



23 OCT 2022 | PS ERNIE SONG | FAMILY: LOVE IN THE MIDST OF IMPERFECTION | GENESIS 1-3, JOHN 10:10, REVELATION 21:1-5

SPIRITUAL OBJECTIVES

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

- a. Acknowledge that we are weak and not righteous, and to repent of our ways that block our relationship with God; and
- b. Commit to strive towards holiness and wholeness, so that our families, parenting and marriage will be blessed.

SERMON SUMMARY

#1 The Design of the Family (Genesis 1-2)

In Genesis 1-2, God created Adam and Eve – the first family unit. God designed this family unit to rule and reign on the earth ([Genesis 1:28](#)). Adam and Eve, together, were meant to be God's representatives (Image-Bearers) to all of creation. Though they are equal, Adam and Eve each reveals a different aspect of God to creation.

#2 The Fall of the Family (Genesis 3)

The serpent redefined the family (approached Eve, not Adam), and tempted Eve to be self-centred (do whatever you want!). The serpent tempted Eve to disconnect herself from the Source of life – God. This opened the doorway for pride, conflict, shame, etc to enter into the family unit; not just Adam's family, but every generation after Adam. That is why family life today is imperfect and at times destructive.


#3 The Hope of the Family (Revelation 21:1-5, John 10:10)

Christ's work on the Cross bought us not just salvation but freedom and wholeness because we are once again reconnected to the Source of life. As a result, we can draw out of God's goodness and righteousness to do family life. Though we still live in the imperfection as a result of sin, the return of Christ will bring forth the full restoration of the family unit.

SERMON RECAP

#1 The Design of the Family (Genesis 1-2)

In Genesis 1-2, God created Adam and Eve – the first family unit. When man was created (male and female), God gave them a mandate – God designed this family unit to rule and reign on the earth ([Genesis 1:28](#)). "It is not good" that man should be alone ([Genesis 2:18](#)). Even though Adam was in perfect communion with God, it was still not good. Part of being human is the ability to relate, not just with God but with one another because God is a relational God.



Adam and Eve, together, were meant to be God's representatives (Image-Bearers) to all of creation. Though they are equal, Adam and Eve each revealed a different aspect of God to creation. This is also why as Christians; marriage must be between a man and a woman.

#2 The Fall of the Family (Genesis 3)

The serpent redefined the family (approached Eve, not Adam) - breaking God's designated order by bypassing the head of the house. In cleverly combining lies with a distortion of facts, the serpent tempted Eve to be self-centred (do whatever you want to do!). Sin happened when Eve decided that she was going to bypass authority and Adam remained passive. The serpent tempted Eve to disconnect herself from the Source of life – God.

This opened the doorway for pride, conflict, shame, etc to enter into the family unit; not just Adam's family, but every generation after Adam. The family is forever damaged and is imperfect because of this act of disobedience. That is why family life today is imperfect and at times, destructive.

The consequence of sin is that we will fail in our roles as image bearers. This is evident in the desire in some quarters to redefine the family, marriage and gender. These lead over time to disastrous consequences in many societies in the West, where the institutions of family and marriage are under increasing strains.

Scripture tells us that towards the end times, the world is going to become darker. This is the environment that our children will be growing up in – an environment that is the consequence of the Fall. So, where is the hope for the families today?

#3 The Hope of the Family (Revelation 21:1-5, John 10:10)

Christ's work on the Cross bought us not just salvation but freedom and wholeness because we are once again connected to the Source of life. When we have a thriving relationship with God, we receive life – grace, love, righteousness, long suffering, wisdom, etc... everything we need for life and godliness. As a result, we can draw out of God's goodness and righteousness to do family life. We can become the Image Bearers we were meant to be to our children, to our spouses, to our parents, and to our siblings.

Though we still live in the imperfection because of sin, the return of Christ will bring forth the full restoration of the family unit. As the days get darker, Ps Ernie exhorts that the Church and the Family are the last line of defence against the advancing kingdom of darkness. We need to stand our ground, taking our God-given roles and responsibilities in the family seriously, because we are fighting for every generation after us.

Through Christ, we have authority (which was lost in the Garden of Eden because of the Fall) over the works of the enemy. Christ bought for us healing, not just physical, but spiritual and emotional. We can be free from our bondages and the consequences of sin - past hurts, the imperfect ways we were brought up, etc. Through Christ, we can overcome our own pride and insecurities to live free from bondages and strongholds. Therefore, the best gift we can give to our family is a "whole" self – one that is whole and free, actively connected to the Source of life, that is Jesus Christ! When we are whole, our families will benefit.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Ps. Ernie shared some findings from a survey conducted with our youths in MegaLife. Does it surprise you? How can you, the cell and the Church respond to the challenges revealed through the survey?**

Leader's Notes

This is a recap and ice-breaking question for members to ponder over the importance of this sermon series on family and why the Church should actively express its stand amid pressures to do otherwise.

Ps Ernie highlighted some findings:

- 61% of MegaLifers have no connection to an older generation in the church
- 12% hate their siblings
- 20% wish they had grown up in a different family
- Only half of MegaLifers feel their parents are good role models for marriage
- Only 34% agree that their parents are good role models of what a Christian should look like
- 43.9% wish their parents are more empowering.

Ps. Ernie also shared some of the noteworthy comments from MegaLifers:

- "Pls don't work so hard come home. 😊", "Can you turn off your screen time..."
- "I am going through a hard time...", "I don't trust you enough to tell you my full life..."
- "I hope y'all can recognise that you too need to improve, not just us..."
- "You can't love your kids if you don't love your spouse..."
- "Please stop leaving the dishes in the sink..."

Leaders can ask members to share on their hopes and fears for the family in the societal context and on a personal level as revealed from the MegaLife survey. Ps. Ernie issued a challenge for all of us to consider and commit to: if we steward our families well – this includes singles, the generation after us will be blessed. In the coming month, the following will be given to RiverLifers as aids in this journey: -

- a. Self-Reflection Guides on 23 Oct, 6 Nov & 13 Nov 2022 (linktr.ee/rlcsg.pulpit)
- b. Podcast episodes on issues regarding the family, marriage and parenting (6 Nov & 13 Nov 2022)
- c. Movie/documentary Screening: Irreplaceable on 6 Nov 2022, 11 am to 12.30 pm (rlc.sg/nov-reg).

Transition

Singapore today will be very different from the Singapore of tomorrow when our children grow up. What will the future hold for them? With all these socially pressuring choices available to them, how will they stand in the future? The family can be something that holds firm amid the chaos and messiness that enfold in society. If we are committed to putting the family as an important priority of our Christian walk, the following questions can be the approach we take to strengthen our families!



2. Ps Ernie reminds that “we are not righteous” and “we are weak.” In our family life, what does this mean for us as spouses, parents and family members?

Leader's Notes

This is a reflect question for members. Many nowadays have unrealistic expectations of family life to be perfect or good. When things do not go well, they depend on their own strength, wisdom and “goodness” for their parenting, marriage and other family relationships. We are however not righteous, and we are weak – see [Isaiah 64:6](#). By ourselves, we cannot. Yet through Christ, we can! We should lay our imperfections such as blame-shifting, broken relationships, loss of identity, mistrust, me-centredness, etc at the feet of Jesus. Repentance from these sins are therefore key to the restoration and healing that God wants for His children. We also need our spiritual community to help us in this journey.

Transition

Turning away from the corrupting influence of sin and towards the redemptive grace of God is the first step towards achieving in our families what God intends for His children – see [Genesis 1:28](#). We need to be “whole” in Christ to see and enjoy the blessings of our family, parenting and marriage!

3. It is said that “the best gift I can give to my family is my wholeness.” Share with the cell on ‘what is the next step that I can take in order for my family to have a “whole” me?’

Leader's Notes

This is a reflect and response question for members to share about what they can do to contribute to a healthier and God-honouring family life. Sin affects us and infects others. Many conflicts are the result of the pride and unhealthy self-will. Oftentimes, our earthly desires cause conflicts in our family relationships. The break in the relationship with God (that is, oneness) negatively impacts all aspects of our family life. Drawing closer to God allow us to rely and tap on God’s infinite store of love so that we can have freedom and wholeness. God’s grace, righteousness and goodness can then flow in our families!

Closing

As we focus on Biblical principles as applied in the areas of our family life, let us encourage one another on this journey. We live in between the “already but not yet.” In Christ, we can have a glimpse of what is to come in the future, even as we work through our imperfections in the here and now.

WORKS

Consider dividing the group into micro-groups for a deeper time of sharing as well as praying for the following items:

1. Sermon Application

- For God to help us acknowledge that we are weak and not righteous, and to repent of our ways that block our relationship with God
- For us to strive towards holiness and wholeness, so that our families, parenting and marriage will be blessed!

2. COVID-19 in Singapore

- Pray for God's protection in the midst of an increase in community cases

3. World

- A swift end to the COVID-19 crisis globally, if not a reduction in cases in third world nations, and a stable environment where humans and virus coexist.
- Pray for peace especially in areas of conflict (Ukraine) and potential conflict – China & Taiwan.

4. Opportunities for Outreach

- Ask the Lord to grant you opportunities to reach out to a non-believing loved one, friend, or colleague this week as we seek to mature in Christlikeness.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Digital Bulletin: rlc.sg/bulletin

1. Nov-Dec Church Calendar

- 13 Nov – Christmas Gear Up (Service extended for 15 mins)
- 13 Nov, 11 am – Workshop: How to Share the Gospel in 5 Mins
- 13 Nov, 2.30pm – Water Baptism Service
- 20 Nov, 11am – 377A Forum: Future of the Family
- 03 Dec, 4.30pm – RL Cares Community Outreach
- 17 Dec, 2.30pm – RL Cares Community Outreach
- 04 – 25 Dec – Christmas Evangelistic Services

2. Current Pulpit Series – Family Matters.

In this series, we will explore issues concerning family, marriage and parenting. Our desire is to see families of RiverLife strengthened and be God's light in this nation. This series is relevant for all as it also explores the role of one's spiritual community in strengthening the families within RiverLife.

- *Series Details*
 - 23 Oct – The Imperfect Family
 - 06 Nov – Thriving, Not Surviving
 - 13 Nov – The Arrow Makers
- *Beyond the Pulpit*
 - 23 Oct, 6 & 13 Nov: Sermon Self-Reflection Guides (Link: linktr.ee/rlcsg.pulpit)
 - 6 Nov: Irreplaceable Movie / Documentary Screening (Link: rlc.sg/nov-reg)
 - 6 & 13 Nov: Podcast Episodes to explore topics in regards to family, marriage and parenting.


3. Leaders Advance 2022.

3-5 November. More details and registration here: rlc.sg/la2022

4. Global Hunger Fund.

This fund will go towards RLC's mission partners to help their local churches and communities gain access to food amid soaring costs. Refer to the [Digital Bulletin](https://rlc.sg/bulletin) for more details.

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5. **Children's Day Book Gift Sets.** Missions from Home (MFH) are selling children's day book gift sets to help families in Myanmar with food and necessities. Link: rlc.sg/mfhm-book
 6. **RiverLife Kindergarten**
 - RLK has vacancies for Chinese Teachers. If you wish to apply, please send your resume to Mrs Tan Oi Leng (oileng@riverlifekindergarten.org.sg).
 - RLK are looking for volunteers for their Annual Concert and K2 Graduation. Full Dress Rehearsal – Thu, 10 Nov, 8am-1pm. Concert & Graduation – 12 Nov, 9am – 12pm. Contact: 65114168
 7. **Updated Safe Management Measure.** Mask wearing for indoor worship services and religious classes is now optional. All worshippers and performers can sing and play instruments without wearing masks.
 8. **RiverLife Missions Upcoming Trips.** Signup: rlc.sg/signupformissions.
 - Arise and Shine Church Pastors & Leaders Conference. Pangasinan, North Philippines. 9-14 November. Cost: \$800.
 9. **Call for Musicians and Vocalists.** The Worship & Music ministry is on the lookout for musicians and vocalists – keyboardist, electric guitarist, bassist, drummer and singers. If you are interested, you can sign up at rlc.sg/serve. Do note that an audition will be required before joining the ministry.
 10. **Call for SuperLife Volunteers.** If you have a heart for children and a desire to disciple them in their spiritual journey, come be a part of the SuperLife team. Sign up at rlc.sg/serve. Immediate needs:
 - *SuperLife Primary Teacher* (Serve twice a month. Facilitate small group discussions after each Bible lesson, connect and pray with the children, be involved in SuperLife Ministry events, etc.)
 - *Special Needs Chaperone.* (Serve twice a month. Provided 1-1 support to children with special needs and help facilitate an inclusive environment between children with and without special needs.)
 11. **F&B Related Ministries Recruitment.** We're looking for RiverLifers who love connecting with new people and enjoy cooking and serving. Team members will serve once a month. For more details Karen Koh (Welcome Lounge) at karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg and Jonathan Cho (The Café and Volunteers Corner) at jonathancho@riverlife.org.sg.
 12. **Technical & Production (TAP) Ministry Recruitment.** The TAP ministry comprises five teams – audio, graphics, lighting, sound and video – and they all work as one in partnership with the Holy Spirit to support an atmosphere that allows the congregation to encounter God. We are now opening up recruitment for this ministry. If you desire to take the next step in your walk with God through starting to serve, we invite you to sign up to explore serving in one of the five TAP teams. You may sign up online at rlc.sg/serve or refer to our [digital bulletin](#) for more details.



13. **RiverLife Community Services (RCS).** In 2021, RCS focused on providing relief to families who were badly affected by the pandemic. We believe that in this season, God is calling RCS to build loving families and strong communities. Listed below are opportunities where you can serve or give to RCS:

- You can serve as a volunteer in one of our programmes to befriend and build relationships with children, youth, mothers and lower-income families. Find out more here: rlc.sg/rcs2022.
- You can sow by contributing financially too. Your giving will go into initiatives such as grocery distributions and various programmes that will help our beneficiaries build resilience and break free from the poverty cycle. Find out more by writing to RCS at office@rcs.org.sg.
- RCS is also looking to partner with organizations (donations of essential items – toiletries, wearables, etc). To find out more, write to us at volunteer@rcs.org.sg.
- RCS is looking for 20 Food Collection Helper/Driver that is able to help with the loading/unloading of fresh food items at blocks where we are reaching out to. Commitment: Minimally once a month for 6 months, Saturdays, 12-4pm. Contact: rlcares@rcs.org.sg.

14. **RiverLife Podcast.** The RiverLife Podcast allows you to listen to RiverLife content anytime, anywhere! The link to go to is rlc.sg/podcast or simply search '**The RiverLife Podcast**' on Spotify.

15. **Spiritual Growth Resources.** We have put together a curated list of recommended resources for the RiverLife family. These resources (books, articles, podcasts and videos) are recommendations for the various spiritual growth stages as you seek to grow deeper in the River of God this year. You can access them at rlc.sg/resource. This list will be continually populated throughout the year.

16. **Cradle Roll.** Our Cradle Roll is open from 9am to 10.30am every Sunday for children 24 months and below. *NO booking of tickets is required.*

17. **Prayer Ministry.** If you require prayer ministry for any issues you face (eg. unforgiveness, demonic oppression, etc), you can sign up for RLC's RTF ministry: <https://bit.ly/rlcrtf>

18. **Bible Reading Plan.** You can access our 2-Year Bible Reading Plan 2021-2022 by visiting: <https://rlc.sg/brp2021>.

19. **Testimony.** If you have a testimony to share, you can write to us at stories@riverlife.org.sg to share with us your testimony as an encouragement to others.

ONLINE GIVING TO RIVERLIFE CHURCH

Contribute your tithes and offering digitally:

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RiverLife Church Bank Account: *DBS Autosave*
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Bank Code: 7171 / Branch Code: 029



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