

Family Ties: Knotted

Ephesians 4:1-7

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Anybody here ever have someone in your family make you mad?

Anybody here ever said something to a family member that you shouldn't have said?

Anybody here ever wish y our children or grandchildren would behave differently?

Anybody here have a perfect family?

Yep...we are flawed in our family relationships---because we are flawed people. Just because we are Christians does not mean we have perfect family relationships.

Family ties: Outward, Upward, and now Knotted.

I remember, I think it was in High School where I cut a picture out of the newspaper that gave step by step instructions as to how to tie a tie, and what type of know you wanted. Now my dad went the easy route and had the clip on tie! When I graduated college with a teaching degree I taught Middle School and High School. I wore a tie every day to class. In part I did that because of my young age and my height I knew that if I wore a tie people would not think I was a student.

As hard as I worked to figure out how to tie a tie I now find it more difficult to untie a knot. I hate tying or untying my shoes to find out my shoe-string has a knot in it. It seems like it takes forever to get that knot out. If it's a small tight not...the thought crosses my mind....I'll just leave the knot...nobody will know.

Excuse me for telling a "Bar joke." A piece of string walks into a bar and walks up to the counter. The bartender says, "Sorry, I don't want to string you along, but we don't serve pieces of string in here, get lost."

Upset, the piece of string walks out the door. A sudden thought strikes him. He ties himself in a knot and messes his hair up. He walks back into the bar and approaches the counter. The bartender says, "Aren't you that piece of string from before...?"

"No," says the piece of string, "I'm a frayed knot." **(Image)**

Family Ties...be afraid not...don't be scared, let's discover how through God's power we can working at deknottting those knots.

Sarah and I have several knots in our family. Our daughter Jenny married Jason and they have 2 of our 4 grandchildren. Our 2 grandsons Micah and Eli. They have been married over 6 years. The problem is Jason's last name is Knott. So we have Jenny Knott, Jason Knott, Micah Knott, and Eli Knott. Yes truly Knotts in our family relationships.

In all seriousness how do we deal with the flaws/knots of family relationships.

Single parents raising children that have a variety of pressures and “knots” that you have to overcome.

If there is a divorce situation and shared custody of children then there are certain “knots” that you have to negotiate.

If you are part of a blended family there are often tensions and knots that are a byproduct of all the various relationships.

If you have an adult child that you have an estranged relationship that becomes like a knot.

So in Family Ties there are Knots. Those knots gives us knots in our stomach and our very soul...so what do we do?

Again let me remind you of the Visionary Family Conference this weekend. Marriage session Friday night. Session Saturday morning for its “Never Too Late” challenging parents to connect in faith with their adult children. And then Saturday afternoon a parenting seminar. These seminars can help with these ‘knots’ you may have. Sign up on line at our website or in the Multi-Purpose Room today.

Let’s go to scripture. Paul is writing to the church at Ephesus and he calls all of us to this: **Verse 1: “...walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called,”**

First and foremost we are called to be a Christ follower. Are we walking in a manner worthy of that calling?

When I was in seminary I went before the Florida Conference Board of Ordained Ministry to be interviewed to see if I would be approved to be Ordained. Sarah was back in Kentucky, at that time we had one child. I was thrilled when I called and told her that I had been granted approval and that I would be ordained at Annual Conference...that was in 1986. I flew home from Florida and was so excited because with the ordination status I could be called Reverend. Our son Ben was less than 2 at the time. Sarah presented me with a T-Shirt that she said was from Ben...wink, wink...but the front of the T-Shirt said, “Rev. Da-Da.” She then proceeded to tell me that I may now be a Reverend, but you were a husband and da-da first. And by the way you are still taking the trash out!

Titles don’t mean anything....we need to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called. The calling is to be a Christian. But let me expand a little on that. Are you walking worthy of the calling of being a Christian husband/wife? Are you walking worthy of the calling of Dad/Mom...a Christian dad/mom. What about the calling of brother/sister? Uncle/aunt? Are you walking worthy of the calling of a Christian Grandpa/grandma, pops, ya-ya, Mimi Papa, Meema, granddad? And what about walking worthy of the calling of being the Christian mother-in-law, father-in-law you need to be?

No matter your title---Revered, Dad, Pops...are you walking in a manner worthy of the calling of Jesus Christ who calls you to follow Him?

I believe we can take this primary Christian calling and walking worthy of it and apply it to family relationships even the flawed/knotted ones.

Paul gives us a list in verse 2 and 3.

The Worthy Walk

- 1. Humility**
- 2. Gentleness**
- 3. With Patience**
- 4. Bearing with one another in love**
- 5. Eager to maintain the unity in the bond of peace**

In our family relationships do we have humility? Do we use gentleness? How patience are we? And what about bearing with one another in love? Are we eager to maintain the unity and peace?

So think of those knots in your family relationships. Are you responding with humility? Gentleness? Patience. Grinning and bearing it with love? And are you doing all you can to maintain unity with peace?

It can be easy with family to get to a point and say...if you are going to be like that well...phooey on you!!!! But does that bring peace?

Now Paul is talking about the church and says there is one body. Beloved we only one earthly family. It pains me when I do funeral preparation with a family and they talk about dysfunction or the relative that they haven't heard from and they don't even know if they will show up for the funeral.

I feel for them. I hurt for them. I also know that no one but God and them know what has transpired in that family relationship.

Now let me mention another verse written also by the Apostle Paul. It is from the book of Romans chapter 12. **Romans 12: 18 "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all."**

Let's look at it carefully. So far as it depends on you. What are you doing to live peaceably with all...including family. But also notice those first 2 words---If possible.

What if you try with these knotheads...I mean those in family relationship but they do not respond positively. Have you done what God has called you to do to be at peace with them? Even if it ain't your fault?! Do what God calls you to do to be at peace with that family member...however you can only do your part. You may try and your efforts may be rejected.

Your offer for reconciliation and peace may be refused. Beloved, if you have done what God has called you to do and that offer is rejected...it then becomes their problem and not yours. Don't let false guilt get you down. You can only extend the offer and try.

If they refuse it then becomes an issue for them and you need to be released from those feelings. You have done what God has called you to do, you have so far as it depends on you tried to live peaceably. What is God calling you to do? If you do it...then it is between God and the other person.

No matter their response you must still walk worthy of your calling as a Christ follower...still with humility, gentleness, patience, and yes love.

You don't want it to be said, "If you are a Christian then why are you treating me this way?" However as you do what God has called you to do...and if that is rejected know that they may still throw your Christianity in your face to induce false guilt. Be worthy of the calling. Walk where you do not need to be ashamed. Have integrity. But do not let Satan rob you and produce false guilt in you. If you have done what God has called you to do...then you should be at peace with God knowing that you have done your best.

Bottom line we are one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of All. Are we representing that oneness in our relationships?

Verse 6: one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

There is that Father relationship again. He is over all, He is through all, and in all...and as my 2 favorite Kentuckians Sarah and Mama Lena would say he is for ya all. Yes! One God and Father who is over all and through all and in all and for you all. Woo-Hoo!

So Family Ties: Knotted.

No easy solutions. I don't have a quick fix.

I have some rope here with knots in them.

You may feel like your family relationships are like this---all knotted up and a mess. God will help.

You may have several knots in your family relationships. Some you may be able to work on and unknot with humility, gentleness, patience, love, and peace. Others may not be so easy.

And you may even have a knot that takes a long long time to make that relationship smooth.

It would be easy to give up. Oh Lord I need you.

We are going to pray right where we are seated...a time of silent prayer. A time to think about Family Ties, family relationships and which ones may be knotted. What is God calling you to do? Let's spend some silent time in prayer.

(Closing sermon prayer)
(Words from Matt Maher, Lord I Need You)

Lord, I come, I confess
Bowing here I find my rest
Without You I fall apart
You're the One that guides my heart

Lord, I need You, oh, I need You
Every hour I need You
My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You

Where sin runs deep Your grace is more
Where grace is found is where You are
And where You are, Lord, I am free
Holiness is Christ in me

Lord, I need You, oh, I need You
Every hour I need You
My one defense, my righteousness
Oh God, how I need You

Lord help me to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which we have been called. Help us to do what you want and need us to do. Give us boldness. Give us resolve and peace when we have done what you have wanted us to do and it has been rejected.

Help us with humility, gentleness, patience and to bear with one another in love. Help the unity of our families....may there be unity of Spirit in the bond of peace.

We ask this in the name of the Father who is over all and through all and in all. Amen.