**Chapter 3**

**Sifting Through the Family Soil**

Family of Origin



There is growing intolerance in our culture for biblical views on marriage and family. Chapter 3 makes a bold declaration that Satan has declared war on God’s family and demonstrated the ways that God’s family is being destroyed. This is very controversial even in Christian circles. As a group leader, you will need to use discernment and be sensitive to the views some participants may have while at the same time standing on the truth of God’s Word on the subject of marriage and family. The focus should be about God’s intent for the family because His way is perfect and the way of blessing. Participants are to be encouraged to seek God through prayer and His Word if they are conflicted in any way about His design for the family.

Why are we looking at the family system? Because generally, that’s where the roots of our present struggles are. The family system is the most influential place where we learn how to love, give, and receive in relationships, find security and security, producing a whole, healthy individual. It’s also where we often form our initial sense of identity and learn specifically how to function in our gender roles. It should be obvious how this area can distort participant’s perception of God’s intent for the family system if they have been exposed to dysfunction and even chaos.

This chapter is a sifting process to understand how families function, and to align that with God’s truth. While we may not be able to offer solution for a family crisis immediately, we can begin to heal by first identifying the breakdown, so we have a better understanding of the ‘why” behind our present struggles. We can also start to see God’s redemptive plan. He is able to supersede anything negative or toxic that has occurred and can heal and transform even if our present relationships issues don’t change. How so? We learn to depend on our perfect Father and perfect Spouse to make up for what is lacking. And based on that relationship, we will find the wisdom to deal with our relationship challenges.

This chapter can be extremely overwhelming and painful. It is an area where participants are often the most fragile and hurt. Be sensitive to people’s past dysfunction, but firm in the truth of God’s solution, even though it may not be popular. We need to be loving, but remember, that in fact, the truth will set people free, not keeping them in bondage. Continue to remind the participants this process is to help them see what is going on inside themselves.

**Group Note:**

Some participants may have a difficult time identifying where their parents may have failed in their God-given role as parents believing that they are disrespecting and dishonoring their parents. They may feel guilty about even talking about it and insist that…they did the best that they could….. Please remind them that this process is not about blaming anyone. The truth of the matter is that our parents can only pour out what was poured into them. So it’s not about blaming them. This process may even help us understand our parents more and give us compassion for them, but we cannot bypass this process. This is a stumbling block to freedom. Because failing to look at the dysfunctional patterns of origin allows for repeated patterns in our own families. We need to identify what we were marinated in and replace it with God’s perfect marinade for our family in order to break the generational sin cycle. It is possible to walk through recovery, being honest, truthful and even angry at our experience…and still, maintain honor in our hearts towards our parents. Because we can honor the position of our parents in our lives…without condoning or excusing what they did.

**Group Discussion:** Self Evaluation section at the end of Chapter 3 can be used as discussion points in groups.

Author Note: This chapter is often a point of disagreement in Christian circles depending on doctrinal beliefs. Some adhere to the complementarian view meaning that God has created men and women equally but with distinct roles and gender distinctions when it comes to functional roles in society, the church, and the home. The egalitarian view holds that God created all men and women equally and that there are no gender distinctions when it comes to roles in society, the church, and the home. While the author holds a complementarian view of the male and female roles according to God’s design, this should not ever be a cause of division. Suffice it to say that whatever view you subscribe to know that a child is born with three inherent God-given needs –for love, security, and significance. They require a lot of touch and time. Unmet needs are at the root of brokenness. God’s heart is for His hurting children to be made whole. As a group leader, your goal is to keep the group focused on the subject at hand so that the Lord will guide them in identifying unmet needs and other rooted issues that need healing.

**Spiritual Growth:**

Read the book of Ephesians

Read a Psalm & a Proverb daily

Meditate on Psalm 27:10