

Week Five – *This Is Us*
Ephesians 4:1-7; 14-17

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. Describe your family of origin. Where did you fit into the pecking order of things?
2. How are you the same or different from your siblings, or parents?
3. Did you always feel special, never feel special, or never really give it much thought? As you look back on your childhood today, how has your self-perception changed?
4. Tom & Dickie Smothers Brothers were a big comedy act that loved to use the phrase, “Mom always loved you more than me.” Did you ever feel that way growing up? Do you think all siblings feel that way about their place in the family?
5. Can you name any siblings in the Bible that fought for attention and honor? Do you think that just goes with the territory, or do most families honor each other and affirm each other in love?
6. Read Philippians 2:1-4. Is that kind of attitude possible in a family? What makes it possible or impossible in your opinion?
7. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray a prayer to God about your family of origin... perhaps a prayer of thanksgiving or for acceptance and peace to rise above any lasting resentments or pain.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

8. Read Ephesians 4:1-7; 14-17. What part of the reading especially spoke to you?
9. What are the key descriptive words from verse 2 that describe the attitude God wants to foster in all our relationships?
10. According to verse 3, what is the expected outcome of those attitudes?
11. How does God describe the overall goal in verse 1? How does this description compare to how Jesus said nonbelievers would recognize Christians in John 13:35?
12. In your opinion, is that how Christians are often typecast in our culture... as people of love, patience, humility,

gentleness and overlooking faults in others?

13. Is the reputation Christians have in the world today one we've earned, or one that has been falsely applied by enemies of our faith? Explain.
14. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to be more gracious towards others, both believers and nonbelievers so that your attitude would reflect God's expectations.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

15. Read Ephesians 4:7. Explain it in your own words.
16. Are you a peacemaker by nature or a boat rocker? Can you be both at the same time?
17. Read Ephesians 4:4-6. Are divisions in the Christian faith (denominations and differences in theological perspective) a blessing or a blight upon the church? Why?
18. Does your congregation affirm and speak well of Christian churches different from your own, or do they encourage you to keep your distance for fear of false teachers? Do you agree with that perception?
19. Can a person disagree with another person without becoming disagreeable? Explain your point of view.
20. America seems to be more polarized on race, creed and political perspective than at any time in her history. Do you agree? Is it best to stand firm, compromise, or respectfully disagree?
21. Read Matthew 5:9. Then finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray to the God of peace that he might use you as an instrument of peace in the world.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

22. Read Ephesians 4:14-17. How does verse 15 describe the proper attitude of Christians as an influence in the world?
23. Do you agree with the statement, "Love without truth is not true love. Truth without love is never heard"? Do you think we are known for that kind of balance? Truth and love equally valued?
24. Do you feel your current marriage, family, or closest relationships are a good example of truth and love in balance?

25. Would you describe your family or closest relationships as a place of unity and mutual admiration?
26. Is your family situation more united or dissimilar? What would it take to bring your family into greater harmony? What could you do about it?
27. According to Ephesians 4:15-16 who is the true head of the church, our families, and our lives?
28. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Pray for greater unity in your own family and between Christians and between Christians and those outside saving faith.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

29. There is an old Christian hymn that states, “It is level at the foot of the cross.” What do you think that means?
30. Ephesians 4:16 says we are to “build up each other in love.” What percentage of conversation in your home is “building up,” versus critical in nature?
31. Do you respond better to praise or criticism? Do you believe the best approach is to focus on the positives or attempt to correct the negative behaviors of a person? Explain.
32. Someone has said the church needs less teaching and more doing. Do you agree? Why or why not?
33. Does your family share the same faith-perspective on life? Do you think that is important?
34. Read 1 Peter 3:9-12. How could you better demonstrate this attitude in your life? Do you think it would make a difference?
35. Finish your FIFTEEN in prayer. Re-read 1 Peter 3:9-12 and turn those thoughts into your closing prayer.