

WEEK 1 - One Family Under God

Brian Flewelling
September 13, 2026

WORSHIP

Begin your group with a time of worship. If someone in your group can lead worship, invite them to lead two or three songs. Alternatively, consider using one or more of these songs from our Sunday morning worship time:

- **I Know That I Know** (*The Belonging Co.*)
- **Firm Foundation (He Won't)** (*Cody Carnes*)
- **I Believe** (*Charity Gayle*)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Genesis 18:16-19
- Ephesians 4-5
- Joshua 24:15

OPENING PRAYER

Open your time together in prayer.

ICEBREAKER

Go around the group and answer this question: Growing up, what is one family habit, tradition, or “way of doing things” that you remember – good, bad, or just funny – that helped shape what home felt like for you?

OVERVIEW

This week Pastor Brian opened a six-week series on the family as the first community and the home as the first sanctuary. Drawing from Genesis 18, Ephesians 4-5, and Joshua 24, the sermon challenged us to see our homes not as places we escape to, but as places where God's character gets formed in us — and through us into others.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The home is where our least-filtered selves emerge, making it the most honest environment for spiritual growth.
- God chose Abraham not just for Abraham's sake, but so that Abraham would direct his household in the way of the Lord — and through that family, bless all nations.
- "Directing" a household is not about control or wishful thinking. It is about intentional, practiced habits that replace broken patterns with God-shaped ones.
- A household is not limited to a nuclear family. It includes anyone within your personal sphere of influence — the culture you set and tolerate in your space.
- Our emotional responses in the home do more spiritual branding than our words at church ever will.
- The Ephesians household code calls us to act as if Jesus is the head of the home, present in the home, and represented by each person in the home.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening (Choose one to get the group talking)

1. What is one word you would use to describe the emotional atmosphere of the home you grew up in? How did that atmosphere shape you?
2. Pastor Brian said, "Home is where sin gets cooked out of us, and grace gets worked into us." Does that description match your experience? Why or why not?

Digging In

3. Genesis 18:19 reveals that God chose Abraham specifically so he would direct his children and household in the way of the Lord. What does it mean to you that God's plan to bless all nations ran directly through the faithfulness of one family?

4. Pastor Brian described "the way of the Lord" as something intangible — a mix of habits, values, attitude, and personality. How would you describe the "way" that currently characterizes your home or your closest living environment?
5. Pastor Brian used the image of a trellis and a vine to describe directing children and household members. In your own words, what is the difference between controlling the people in your home and providing a structure for them to grow?
6. Ephesians 4:29 calls us to speak only what builds others up according to their needs. How does that standard challenge the everyday communication patterns in your household — things like tone, sarcasm, silence, or criticism?
7. Pastor Brian said our emotional responses in the home are what actually brand the people we live with, more than any sermon or lesson we could teach. Do you agree? What emotional patterns have you noticed yourself passing on — for better or for worse?
8. Ephesians 4:32 calls us to forgive one another just as God in Christ forgave us. Pastor Brian noted that familiarity can work against forgiveness — we know too much about a person to be surprised by their failures. How do you fight against that kind of hardened expectation in close relationships?

Going Deeper

9. Joshua 24:15 records Joshua's declaration that his household will serve the Lord, regardless of what others choose. What would it look like for you to make a similar declaration — not as a performance, but as a genuine, daily commitment? What would have to change?
10. The sermon described the home as a "laboratory of love" and a "school of love." What is one area of your character that your home environment is currently putting to the test? What might God be trying to form in you through that pressure?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION (10 Mins)

Choose one or more of the following to commit to before your group meets again:

- **Take inventory of your household culture.** Spend fifteen minutes this week writing down three words that honestly describe the emotional atmosphere of your home. Then write down three words that describe the atmosphere you want. Share what you find with a trusted person.
- **Practice the pause.** Pastor Brian suggested "taking a breath" to uninstall your emotional reaction before responding. Identify one recurring situation in your home where you tend to react poorly. This week, commit to pausing before you respond in that situation — even once.
- **Speak one building word daily.** Based on Ephesians 4:29, choose one person in your household or closest living environment. Each day this week, say one specific, sincere word of encouragement to that person that is tailored to something they actually need to hear.
- **Read together.** If you have a family or household, consider reading one short passage from Ephesians 4-5 together this week and briefly discussing what it would look like to live it out in your home.

Closing Thought and Prayer

Pastor Brian closed by asking: "Where do I feel my inadequacy?"

Take a moment before you close your group time to sit with that question personally. The goal of this series is not to produce guilt over the home we have failed to build. It is to open our hands to the God who builds it with us.

Close in prayer, asking God to make your homes — whatever form they take — places where His character is formed, His love is practiced, and His name is honored.

Next Week — Week 2: Family Values. How do we nurture God's ways among us?