memories seep from my veins
 Let me be empty. Oh and weightless and maybe I'll find some peace tonight.

Verse 2

There's vultures and thieves at your back. The storm keeps twisting, you keep building the lies
 That you make up for all that you lack. It don't make no difference, escaping one last time.
 It's easier to believe in this sweet madness. Oh this glorious sadness that brings me to my knees.

Since Satan had rejected relationships as the basis of worth, he could never establish a kingdom based on relationships. What option was left to him? He had to set up a kingdom based on what you can do rather than who you belong to.

This kingdom could never work if everyone acknowledged that all life, wisdom and love come from God. To counter this Satan came up with the 'power within' theory. This theory reduces God to a force, replaced by our own force within us.

- The pressure to perform within this kingdom is immense. The end result is conflict and stress, depression and death. We seek positions of authority, we want to show our power to control and we desire pleasure as a release mechanism when the stress of performing builds up too much. Please yourself, is the motto of Satan's kingdom. Just do it!

This kingdom is doomed from the start because we do not possess life within ourselves. We may use the gifts of life and strength and abilities to 'do our own thing' but at the end of the day we will face the inevitable destiny of taking our last breath. What then?

When face to face with our Father in heaven, we will come face to face with the reality that we have rejected the life, love and hope He promised us from the start. Our own sense of worthlessness, guilt, self-condemnation and fear will crush us as we exclaim like Cain, 'My sin is more than can be forgiven.' Here we learn the truth in the proverb, "There is no rest for the wicked."

The paradox of wanting to live apart from the life Giver, while desiring to live forever, will prove too much for each person trapped by the deceitful lie of the Serpent that 'You shall not surely die.

- Without any self sustaining power of life, we shall perish under the weight of our own self deception.

The Garden of Eden promised so much to humanity. We were invited to walk in harmony with the life Giver, but alas, the swallowing of the lie that we have life in ourselves has left us empty and doomed. We live on a planet full of people running around insanely trying to build their own little kingdoms before they die. Trying to form some sort of identity without a foundation to build it on.

No wonder Jesus shared these words which are the answer to every empty and forlorn heart:

" This is life eternal, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent." John 17:3

Find God and His Son, and you will find your true identity, value, and peace within.

The crisis will be over when your value is restored in Christ. God invites us to join His family and find our true identity. The decision is ours. Amen