

Secrets Of Your Family Tree Reflection #2

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When you think of a family what comes to mind? Google defines family as a group of one or more parents and their children living together as a unit. What comes to my mind when I think of family is a group of people sharing the same DNA under one house. Something I realized about families is every family has secrets that can break a family or even divide a one if they are not dealt with. Not every family is perfect, Adam and Eve had the perfect parent, yet, they still went for what they wanted. Swindoll shines a light on what dysfunctional families are all about. He brings modern stories and even biblical ones to show readers that even in the Bible there were dysfunctional families to have us understand that what we are experiencing is nothing new to God. Rather it means if he could do it before he can do it again.

One concept or insight that either challenged, rattled, upset or bothered you:

“Unwittingly, Christian laymen may be feeding into the problem. When those in Christian ministry are placed on a pedestal (as discussed in chapter 10), unrealistic expectations are imposed on them. True, those in ministry are to be examples, but that does not mean that they must be paragons of perfection. They and their families should be free to be themselves and to enjoy life within biblical parameters without harsh judgment from their followers. Christian leaders provide encouragement and support for the laity, but they have needs, too,” (pg:122). Reading this from chapter five made me feel convicted both as a leader going through personal things and as a parishioner condemning leaders because of their shortcomings and failures. As a parishioner, I would have these false ideas about Christian leaders and how they always thought of themselves as perfect and are better than those in the congregation. I always thought these leaders had no place to judge me and question me about how to live my life, my relationship

with Christ, and the relationship with my family. The more I thought of the reason why I held onto the hostility is because I had a misconception on correction and a problem with pride. It was hard taking responsibility for my actions and hard hearing the truth. Still is till this day, but something that is helping me understand is everyone is human and is prone to making mistakes. In the chapter it says that leaders too need help and support more than we, I think because they are the example of kingdom living. As a leader, it is hard having to work and prepare things for people when they show little appreciation. It is hard having to serve people and they would treat you poorly, speak to you poorly, and speak about you poorly. Because this would happen within the congregation, motivation to do ministry is hard because one would begin to think, "What is the point?" Because it seems like what is being offered from leaders is something that is not always interesting enough to take. It is in moments like this where leaders need encouragement, prayers, and support from one another and from people within the congregation. The author of this chapter, Alice Brawand suggests that a way to give support to our leaders in churches and around the world is by praying for them, giving respectful treatment, encouragement and communication between themselves and their people, and respecting their privacy. It was not until I became a leader that I truly understood the pressures that they face when serving people, showing them kindness or being the bigger person when dealing with a difficult member. This concept challenged me because I am now in the shoes of a leader and is experiencing this myself. There are moments where I want to give up because the people I am serving do not show appreciation. It is in those moments where I question, "Am I doing the right thing?" or "What am I doing here?" Asking God to continue reminding me of the purpose, the mission, the calling is the only thing that is keeping my hope alive. I have to remember why I have been chosen out of

all the Tara Robert Jean-Charles in the world God chose me. When I ask God for these reminders it gives me hope, it reignites my passion, my willingness to serve, and the reason why I care.

When I ask God to remind me it brings back the passion I feel for people. Chapter five made me realize that I am going to face people with this kind of nature and I am going to face moments where I want to give in and when that moment comes all I have to do is call on God and he will refuel me, He will give me strength.

Two concepts or insights that enlightened and encouraged you:

Something that encouraged me while reading chapter seven was the significance of having or creating a bond with people. Even creating a stronger bond with the relationships that I have now. This encouraged me to always strive for an authentic relationship where both parties find mutual or something even stronger bonds where they feel connected through their feelings, thoughts, values, and beliefs. Or in other words finding a connection or spark. Prior to reading this chapter, what I understood from bonds is finding a connection with a person or creating a connection with a person. How John Townsend defines it, “A bond between two peoples is an emotional and intellectual investment they have in one another. It is a relationship in which all of the parts of the soul--feelings, thought, values, beliefs, joys, and sorrows--are shared with and valued by another. To be known at this level is to be truly understood in all of one’s complexity, the complexity David speaks of in Psalm 139:14 when he states, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” The best way to define bonding at its core is to say that when I am bonded, I “matter” to someone,” (pg: 148). From this chapter it also made me realize how much God is a relational person because He calls us to life in community and relationship. Through relationships we do

experience and encounter God in a way people have been praying for. The second concept is, God did not intend for us to walk this world alone, “If bonding is such a deep need in our hearts, what part does the family play in it? It is the crucible in which our “bondedness” is either developed or injured. God has made the family an incubator in which our sense of basic trust and dependency is formed in thousands of experiences over time. If we find that our emotional needs are welcome in the family, we will experience a sense of bondedness throughout our lives,” (pg: 151). It is hard to relay my burdens on people because they do have struggles of their own, but Townsend has a good point, “Then why have family or friends?” At this point everyone has something they are experiencing, but it is having friends and family that make the load lighter, make life easier because of carrying the burden with us. What I mean by “carrying the burden with us” is not literally taking the responsibilities and becoming the Savior, not possible. Rather what it means listen to you about the problem and be willing to encourage and support you through the season.

One life-changing idea (or thought provoking concept) that forced you into some new paradigms for renewal and personal application:

Learning to Set Boundaries was a difficult chapter to read because a lot of the case studies resonated within me because I struggle with people pleasing, having a different opinion because I fear people leaving me, and I try my hardest to avoid conflict all because of an unhealthy experience that happened in my life. “Given that we need both attachment and freedom, how does this second ability, the ability to be separate, develop in the family? The family was designed by God to develop our wills for two purposes: to protect us against evil, and

to give us the freedom to choose how we will live our lives under God. The mechanism for building our wills is called a boundary,” (gp: 169). Setting boundaries is a grey area for me because I am still learning how to do this and understand its meaning. What Townsend said was interesting because families are to give the freedom to the children for them to choose how they will live their lives under God. That means the parents have to trust the process of their children in becoming adults. I find this example interesting because my family does not have boundaries and because we do not find it hard to understand how to use it.

One specific step you’ll take personally on implementing change because of something you read. Be realistic in your application:

How Townsend suggests to establish boundaries from chapter eight is by allowing family members to state their different opinion, making it safe to disagree without criticism, rejection, or isolation, help members discover and train themselves to use their unique gifts and abilities. To implement this within my family will be interesting because we are dysfunctional, but I think when we finally stop putting one another down and truly listen to one another about core values, standards, and belief then I think it will open a door of recreating a bond that will help make one another seen and heard. I want that for my family and for myself. I want for people to feel comfortable or safe when they are talking to me as a counselor and as a friend.

After reading this book, I started making rethink about relationships and how to truly care for them. Learning how to establish boundaries, how to care for leaders, and strengthen and preserve a bond made me realize the significance of relationships. Swindoll suggests ways for us to consider if we want to strengthen relationships and families. He gives a biblical standpoint on

what God planned for families, relationships, and friendships then makes you consider whether this is being practiced. *Secrets of Your Family Tree* does make you consider or reconsider how you are caring for yourself and those around you.