

Our
Family
Devotional

Adam
Griffin

*Learning
Grace
Together
from the
Bible's
Imperfect
Families*

"One of the greatest needs of our day is a robust biblical theology of the family. We also need faithful, practical resources that equip parents to disciple their children. This book wonderfully meets both needs at the same time. I encourage you to read it with your family and see how God might use this tool to work in your home."

MATT BOSWELL, Pastor, The Trails Church, Celina, Texas;
Hymn-writer; Author

"A thoughtful and grace-filled walk through how the Bible's imperfect families show God's love for his people, and how our own families can live as part of God's perfect, eternal family."

CASSIE MARTIN, Author, *Genuine and Gain the Whole World?*

"*Our Family Devotional* is a gift to families who want more than just surviving the chaos of life—who want to grow together in the word of God. Adam Griffin has created a gospel-centered, practical, and deeply intentional resource that helps families have meaningful conversations about faith, grace, and following Jesus together. In a world fighting for our attention, this book helps point families back to what matters most: building a home centered on Christ."

SHANE PRUITT, National Next Gen Director, North American Mission Board; Co-author, *Reaching Generation Alpha*

"For years, I've told parents: if you feel like yours is the only dysfunctional family you know, read your Bible—it's filled with imperfect people from imperfect families. Adam Griffin has finally given families a way to do exactly that, together. This gospel-saturated devotional will show families their sinfulness, Christ's perfection, and their need for a Savior. Any family willing to read it will find grace waiting on every page."

SAM LUCE, Director of ChildDiscipleship.com, Awana

"Playing the role of 'first-discipler' in our kids' lives continues to be one of the greatest challenges we face as parents. Adam Griffin's *Our Family Devotional* makes having Bible conversations with our kids easier by connecting us to moments in the Scriptures that have implications for how we think about our family while posing great questions that both kids and parents will want to answer. I wish we'd had it ten years ago, but now I can't stop thinking of ways to use it with our college-aged kids!"

ED USZYNSKI, Co-author, *Away Game: A Christian Parent's Guide to Navigating Youth Sports*

"Research shows that fewer than 10% of committed Christian families study the Bible together. This book is sure to help that number grow, in part because it guides families to answer a critical question: what kind of family do we want to become as we study God's word together? Each study is clear, brief, and achievable for any family seeking to build a strong foundation. Even more, this book does the honorable work of helping families see the study of God's word not as a chore but as a delight and a grace. I will use this study with my own family, and I heartily commend it to others."

CHRIS AMMEN, Founder, Kaleidoscope Ministries;
Author, *God's Bright Story*

"The Bible is a story about families, and in this devotional Adam Griffin helps your family find its place in the story of Scripture. This devotional is built for real families, real schedules, and real parents who want to hand down the true story to their kids. I highly recommend this resource."

J.T. ENGLISH, Lead Pastor, Storyline Church, Arvada, Colorado;
Co-host, Knowing Faith podcast; Author, *Remember and Rehearse*

"How does your family fit into God's grand story of redemption? With fidelity to God's word and the skill to communicate it clearly to children, Adam Griffin answers that question in 52 devotionals. Whether discussing the gospel, prayer, godliness, wisdom, a family legacy, or eternity, the author shows how God's infinite grace in Christ can meet you and your family precisely where you're at. Learn here about God's matchless mercies in the gospel and about what a gospel-shaped life of holy joy and fullness can look like in your family."

JOEL R. BEEKE, Chancellor and Professor of Systematic Theology
and Homiletics, Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary; Pastor,
Heritage Reformed Congregation, Grand Rapids, Michigan

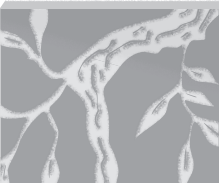
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Introduction

The Bible is not just a story with families in it; it is the story of a family.

As you read the Bible, you trace the story of the descendants of Adam and Eve through Noah and Abraham and David to Jesus Christ. And Jesus said that those who trust and obey him are his brothers and sisters—they're part of that family too (Mark 3:34-35). So the Scriptures are about this family from beginning to end. They're about how God, our Father, weaves a family of brothers and sisters out of every tongue, tribe, and nation. *Our Family Devotional* is about that family.

Along the way, within that broader family, there are, of course, individual family units. And in those, we see sibling rivalries, amazing loyalty, bad parenting, courageous faithfulness, God's grace, and much more. *Our Family Devotional* is about those families.

And *Our Family Devotional* is about *your* family. In this way, it's different than other family resources you might have picked up. Not only is it going to key in on the family story of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, but it's also going to give you space to consider how the truth of God's word can and should shape the kind of godly family that you want to be.

Some of the stories you'll encounter will probably be familiar to you. I'd wager that some of them you have never considered before. Regardless, in every biblical family story you read, I hope you will see Jesus more clearly and that your vision for your own family will take shape.

Here is what I want for your family: that, after you've pondered these Scriptures, you'll be clearer on how to follow Jesus, and better at encouraging one another to do so, than when you started. I believe that this journey through the Bible together can forge something really special in your relationship with one another and your relationship with God. I hope you'll cultivate a family tree that will bear fruit for generations. Scripture changes people. I know that reading the Bible together as a family is going to change you.

As with all resources written to drive your family toward God, in order for you to be faithful, be flexible. That's how I designed this one. You can use it once a

week (for a year—there are 52 of these devotions), or use it every day. You can read a question or two a night, or have a lengthy conversation all in one go. I won't be offended if you pick and choose or personalize the questions so that they work best for your home. Most of these devotions build off the one that came before, but feel free to jump around as the need may be. I want using this resource to be an easy win and a good fit for your home.

There's no "wrong time" to do devotions together. You can discuss your thoughts around a breakfast table, before you head to bed, or while you eat ice cream. Whenever and wherever it happens, I want it to be a delight to open God's word together as you look at what God says, and look at each other, undistracted.

I hope this is a resource for your family that you can use no matter the age or stage of your children, and one that you can return to year after year. So immediately after each devotion's reading, you'll see two questions that encourage you to interact with what the passage says, before something to read and then lots of questions to help you discuss and apply. I have deliberately kept the first of those two questions very simple and straightforward so that if your family includes younger kids or if you are newer to Christianity, you should be able to engage with the material.

God's words for your family are timeless, and they are for everyone in your family. I hope you keep coming back to his truth over and over and over. And I hope that *Our Family Devotional* enables you to build your family on his firm foundation.



Our Wonderful Family

Genesis 2:18-25

Prayer

Lord, help us pause and wonder at all you've done. Amen.

Preface

God created a perfect world, and, to live in it, he created a perfect family with a perfect relationship with him. As you read this passage, listen for how the first man, Adam, responds when God creates the second person in this family.

Read Genesis 2:18-25

- What did Adam say when he first met Eve?
- Was Adam making note of how different Eve was from him or how they were alike?

What came first: a family or sin?

In the Garden of Eden, in the world God made, there were no insults. There were no lies. There were no frustrations. And yet there was a family. There was no jealousy. There was no hurt. There was no shame. And yet there was a family.

In this “very good,” perfect garden, God cultivated more than fruit trees. He reached down into the life of the first person and, out of the man’s side, formed for him a perfect bride. Then and there, God started a flawless family. The right response of Adam was a poem of celebration. He cried out, full of wonder, “This at last!” He couldn’t resist singing for joy over his wife, their marriage, and the forming of this first family.

A long time later in the Old Testament, there’s a prophet called Zephaniah. He describes a song like Adam’s—but this time it is our God who is singing. God sings over his people—his family. Zephaniah 3:17 says that God “will rejoice

over you with gladness: he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.”

Adam’s exclamation of joy also reminds us of the glimpses of heaven that the apostle John shares in the very last book of the Bible, Revelation. People in heaven, in seeing the wonder of God, can never stop singing, “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created” (Revelation 4:11). God’s family story starts and ends with a joyful song.

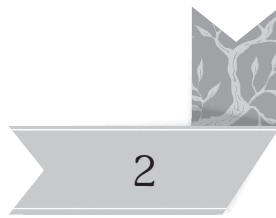
What will come last: a family or sin?

After all the insults are gone... when there is no more jealousy... when frustrations are history... there will be a family. When hurts and lies and worries are extinct... when nothing is hidden and there is nothing left to hide... there will stand one final family, created through forgiveness. It will be a wonderful family, whose father is a perfect heavenly Father and whose brothers and sisters are from every tongue and tribe and nation.

Like that very first family, this final family will sing new songs. Those of us who trust in Jesus can eagerly look forward to the day when we see our Father, in all his glory, face to face, and sing out together in wonder, “This at last!” This is the family of God, forever. Finally a flawless family again. That will be very, very good.

- What did we learn about God from Genesis 2:18-25?
- Genesis tells us the story of Adam meeting Eve and how their family got started. On what day or days would you say that our family got its start? How do each of you feel about those days?
- Adam celebrates what he loves about Eve. What are five things that are really good about our family right now?
- Singing can bring great joy to a household. Whether it’s birthdays, Sundays, or any day—what makes our family sing and why?
- How can our family do a better job of celebrating what God has done for us?
- How can our family do a better job of celebrating one another?
- Would we like “celebratory wonder” to be a core strength of our family? What would it look like, and what would it take for us to get there?

Let’s pray prayers of celebration for all that God has done for our family.



Our Imperfect Family

Genesis 3:8-13, 21-24

Prayer

Lord, help us humbly admit our own mistakes. Amen.

Preface

Adam and Eve could eat from any tree in the perfect garden, but God warned them not to eat from one particular tree. The serpent, Satan, tempted them to do what God had told them not to... and they did. As you read this passage, listen for who gets blamed, and by whom.

Read Genesis 3:8-13, 21-24

- Who did Adam blame, and who did Eve blame?
- In verse 21, what did God make for Adam and Eve? Where did it come from, and why did God do that?

No one wants to take the blame or face the punishment—even if we deserve to.

Look as closely as you'd like at this story, but you won't find anyone confessing, "It was my fault." You won't see anyone apologizing or repenting. No one says, "I am sorry." And most heartbreaking of all, you won't hear anyone ask for forgiveness. Both the people in this first family seek freedom from their sin by hiding their faults instead of asking for forgiveness.

Adam wants to blame Eve for what happened. Eve wants to blame Satan for her wrongdoing. No one here is blameless, but everyone finds someone to blame. Everyone is pointing at someone else and saying, *Don't look at me—it was them*. Adam even seems to suggest that God may be partially at fault. He says it was "the woman whom you gave to be with me" who caused him to sin.

But the truth is that Adam was to blame for what he had done. And Eve was to blame for what she had done. They just didn't want to own it.

Our family, like every family, has been imperfect ever since. We are messed up, and we mess up. We are all born sinners, and we all choose to do what God does not want for us. We sin in what we think, what we say, what we do, and even what we fail to do.

Our family will never be perfect, but that doesn't mean that we need to respond to our shortcomings with finger-pointing. Adam and Eve wanted to hide and they wanted to blame. The strength and godliness of our family depend on our ability and willingness to recognize our faults and to repent instead of hide. When we do something wrong, we are to say to each other, "It was my fault. I'm sorry. I want to do better. Please forgive me."

Instead of being quick to point fingers as they did back in that garden, we want our family to be quick to own everything we can and to show grace whenever we need to. We can forgive each other if we remember that we need forgiveness too—forgiveness from God. We can do this because though we are guilty, in Christ we don't bear the burden of our sin.

The beauty of the gospel is that if we truly want to be free of the burden of our sin and we want our transgressions covered, that doesn't come from finding someone else to be at fault. It comes from owning and confessing all we can and looking to Jesus to set us free by forgiving us.

No one wants to take the blame or face the punishment—even if we deserve to. But Jesus did face that, even though he didn't deserve to! He took what no one else wanted—the punishment for our sins. Just as an animal died to clothe Adam and Eve as they left the garden, Jesus died to "clothe" us with forgiveness. Out of love he says, *I'll take the punishment. You're forgiven.* And now we forgive each other as Christ forgave us. Fully, freely, and forever.

- What did we learn about God from this passage?
- Can you think of a time when someone in our family responded really well to a way they had sinned against someone else in the family?
- When you do something wrong, what are ways in which you try to hide it or make excuses?
- Adam and Eve thought that it would set them free to find someone else who was more at fault than they were. What are three things that would have been better for them to say than, *It's not my fault*?
- Grace is undeserved love and forgiveness. But that does not necessarily mean there won't be any consequences, just as there were consequences for

Adam and Eve. What are some examples of how someone in our family might be forgiven for something but there would still be consequences?

- Repentance is admitting what happened and giving effort to change in order to live God's way. What's the difference between repentance and just confessing or saying, "I'm sorry"?
- What would it take for "quick and full repentance" and "undeserved forgiveness" to be core values of our family?

Let's pray that God will work in us to make us more and more a family that responds well to our own sin without seeking to blame others, and that is quick to ask for forgiveness from each other and from God.



Our Family's Worship

Genesis 4:3-15

Prayer

Lord, may our worship be pleasing to you. Amen.

Preface

Now living outside the perfect garden, Adam and Eve's family started to grow. They had two sons, Cain and Abel. As you read this passage about them, listen for how God responds when each of the brothers brings an offering to him.

Read Genesis 4:3-15

- What was the difference between the two brothers' offerings? How did God respond differently to them?
- When God punished Cain, did Cain repent and ask for forgiveness?
- Reread verses 14-15. What seemed to be Cain's number one concern?

The difference between a brother and a bother can be very small. Sometimes we view our closest relatives as our fiercest rivals. In this first family, Cain is angry with Abel because Abel gets what Cain wants.

Cain and Abel both desire the same thing—to be accepted by God. They both want the Lord to delight in them and to bless them. They both try to worship God, but, unlike Abel, Cain only wants God to accept him if it won't cost him much. Did you notice that Cain brought some fruit, whereas Abel brought the very best parts of the very best sheep he had. Cain brought *something* to give to God, whereas Abel brought the *best thing* he could. Cain wanted God's blessing *and* to keep his most prized possessions. Abel gave up something precious for God's sake and gladly said it was worth it.

Cain didn't think his offering was worth much, so it should come as no surprise

that God did not think it was worth much either. After all, how could something be a beautiful offering if it has no value? An offering that is worth little to the giver is an insult to the receiver. In this case, Cain was showing God that he didn't think God was worth giving his best to.

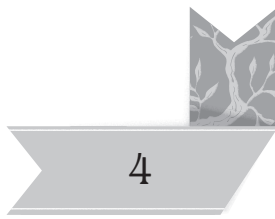
All true worship will cost something. For our family, worshiping God will be costly. Today, sometimes families are hesitant to sacrifice their time, their reputation, and their comfort for God. It's always going to be tempting to be a family that says we want God's acceptance and blessing, but not if it costs us. It would be easy for us to be willing to worship God but only if it doesn't take away too much of our time, reputation, comfort, or money.

But when we give God the best we have—when, for example, we give up our time to read his word or to pray together or to attend church as a family or to serve others—we are saying to God and to ourselves, "There is nothing more important in our life than our God."

It will cost our family to live for God and to worship him together. It will cost time and maybe our reputation and likely our comforts. Giving God something that is costly is a beautiful offering. He is worth it. When he sees us worshiping like that, he is pleased. Truly following God will not just cost our family something—it can cost our family everything, and we will gladly sacrifice it all for Christ.

- What did we learn about God from this passage?
- What words would you use to describe the perfect brother/sister relationship?
- God warned Cain that there was sin and temptation "crouching at the door," wanting to control what he did next. What are three to five common temptations you see in your life? What would it look like to master those?
- Read Matthew 6:33. What are the most important things to our family? What do we plan our schedule and money around?
- Cain was willing to worship only if it didn't cost him too much. What would it take for us to read, pray, and sing together every day and to go to church together every week no matter what? What might that cost us?
- How can our family be better at serving together? What might that cost us?
- What would have to change for us to value being committed and consistent to "family worship, no matter what" in our home?

Let's pray that God will show us how worthy he is of our worship, so that we'll be a family that is willing to follow God no matter what it costs.



Our Strange Family

Genesis 6:5-14

Prayer

Lord, prepare us to follow you, even if it makes our family different. Amen.

Preface

Several generations after Adam and Eve, their family had grown in number and was starting to fill the earth. But sadly, none of their descendants were following God. None, that is, except for one man named Noah. As you read this passage, listen for how God describes the kinds of things going on in the world.

Read Genesis 6:5-14

- What did God say about what people were doing?
- How is Noah described in verse 9? How would you expect someone like that to respond when God says he's going to send a flood and Noah must spend time and money building a boat?

Imagine a world where no one believes in God. Imagine a world where not one single person follows God's laws or even thinks that he exists. Nobody.

No one, that is, except for our family.

Imagine a world where we see violence and corruption everywhere. If we step out our door, we might see people punching, kicking, biting, fighting, and killing. A world where people steal and lie and cheat and exploit, and it is common and normal for everyone but us.

Now imagine that in that world our father, the last dad on earth to follow God, says that God has asked our family to spend years and years building a boat. If our faith hasn't already made us feel strange in our neighborhood, our family

ship-building certainly would¹ What do you think other people would say about us as they laugh at us? How would it feel to us, do you think?

Noah's family didn't need to imagine any of that. That's what the world was like for them, and that's what God told them to do.

But Noah's family was ready to seem strange if it meant being obedient to God.

Unlike Noah's family, we hopefully won't be totally alone in what we believe and practice. But in our time and place, our family may well seem strange as we follow God in ways that others don't understand. People may say negative things about us because we believe things God says, which most people today think are wrong or even bad. Christ warned his disciples that many people will hate us for following him.

We are living at a time that cares more about worldly success, beauty, and entertainment than anything else. It would be easier for us to make decisions based on what's normal for families in our community than what is noble for a godly family to choose. Because we follow Jesus, as a family we want to choose not to talk, spend, work, play, date, make decisions or believe as the world does.

If we live as steadfast Christians, we will seem strange. Like Noah, we will need to stand firm when the temptation comes to conform to the pattern of this world—to be just like everyone else. But if we do stand firm, then our family will shine like stars among sinful people who don't follow God—what the Bible calls a crooked and twisted generation (Philippians 2:15).

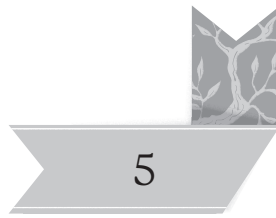
When that is hard, we can remember Noah, who trusted God and showed his trust by obeying God. And because Noah's family trusted God, God rescued them. Because they trusted God, they got to be part of God's plans for his world. Yes, they were different—and it was great that they were!

We have no one and nothing to fear since what we believe is true. Our family can be confident about being different because God is with us and God's word is true. As a family, let's stand ready to be seen as odd, if that's what it takes to follow our God.

- What did we learn about God from this passage?
- Noah's family was the last one on earth that followed God. What are five things that might make a godly family stick out in our culture?
- Read Philippians 2:15. How will our family talk, spend, work, play, date or make decisions differently than families that aren't following God?
- What words would you use to describe a family who does and believes what's right even when it's not popular?

- What truths about God would you like us to remember when obeying him is hard and makes other people think less of us?
- How can our family do a better job of following God when it gets hard because of what people think about us or how strange it makes us feel?
- What will it take for “steadfast faithfulness even when it makes us different” to be a core value of our family?

Let's pray for the strength to follow God even if we face resistance from others.



Our Patient Family

Genesis 17:15-17; 18:9-15

Prayer

Lord, help us when we don't like your timing or find waiting hard. Amen.

Preface

Several generations after Noah, God chose a man named Abraham to start a new family, which would be the way his promise to rescue and restore the world would come true. God promised Abraham that he would have as many descendants as there were stars in the sky—but he and his wife, Sarah, were old and had had no children at all so far. They waited for years and years, and still no child came... As you read these two passages, listen for what makes Abraham and Sarah each laugh.

Read Genesis 17:15-17 and 18:9-15

- What did Abraham and Sarah laugh about?
- Read 18:14 again. What is the answer to the question there?
- Why would the Lord ask it in this situation, do you think? What difference would it have made to Abraham and Sarah if they had remembered the answer to that question?

Has our family ever been late for something? Everyone is late sometimes. Some people are late because something gets in their way. Some are late because they lose track of time. There are even people who are late simply because they don't care whether they are on time. (Is anyone in our family ever like that?!)

The impression we get from Abraham and Sarah's family is that they really did want to have kids, just as God had promised them. But they had waited so long without it happening that they stopped believing it would ever happen. They

had gotten far, far too old to have children, and so, in their minds, God was too late. They were now in their nineties, and the idea of them having kids was so unlikely that it was hilarious.

Imagine that God told our family we could wish for anything we wanted and he would give it to us. How sure would you feel that he'd keep his promise as you got up tomorrow? What about the day after that? What about the start of next year, if God's promise still hadn't happened? What about on your 30th birthday, if there was still no sign of our wish being given to us? Why would it get harder to keep trusting that he'd do it?

Abraham's family had to learn that God can be trusted not just with what he's doing but when he's doing it. God knows better than we do what we need and when we need it. His timing is perfect. He is never late. And he always keeps his promises.

Abraham's family had to get used to waiting. God had promised them that a Savior would come from their family, but they had to wait. For hundreds of years and dozens of generations, they waited. I wonder if they ever wondered why it was taking so long, or worried that the promise would never happen. But the apostle Paul says in Galatians 4:4 that Jesus was born with perfect timing, and in Romans 5:6 he tells us that Jesus' death on the cross was at just the right time. It wasn't what people before Jesus had expected or hoped for, but God's timing was perfect. God was gracious with what he did and when he did it.

Trusting God even when we don't like his timing is called "patient faith." Patient faith is having the strength to keep going without stopping believing that God will do what he's said while we still wait for him to keep his promises. Christian families can trust God no matter what, and for no matter how long we have to wait, because we know that his plans are perfect—both what he will do and when he will do it.

- What did we learn about God from this devotional time?
- Can you think of a time in our family when we kept trusting that God would do something, even though it took longer than we'd hoped it would?
- Read Galatians 6:9. When you don't get what you want when you want it, how do you feel? How can our family handle those moments in ways that honor God?
- What are three things that we hope God will do soon, but which he might not do until later?
- Abraham and Sarah laughed at God when he told them his plan, and God replied by asking if they thought anything was too hard for him. What plan do you hope God has for our family's future? Are you ready to trust him if his plan is different?

- If we are a patient-faith family, we will be content with what we have right now even if it's not what we have been expecting or hoping for. If one of the core values of our family is to live with "patient faith," what will people notice about members of our family in times of disappointment?

Let's pray for a steadfast, patient faith and to trust in the Lord's plan and timing.