



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

Reality Show / Week 3

PRELUDE

SOCIAL

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STORY

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BOTTOM LINE

Family is forever.

GOAL OF SMALL GROUP

To help students see their family with a long-term perspective instead of a limited perspective.

SCRIPTURE

Then Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming with his 400 men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and his two servant wives (Genesis 33:1 NLT).

As [Jacob] approached his brother, he bowed to the ground seven times before him. Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. And they both wept (Genesis 33:3b-4 NLT).

"And what were all the flocks and herds I met as I came?" Esau asked. Jacob replied, "They are a gift, my lord, to ensure your friendship." "My brother, I have plenty," Esau answered. "Keep what you have for yourself." But Jacob insisted, "No, if I have found favor with you, please accept this gift from me. And what a relief to see your friendly smile. It is like seeing the face of God! Please take this gift I have brought you, for God has been very gracious to me. I have more than enough." And because Jacob insisted, Esau finally accepted the gift. "Well," Esau said, "let's be going. I will lead the way" (Genesis 33:8-12 NLT).

"All right," Esau said, "but at least let me assign some of my men to guide and protect you." Jacob responded, "That's

not necessary. It's enough that you've received me warmly, my lord!" So Esau turned around and started back to Seir that same day. Jacob, on the other hand, traveled on to Succoth. There he built himself a house and made shelters for his livestock. That is why the place was named Succoth (which means "shelters") (Genesis 33:15-17 NLT).

CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

When Jacob and Esau finally saw each other—despite all the life they had lived without each other—they couldn't escape the fact that they were still family. Jacob had embarrassed and disrespected his brother Esau, and had changed the course of Esau's life by stealing his blessing from Isaac. But when they finally saw each other, Esau still welcomed Jacob as family. Because they were, after all they had been through, still family. This story serves as a great illustration for us today that, no matter what we go through and what happens in our lives, family is forever.



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TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

In this series *Reality Show*, we've been talking about the idea that every family is fractured.

But there are positives of every family, too.

TENSION

We tend to look at our families like a reality show in the last season. Sure there's drama . . . but it's almost over.

Think of it like the cafeteria or the kitchen.

We treat our friends like the kitchen. We see them as permanent, so we treat them with care. But we treat our families like our school cafeteria.

We see graduation as an escape from family. And because of that, we treat our families as something we can escape from.

While that's a normal way to feel, it comes with some not-so-great side effects.

TRUTH

As we saw in previous weeks, after Jacob stole Esau's birthright, the two brothers lived apart from each other—for what ended up being twenty years. After God told Jacob to head back home, the two brothers met for the first time in decades.

When they saw each other, Jacob showered his brother with gifts. It was a gesture of humility. And Esau accepted his brother with kindness.

Esau knew that as bad as Jacob had been, he was still family. So he welcomed him as family.

Despite all the life they had lived, when they finally saw each other, they couldn't escape the fact that they were still family.

Their story would've looked a lot better if they had a long-term perspective on their relationship from the beginning.

APPLICATION

See, there will probably come a day when you part ways (to some extent) with your family.

Bottom line: Family is forever.

You can't control everything about them, but you can do your part to make the forever you have with your family as healthy and enjoyable as possible.

So the question is: Will you see your family as a permanent or temporary part of your life?

LANDING

Listen, God's story for you and for your family is bigger than just high school. It's bigger than just the time you spend together in the same house.

With that in mind, you have two choices: run from your family, or make the most of it.



TEACHING SCRIPT

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BOTTOM LINE

FAMILY IS FOREVER.

INTRODUCTION

1 MINUTE

In this series *Reality Show*, we've been talking about the idea that every family is fractured. Sometimes you'll hear someone talking about someone else, and they'll say, "He comes from a *broken* home." Meaning, his parents are divorced, and now there are stepparents, stepsiblings, or half siblings in the picture.

But the truth is, EVERY family is broken because it consists of broken human beings. So even if your family is a "traditional" one, it doesn't mean it's less fractured. It's just broken in different ways. Your family, like every other one, has tension, complexity, pain, frustration, and disappointment.

In other words, every family's reality is a little messed up.

But there are positives of every family, too. And just like the fractures are different, the strengths are different as well.

TENSION

5 MINUTES

Today we're going to talk about the long-term view of your family. If you're anything like I was in high school, you're pretty convinced your friends are going to be your friends forever. Maybe not *all* your friends, but definitely your closest ones. Even if you go to different colleges or live in different towns, you're 100% certain that you'll stay in touch. A call here, a text there, a Snap in between, a few trips to visit each other, and it'll hardly feel any different than it does today.



TEACHING SCRIPT

That may happen exactly the way you think it will. Or it may not. But when it comes to our friends, we're convinced that the end of high school DOESN'T mean the end of our relationship with them.

On the flip side, when it comes our family, high school DOES feel like it's the end of our relationship with them. You don't feel like you're going to "leave" your friends when you graduate, but you *do* feel like you're going to leave your parents.

And because we see it that way, we tend to look at our families like a reality show in the last season. Sure there's drama . . . but it's almost over.

Think about it like your high school cafeteria. I know that's weird, but *really*, think about it. Close your eyes, take in the smells, think about the delicious options available before you. Actually, don't do that. Instead, just think about the way you *approach* your high school cafeteria. Do you ever worry if it's messy when you leave? Sure, you take your tray and throw away some leftover food, but you don't have to think about washing anything. If a chair's broken, who cares? If a table gets scuffed up, so what? It's a small part of your life each day, and not a big deal.

On the other hand, think about the kitchen at your house. Most of us feel like this is a place that needs to be taken care of. Most of you probably aren't *responsible* for taking care of it, but you still treat it with more care. Probably because the person who is responsible for it (whether it's your stepmom, dad, or grandma) makes sure you treat it with respect! If you break a chair, you're in trouble! If you scuff up the table, you start stressing out. Bottom line: The kitchen at your home feels a lot more PERMANENT than your high school cafeteria.

So here's what I'm getting at: We treat our friends like the kitchen. We see them as permanent, so we treat them with care.

But we treat our families like our school cafeteria. They're temporary. Once we graduate, we'll move on. We'll no longer have the annoying arguments, curfews, room cleanings, or interrogations about homework.

We see graduation as an escape from family.

And because of that, we treat our families as something we can escape from. The thought that one day we'll have freedom from them gives us a sense of hope.

And while that's a normal way to feel, it comes with some not-so-great side effects. When we think about escaping our family . . .

1. **It makes us indifferent toward them.** We feel okay to treat them however we want.
2. **It's shortsighted.** The truth is, EVERYBODY else in our lives can—and potentially may—go away. But our families will be our families forever. Our current friends may not be at our wedding, but our families will be. Our friends may not gather with us every year at Christmas, but our families will. We'll get new friends in college, but we won't get a new mom, uncle, stepdad, or sister.

TEACHING SCRIPT



3. **It's damaging.** When you treat your family negatively, you have the potential to damage them *and* you in the process.
4. **It creates habits.** The way you treat your family *now* will affect how you treat your own family *later*. It will affect how you treat your roommates in college, your coworkers, neighbors, and the people you want to date.

It's a big deal, isn't it?

And this may be hard to hear, because some of you have been really hurt by your family. You've been hurt in way that feels permanent. You're sitting there thinking, "Oh, I KNOW family is permanent! I'll *never* get away from how they've treated me. I'll *never* escape those feelings. I wish I could!"

If that's the case, hopefully today will be helpful as we look at a family who would've had the #1 reality show in history. They make the Kardashians seem like Sesame Street!

TRUTH

5 MINUTES

It's the same family we looked at in week one: Abraham, his son Isaac, and his grandsons Jacob and Esau. I'm glad this family is mentioned in the Bible, because they got it wrong in so many ways. Yet God was still involved.

If you remember from a couple of weeks ago, the main drama between Jacob and Esau had to do with *birthright*—which was a special blessing and privilege passed down to the oldest son. But what exactly was involved in getting this? Getting the birthright meant a lot of things that don't necessarily make a lot of sense in our world today, but the one thing that *does* make sense is this . . .

The son with the birthright got double the inheritance of the other. DOUBLE.

I like to call Jacob and Esau unidentical twins. Jacob was more of a stay-at-home-and-watch-TV kind of guy. He was a patient mama's boy. Esau was more of an I'm-going-hunting-and-fishing kind of guy. He wanted what he wanted . . . and he wanted it now!

The Bible tells us that Jacob and Esau were fighting in their mom's womb before they were even born. From the very beginning, these two had fight after fight, drama after drama. Add in some betrayal, and it wouldn't be unrealistic to imagine these brothers growing up, parting ways, hating each other for life, and never speaking again.

Which is basically what happened. Kind of.

- After Jacob stole Esau's birthright, Jacob took off. He was afraid Esau was going to try to kill him (literally).
- They DID hate each other.

TEACHING SCRIPT



- But even though they probably didn't intend to, they ended up speaking again. It's a long story, but years later they crossed paths again.

Check this out . . .

Then Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming with his 400 men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and his two servant wives (Genesis 33:1 NLT).

Why did Jacob divide his family? Because he was pretty sure he would be attacked by his brother's army, and he didn't want everyone to die. He thought if he split them up, there were better odds for at least some of them surviving. The story continues:

As [Jacob] approached his brother, he bowed to the ground seven times before him. Then Esau ran to meet him and embraced him, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him. And they both wept (Genesis 33:3b-4 NLT).

So Jacob's entire family basically came and bowed before Esau out of humility.

"And what were all the flocks and herds I met as I came?" Esau asked. Jacob replied, "They are a gift, my lord, to ensure your friendship." "My brother, I have plenty," Esau answered. "Keep what you have for yourself" (Genesis 33:8-9 NLT).

My guess is that Jacob's gifts were a combination of, "Sorry-for-being-a-jerk-when-we-were-younger" and, "Please-don't-kill-my-entire-family." Either way, they were another gesture of humility.

But Jacob insisted, "No, if I have found favor with you, please accept this gift from me. And what a relief to see your friendly smile. It is like seeing the face of God! Please take this gift I have brought you, for God has been very gracious to me. I have more than enough." And because Jacob insisted, Esau finally accepted the gift. "Well," Esau said, "let's be going. I will lead the way" (Genesis 33:10-12 NLT).

But Jacob refused.

"All right," Esau said, "but at least let me assign some of my men to guide and protect you." Jacob responded, "That's not necessary. It's enough that you've received me warmly, my lord!"

So Esau turned around and started back to Seir that same day. Jacob, on the other hand, traveled on to Succoth. There he built himself a house and made shelters for his livestock. That is why the place was named Succoth (which means "shelters") (Genesis 33:15-17 NLT).

Imagine the emotion of this moment. Years had gone by since they had last seen each other. They had grown up, gotten married, and had kids. **But despite all the life they had lived without each other, when they finally saw each other, they couldn't escape the fact that they were still family.**

Jacob had lived in a way that had embarrassed and disrespected his older brother. He had made choices with a shortsighted view in mind, thinking he could escape his family and look out only for himself.

TEACHING SCRIPT



And Esau had so much hatred toward Jacob that he wanted to kill him.

But when they saw each other again, Esau knew that as bad as Jacob had been, he was still family. So he welcomed him as family. And the forgiveness and grace Esau showed Jacob was something Jacob never expected.

It's a bittersweet story. On one hand, it could've ended with them at war, trying to hurt each other. On the other hand, it makes you wish they had made up like this earlier. All that time they spent apart, neglecting, fearing, hating each other, and avoiding a permanent relationship, they could've spent that time working on it and making it better. **Their story would've looked a lot better if they had a long-term perspective on their relationship from the beginning.**

APPLICATION

2 MINUTES

See, there will probably come a day when you part ways (to some extent) with your family . . .

- Maybe you'll go off to the college or enlist in the military.
- Maybe you'll move out and get an apartment with some roommates.
- Maybe you'll move into the basement and have your own separate entrance (maybe you'll even pay a little rent).
- Maybe you'll leave the country and travel the world.

But there will always be holidays, weddings, funerals, births, Mother's Day, Father's Day, your siblings' birthdays, YOUR wedding, the birth of YOUR kids, random texts from your siblings late at night, phone calls from your mom on the weekends, and family Facebook posts that you're tagged in. This list could go on for days.

Bottom line . . .

Family is forever.

The question is: *How do you want your forever reality with your family to look?*

You can't control everything about them, but you can do your part to make the forever you have with your family as healthy and enjoyable as possible.

Like every other family, yours is fractured. Even if you feel disappointed, there's still a ton of potential as far as what God can do in the lives of these people who are close to you and will never go away.

So the question is: **Will you see your family as a permanent or temporary part of your life?**

TEACHING SCRIPT



If you see them as temporary, it doesn't matter how you treat them. But if you see them as permanent—as a group of people who God is going to use to grow you, and vice versa—and if you make the decision to make the most of the time you have with them, then the effect can be great.

You can be the one who helps your family grow into a great reality!

LANDING

1 MINUTE

Listen, God's story for you and for your family is bigger than just high school. It's bigger than just the time spent in the same house.

Family is forever.

With that in mind, you have two choices: run from your family, or make the most of it. Just know that every family is fractured. Every family feels like a reality show, and you can either make it better or worse for everyone involved. And you can decide what role you want to play.

So follow the lead of Jacob and Esau. Make peace. And be the one who impacts your family's reality both now and in your future.



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
