

A FAMILY REVIVAL

GENESIS 35: 1-15

We speak often of the need for revival in the church, but did you ever consider the need for revival in the family? The family of Jacob provides us with a wonderful case study in a family revival.

In some ways it might be easier to experience revival in your family than in your church. The smaller the circle the greater the possibility of experiencing revival in the circle. So let's make a case study of the revival in the family of Jacob. Hopefully your family may not be in as bad a condition as that of Jacob. So if it could happen in his family, your family might be a cinch.

I. DESPERATELY NEEDED.

There are times of special need. Jacob's household found themselves in a time of desperate need of a fresh encounter with God in mercy. How could the need be any greater in our families?

1. Because of the moral decline in the family.

The events described in the prior chapter are so evident. The daughter Dinah is defiled. Two of the sons of Jacob have bloody hands. Some of the family members are worshippers of idols.

Have done an honest appraisal of the moral condition of your family recently? Almost all of the families I know have either children or grandchildren that are not walking in the ways of the Lord. Even parents have departed from a life of careful obedience. This should speak to us of the need for revival.

2. Because of the loss of influence by the family.

“Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me stink among the inhabitants of the land.” This was the result of the conduct of the family among the Philistines.

How much influence does your family have the for Lord? Are you respected for the godly lifestyle of your family? The world may not live by our godly principles, but they expect us to live in a godly manner since that is our profession.

3. Because of the strategic place of the family.

The redemptive purpose of God for the world rests on the shoulders of this family. The family of Jacob was at the heart of God's saving purpose for the world.

So it is with your family.

II. DIVINELY INITIATED.

1. God speaks a word of command.

“Arise and go!”

2. God speaks a word of reminder.

“Up to Bethel.”

III. PARENTLLY DIRECTED.

Unfortunately history reveals that most revivals start among the young rather than the parents. But a family revival needs to begin with the parents. Especially the fathers!

1. The father hears the word.

The word came to Jacob as a command—“Arise, and go up to Bethel and dwell there.”

2. The father leads the obedience to the word.

God did not specify the things that Jacob led the family to do, but he instinctively knew what would be required to return to Bethel. In a Biblical family parents lead—especially fathers. They do not operate democratically. I grew up in a family where parents led.

IV. THOROUGHLY PURSUED.

The whole family pursues.

“And Jacob said to his household, and to all that were with him.”

1. The whole family repents.

“And they gave to Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand.”

2. The whole family commits.

“And he built there an altar, and called the place El-beth-el.” (v. 7)

My mentor and pastor Clyde Billingsley did this with his family. They made an altar out of the coffee table in their living room, put everything they had on the table and gave it to God. His billfold, the car keys, the things that represented their possessions.

V. RICHLY REWARDED.

1. There is a fresh revelation of God.

“And God appeared unto Jacob again.”

2. There is a renewed covenant with God.

“And God said unto him, Thy name is Jacob; thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be they name; and he called his name Israel.”

3. There is an enriched blessing from God.

“And blessed him.” “And kings shall come of thy loins.”

One of the great names of the past associated with revival is that of Jonathan Edwards. Have you ever seen a list of the descendants of this good man, and the contribution that they made in the years to come? It is most impressive.

They were achievers in government, education, finance, religion, and in

almost every realm of life. When God blesses a family, they are really blessed.