

2021

# Safe Families Sunday

7-DAY STUDY FOR INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS

*Love never stops*



Safe Families for Children

## DAY 1

# God's Design

## Built for community & placed in families

Our God is an amazing communicator Who chooses His words wisely. So, when He says, *"Let US make man in OUR image, after OUR likeness. And let them have DOMINION (Gen 1:26, emphasis added),"* we see God creating humanity to be part of something bigger than ourselves. God has created us to live in community, but not just any community; His divine community. Every person on earth is designed for this, *"male and female He created them (Gen 1:27)."*

God is smart! It might seem strange to read, but He is very intelligent. There are no details that God misses. *"Even the hairs of your head are all numbered (Mat 10:30)."* So, when God is creating, designing, and defining His community, He's shaping the ideal way for His chief creation (that's you) to live our lives. Mankind was not made to live in isolation. You were made to exist in community with God and others. But on top of that, we've been charged by God to build and expand His community, to *"be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth (Gen 1:28)."*

How are we to exist in community, if that community is to grow beyond our own existence and "fill the earth?" At some point, the relationships get too vast and numerous, even for the most social of us. In this scenario we run the risk of becoming just another face. But God wouldn't have that for His chief creation (again, that's you). God addresses this very real and important concern in His design.

Not only does God show us He has designed mankind to exist in community, but God gets much more personal and intimate in showing us that even on an individual level. *"It is not good that THE man should be alone (Gen 2:18, emphasis added)."* God's solution in this ideal existence for humanity is to keep making these natural groupings that begin, and multiply, and break off to begin again, called families. Families are the most fundamental and basic building blocks of the ideal world that God created. Families are God's design to ensure that each one of His chief creations are individually valued and recognized as important. God's design for families is why, as the people of God, we are called to value families so highly. It's through families that Love Never Stops.

## Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. What are some ways you have experienced the value and power of community?
2. What do you think the impact of isolation is on people?
3. Reflect on the design and importance of the family. What are the implications of whole and broken families in our world?

Would you like information on opportunities for loving and caring for families?

Visit us at [safe-families.org/involvement](http://safe-families.org/involvement).



## This day's Reading:

- GENESIS 1:26-28
- GENESIS 2:18
- GENESIS 2:21-24
- MATTHEW 10:26-31



## DAY 2

# Purpose

## God even promises to bless us when we fight for the vulnerable and our Love Never Stops

As far back as the earliest establishment of the people of God, God has called His people to love strangers and invite them into community with us. In giving His law, God states, *"You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God (Lev 19:34)."* It's not by chance that God says to *"treat the stranger...as the native among you,"* because God had just given His people the same instruction on interacting with one another a few verses prior, *"You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD (Lev 19:18)."*

Everything is about family for God. God calls His people to love strangers, because God cares for them and wants to see them brought into His family. We live in a world that has renewed our minds to caring for ourselves and convinced us that we are too busy for our neighbors, let alone strangers, but this is the exact opposite of God's design. As the people of God, we have always existed to be a light to the nations that leads the world into the family of God. The prophet Isaiah prophesied of the people of God, *"And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising (Isaiah 60:3)."*

There's a skill set that needs to be learned if we are going to live out this mission of being a light in this world and grow the family of God. We must learn to care about what God cares about. God doesn't just happen to care about strangers. God recognizes that strangers are vulnerable and God fights for the vulnerable. More to the point, God raises up His people to fight for the vulnerable. It's in this fighting for the vulnerable that we actually become the light God has called us to be. God even promises to bless us when we fight for the vulnerable and our Love Never Stops.

*"7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? 8 Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard (Isaiah 58:7-8)."*

### Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. What is the mission of the family?
2. Who are the vulnerable in your community?
3. How can the vulnerable be served and loved in not just a transactional way, but in a relational way?

Would you like information on opportunities for loving and caring for families?

Visit us at [safe-families.org/involvement](http://safe-families.org/involvement).



*This day's Reading:*

- LEVITICUS 19:34
- ISAIAH 60:1-3
- ISAIAH 58:1-12

## DAY 3

# The Reality of Brokenness

## We are called to be intentional in empowering families

We live in a fallen world. Our world is broken. People are broken. Systems are broken. Nature itself is broken. All of creation is broken. And as God rescues us and recreates us as members of His family, it then becomes the job of the family of God to be agents of reconciliation in a broken world.

*"19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. (Rom 8:19-21)."*

People have been corrupted, and by extension families are broken. People need someone to provide a vision of God's design capable of restoring them to God's community. A wise man once said, *"Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint (Pro 29:18)."* This means that, if there is going to be hope for unbreaking our broken world, the responsibility to understand God's vision for families and pass it along to broken families falls to the people of God.

Every family belongs to God. And God's desire is to bring reconciliation (His Fatherhood) to each family so that they become empowered members of the family of God. This is a task that can only be accomplished through the people of God intentionally working in partnership with God to see it come about. We are called to be intentional in empowering families. This intentionality is why our Love Never Stops.

*"14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph 3:14-19)."*

### Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. How have you witnessed or experienced brokenness this week?
2. How has God put people in your life to bring healing to parts of your brokenness?
3. Take a moment to send one of those people a note, text or email of thankfulness and appreciation.

Would you like information on opportunities for loving and caring for families?

Visit us at [safe-families.org/involvement](http://safe-families.org/involvement).



### This day's Reading:

- ROMANS 8:18-39
- PROVERBS 29:18
- EPHESIANS 3:7-21



## DAY 4

# Hope & Connection

As the people of God, we must identify those who lack hope and connection

### The Power of Hope

Hope is a powerful emotion. To have hope is to have vision for what you expect. Hope can drive a person to greatness. A single hope can sustain a person for a lifetime. Providing hope to those who do not possess it can change someone's outlook on life and transform their destination. God's people are providers of hope.

Hope doesn't show up in someone's life all by itself. Hope is something that is wooed and cultivated. Romans shows us that there must be the right moment, circumstances must converge, and a certain disposition must be present in a person's life if hope is to take hold. *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope (Rom 15:13)."* As the people of God, we must practice helping others achieve joy and peace, surrounded by ideals that they can believe in, the family/community of God, if they are going to win over the hope that eludes them.

### The Power of Connection:

Hope is found in connection and it's our job as the people of God to connect with those who need hope. Hope is something that breeds when you know you are not alone. This is how God interacts with His people, connecting with us to give us hope, and He empowers us to seek the welfare of others in the same way. The Apostle Paul said it best.

*"3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God (2 Cor 1:3-4)."*

As the people of God, we must identify those who lack hope and connection. We must utilize the power of hope and the power of connection, so that others, strangers, families, have the opportunity to experience God Himself, so that their lives will forever be changed by Him. It is in this process of exercising the power of hope and connection on behalf of others that our Love Never Stops.

## Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. When is a time you have been provided hope through another person?
2. How can you be a giver of hope today to someone who is lovely and disconnected?

Would you like information on opportunities for loving and caring for families?

Visit us at [safe-families.org/involvement](http://safe-families.org/involvement).



*This day's Reading:*

- ROMANS 15:12-16
- 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-11
- PSALM 147:3

## DAY 5

# The Call for Courage

## We are called to be intentional in empowering families

Love Never Stops, so courage never stops. It is the history of God's people (the Church that Jesus is building, Mat 16:18) that whenever persecution, plague, famine, or disease sets in, God's light shines brightest through those unwilling to allow the light of God to be extinguished. There has long existed a rallying cry among the saints of God, *"We will not bow down to fear!"* Not at the threat of our lives; not in our own self-interest; not even in the midst of a pandemic do we fail to represent God. Because God's love empowers us to be bold rather than fearful.

*"18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. 19 We love because he first loved us (1 John 4:18-19)."*

As the people of God, we don't stand up to fear on our own. We are not to do anything on our own. We are to be purposeful in allowing the Holy Spirit to guide us and empower us to continue the work He has called us to do, ensuring that our Love Never Stops. This is why the Apostle John taught us, *"Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4)."* God's Spirit is incredibly mighty on the inside of us and there is way more of God in us than there is evil around us. God has made us strong and He is raising up a people for Himself that stand for what He stands for at the exact moments that He is standing for it.

We are able to stand for what God stands for because His Spirit empowers us. We are empowered to do great things, because we draw our courage from Him. It's no coincidence that *"the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you (Rom 8:11)."* *Jesus was able to touch a leper and make him clean. "40 And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, 'If you will, you can make me clean.' 41 Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, 'I will; be clean (Mk 1:40-41)."* Worldly wisdom teaches that that shouldn't happen. Jesus should have been made unclean, but Jesus didn't fear and through the power of the Holy Spirit the opposite happened. The question is, what will you be empowered to do? How is God calling you to live like Jesus? Whose life will you touch and see transformed, without fearing the unknown? How will you partner with God so that your Love Never Stops?

### Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. What do you fear? How many of your fears have actually happened?
2. How would love overcome your fear?
3. Think about a time that you felt empowered to stand up and face a risk to serve. What happened? What was the result in your life?

Would you like information on opportunities for loving and caring for families?

Visit us at [safe-families.org/involvement](http://safe-families.org/involvement).



*This day's Reading:*

- 1 JOHN 4
- ROMANS 8:11
- MARK 1:40-45



# DAY 6

## Loving Every Day

### Part I

Making the choice to love daily requires us to consider our value system. Love Never Stops means we love at a high level with a commitment to certain values that are intentionally and individually developed in the life of every Christian. (1) Radical Hospitality, (2) Compassion fueled by Mercy, and (3) Disruptive Generosity are the values that we grow in commitment to, as we are transformed by God's love. These are the values that Jesus says we will be judged by at the end of time when He is determining the authenticity of our faith (Mat 25:31-46).

In our Bibles, the New Testament word for hospitality means, love of a stranger. At the same time, when we think of hospitality we tend to think of hosting someone and caring for their immediate needs. Christian's have been accused of going overboard for the last two millennia when it comes to hospitality, but the truth is we are radically hospitable. *"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Mat 25:35)."*

Compassion is another word for love, but if we are to be like Christ, we are called to a deep love that is driven by mercy. Instead of looking past a person to love them in spite of who they were, Christ looked at people and loved them in the depths of his understanding of them (Mat 9:36). Compassion that is fueled by mercy requires us to love someone in their circumstance, even if it's difficult. Love Never Stops. It's about coming alongside and being in it with them. *"I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me (Mat 25:36)."*

Christians may be best known for their generosity, and yet there is a level of generosity that can disrupt broken systems and restore God's design for families and communities. This happens when we target our generosity and commit ourselves to strategic resourcing. We will be accountable for the intentionality with which we love our neighbor as our self, *"I was naked and you clothed me (Mat 25:36)."*

This is what godliness looks like. This is Christianity and it can take many forms. One of the ways that you can live out these values is in partnership with Safe Families for Children. Safe Families for Children hosts vulnerable children and creates extended family-like supports for desperate families through a community of devoted volunteers who are motivated by compassion to keep children safe and families intact. With Safe Families for Children, radical hospitality can be hosting a child in your home for a short period of time. Compassion fueled by mercy can be befriending a mother that lacks social connections. Disruptive generosity can be resourcing families that are hosting children and/or families that are learning God's design. This is how Love Never Stops.

### Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. Reflect back on the themes we've explored: family, purpose, brokenness, hope, connection and overcoming fear. How are compassion, generosity and hospitality both motivators and practices in living these themes out daily?
2. Is God calling you to be a part of the Safe Families movement? In what way?

Would you like information on opportunities for loving and caring for families?  
Visit us at [safe-families.org/involvement/request-more-info/](http://safe-families.org/involvement/request-more-info/).



### This day's Reading:

- LEVITICUS 19:34
- MATTHEW 9:35-38
- MATTHEW 10:8
- MATTHEW 25:31-46

## DAY 7

# Loving Every Day

## Part II

Making the choice to love daily is something that the family of God is called to do. Each of us have a responsibility to make this choice individually, and yet there is strength in numbers when, collectively, our Love Never Stops. **“19 Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them (Mat 18:19-20).”** Over the last six days, we’ve seen how God uses community to further His design for His creation. This begs the question, in what ways and for what purposes can God use you to gather and agree with your local body of believers?

Safe Families for Children has a vision for creating a world where children are safe and families transformed through radically compassionate communities. While each of us can and should act individually, we can also invite one or two others to come along. Each person can get involved at the level they feel comfortable with and you can encourage a like minded gathering in your church. **“For the body does not consist of one member but of many (1 Cor 12:14).”** In Safe Families, we call this a Circle of Support.

**18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body (1 Cor 12:18-20).**

God calls us to work as a family of faith in the family business. He’s proud of us when we collectively display His love with our eyes stayed on Jesus. That was the testimony of the New Testament church at Thessalonica. Collectively, they were determined that their Love Never Stops. **“2 We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, 3 remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (1 The 1:2-3).”**

The Christians in Thessalonica were so committed to this life that their reputation spread, **“7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For not only has the word of the Lord sounded forth from you in Macedonia and Achaia, but your faith in God has gone forth everywhere, so that we need not say anything (1 The 1:7-8).”** This is the opportunity we have in our churches, to be known for living in radically compassionate communities, where our Love Never Stops.

## Reflection/Discussion Questions:

1. Do you have your own “circle of support”? Who are the people that you depend on and do life with each week?
2. How does serving in community help you grow?
3. Share this devotional with your pastor, family and friends. Consider how your church and your own circle can be a part of the Safe Families movement together!

Would you like information on opportunities for loving and caring for families?

Visit us at [safe-families.org/involvement/request-more-info/](http://safe-families.org/involvement/request-more-info/).



*This day's Reading:*

- MATTHEW 18:19-20
- 1 CORINTHIANS 12:12-20
- 1 THESSALONIANS 2:2-10