

False Gospels in Family Roles

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[0 : 00] Okay, well, it's good to be back preaching once again. Part number three about false gospels as we're covering it. And this is where things really heat up.

! Thank you that we have this opportunity to hear your word, to hear your wisdom.

And I ask, Lord God, that I may be a faithful vehicle of that, a faithful conduit of the mind of Christ, of the way that Jesus Christ sees the world and understands it.

Lord, I ask that you'd hold me back from saying anything that is untrue or unwise. Lord, may you give us eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to understand.

What we're talking about are things that, for many of us, might just be in a completely different wavelength than we're used to thinking. It might be hard to grasp so many things about Jesus Christ are, about the way of life that we as Christians are called to.

[1 : 20] So I ask, Lord God, prepare our hearts. I ask that you would open our eyes and let us see clearly all the good that you have in store for us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen. Okay? My name is Dave Nannery. I'm one of the pastors here. And it's been my privilege these last two weeks to talk to you about these things that we've been calling false gospels. What these things are, how they show up in our lives. That's even how, last week we learned, even churches can collaborate with them and promote them, often without intending to or without realizing it.

A false gospel, we learned, it is a story that is repeated to you or that you've invented yourself. And soon you buy into it and it just keeps circulating in your head or circulating in your gut. And it becomes one of these scripts that you run your life by, whether you are conscious of it or not. A false gospel is good news.

[2 : 21] That's what the word gospel means. It's good news that is fake. It tells you that you need something. You need something.

It encourages you to pursue it so that you can get that good life that you've always wanted and always dreamed of. And you toil away your life trying to get that false need filled, trying to get that emptiness filled, or trying to make sure that you don't lose the thing that's filling it.

But it's just a fantasy. And it's not going to save you forever from the fate you're trying to avoid. We talked last time that false gospels are always going to stunt your growth. They keep you childish. And if you're wondering, what does a false gospel look like? How do I identify it? They come in the form of longings, demands. And often the long demands, you might think of them as beginning with the words, if only.

Maybe you direct those if only's outwards. If only other people would just. And we fight and we quarrel to make those things come true.

[3 : 24] Or we just give up in resignation and resentment. If only other people would just. And they're not doing it. Or we direct them inward and say, if only I would just.

And we lose ourselves in shame and anxiety because you can't seem to get yourself to do and to be the things you think you need. If only, if only, if only, if only then life would be good or at least I'd be okay.

All the insecurities, all the anxieties, all the struggles would finally be solved. Now as it turns out, you can let these false gospels run your life.

Even as you get married, have children, raise children. Sometimes people think, if only I could get married. If only I could have children. Then they would go away. Well, unfortunately these things are like a gaping black hole that just can never really be satisfied.

And if they are running your life, what happens in our homes is that our children grow up in a home where their parents are living their lives according to these false gospels.

[4 : 32] And what happens to the children is that they have to play along with the false gospel. And if they don't, bad things happen.

And the children learn that pretty quick. And so it is that many false gospels form in the family home. Many false gospels form in the family home.

And in the counseling work I do, man, this is where things get really deep, really hard, really painful for many of us. Because this goes all the way back. Children learn very quickly what they have to do to accommodate false gospels in the family home.

And children, often they do that. They react to their parents' false gospels by developing a few of their own. This is just what we do. And that is how one generation's false gospels leads to the next. Either adopting the same false gospels or developing ones of their own to adapt, to accommodate, to survive. We would develop these, by the way, even if we were in a perfect family.

[5 : 42] The doctrine of depravity, of total depravity says, look, the human heart is a factory that produces these things endlessly. Trying to handle life our own way, apart from God.

But our tendency to receive false gospels from our parents, from our society, or to innovate them on our own, that tendency can really be accelerated in a family in which the parents are themselves enslaved by false gospels and false needs.

One of the best things you can do for your own children is address the false gospels in your own heart. And that's hard when they often developed in your own childhood, perhaps.

What happens is that children develop false needs in the form of family roles. If only I could just fill in the blank, then my dad wouldn't lose his temper.

If only I could just fill in the blank, then my mom wouldn't be so sad all the time. If only I could just fill in the blank, then someone would finally notice me.

[6 : 54] So children start figuring out their roles. Maybe you're a child whose role was to be perfect and successful. To make the family look good.

Someone your parents can point to and say, Yeah, our family looks good. We've got it together. Look at how my child is doing.

And the child starts thinking, If only I could just do more and do better. And they just keep carrying that throughout their life, pressuring themselves to do more, to do better. Maybe your role was to adopt all your parents' values and interests and opinions and moral code.

To be the embodiment of goodness and light. Someone your parents can idealize. You can be the wonder child. And then you start going through life. If only other people would be just like us.

And you pressure other people in your life to be wonderful too. Maybe your role is to take care of your parents or siblings. Comforting and solving problems and keeping the peace.

[7 : 58] And keeping your own feelings locked away. If only I could just be there more for others. Maybe your role was to diffuse conflict with humor and laughter.

You became the family clown. So that family conflicts didn't spin out of control. If only we could just not go there. If only we could just have a laugh and let it go.

Maybe your role was to be the scapegoat for the family. Sometimes families kind of choose one child to be the bad child. The one who just can't seem to go along with the family.

With the false gospel of the family. They notice problems. They bring them up. And they get accused of being the bad child. And sometimes being called the bad child becomes a prophecy.

That in time the child accepts. And it comes true. If only I could just be rid of our stupid family expectations. Maybe your role in your family was simply to pretend that things weren't that bad.

[9 : 03] Maybe to mentally check out. To make yourself small. To withdraw into fantasies. To hide away from all the trouble. If only I could just be somewhere else. If only other people would just get off my back.

There's many more we could come up with. We have infinite ways of adapting to lives in our families. These family roles. These are human ways. Of solving deeply spiritual problems.

And they. You know they'll get you through childhood. But it's not living by the spirit. It's what we. When we looked at 1 Corinthians chapter 3 last week.

We saw what Paul calls. And he uses the word unspiritual. To describe it. Earthly. Of the flesh. Handling life. Apart from God's wisdom.

And God's power. Handling life in the only way that we know how. If God is not present. Even the well-behaved good child. Can be mistaken as.

[10:08] Wow this is a good child. A good Christian kid. But it might not be. A spirit-led goodness. It might be an unspiritual. Family role. Family role. That they play out.

Because it's all about pleasing people. It's all about pleasing people. In order to. Do well in the family system. These roles. These false needs. These are child-sized ways.

Of solving God-sized problems. In our lives. And in our families. And by the way. These roles are the best we have. If we don't have the spirit.

Think in a way. You almost want to have compassion. When someone doesn't have the spirit of God. What else are they supposed to do? How else are they supposed to make it through a world. In which they are young and helpless.

But as you grow older. You are now left with a choice. Do I keep trying to live out my life. According to the role that I grew up in.

[11:07] Trying to make my way through the world. Just keep doing the same thing. And keep having the same expectations. And demands of other people. Keep having the same expectations. And demands of myself. And just keep trying to go through life that way.

Whether it works or not. Or do I rebel against the role. Do I try to carve out my own path in life. Do the opposite of everything my family expected of me. Or do I run away and hope.

Maybe a change of scenery. Will make my problems go away. Or. Does walking by the spirit. Means something entirely different.

From any of those things. Entirely different from compliance. Entirely different from rebellion.

Entirely different from escape. What if God has something better for us.

Now again to reiterate. These family roles. They become really severe in families that are racked by false gospels. By demands.

[12:05] By disorder and chaos. But even in the best of families. Children grow up adopting false gospels. So if you're sitting here thinking. Well actually I had a great family growing up. Well number one. Maybe you did.

Maybe you didn't. Remember that one of those family roles is. Acting like everything's okay. And sometimes you're so good at it. You even fool yourself. But second of all. This is true of everybody. I don't care how good your home is. This is our way of life. In the flesh. Apart from Christ. This is you.

One way or another. False gospels form in the family home. That's one thing as tough as a parent. Sometimes parents struggle with that. That like I just want to not have these things show up in our home.

And they just end up showing up. And really the best thing you can do as a parent. Is recognize them in yourself. And model for your children how you address them. Model that humility.

[13:08] Even if you grew up in the best of families. You must ask yourself this question. Who gave me my role? Who told me what I need? Who told me how I'm supposed to live?

Now. Working with counseling. I certainly read a lot of the kind of the popular doctrine of the day. The doctrine of secular therapists. And the doctrine is very simple. Your family of origin shouldn't be gods who dictate your way of life. It's time to grow up and reject the roles that you adopted to survive.

Now so far I would say okay. That's actually. We're headed in the right direction here. We're recognizing that there's a problem with this. And then things start going off the rails. The doctrine then continues.

You need to dig deep and find that inner child. That's underneath all those roles. Find that true self. The authentic you. And you need to let that out. And follow your heart.

[14:10] And discover who you really are. And how you ought to live. And set boundaries for people who try to not let you live that way. You are the master of your fate. You are the captain of your soul. And what that means is you just traded one false master for another.

You traded your parents and your family in for yourself. All you did was find a new and improved way of walking according to the flesh.

And the reason secular therapy sometimes seemed to help people is because it kind of has its advantages. You're likely to feel less demeaned and less anxious. But what's going to happen is that your true self, it is not a better God for you than your parents and your family.

We don't want human-sized gods in our life. Even if it's you. Our culture is already filled with people running around, controlled by every voice that they hear.

Every little human-sized god speaking into their life. And then just adding yourself to the pantheon as yet another voice, yet another god. That isn't what a Christian is meant to do.

[15:20] God wants something better for us than that. A Christian is not meant to trade one false gospel for a new upgraded model. God has better words of counsel for you.

God the Father calls you to something better than any false gospel. God the Father calls you to something better than any false gospel.

I want to take you through some scripture that show you the way that God perceives and thinks of these things. We'll start in 1 Peter 1, verses 14-19. Think if I remember right, David said that's on page 1014 if you're using one of the Bibles or usher's handout.

1 Peter 1, verses 14-19. And here's what Peter says. And I want you, as you listen to this, notice all the family language that he uses. That is not a coincidence.

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance. But as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.

[16:28] Since it is written, you shall be holy, for I am holy. And if you call on him as father, who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

These verses tell us what it means to be a Christian. To be a Christian means you are a child who has been adopted into a new family.

Verse 17, Peter writes that we call on God as father. You have a new father. And so, we are meant to be obedient children.

How do we do that? We do that by embracing the culture of God's family. There is a whole way of life here. Some people, what they want is, okay, just give me a long list of little do's and don'ts, little black and white rules for every single life circumstance and situation.

And you are completely missing the point. That is the way a Pharisee thinks. Rather, it's learning the mind of Christ. How does he think? Getting on his wavelength.

[18:01] Gaining his wisdom. How he processes the world. How he understands relationships. How these things feel to him. And this family culture that we're meant to dip and share.

Where children adopted into a new family. And we're beginning the process of learning this family culture. Learning this mentality and this mindset that God has. And the family culture is described in one word.

Peter describes it as holiness. Our father is holy. And he has a calling for us. And your calling is very simple. Be like your dad.

That's your family role. You shall be holy. For I am holy. What a noble calling and invitation that God would save you and welcome you into his family.

And say to you, put his arm on your shoulder and say, be like your dad. That's amazing. To be in God's family means to learn the family culture.

[19:05] The mindset that he calls holy. It does carry with it a sense of exile, Peter says. The sense that you are no longer a part of the culture that you came out of.

This not only includes the morals and doctrines of Canadian culture or of any other culture. It also includes the family roles that you learned growing up. As we read in verse 18.

You were ransomed. Bought out of the futile ways inherited from your forefathers. Those roles are not your roles anymore.

Your father has something different. Something better in mind for you. And he was so determined to save you from your false gospels and your false needs and false roles.

That he gave his own son, Jesus Christ, to ransom you. To buy you from your old slavery. With his precious blood that he shed on the cross.

[20:13] He bought you at the expense of his own life. And so now. The new Christian way of life.

Is different. From what you grew up with. You are going to spend the rest of your life learning to become what you are.

Learning to be holy. As God has already declared you holy. A member of my growth group this past week reminded me that our natural tendency is to take our own experiences with our parents.

And especially with our fathers. And to project that onto God. To feel that God is just a bigger version of mom and especially a bigger version of dad. We model the way God thinks.

We model the mind of Christ on the mind of our parents. It was in your home that your first ideas of what God is like began to form. Not just from what you were told. But even more importantly from what you experienced.

[21 : 17] So parents when they grow up telling their kids about God. But then reacting and responding to their children in a very different way from what they say. Guess which one their children will learn from.

They will learn from what they experience. Not what they are told. And now it's possible that the Lord is calling you and saying it's time to unlearn the things you have learned.

And it's never too late. You could be 70, 80 years old and it's not too late to unlearn. To learn your father's heart. To learn what it means to be his.

To learn what it means to be holy. Because being holy means belonging wholly and entirely to the Lord. You are set apart for him.

Now that's important because that means that you are not absorbed into the will and the demands of your parents. You are not conforming to what other people demand and expect and need from you.

[22 : 22] And neither are you just being your own man or woman either. Disregarding other people. Rather, you are belonging to the Lord.

A person who understands holiness. The way they speak to God is like the words of Psalm 119 verse 94. Wonderful verse.

I am yours. I am yours. Save me. For I have sought your precepts. I am yours. I am not fundamentally my family's.

I am not fundamentally my own. But with body and soul, both in life and death, I belong to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ. Save me. Save me.

False gospels will not save me. They won't get other people to save me. They won't be a way that I can finally be enough to save myself. Lord, you are the only one who can save me.

[23 : 26] For I have sought your precepts. It is your way of life. It is your role for me. It is your calling that I follow. Not my family's.

Not my own. I will learn to walk in your way. God the Father calls you to something better than any false gospel. So then, what does it look like to embrace your new role in God's family?

What does it look like to embrace your new role in God's family? What does it look like to be His? What does it look like to seek His precepts? That's a tough one.

It's hard to preach this because it's almost like we have to have this conversation individually with each person. Because of the way God has gifted you. Because of the unique circumstances and situations and relationships that He has called you to.

What's hard is I have to preach this almost like it's a one size fits all and it's really not. Perhaps a good approach would be let's look at the way that Jesus lived and taught.

[24 : 29] Let's get the hang of how Jesus, how did He respond to family pressures? How did He respond to family roles? And we're just kind of almost, we're just opening the door to take a look at this.

And to just go through that door takes so much more than what we're talking about. But just to give you a taste. How does Jesus respond to family pressures and roles?

Second, how can each one of us seek the roles and precepts our fathers have for us? So first let's consider Jesus. Because Jesus knew that sometimes the roles that we are expected to play in our families, sometimes those roles are going to hinder our ability to be holy as God calls us to be.

And embracing our fathers' roles for us, it might create conflict. For example, when the always well-behaved child starts challenging her parents, when the family clown stops diffusing fights, when the withdrawn child starts speaking up, holiness might create offense in our families.

They may become offended because it reveals that our family was never really at peace. It reveals the fakeness of peace in our families. That is why Jesus says in Matthew 10, verses 34-39, Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth.

[26 : 00] I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household.

Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is

not worthy of me.

Whoever finds his life will lose it. And whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. The most obvious example, of course, is that simply confessing Jesus as Lord and being baptized in many cultures, and often even in our own, that is enough to anger many families.

I have friends of mine who are missionaries, and they'll say, if you tell other people you've been a Christian in your family, they're like, okay. But the moment you get baptized, oh boy, you have crossed a line.

But Jesus often challenges his own family's expectations in small and subtle ways, even beyond just that. Even as early as age 12, Jesus wouldn't play the family role that his parents expected of him.

[27 : 23] When they returned from a Passover trip to Jerusalem, Jesus stayed behind in the temple to dialogue with teachers of the law. As a 12-year-old boy arguing with scholars, that's quite the move there.

And when his parents find him after a frantic search, and guess what? They're pretty upset with him. We read in Luke chapter 2, Rather than Jesus saying, oh my goodness, oh my goodness, that my job and my job and to make sure you feel okay, and make sure your dad aren't troubled by anything.

Jesus refuses that role, and he says, Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my father's house?

You see, Jesus, in the very next verses, make it clear, Jesus was an obedient son to his parents. Even as a boy, he was perfect and sinless in the way that he related to his parents.

But if we were to go one by one through every encounter in the Gospels that Jesus had with his mother, with his siblings, you'll see Jesus making it clear to them that, yes, he loves them.

[28 : 42] But his first calling is to God the Father. And so in turn, Jesus expects his disciples to follow in his footsteps, to embrace their new role in God's family, rather than simply going along with the old family roles and their false needs and their false Gospels.

And that explains some of the things Jesus says, that to our ears, and also to the ears of the people of the time, by the way, these things seem harsh, even cruel at first glance.

Consider Luke 9, verses 59 through 62. Two prospective disciples Jesus has. Look what happens.

To another, he said, follow me. But he said, Lord, let me first go and bury my father.

And Jesus said to him, leave the dead to bury their own dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

Yet another said, I will follow you, Lord. But first, let me say farewell to those at my home. Now, if it weren't Jesus saying these things, you would think, what a nasty, cruel thing to say.

[30 : 06] But these words from Jesus make sense. If he understands the human heart. And if he knows, as the Gospels make it so, so clear, he sees people.

He knows people. He gains understanding of who they are before he speaks to them. And what if he knows that these men had adopted a family role of always being the caretaker for their parents and their family, always caring for their family's needs, always trying to keep the peace at home, losing their own identity and their attentiveness for others.

And Jesus knows, they're just going to keep doing that even as they're trying to follow me. They're just going to keep, whenever their family places demands on them, every time they do that, they're going to walk away from me.

And so Jesus says, you need to stop this. That is not, that caretaker role is not your role anymore. Put your hand to the plow and don't look back.

You're a new role. Go and proclaim the kingdom of God. Tell others about the good news that you can be born again into this new kingdom, this new family. This is where you belong now.

[31 : 20] He says that because that's what those two men needed to hear. Sometimes I'll say to people about verses like this though, that verse isn't for you.

Because sometimes, boy, the human heart loves to latch onto Bible verses that we think can get us to make our false gospels work better. And if you're the kind of person who you're like, great, you deep down, like I want to swear off my parents and my family.

I want nothing to do with them. Yes, I finally got license to do it. Thank you, Jesus. These verses aren't for you. They're for the caretaker role, people.

Okay? Matthew 15, verses three through six. These are the verses for you because here Jesus is fronting Pharisees who are more than willing to cooperate with that false need for escape. Jesus answered them, Why do you break the commandments of God for the sake of your tradition? For God commanded, honor your father and your mother. And whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.

[32 : 28] But you say, if anyone tells his father or his mother, what you would have gained from me is given to God. He need not honor his father. So for the sake of your tradition, you have made void the word of God.

What Jesus is saying is people who say, well, I'll kind of use this, you know, my money is devoted to the Lord loophole so that I don't have to support my parents as they age. And Jesus says, no. If you're going to follow me, play a role in my family, you honor your father and mother. That's part of the role I give you.

It might look different from what your family expects, but you're going to learn the way that I do. Even on the cross, Jesus demonstrated that because he himself spoke to one of his disciples and had had that disciple take care of his own mother.

So Jesus himself made sure that his mother was going to be okay. He had this amazing way of staying connected to his earthly family, loving them and not letting them control him.

[33 : 40] not appeasing them by playing the role that they wanted, not attacking them to rebel against his family role, not avoiding them so he just wouldn't deal with them.

Rather, Jesus looked to his father in heaven to know how to relate to his earthly family. those words from Psalm 119 were the heart of Christ.

I am yours, father. You save me for I have sought your precepts. He was led by the spirit, living a holy life.

And so Jesus was able to really love God and love other people with a wisdom, a flexibility, and a courage that you and I can just barely even touch.

He is so not rigid in his thinking and the way that he relates to other people. He's wonderful. He was able to yield to their wishes when he could, when it was good to do so.

[34 : 51] He was able to confront them when that was called for. He was able to withdraw when he saw that's what's needed here in this situation. Faithful, adaptable, full of holiness, wisdom, and love.

That is the way Jesus lived. He is holy. He is perfect, isn't he? He's beautiful. I have some good news for you because sometimes we hear things like this and we think, oh man, the pressure is now on me to be perfect, which by the way, family role, right?

Gotta get it perfect. Gotta get it all right. Gotta get all the answers and get everything perfect. All the pressure is off of you to be perfect because Jesus did it all for you on your behalf.

And so if you, look, it is not your family role to get everything perfect so that people will look at God and think he's good. That's Jesus' role. Your role is to follow Jesus.

If you were a Christian, you're not driven by this desire to establish yourself as perfect. Rather, what happens is you look at Jesus and you're like, oh, my heart aches to be like him.

[36 : 04] Look how good he is. I want to be holy like Jesus. Not to prove yourself. Not to boast in yourself. But because you want to be like the one that you love.

you ache to be that kind of man or woman who reminds people of Jesus. That's all you want. It's like, I just want to remind people of Jesus when they look at me. Your heart's desire is to throw away your false gospels, your false needs, your false rules, and to learn the way of holiness, wisdom, and love.

To embrace your new role in God's family. How then do we do this? What's that going to look like for us to start seeking our role in God's family as Jesus did?

Here's some practical instructions. Here's some things that God would have you do. And think of these as just a starting place. First, believe in the Lord Jesus and be saved.

If you are not already a part of God's family, if you've been walking apart from him, handling life your own way in your own wisdom, turn from that life of sin, come and believe in Christ and be saved.

[37 : 20] Be delivered from bondage to sin, bondage to bad family roles, bondage to false needs and false gospels that twist around us and drag us down and control us and send us on a pathway to hell.

Be ransomed by the precious blood of Christ and be born again into the family of God. Second, if you have not been baptized, then be baptized.

Not to fulfill a role in your earthly family, not to be the good kid who does what his Christian parents expect, to appease mom and dad, to check all the achievement boxes. If you have an unbelieving family, sometimes this actually happens, don't be baptized merely as a way to rebel against them, to poke a finger in their eye.

When you're baptized, you're baptized into God's family. That's what it's about. Regardless of what your family does or doesn't believe, though none go with me, still I will follow.

Baptism is you saying to the Lord, I am yours. You save me, for I have sought your precepts. Third, be a part of a local church.

[38 : 33] You are not your own. You're going to need help. Being a child of God means you've been adopted into a family and not just a nebulous, oh yeah, I'm part of kind of the family of God.

No, no, no. You need literal people in your life living in community together, reading and studying the Bible together. And one of the reasons, I tell people, one of the reasons you want to read the Bible is not just to learn a lot of things, which is great, and you're going to need that, but you also want to learn how your father speaks, to become familiar with the way that he speaks so that it becomes second nature.

So it's almost like you can hear his voice inside your head because you know how he talks, just like many of us hear our own parents' voices inside our heads because we knew how they talked. Find people in your church who remind you of Jesus, who are holy and wise and loving.

In this way, as time goes on, you will begin to understand what Romans 12, verse 2, calls you to do. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

That by testing, you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Notice that Paul's model here isn't just read the Bible to get all the do's and don'ts of all the life situations so that you can execute your false gospels better and play your family role better.

[40 : 03] No, your whole mind needs to be tuned into a completely different frequency than it is now. You're not even operating on the same wavelength as Jesus and what you need is to be on that wavelength and once you are learning to get there, the will of God, what pleases him is going to start feeling intuitive and natural and good and acceptable and perfect.

You'll get a taste for what's good and what's pleasing to him. You'll begin to understand how God your father speaks, what he desires and enjoys, how it can be lived out in a world that is complicated and difficult and there is no gigantic encyclopedia of handling all the particular situations and circumstances of your incredibly complicated life with complicated people in an ever complicated and changing culture.

You need to learn the way of wisdom to navigate all this. a mind that is starting to look like and be shaped like the mind of Christ.

Finally, a few words of wisdom for your life and relationships. Here's the thing. You've got ideas about what it looks like to love your family and to love other people.

You've already got ideas of what that looks like. And you're going to place expectations on yourself to love in ways, sometimes to love in ways that God has not called you to love.

[41 : 37] Or you'll be completely blind to things about love that you are missing. Here's the problem. Each of us, we assume that we know how to love and we judge ourselves whether I'm living up to that standard and those expectations that are existing in my head.

Sometimes we come up with those standards who knows where. Sometimes other people are more than happy to dump a bunch of expectations on us. Here's how you ought to love. Here's all the things you should be doing. And then what happens is when you reopen the Bible and start reading these commandments from God about love, you're like, oh, I know what that means.

I think I know what that means. And a very important word of counsel I have for you is this. Don't assume your role. Do not assume your role in the situations and relationships God has for you.

Don't assume that you know how to love the people God has put in front of you. I often find when we are very quick to assume, oh, I know what needs to happen here and either rush in with our own ways of loving or to sit back and beat ourselves up because we just can't seem to pull it off.

And so often what the situation is, is these are just the futile ways you inherited from your forefathers. These aren't the spirit-led ways that God has called you to in these relationships and situations.

[43 : 08] One of my favorite authors, Paul Miller, he tells a story about this sort of crisis taking place in his family, in particular with his marriage to his wife, Jill.

There came a moment where he had to choose between his own ideas of what love would look like and his own ideas of the roles that he's supposed to play as a husband or whether he needed to learn a new way.

And here's what he says. We were just going through a horrendously hard time. Our kids were ages three to sixteen at that point. Our income had dropped to about \$42,000 and things were just progressively getting harder.

That all came to a point. We were going to bed and heading up the stairs and Jill asked me if I loved her. I said yes. I just thought she wanted reassurance.

Then she asked me again if I loved her. I said yes. And I was sort of like you know what's going on here?

[44 : 17] By the time we were at the top of the steps on the landing she asked me a third time do you love me? That just made me irritated because she was doubting me.

Doubting whether I loved her. I was flabbergasted. So I started this is a real bold move by the way. And this will win your spouse over. So I started giving her this long list of all these ways I loved her. And Jill didn't say anything. Jill was beyond distraught I would say. I couldn't reach her. And that made me afraid. I just sensed I was missing something.

Or let me put it this way. Everything I knew and I knew a lot wasn't working. that month my prayers went from kind of gritting my teeth God help me to love my wife to kind of a quieter God help me to love my wife to an even quieter God would you show me what love is?

I love that prayer. God would you show me what love is? Not assuming you already know not weighing yourself and as he was doing weighing himself and finding he measured up to his own ideas but realizing I Lord do I know?

[45 : 50] And asking that is a prayer for wisdom. That prayer for wisdom God would you show me what love is? that is the kind of prayer God always says an enthusiastic yes to.

That's the one prayer I can guarantee you he will answer yes. If you ask that with a sincere and humble heart God would you show me what love is?

It's a prayer in which you humbly admit that you don't know your role and you don't know your place and maybe you filled your mind with knowledge and information about all the things that you ought to be doing in your relationships and coming humbly and saying I actually don't know.

Don't assume your role. Start by humbly laying yourself at the Lord's feet and asking God what is my place here? What does love look like?

I do not know what to do but my eyes are on you. What happened with Paul Miller is that he began after this time he began carefully reading the stories in the Bible about Jesus Christ and God began to answer his prayer because he realized that Jesus was operating in a completely different wavelength of a completely different dimension than his own love that he thought he was giving his wife.

[47 : 16] As a husband he had all those do's and don'ts and he had been doing them all but he had missed some important things about Jesus that were right in front of his face and he realized that we just don't know how to love God and we don't know how to love our neighbor and we have to learn what it looks like from the life of Jesus Christ when we read God's commands we fill them with our own ideas of what they mean but you have to see them in action to see them in flesh and blood to see Jesus at work to even understand what those commandments mean now finally a caution to those of us who have extra sensitive!

Maybe throughout this whole series you've been tempted to obsess over false needs false gospels and now you're like oh no these family roles that could lead us into false gospels and you start obsessing and ruminating about what's inside of you thinking and thinking and self examining yourself to death and trying to repent and repent and repent and do better but a humble heart doesn't do that a humble heart asks!

for wisdom! Ask the Lord to do the search he is more merciful than man let the Lord be the one to uncover these things inside of you Psalm 139 verses 23 through 24 here's your prayer ask him search me oh God and know my heart try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any grievous way in me and lead me in the way everlasting ask those prayers ask humbly!

God would you show me what love is would you show me what my part and my role in this difficult relationship is I don't know! help me!! wait and see what does the Lord bring to light?

Do you sit down with someone and they call your attention to a problem that maybe you didn't see yourself? When you're reading the Bible does a verse jump out at you in a new way that you never saw before and somehow you know that confronts you and addresses the issue?

[49 : 38] Maybe something comes up over the course of the week a difficult situation relationship and all of a sudden that demanding neediness in you shows up and you're like where did that come from? Oh God's calling my attention to something.

God has a way of answering this prayer. You may have taken on a family role that has led you into false needs and false gospels and these are things that weary you that burden you with sin and that burn you out but God is beckoning you out of it.

You who are weary come home. Be holy for I am holy. May your soul say to him I call on you as father. I am yours.

Save Save me! Father it is hard to put into words father the mind of Christ in this way of living.

And Lord I myself feel as though I am just scratching the surface of it all. There is a depth of love that we just can't know till we see you.

[51 : 01] I ask Lord God that for each one of us here you may somehow answer this prayer. May we come to you humbly saying Lord I do not understand your ways.

I don't know how to love that really difficult person. I don't know what my role is here God. There are plenty of people who are more than willing to tell me.

I have been pressuring! myself and maybe I have been so convinced I know! But Lord I lay myself at I have sought your precepts.

You have ransomed me from the futile ways I inherited from my forefathers. And now let me learn to walk in your ways. I ask Lord God for each one of us that you would answer this prayer this week.

Humble our hearts to seek your face Lord. Amen.