

THE BIG IDEA: When we stress expectations, we can expect less stress.

The Take-Off

Welcome to the 3rd week of our "We are Family" series! Here's what we've seen to this point:

In part 1, we learned that family means we're accepted and that being accepted gives us a place.

Last week, we learned that family means we're connected and that being connected gives us power.

This morning, we're going to see that family means we're expected and that being expected gives us purpose.

Not the word you were expecting, was it?

Expectations give most people a headache, or stress, or any number of other weird reactions! Instead of providing purpose, they provide pressure!

So expectations become like death or taxes: we know they're coming, but we don't want to talk or think about it.

Shakespeare said expectations were a bad thing [SHOW SHAKESPEARE QUOTE], and as the years have gone on and expectations continue to go unmet, popular culture has tended to side with him.

[Show various images about expectations]

So, right away, when I say that family means we're expected, some of us may start to bristle.

But all of us live everyday with expectations.

We expect the lights to come on when you flip the switch.

We expect the internet to work and we expect Google to steer us in the right direction.

Speaking of steering, we expect our GPS devices to be accurate.

We expect slow drivers to get in the right lane.

Wendy expects a cup of freshly brewed coffee when I wake her up.

We expect God to answer our prayers (and usually in the exact way we want them answered!).

We expect the cable to work no matter how bad the weather is.

See, we've all got expectations. Our issue with expectations isn't that we have them; it's that others have them of us.

Again, if being accepted gives us a place and being connected gives us power, then being expected gives us purpose.

[Telling the boys to pick up sticks on Friday]

So expectations simply allow everyone to, well, know what's expected of them! They provide some sort of measuring stick for all of us, and every family has them.

I found one blogger who listed their family expectations:

Be happy. Cooperate with others. Show respect. Communicate without anger. Act responsibly. Be honest. Pick up after yourself. Forgive.

On the off chance that you're still not convinced that expectations are normal, consider the following scenario:

You get up early on a hot summer day and go into the yard. You pull the weeds, stopping for water occasionally. Then you crank up the push mower and spend the next 2 hours mowing the grass. After that, you do the trimming, the edging and the blowing. Somewhere around 12:30 pm, you walk back into the house sweaty, hungry and you see this [PICTURE OF MAN ON COUCH].

How do you react? I think we all know.

You react that way because family means we're expected, and not just our natural families, but our spiritual ones, too.

They're found all through the Bible, because the majority of the time that the word "church" is used, the reference is the local church as opposed to the global church.

Let's take a look at some expectations found in the Bible about this family - the church family.

1. We're expected to show encouragingly

- a. Can you imagine any scenario where a family gets together on a regular basis for a meal and one member consistently refuses to show up and everyone's ok with it?
- b. Of course not! Family shows up!
- c. And if you've ever sat through a family event with a member who really didn't want to be there but was forced to be there, then you know that the expectation isn't just to show up, but to WANT to show up!
- d. Family means we're expected to show up in a way that encourages the others around us!
- e. We're expected to show encouragingly (and yes, it's a real word, I looked it up!).

- f. Acts 2:42-47 paints the picture of a thriving, vibrant, "I can't believe we actually get to do this!!" church, doesn't it?
- g. Less than 40 years later, the author of Hebrews felt compelled to write the words found in Hebrews 10:23-25...
 Hold on! Spur each other on! Keep coming together! Get together to encourage!
- h. So often we get our motivation from big names in big places, and there's nothing wrong with that.
- i. Other can encourage us from a distance, but living "in courage" takes close relationships.
- j. Church attendance isn't about putting the time in as much as valuing the time we put in.

2. We're expected to grow steadily

- a. Can you imagine a baby staying a baby? I mean, most parents would love to put bricks on their kids' heads and keep them small, but that's not really the way it's supposed to be, is it?
- b. It's the same spiritually. We expect family members to grow around here, too.
 - Ephesians 4:15 - in all things GROW UP
 - 2 Peter 3:18 - grace is fertilizer for GROWTH
 - 2 Corinthians 3:18 - we move from glory to glory - steady upward trend of GROWTH

3. We're expected to know increasingly

- a. Currently, my kids are taking things like algebra, chemistry and physics.
- b. It wasn't that long ago that we were excited that they knew that 2+2 equals 4!
- c. But we don't get excited about that one anymore, because as my kids have grown, we've expected their knowledge to grow, too.
- d. Family means we're expected to know increasingly
 - 2 Peter 3:18 - we already saw this one - we don't just grow in grace, but also in knowledge
 - 1 Peter 3:15 - always be ready to give an answer about our hope to everyone who asks
 - 2 Timothy 2:15 - do your best to show yourself approved (KJV - study to show yourself approved)
 - 2 Timothy 4:2 - be prepared in season and out of season
- e. God takes growing in knowledge so seriously that He led the writer of Hebrews to correct the readers for NOT growing in what they knew. The Message Bible says it like this: "I have a lot more to say about this, but it is hard to get it across to you since you've picked up this bad habit of not listening. By this time you ought to be teachers yourselves, yet here I find you need someone to sit down with you and go over the basics on God again, starting from square one—baby's milk, when you should have been on solid food long ago! Milk is for beginners, inexperienced in God's ways; solid food is for the mature, who have some practice in telling right from wrong." (Hebrews 5:11-14)

The Landing

What does it mean to say "We are Family?"

It means we're expected to show, grow, and know.

Remember, we started this morning talking about why expectations are so important, and if we don't say what they are, then no one ever really knows how they're doing.

There's a German word that sums up what that last sentence feels like: "angst"

It's a restless type of dread, and often just knowing what's expected takes that away.

The Big Idea says it like this: **When we stress expectations, we can expect less stress.**

So knowing that we expect the family of God at The Gathering to show, grow, and know helps to RELIEVE the angst of not knowing how we're doing.

So this morning, when you leave, you can leave 100% sure of what it means to be part of the family, or at least half of what it means.

We'll get the other half next week.

Let's pray.