

Fiction Family And Factual Family

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[0 : 0 0] This morning, I'm going to talk about fiction family and factual family. Okay? Fiction family and factual family. A lot of little alliteration there.

So, you've heard me say before that probably one of the more disillusioning things is to have the language of family without the experience of family, right? Okay, so we have the language of family.

We talk about family as we should. Okay? Talk about the church being a family as we should. We're getting that from the Bible, right? The danger with people talking a lot about family would be that there's areas where we're not living like family, or we're not experiencing family as much as we're talking about it.

And that's not to say, when I say that, we don't have to think in like extremes, whether it's just all family or not family. We can have certain experiences of family, and then others where it's just like, well, this could be a little better.

We could experience this more. We could, you know, do this better. Okay? And in talking with different people, I've heard a little bit of that. You know? It's like, yeah, this is good, but we could do this better.

[1 : 1 1] I want to get to know each other better, get more deep. It was even prayed. Someone even prayed it. I think Zemir might have prayed it this morning in our prayer time, just praying that we would be a family together and experience more of what that looks like.

And the fact that there's areas where we can improve on that and grow in that, that's nothing to be ashamed about. That's nothing to feel condemned about in any way, shape, or form. That's just part of being a church together.

We've got to grow in that. We've got to be intentional in that. And it doesn't happen without being intentional. It's not like you just sit around and, oh, yeah, family just happens. No.

We have to be intentional to really relate to each other in the right way and to be obedient to Jesus, really. And when we're obedient to Jesus and all the little things, the bigger thing of family starts coming together.

So we want to get this right. It's important that we get this right because part of the good news of the gospel is that God is a father who sent his son so that we could be adopted into his family.

[2 : 1 4] Okay? And there's implications of that. So the question would be really, how do we make sure that our experience of family is real family, not just kind of a family in name only kind of thing?

And it's important to start with the fact that sonship produces brotherhood. The gospel creates family. Okay? Because Jesus adopted us into his family, that now makes us family with each other.

Right? Also makes us family with God, of course. But it's not just that we're now family with God. It's not just that he just adopted us into his family. All his kids adopted into his family are brothers and sisters.

Right? John chapter 1, 12 to 13, To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Okay? There's some people in here who are blood brothers or sisters, like that they lived in the same flesh family. Okay? But all of us who are in Christ are automatically brothers and sisters.

[3 : 21] All right? And so when God reconciled us to him and adopted us into his family, that automatically, when you came to Christ, that made you a brother or a sister with all the other brothers and sisters.

And specifically, more specifically, more practically in the local church that you're a part of. So it's really important for us, for us to experience family, to think of ourselves in that way.

1 Timothy 5, 1 to 2 says, Don't rebuke an older man, but encourage him as you would a father. Younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters.

Excuse me. And all purity. Okay? So there's this, when you're rebuking someone or encouraging them, you should treat them like family.

And one thing I was looking at that I was honestly a little surprised about looking in the Bible is that from the book of Acts to the book of Revelation, so taking out the Gospels because the Gospels talk a lot about natural family, but through Acts, Acts to the book of Revelation, the word brother is used 256 times.

[4 : 39] I didn't realize that it was actually used that much. It's like you almost kind of take it for granted when you're reading through the epistles and you're reading through the book of Acts, but it's constantly being used.

Paul's constantly calling someone a brother. He's calling someone a sister. Starts in the beginning of the letter. He's like, hey, this letter's from so-and-so and so-and-so, our brothers.

At the end, he's like, hey, say hi to so-and-so, our sister. And you just see this language. I didn't realize it was so littered, but once I started reading all the verses, I was just thinking, my goodness, this is really pervasive.

And there's something to be gleaned from that. Not only that, but also even just thinking of the concept of Jesus himself being our brother. If Jesus himself is our brother, which says in Romans 8, 29, those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Okay? If Jesus calls his brothers, you know, in Mark chapter 3, Jesus, they said, hey, your mom and your brothers are here. And he said, who are my mother and my brothers?

[5 : 54] He said, he who does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother. So, you see this language here. He's the firstborn among brothers. He calls those who obey him, his brother and sister and mother.

Hebrews 2 says, he's not ashamed to call us his brothers. All right? And Hebrews 2, 17 says, he has to be made like his brothers in every respect so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Isn't it interesting that God, you know, he doesn't have to earn any kind of stature or trust with us. He's God. Right?

He could have just came in quote unquote, you know, kind of like guns a blazing, so to speak. Like, I'm God, you're not. Like, you do what I say and I don't really care what you think. I'm God.

But Jesus comes to earth and he's made like his brothers in every respect. Isn't that just an incredible thought to think? Why did he do that?

[6 : 58] Why would, why was he made like his brothers and then called us his brothers so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God to make propitiation for the sins of the people?

I mean, it basically says he came into our world. He took on flesh. The word became flesh and dwelt among us, right? So he could be a faithful high priest so he could know what we go through.

You know, you can never say, well, Jesus, you're just this distant God who has no concept of what we go through because you're God and then we're, you know, humans living this earthly experience in a broken world.

You can never say that because Jesus lived in this broken world. Jesus truly was our brother and still is our brother and that he took on, took on flesh and he was made like his brothers in every respect so he might become a merciful and faithful high priest.

Now, if God himself became a brother instead of just trumpeting, hey, I'm God and I'm Father, how much more should we when we relate to one another should we begin the experience of family relating to one another as brothers and sisters?

[8 : 12] Okay? So really for those two reasons that I just laid out. One, because that's where we always start with the gospel. The gospel is the framework. The gospel is the foundation.

That's what we build upon, right? We build upon Christ and the gospel reconciles us to each other and makes us family members with one another, makes us brothers and sisters. Okay?

And then second, Jesus himself related to us like a brother and came into our world like a brother and we should do the same thing. We should love one another like brother and sister.

And so I think oftentimes if we want the quality of family, we have to start there because that's what the gospel does. It gives us the right to be called children of God and if I'm a child of God and you're a child of God, that means we're brothers or we're sisters or we're brothers and sisters depending on who we're talking about.

Okay? Jesus, or the Bible, New Testament has some more commands about this. Basically telling us to love like brothers. Romans chapter 12, verse 10 says, love one another, how?

[9 : 19] With brotherly affection. And then it says, outdo one another in showing honor. Okay? Love one another with brotherly affection. So we should be affectionate with one another.

How? Like a brother would be. Like a sister would be. That brother-sister, brother-brother, sister-sister kind of affection. We love each other in that way.

Do you love that way? Do you think of that? Say, okay, when you relate to the people in this room, when you come on a gathering like this morning, you think, okay, this person that I'm now seeing face to face, that's my brother.

That's my sister. But what if they're, you know, what if they're way older? What if they're way younger? Yeah, there could be some other different dynamics that take place. You know, it says in 1 Timothy 5, don't rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father.

But, for starters, we're all brothers and sisters. Even your own blood father or mother, if they're in Christ with you, you're brothers, you're sisters in Christ because you're both children of God.

[10 : 25] And so, we should be thinking if we start in that place, number one, that brings us in unity with one another because we're all thinking the same thing. We're all relating the same way. Hey, I'm going to come in, I'm going to hug someone.

Why? Because the Bible says love one another with brotherly affection. And I say, well, my brother never hugged me. Well, your brother needs some work. Okay, he shouldn't. He shouldn't.

Okay, so love one another with brotherly affection and outdo one another in showing honor. 1 Peter 1, 22-23 says, having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart since you have been born again not of perishable seed but of imperishable through the living abiding word of God.

So, you've been born again? Have you been born of imperishable seed through the living and abiding word of God? If that's true, then what do you do?

Then you should love one another with a sincere brotherly love. A sincere brotherly love. Notice it says, this one adds another word.

[11 : 36] It doesn't just say a brotherly love or affection. It says sincere. Okay? If we're just going through the motions and there's not sincerity, we'll have the lingo, we'll have the language but not the experience and that will, that'll cause people's hearts to take a nosedive.

All right? It has to be sincere. Well, where does that sincere love come from? Well, you don't have to try to muster up in yourself and I would actually encourage you not to try to muster up in yourself because newsflash, you can't.

There's nothing in you that can love. You want to shipwreck the love of this church, try to do it on your own. Try to do it in your flesh. The good news is that Jesus lives inside of you and Jesus loves everybody perfectly.

Jesus is a good brother. Okay? Jesus loves with the right affection. He loves with familial affection. And when we die to ourselves and die to our own experiences and die to our own preferences, you might say, well, I don't like to be affectionate.

Well, Jesus does. So Paul said, I love you with what? The affections of Christ. Christ is affectionate. You might say, but I'm not. Well, you've died.

[12 : 48] It's no longer you who live. It's Christ who lives in you. We're just talking, Seth was just talking about this yesterday at Workman's Trust. Okay? So if it's no longer you who live, then the one who lives through you is sincere.

The one who lives through you is loves with brotherly affections. And so you might say, well, I'm not good at that. I got good news for you. You don't have to be good at it. No one asked you to be good at it.

The Bible just asked you to get out of the way. Die and let Jesus possess you. Let Jesus move through you, work through you. So that when we leave a service, we don't say, oh, so-and-so, such a great person.

We say, Jesus is so great in his church. To him be the glory. He loves people well. Okay? The result of you being born again is sincere brotherly love.

Why? Because you now have another person living inside of you who loves with sincere brotherly love. That's why those two are implicated together. And, because you're born again, all the other people who are born again are now your brothers and sisters.

[13 : 55] Automatically. 1 Peter 2.17. Peter goes on and he says, honor everyone. And then he says, love the brotherhood.

Love the brotherhood. Okay? So this is going, this is, you know, again, another kind of nuance on this. Love the brotherhood. Love the fellowship that you have together as brothers.

Love the fellowship and you could do the same thing with sisters. Love the familial fellowship you have. Love this bond you have. Love that. So this is not saying love each other.

This is saying love the bond you have with one another. Love the fact that you're brothers and sisters. Love that. Love this collection of people and when you, when you care about that, when you love the brotherhood, it's, it's not just loving those individual people because you could do, you could love a brother without loving the brotherhood.

Do you understand what I'm saying? The brotherhood is more than that because that's you loving the connection, the bond together and saying, this is important. I need to do that.

[15:02] But I can't do that if I'm not relating to people as brothers and sisters. I can't do that. And to the degree that I'm not doing that, I'm hindering church as family and I'm creating kind of a fictional family instead of a factual family.

Family, in fact, that is when we love the brotherhood. We love that bond and we say, I'm going to do what I can to love as brothers and sisters.

And I'm not just going to only do guys with guys and girls with girls because that gets weird. I want to love, guys are going to love sisters well. Sisters are going to love brothers well. That's important. Sometimes that's not as easy.

Sometimes it's easier. It really doesn't matter what's easier or what's harder. It just matters that God has reconciled to him, given us the right to be called children of God, which makes us family, which makes us brothers and sisters.

And that has to be the basis by which we build. That has to be the basis by which we relate to one another. He goes on, this third verse in Peter, 1 Peter 3, okay, we have 1 Peter 1, 1 Peter 2, now in 1 Peter 3, verse 8, he wraps up, he says, finally all of you have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.

[16:20] Okay? So he's, Peter's really hammering this one. Three chapters in a row, he's like, hey, you guys getting this? I'm going to keep saying it. Like, why does he keep repeating it?

Well, Peter obviously believed that this was important, right? And even more so, God thought it was important because he's writing scripture. Okay? So he starts with a sincere brotherly love, he says, love the brotherhood, and then he culminates there in 1 Peter 3, verse 8, with having a unity of mind, sympathy, and brotherly love.

Are you united, are we united, in mind, to be brothers and sisters to one another? Starting there. Like, let's time out on the father-mother thing and all that kind of, and the different authority or hierarchy and all this stuff.

Like, let's just, we're going to talk about some of that stuff. But again, don't get distracted. You have to start here. Brothers and sisters, brothers and sisters.

Am I a good brother? Are you a good sister? Are you a good brother? Do you know how to love that way? Do you know what the Bible says about that? Are we seeking to be that to one another and to be that way sincerely, to be that way consistently?

[17:33] And we can worry about all the other dynamics. Okay? Even, you know, even in marriage, you can worry about these things. But again, at the basis, are we relating, even in our marriages, according to the gospel?

Like, this is, like, the Bible even says, relating to your wife as heirs of the gift of life. Why is she an heir? Because she's your sister. She's part of the same family, the same inheritance.

And so, we need to relate to one another as brother and sister. Peter writes about this, again in his second letter, 2 Peter chapter 1. Probably familiar with this portion of scripture.

Verse 3 says, His divine power is granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. Through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises.

So that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. for this very reason. Make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue and virtue with knowledge and knowledge with self-control and self-control with steadfastness and steadfastness with godliness and godliness with brotherly affection and brotherly affection with love.

[18 : 57] Okay, so he's saying you need to make every effort to supplement this. You need to make sure this is a part of your daily life, your interactions with the other people, that you are adding brotherly affection kind of into your repertoire, into your tool set.

And then in verse 8, he says, if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Have you ever thought that actually not having brotherly affection for one another would keep you from being effective and it would actually put you in a place of unfruitfulness in your knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ?

This is true. Why? Because whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins.

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligently to confirm your calling and election. For if you practice these qualities, you will never fall. For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

[20 : 11] Okay? So, he's saying if you lack these qualities including brotherly affection, it's a nearsightedness, it's a blindness that comes from forgetting that you've been cleansed from your former sins.

Do you ever say, I'm having a hard time relating to my brothers and sisters as brothers and sisters. I'm having a hard time having brotherly affection for them.

Why is that? Well, it's because you've forgotten. You've forgotten that you've been cleansed from your past sins. You've forgotten that you were cleansed from your sins and they were cleansed from your sins by the Father which makes you family and makes you brothers and sisters.

And when you forget that, it becomes harder to relate with them because then you're stuck only relating to them on similar interests and similar background and similar personality.

And then we have these weird, awkward conversations about stuff we really don't even care about. And the great thing about being in Christ together and remembering that Jesus reconciled us to the Father and made us family with one another is there's a couple things.

[21 : 25] One, we now have a common interest in Christ and we can relate with what the Bible calls it the fellowship of the Spirit. We have fellowship in the Spirit which is deeper than any kind of fellowship we could have over anything.

You know, over liking the Chiefs or, you know, over, you know, having same hobbies or whatever it may be. Being the same gender, being whatever it may be.

Same age. There's a greater bond that happens when we relate to each other and in fellowship with one another by the Spirit. But here's the other thing and this is one that I don't think we think about as much. It's not just that we have that although if we only had that, that'd be pretty good.

That'd be pretty awesome. It's also that when you realize that you've been cleansed from your past sins and you've been made family with one another, you begin to enjoy even the things in other people that you normally wouldn't enjoy.

Why? Because you know that they're your brother or your sister. Like, for those of you who grew up with a brother or sister, did you ever start to like the same things as them just because they were your brother or sister even though at first you didn't like it?

[22 : 34] I mean, I remember that with my brother sometimes even with music. He'd listen to music and I'm like, bro, why are you listening to this? This music sucks. Don't listen to that music. And then because I love my brother, I want to get into it because he's my brother.

And it's maybe not my favorite music in the world but he's my brother. And if he likes it, I like liking it with him liking it. You know? Because that's fun. And that's what affection is.

Affection is like the lubrication of relationships. It's like the oil of relationships that keeps the engine from getting overheated and causing friction between you two. Which can happen with brothers, right?

Happen with sisters, happen with brothers and sisters. But when there's affection, that keeps that relationship, the pistons of that relationship moving in a way that there's not friction.

And then you can even actually enjoy things that maybe you wouldn't normally get into. Why? Because that's my brother. That's my sister. And you know this has happened when you see that.

[23 : 38] You know, we know what this looks like with a little kid, right? When you see a little kid and there's natural affection that rises up, you kind of just want to squeeze them, right? You just want to hug them or squeeze their cheeks.

I'm not saying you're going to do that with each other but there's something similar that happens in your heart. It's not, you know, the same way that it is with a baby but it's the same kind of affection where you see them and you're just like, I'm really glad to see them.

And even though they're very different than me, even though they might think differently, they might be different age, they might be different gender, they might have different background, different gift mix, just different, all these kind of things, I actually feel affection for them because that's my brother.

That's my sister. And I want to give them a genuine, sincere, good squeeze hug because I really, not because that's my religious familial obligation but because I have genuine, sincere, brotherly or sincerely love for them.

And maybe you've experienced that some, maybe you've experienced that a lot, maybe you've never experienced that in the context of church and maybe you have a hard time believing it's possible or maybe you're just having, maybe you have experienced it and you're having a hard time believing it's possible in this church.

[24 : 57] And if that's the case, I want to encourage you and exhort you to actually repent of your unbelief because are you actually saying that the God who reconciles us to one another and adopts us into his family can't make us family to the point that we actually have genuine affection for one another?

That's kind of a slap in the gospel's, the gospel's face. You know, like God literally gives this to us and we're just going to say, no, I don't believe that then you could actually make us have real affection for one another?

That's such an affront to the gospel of grace. That's such an affront to all that he's done and that's why it says those who've forgotten are nearsighted and blind. And so they relate to one another in blindness.

We can't do that. So that begs the question though, and I told you I'd get to this, well, what about, what about, okay, that's brother-sister stuff. What about father-mother stuff?

I mean, come on, Paul, right, Paul's using the language of father. So what about that? How does that work? Well, let's look at it, okay? Let's look at it with Paul with Timothy, Titus, and Onesimus, okay?

[26 : 03] Three different men that he related to and talked about a little bit more often than some of the others. First one with Timothy, okay? In 2 Corinthians 1 and 1 Thessalonians 3 and Philemon 1 and in Colossians 1, all four of those books, he refers to Timothy, he uses this phrase, Timothy, our brother.

Timothy, our brother, okay? Did you know that, that he referred to Timothy as his brother? Because we know that he referred to him as his, in other ways, right?

In Philippians 2, 22, he says, you know, Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father, he has served me in the gospel. In 1 Corinthians 4, 17, he says, Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, I'm sending him to you, okay?

He calls him his child. And then when he writes to Timothy specifically, in 1 Timothy 1, 2, and 1, 18, he says, Timothy, my true child and Timothy, my child. And then when he writes the second letter to him in 2 Timothy, he says, Timothy, my beloved child.

So what is it? Well, it's both. It's both. You can have someone who is your child or you can relate to someone as father, but that's sometimes, not all the times, you always, always can relate to one another as brother or sister.

[27 : 27] And you don't see any place in Scripture where there is a referring to someone as a father, where there's also not a referring to one another as a brother. And in Timothy here, Paul clearly was a spiritual father.

Okay? He had a fatherly role in his life for sure. That's clear. Okay? But there's multiple instances of him also calling him our brother.

So it was both and it really should start there. It gets, things get really weird when a person tries to be someone's father or mother without first relating to them as a brother or sister.

Because there's not that trust there. there's not, that's the basis for what this happens. What is the basis? It's the gospel. For you to be a father or a mother to someone is a very noble thing and it should happen in some instances and at some time.

Especially as you get older, that should happen, be more common. Okay? But it's going to be really weird if it doesn't first start with the gospel and the fact that we relate to one another as brothers and sisters.

[28 : 33] And the better you can be, this is my opinion, and I've seen it play out in a lot of ways, but I think the, I believe that the better you can be at loving one another with brotherly love and loving each other as sisters, the more likely it's going to be that people will receive you eventually someday as a father or a mother.

Because that's what builds the trust of that. That's what builds the foundation of that. And if we get those things out of order, things get weird. Okay? So, that's got to be, because we're in the early stages of our church, of this church, we have to make sure that we're building on with that.

Building first with father, sorry, with brother and sister, affection and love for one another, right? Same thing with Titus. 2 Corinthians 2.13, Paul calls Titus his brother.

But then in Titus 1.4, when he writes a letter to him, he says to Titus, my true child in a common faith. Do you see? Same thing as Timothy. It's both. When he's writing to the Corinthians, okay, which is one of the first letters he wrote, he says, my spirit was not at rest because I did not find my brother Titus there.

That's what he said. But then when he writes to Titus later on in his life, he says, Titus, my true child, my true child. Okay? It was both. Paul didn't just relate.

[29 : 58] He wasn't just this guy who only related to his father. He still related even to people who eventually were, or maybe even early onward, true children of his, he related to his brother. And he did the same thing with Onesimus.

In Colossians 4.9, he calls Onesimus our faithful and beloved brother. And then when he writes to Philemon, he says, I appeal to you for my child Onesimus whose father I became in prison.

Okay? So in prison, he developed this relationship with his brother Onesimus that turned into a father relationship. And then he appeals for Philemon because Onesimus was Philemon's slave, his bondservant.

He says, to relate to him as a beloved brother, especially, because that's how he's become to me, a beloved one, a beloved brother to me. But how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord?

Okay? So he's wanting him to relate to him as a brother. He's appealing. Relate to Onesimus as your brother, even though he's your bondservant. Relate to him as a brother.

[31 : 07] A lot of this comes down, gets, a lot of times what ends up getting mixed with this is the whole concept of authority. Okay? When authority gets in the mix, it's like, oh, can I relate to someone as a brother or sister if they're in authority?

Yes. And, when is there authority and when is there just influence? Let's look at this because this, I think, it impacts things. It's like, I think that sometimes we get confused with how to relate to one another.

Right? So let's look at this. What's the difference between authority and influence? There's people who have authority in our life and we have to listen to them. Right? A great example would be like when you're a kid, your parents.

You know, Ephesians 6 says, children, obey your parents. Right? Kids, you guys heard this many times? Children, obey your parents. Like, yeah, okay. you might have sometimes when you don't want to obey your parents, right?

I know you guys all want to obey your parents, right? Max, Charlie, never had that happen before where you didn't want to obey? Right, right. But, okay, but if you did, let's, hypothetically, if you actually didn't want to obey your parents, would you have the option to not obey your parents?

[32 : 22] No, you have to obey them, right? Otherwise, your parents have the authority to discipline you because they're, Max's like, yeah, okay, because they have authority.

It's not, you can't, like, prefer, like, well, you know, I prefer not to obey my parents and then you're just going to get away with it. No, because they're your authority, all right? Someday, you're going to leave your father and mother and start your own family and when you do that, they don't have that same role in your life anymore.

Hopefully, they wouldn't be spanking you at that point so everything's good there. Um, but they still have strong influence on you, okay? And I think that's important to remember.

There's some people who have authority in your life and then there's some people that influence you, especially for kids. Your parents have authority over you and then there's other people who have influence and you should respect, right?

But the kids don't relate to them in the same way. You know, they should respect other adults. They should, they could see other adults having even a certain level of influence in their life that's stronger than maybe other adults, but they don't have the same authority that the actual parents have.

[33 : 34] The parents have different authority, okay? So there's parenting authority. There's also elder authority, right? In a church you might have specific fathers and mothers, but then you have fathers who are elders in the church.

They have an office of eldership that carries with it authority, not just influence, but authority. Hebrews 13, 17 says, Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who have to give an account.

Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. 1 Timothy 5, 17 in the NIV speaks of the elders who direct the affairs of the church, okay?

So, in a church there's going to be people who have influence and then there's going to be people who have authority. Those are two different things.

If you relate to someone who has authority in just a way that, oh, they have influence in my life, that's going to be a problem. Just like if you related to your parents that way and just said, well, I'm not really going to relate to them as authority.

[34 : 36] Let's just say, Dad, you're a strong influence in my life. I don't think I'd go over too well right here with Max and Charlie. I keep using you guys as an example, but you're just a great example for this.

So, if you confuse those two, it's not going to go well. When someone's an authority in your life, they should be an authority. You should treat them like an authority, and they should act like they're an authority.

When someone's an influence in someone's life, they shouldn't act like an authority, and you should treat them like an authority. That's an important thing.

Same thing with apostolic authority. In 2 Corinthians 13.10, Paul, which he's writing about his apostolic authority, says, for this reason I write these things while I'm away from you, that when I may come, I may not have to be severe in my use of the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.

This is always a good reminder. Authority is given to build up. That's the purpose of authority, is to build up. So, apostles and elders have authority in the church, okay, and we should respect that authority, we should submit to that authority, and then there's also going to be people who are aspiring to leadership or aspiring to eldership, right?

[35 : 53] 1 Timothy 3, 1 says, this saying is trustworthy. If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, overseer meaning the same thing as elder, he desires a noble task, okay?

So, he's saying it's a noble thing to aspire to eldership. In this church plant, I would hope that there would be multiple men who would be aspiring to eldership, okay?

That's a, the Bible says, hey, that's noble. That's a good thing. You should do that, right? So, aspiring to eldership is a noble task, but someone aspiring to eldership, to aspire to eldership doesn't mean you treat them like they are an elder, and it doesn't mean they take on the authority of an elder.

Aspiring to eldership means that I try to become the kind of person that has influence like an elder, and then hopefully when the influence is there and recognized, it becomes a no-brainer when that person ends up becoming an actual elder.

But where does that influence start? Relating as a brother or sister, right? Relating as a brother or sister. When that trust of being, relating to one another as a brother and sister happens, it becomes a lot more natural to be fathers and mothers.

[37 : 06] And make no mistake, the church needs fathers and mothers. fathers. That's why Paul said in 1 Corinthians 4.15, though you have countless guides in Christ, you don't have any fathers.

And he said, I became your father in the gospel. Okay? So what kind of father did he become? Did he become like a natural father where now he has, you know, that when you get someone saved, all of a sudden you have authority over them?

No. But when you lead someone to Christ, you have influence over them. You become their father in the gospel. Okay? If you have someone where you love them like a brother and a sister, and then through that you start to source them in discipleship, you start to teach them what Jesus has commanded, what ends up happening is you start gaining influence in their life, and maybe they start to relate to you in a more fatherly way.

Okay? You never assert like a fatherly authority, but hopefully you have fatherly influence. Even someone who has the title of elder or apostle should be very selective in how often he asserts his authority.

Should always try to win influence through relating to people in that familial way. Okay? I have been an elder now for 13 years, and elder or slash apostle, church planter in those 13 years.

[38 : 26] Okay? And very rarely do I say, hey, because I'm an elder, this needs to happen. I'm always, always, always trying to win trust.

I'm always trying to get into people's lives, serve people, and win influence so that the authority is recognized because there's buy-in, there's sincere brotherly effects to him.

I think so often we think, well, the influence comes from a title. no, no, no, no. Influence comes from loving one another like brothers and sisters.

The best, most effective leaders weren't someone that just got conferred a title, and we know how this is. You've seen this in business, you've seen this in churches, when someone just gets conferred a title and you're just like, who's this person?

They don't know anybody. You see this in war movies where you see all of a sudden so-and-so has this authority position in the platoon or whatever, and you're just thinking, this guy has won no trust with any of the soldiers.

[39 : 40] He hasn't laid down his life for any of them. He's not served them. He's not been in the trenches with them. Now, he has a place of authority, but he doesn't have respect and he doesn't have influence.

That's honestly the worst kind. The best kind is the kind of authority that's real authority, but that would still have the same influence even if the title was removed.

Because behind that authority is real serving, is real brotherly affection, is real brother and sister relationship. Does that make sense? And that's what we should fight for.

And that's what you should always fight for, even if you would get a title someday, or an office or a position. Let's say some of you men become elders in this church, you would never want to rest on that.

You would never want to just say, well, because of that, that's the deal. No. We always want to build trust, build that rapport and that influence that comes from being someone who cares enough like a brother or a sister.

[40 : 41] Or like a father or a mother. Because when you get into those things, it's like that's more of a fatherly, an elder should be a father, an apostle should be a father. Okay? But he's first a brother, just like Paul was.

Right? It's like Paul was with Titus, Timothy, Onesimus. And so, you can see the difference here. There's parenting authority, elder authority, apostle authority.

I forgot one. There's also Bible authority. Here's one other authority that we can have. Okay? This is an important one. So you might not have a parenting role in someone's life where you're like they're your kid or you're an elder in the church over them.

Okay? But you can come to anyone, older, younger, and you can speak with the authority of the word of God. You know, if someone was in an affair in this church, you have full authority to say, you must repent.

It's like, hey, you can't take authority over me. You're not my elder. It's like, you're right. I'm not. But Jesus happens to have a lot of authority over you, and he's the one who said in his word, you know, the Bible says in the word that this is adultery and you can't do that.

[41 : 56] You must repent. Okay? So there's authority in the word of God. Now, when we claim authority in the word of God, you know, over things that aren't really in the word of God or these disputable matters that can get weird really fast, but when we're talking about there's a lot in here that's not disputable, right?

We all have authority, all of us. I don't care if you're a man or a woman. I don't care if you're young or old, right? We have authority to call people to obedience to Jesus, obedience to the word of God, and there's an authority in that, and you can speak authoritatively on that, and you should.

You should. That's important. But it's important to sometimes we can do that and then think, oh, well, then I have the world that, you know, I could say, hey, you must move to Raytown.

It's like, well, hold on here. I mean, you just kind of overstepped it. But if I say, hey, yeah, you must repent of adultery, yeah, you do. You need to repent of adultery if you're an adult. Those kind of things.

So in closing, what do we do with this? How do we respond to this? Five quick things here. I'm just going to read through. Number one, seek to grow in brotherly love and affection.

[43 : 11] Seek to grow in that. Okay? I know we want to experience more familial relationship. I'm trying to be more specific with how we do that. It starts with just being brother and sister to one another and being creative and intentional to do that and to relate to one another that way.

Again, how can I do that? How can I start with that in every interaction that I have with people? When I see them on a Sunday morning like this, when we hang out in each other's homes or we're doing other things, when I see these people, how am I relating to them?

And seek to grow in brotherly love and affection. And know, again, remember, know that Jesus in you is full of brotherly affection, right, and brotherly love. Okay?

Number two, seek to grow in fatherly and motherly influence. Okay? Seek to grow in fatherly and motherly influence. Honestly, we should all seek to do that.

Like the goal, I mean, especially for some of us who are younger, that might be, take a little longer to get there. It's, it's, it's harder for people to relate to younger people that way. That's just makes sense, right?

[44 : 18] But you should also never think, well, because I'm young, I can never have, um, the word father in the Bible means source. Okay? It's even translated that way in some versions where it says the father of all compassion.

Some versions will say the source of all compassion because it's the same, uh, same meaning. Father means source. So young people can source older people because they have Christ.

They have the word of God, right? So even if you're younger, you can seek that, but irregardless of age, we should all seek to say, Hey, I want to become in Christ, in the spirit.

I want to become more fatherly, more motherly, right? Does that make sense? We should all seek to that. But remembering the first one though, I grow in fatherly or motherly influence after I seek to grow in brotherly love and affection, sisterly love and affection.

When I lay that foundation, then my fatherly and motherly influence will go up. Okay. Number three, men, aspire to eldership, aspire to eldership.

[45 : 22] Okay. Some of you aren't called to be elders. Okay. But even just aspire, if that is something we think that God's called you to, aspire to it. Don't just say, that'd be cool. Aspire to it.

Well, how do you aspire to it? Be a good brother. Lord, love the sisters well, love your brothers well, love the brotherhood. Okay. And even if you're not called to be an elder, still aspire to the character qualities of an elder.

Okay. That's a noble thing. Those are good things. But yeah, aspire to that. Number four, don't assert or affirm imaginary authority. Okay.

Don't try to, that's the shortcut, right? Right. The, the, the temptation for a church plant is to try to shortcut things. It was just like, oh, can we get going on this?

Like, I just want to, I want this experience of family faster. And so we try to shortcut it by, you know, pressing things that take a lot longer and we're trying to speed them up.

[46 : 26] And so we try to force them or assert them. And we try to, we start relating to each other in weird ways. It's like, there's no shortcuts in this. There's no shortcuts. You can't go any faster than the pace of relationship.

You can't. You can't go any faster than the pace of relationship. And I know, just as you do, that sometimes that's frustrating. Sometimes you wish there was more brotherly sister relationship.

Sometimes you wish you had more influence. Have you ever wished you had more influence? I certainly have. Sometimes you wish, man, I wish I had more impact in this person's life. I wish I had more trust in this person's life.

I wish they trusted me more. I wish I trusted them more. Right? Sometimes it's the other way around. You're like, I love this guy, but I love this girl, but I don't really, I don't really trust them. But I want to.

Right? You can't speed that up. It's not like, well, if I just, you know. It's time. Time. Takes time. Be okay with that. Be okay with it taking time to build the trust, to build relationship.

[47 : 33] And don't try to shortcut it. Don't try to force your way into people's lives or onto people or have them to relate to you in any weird way. You know, if you're thinking, man, they just don't trust me.

Well, they should trust me. Why don't they trust me? Let the relationship determine where you're at, not you determine where you're at. I know, I don't know about you, but in my mind, I'm like, you ever think that, man, they should trust me.

But they don't. So what am I going to do? Assert my trust? Hey, you should trust me. Oh, that makes me really trust you more. I love it when you say that to me. I've never trusted you more than when you said you should trust me.

That doesn't work that way, right? So whenever I feel like someone doesn't trust me, although I'm tempted to be like, come on, man, you should trust me. That to me is kind of a dashboard light that says, hey, you got to pay attention here.

You got more work to do. But I don't want more work. Well, too bad. The dashboard of your relationships is telling you, you got more work to do. But shouldn't it take less time than this?

[48 : 42] Should? Who determines the should? Shouldn't we be farther along by now? Should we? Where do we get this should from? Where does the should come from?

How long should it take? Great question. It's not in here. You're not going to find in here where it says, well, it takes this long to build family and to build trust and to really be brothers and sisters and to raise up fathers and mothers and all that stuff.

It takes this long. But in our minds, we put times and dates, right? Sam and I were just talking about this other day.

Should we be farther along? You tell me. Is that should in here? No, it's not. If the should ain't here, then you should get the should out of your mind. Okay?

Because you start thinking things in a way that is not helpful. So, and then lastly, number five, outdo one another in showing honor.

[49 : 47] That's from Romans 12.10, which says, love one another with brotherly affection. And then it closes with, outdo one another in showing honor. You know, it's a great way to love one another like a good brother. I mean, a lot of brothers and sisters kind of like to do the opposite.

Outdo one another in showing dishonor to one another sometimes, you know, teasing and like, you know, doing all kinds of things. And now you guys can't relate to any of this, but you know, some some brothers do that.

All right. Where we're like constantly getting at each other. But the Bible says out in the same context as brotherly affection says outdo one another in showing honor. What would that do to our familial relationships and to the speed at which we get more trust and more of that familial experience?

If all of us were really intentional to outdo one another in showing honor, that if we had a good godly competition to see who could show the most honor, that's the only competition that I see in Bible that is encouraged to do among believers in the context of their life together is outdo one another in showing honor.

And if we did that in the context of brotherly affection, because that's the context he's saying this in, what would that look like? And I think, you know, none of us, myself included, any of us, I don't think any of us could say, well, I do that perfectly.

[51 : 08] I got that down. I could I don't I can't show any more honor than I already do. No, we could all do that. And if someone else is doing it more than you, then there you go. Outdo them. There's your new standard.

OK, outdo the next person and then you outdo that person and then it'll just keep going up. Amen. Amen. All right.