

**Scott A. Wood 12-11-2016**  
**SERIES: HOW TO HAVE A FEAR LESS CHRISTMAS**  
**PART 2: FIGHTING FOR AN AWESOME FAMILY**

Merry Christmas, CVCHURCH. We started this exciting series HOW TO HAVE A FEAR-LESS CHRISTMAS last week with my first installment being how to have awesome relationships. How to develop friendships that last a lifetime. I continue to hear some great stories. Hey, church, I am so excited that we have had 19 people sign up in the last three weeks for small groups. Two people have signed up to lead a small group. I have had 5 new people come to our group. We had 14 people last week. I so appreciate how you're listening to God's Word, and you're taking action on it.

Today I want to look at with you how to have an awesome family and how to fight for it. I want to be emphatic on this one point. Any relationship that is worth your time, energy and investment is worth fighting for. Don't be mistaken, loved ones; you will have to fight for your marriage, your family, your friendships, and your relationship with Jesus Christ. Why? Because all of these relationships reflect that you're created in the image of God, and that is why there is an all out assault on humans from abortion, to euthanasia to suicide to the sexual delusion and distortion that has saturated our culture. If you're going to stay above the fray then you will need to adopt the attitude and lifestyle of a spiritual warrior and fight for the biblical values that create in you the heart and mind of a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. I have chosen this word intentionally—"Fighting"—because families are not awesome by accident. By accident they're average. You have to fight for your family if you want it to be a great family simply because there are all kinds of forces working against your family and friendships in our society. I don't have the time to detail all of the forces—needless to say that there are spiritual forces, economic forces, moral forces, cultural and social forces that want to destroy the idea of family and specifically your family. I want to look at the positive side of family and give you some tools and impart some skills in how you can successfully fight for your family and your relationships. Does that sound good to you? Let's go for it.

When the families of Jerusalem were under attack thousands of years ago, the leader Nehemiah said to the people he was leading in Nehemiah 4:14 **“Don’t be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is awesome, great and glorious, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes!”** Nehemiah was appealing to their care and interest to protect their families. No matter where you are on the continuum of families—whether you’re just starting out or your family looks like it could be disintegrating or you’re starting a new family, it’s not too late to fight to make your family better. What I want to do today is share from God’s Word and 39 years of marriage, 31 years of being a father and for over 40 years of working with families all along the continuum. I have seen families that were divorced and then they remarried. I have worked with couples who were separated, sometimes for a long time, get back together. I have worked with blended families and culturally diverse families. Here at CVCHURCH, we’re here to fight for you and with you and your family. The first symbol of an awesome family is the board game called **CANDYLAND (pic)**. Here is the reason why.

## **I. Awesome families are playful**

It’s the first common denominator of great families. They know how to play. They know how to have fun. They enjoy life together. This is the missing ingredient in so many families today. Today our families are too busy, too tired, too negative, too worn-out, and too serious. Who wants to come home from school to that? Families should be fun. Recently I read an article on a survey of what kids in CA answered when asked what fun things does your family like to do together. Here were some of the responses. I like to spend time with them and go swimming. I just like to be with my family. I guess my favorite is to go to parties and fun places with my family. I like to go to Lego Land and ride trains. I like to help my mom cook. Go to the skate park. Play tennis. I like to go bike riding. Go surfing. Bake cookies with my dad. Play tag. I like to do crafts. Go to Disneyland. Open presents with my family at my birthday and Christmas. Play board and card games. Go to church. I like to have family dinners together. I like to read the Bible with my parents. Here is the truth parents. Your family is not a boot camp. Parents are not the drill sergeants. Your family is not a business and parents are

not the CEO's. And your family is not a laboratory experiment, and you parents are not the research scientists experimenting on the kids. Will add a little of this and a little of that. We're going to make the perfect child. There is no perfect child, and there is no perfect family.

The Bible says that play is an important part of your life. Play is essential to adults not just to children. In fact, play is connected to creativity. The more play you have in life the more creative you're going to be. Solomon says in Ecclesiastes 8:15 **"I commend the enjoyment of life."** **"People ought to enjoy every day of their lives, no matter how long they live."** Ecclesiastes 11:8a (NCV). **"Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love."** Ecclesiastes 9:9 (NIV).

1 Timothy 6:17 says, **"God generously gives us everything for our enjoyment."** Do you realize that everything in the world God created He created for you to enjoy? Listen! God wants life to be enjoyed not merely endured. And a lot of you are simply enduring life. God wants you to enjoy life with your family. The wisest man who ever lived, Solomon, says that I recommend, I commend, the enjoyment of life. God says everything created is for enjoyment. If you're too busy to enjoy life, you're too busy. God meant for you to play and have some fun.

I have a confession to make. As our kids were growing up I was more of the rule keeper for the family and Kathe was more of the funmeister. The genius in both of our kids, Benjamin and Whitney is that their friends say they're both so fun. Whitney's health can slow her down but Benjamin goes 1,000 miles ahead in fun. Almost every weekend there in another state doing something fun. I have had to check myself that I don't throw water on his desire or on Kathe's desire to have fun. Please write this down in your notes. **"People don't remember what you say but they will remember how you made them feel."** Hear me, parents, especially with kids under 16 in your home. You can always buy things. Kid's don't need things. They need your time. They need fun with the family and in the home. They want the home to be fun, not a boot camp or a laboratory. They simply want time with you, dad, with you, mom. The first symbol of an

awesome family is the game Candyland. The second symbol of an awesome family is a **watering can (pic)**.

## **II. Awesome families encourage growth**

Families are meant to create an atmosphere for lifelong learning. They are meant to help each other develop and grow. They are meant to encourage the discovery for each person in the family's shape—S.H.A.P.E. We have a seminar that is called LD 301. It helps you discover your Spiritual gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality, Experiences. It will be taught in the New Year. If that piques your interest please fill out your CC and let us know you want to attend. The families that don't grow tend to bore because you get into ruts pretty easily. Look at how Jesus grew. Luke 2:52 says, "**Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and all the people.**" Jesus grew in four areas, and so should we. You grow in wisdom. That's intellectual growth. You grow in stature. That's physical health. You grow in favor with God which is spiritual growth. And you grow in favor with others. That's social growth. Every person in your family needs to be growing in all four of these areas. Not just the kids but you dad. You mom. You brother. You sister. You want to be growing physically, mentally, spiritually and socially. Here is a question you want to ask yourself. How am I going to be different a year from today? Do you know more than you knew a year ago? Are you closer to God than you were a year ago? Are you more loving than you were a year ago? Awesome families encourage growth. Average families just stay the same. No one changes or grows.

### **A. What are we to learn from our families?**

#### **1) What to do with feelings**

This is one of the most important skills you can learn. How do I handle them? What do I do with them? Awesome families care about feelings and help you learn how to recognize your feelings, how to name your feelings, and how to open up to your feelings, how to identify your feelings, and how to express them in a healthy manner. When kids leave their families and they haven't learned

how to deal with their emotions, they leave emotionally crippled. We have more mental illness and emotionally disturbed people than ever because they did not learn from their families how to deal with their emotions. This is a leading reason for being a member of a local church where you feel you fit and belong. You can learn how to deal with your emotions from other brothers and sisters. You do this by becoming a part of a small group. You can get involved with our Celebrate Recovery ministry. You develop good friendships.

## **2) How to handle conflict**

When a person leaves their family, and they haven't learned how to deal with conflict, they're going to have problems in all of their relationships, especially if they get married and have children. Children must see their parents and how they resolve their conflicts in front of them showing how we resolve hurts, difficulties, anger, etc. What happens for most people in conflict--they become either a mute or a martyr or they become a maniac. They either hold it in or they explode. Please hear me, loved friends--if you don't learn how to deal with conflict you tend to become a skunk or a turtle. Skunks, when they get upset they just spray you and stink the place up. A turtle when they get hurt they pull into their shell and isolate and pull back out of fear of conflict. Pretty often skunks marry turtles. Don't look at each other or nudge the other person but you know who the skunks are and who the turtles in your family are. There are those who are the aggressors and those of you who pull back. Neither one of these are affective approaches.

## **3) How to handle loss**

We all will experience big and little losses throughout our entire lives. An awesome family doesn't belittle losses of any size but helps their members how to grieve. I will never forget when Whitney's dog, Patches, died. We went on a two-day get away, and in a dream Whitney woke up in the morning and was crying and said something bad has happened to patches. Something very unfortunate happened when one of our neighbors was to take care of our dog, and they didn't, and he died. We did not make light of her loss. We all mourned

and prayed together. Kathe being so incredibly wise got her two kittens not long afterwards. Dale is 22 years old and blind but she adores Dale. I love Proverbs 24:16 **“The godly person may trip seven times, but they will get up again.”** A family that teaches their members to grieve their losses teaches them how to be resilient.

#### 4) **What values matter most**

You get to help your kids learn this is important and this is not. Our culture is teaching our kids values that aren't very good. You want to teach your children that there are 3 basic temptations. The Bible calls them the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. It has to do with how I feel, what I do and what I get in life. Secularists or philosophy would call them hedonism, materialism and secularism. But basically it's sex, salary and status. These are the three temptations that Jesus experienced, Moses, David and Adam experienced. You teach your children what matters most.

#### 5) **Habit development**

Habits develop our character

### **B. How to encourage growth in your family**

#### 1) **By example**

In John 13:14-15 Jesus said, **“Since I have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you.”** We learn best by example. Your kids don't want to hear a sermon; they want to see it.

#### 2) **Through conversation**

You must have conversations about real issues, or they're not growing, especially in a biblical worldview. This is critical. Too many of our conversations

are about we need to get here by this time. We discuss scheduling, eating and homework. But you have to have important discussions about what really matters in life. Deuteronomy 6:7 says, **“You must teach God’s commandments to your children and talk about them when you’re at home or out for a walk; at bedtime and the first thing in the morning.”**

### **3) Avoid criticizing**

Please hear me: criticism never helps a family member grow. Nagging doesn’t work. Condemning them doesn’t work. Criticism focuses on what you don’t want from them in attitude, thought and deed. Teaching them what you want and affirming them when they give you what you’re looking for is the best way to help nurture growth in all things SERFVIP. Ephesians 6:4 says, **“Don’t keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful. Instead bring them up with the loving training and teaching of the Lord.”**

### **4) Avoid comparing**

Comparing your husband, wife, son, daughter or anyone else never works because God has made every one of us unique. Everyone is different. There’s no one in the world like you or your family member. The Bible tells us not to compare. Build your wife, husband and child up. Comparison is unfair and lethal in any relationship. Galatians 6:4 says, **“Each person should judge his or her own actions and not compare themselves with others. Then they can be proud for what they themselves have done.”**

## **III. Awesome families protect each other**

Awesome families protect each other when they go through the storms of life, because you need support to make it through the storms of life. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 says, **“Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed. 10 If one person falls, the other can reach out and help. But someone who falls alone is in real trouble.”**

**There are three types of storms to care for each other when they come:**

### **A. Change**

Change can be a big bump in the road. Change can be very upsetting, especially for children. I highly recommend that you get help from your small group, a brother or sister you respect or get some professional counseling. When you're going through a change it is very wise to get some outside advice. It is smart to get some coaching. Sometimes you need a family coach. I have had families bring in their entire family. It is incredible to watch what God will do. Awesome families help each other face the storm of change.

### **B. Harmful ideas**

Our family members are being bombarded with harmful ideas through the media, entertainment and movies. Many children are provided for, but they are not protected. They're letting their kids go to movies they have no business going to see and watch TV shows they have no business watching and reading books and listening to music they should not. Parents protect kids in the storms of life. We need to be able to sit and discuss with our family members the harmful ideas that they are exposed to and talk them through the biblical values and alternatives that will feed their minds, spirits and behaviors.

### **C. Rejection**

This is a storm we will all face in life, and it's the most painful storm of all. When we feel betrayed, and rejected. When your children are rejected or when your husband or your wife feels rejection at work the family needs to rally around and be there as a raincoat in the storms of life. I will never forget when Benjamin tried out for the varsity team at APU. He had a great HS career and was excited to see if he could make the team. That year they only kept 12 players and Benjamin let us know he was the number 12 man. He was ecstatic and we were very excited for him. Kathe and I left for our vacation to Scottsdale, and, one day, I got a call from Benjamin, and he was crying and said he got cut. Kathe

and I immediately put him on a plane to come out with us. We just simply nursed him back to life for three days. We all wept together, and he shared his hurt, frustration, rejection and anger. It was one of the most exhilarating times for us as a family as we were there for him in his storm. We have been walking Whitney through the storm of her health. These times have brought us all closer together. Loved ones, it is neglect and abuse to not be there for your family and to walk with them through change, the harmful ideas they're exposed to and the rejection. Awesome families do this in spades, and your children will rise up and call you blessed because you're there for them.

#### **IV. Awesome families serve God and others together**

The Bible says we actually serve God by serving others. This is what we call the purpose of ministry. Awesome families teach their kids it's not about you. You're not the center of the universe. Awesome families teach their kids you were made by God for a mission. Awesome families teach their kids you were shaped to serve God. As I said, we're got a whole seminar on that--LD 301--to teach you and your family how to discover your shape and how to help your children discover their God given shape. I am the man I am today because my parents instilled in me certain values to care about other people. Loved ones, your children will either learn to be givers or takers. They learn to be one or the other by watching how you treat each other at home. How you treat your neighbors. How you treat your brothers and sisters in church. Do they see you making the worship of God, the serving of God by serving others, the sharing of your faith with others, the mentoring of others and the development of close intimate relationships a top priority in your life? Our kids have grown up seeing hundreds if not thousands of people come and go through our home. I loved it before Whitney left for Liberty she was actually attending our small group. That is a real feather in my cap to see her sharing her life with others. Benjamin and Whitney have grown up watching us have people living in our home for years. Awesome families are playful, awesome families encourage growth, awesome families protect each other and awesome families serve God by serving others. Let's pray. If you've never given your life to Christ that's the starting point. If you've never given your family to Christ, that's the starting point. Would you pray this

prayer in your heart and mind with me? “Dear Jesus Christ, I want to live an awesome life. And I want to have an awesome family. I know I won’t have either if I just live for myself. So today I give myself to You. As for me and my house, we’re going to serve the Lord. I want my family to be a place of play and fun, not just work and negativity. I want my family to be a place where we encourage each other to grow constantly. Thank You for a church that helps our family grow. I want to be a family that is a shelter in the storm, a safe haven, a safe place a refuge. Help me to protect my family, not just their bodies, but also their minds. I want my family to serve You by serving others. Help us find our family mission, our family purpose, what you shaped our family to do. Help me to teach my kids to be generous by modeling generosity to God and to others. Help me to have a bifocal vision to not just care about my family but teach my kids, my wife, my husband and all of us to care about the whole world. And may we model dedication, service, generosity and prayer. I can’t do this on my own, Jesus. So I ask You to come into my life and take complete control of every area of me and give me the power to do the right thing. In Your name I pray.”