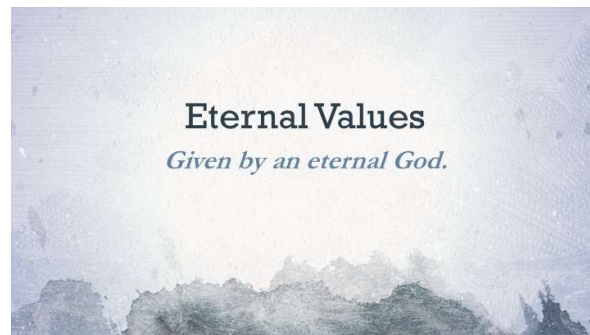


## Clearing the Fog— Storm Strong Families 6.23.19

If you have ever wondered, can God really use me, my family... you don't know us / me. Today is for you.

If you like reality tv and can't peel your eyes away from the drama... today is for you. We are going to take a peek at three generations of God's family line that he first promised the Messiah through. We are going to see that God has eternal values for us as people and families, that lead us to be Storm Strong. We are going to be encouraged because if God can use this hot mess of a train wreck family line... then he can use us. Not because of how good we are in comparison... but, because of how good God is in-and-of himself.

We live in a world of subjectivity, in which we feel the draw to define what is right and healthy for ourselves. Family life and personal relationships are not immune to this. It might be the one area we have been most hesitant to draw clear boundaries for the longest time. After all, each family and person are unique. But, when we look in God's word, he clearly shows us precisely what we should value and what is healthy for our families and personal relationships.



### 1. Clear the Fog... Eternal values from an eternal God.

- a. We live in an era of unprecedented subjectivity.
  - i. It seems that everything in our lives is fluid or up to us to define / redefine.
- b. However, there is a level of subjectivity that has been pervasive within families for years.
  - i. "There are no two families that are exactly alike. What works for you, may not work for us."
    1. There is a grain of truth in this statement.
      - a. Families and people are not all the same.
      - b. I don't parent each kid the same. And, I shouldn't.
    2. There is a deeper problem in this statement.
      - a. When applied to rhythms or disciplining it could stand true.
  - b. When applying it to values, ethics, and standards... It leaves us lost in a fog.**

# God Values

## Dependence Not Self-reliance

### 2. God values dependency not self-reliance. → Abraham

- a. When they take the plan into their own hands the plan fails.
- b. **Gen. 12** → God wants to start again. He wants to prove himself trustworthy to the people of the world... he wants to prove himself to be worth following.
  - i. He promises to be a blessing to the nations via Abram.
    - 1. IE. You are blessed to be a blessing.
    - 2. **This is a big moment! → God doesn't need Abram to bless the world. God chooses to use him.**
      - a. **God chooses to use us to bless the world around us.**
  - ii. Abram gets it right... v.5 → They acquired people???
    - 1. These people are most likely servants. But the big indication is that something was different about Abram... he was following the Lord. → Were they too following the Lord?
  - iii. Abram gets it way wrong!!! → 12:10 & 16:1 & 20:1
    - 1. 12:10 ff → She is my sister to Pharaoh.
    - 2. 16:1 ff → Have a baby with my servant.
    - 3. 20:1 ff → She is my sister to Abimelech.
      - a. Every time Abram & Sarai take God's plans into their own hands they make a royal mess of things!
      - b. **When they follow God's plan and depend on him, God proves himself to be trustworthy, blesses those around Abram, and provides for Abram.**
- c. If we think we can do it on our own we are fooling ourselves!
  - i. This is the gospel!

### How do we live dependently?

Listen to God's promises & truth.

Don't come up with our own creative solutions!

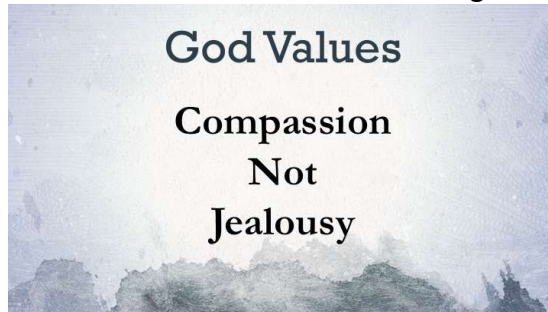
→ Sin never fixes anything.

Tell God's stories... "If we stop remembering, we will forget."

### ii. How do we live dependently?

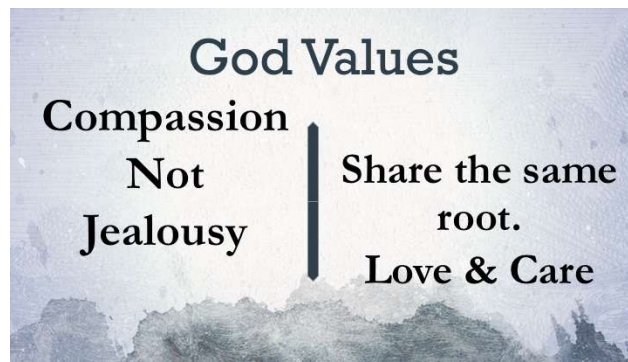
- 1. **Listen to God's promises & truth. → Heb. 11... FAITH!!**
  - a. By faith... what is this faith?

- i. It is living wholly dependent on God to rescue, provide, and come through for you.
- 2. Don't come up with our own creative solutions!
  - a. Sin never fixes anything.
    - i. Abram & Lot
    - ii. Abram & Pharaoh / Abimelech
    - iii. Sarah & Hagar
- 3. Tell God's stories... "If we stop remembering, we will forget."
  - a. How has God come through for me / our family?



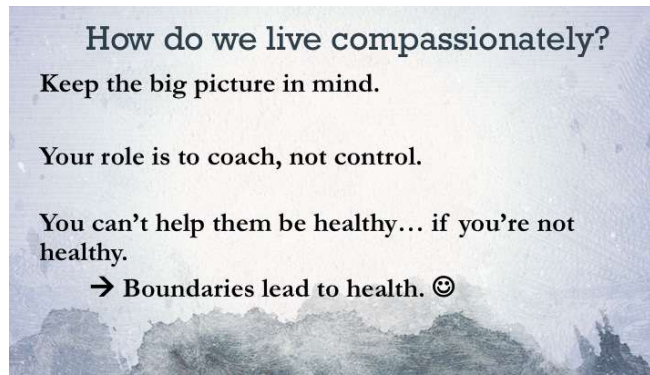
### 3. God values compassion not jealousy. → Jacob & Esau (Gen. 27)

- a. Gen. 27:1ff → Rebekah hatches a plan for her favorite son.
  - i. Jealousy is ripe throughout this story. Mom has a favorite... Dad has a favorite.
    - 1. The blessing... what is it?
      - a. Spiritual, personal, economical, and positional.
      - b. Esau gets everything... technically a double portion.
      - c. **This was never done in private!**
        - i. Consider a transition of power. → Never done in private.
        - ii. Dad wanted to make sure his favorite son got it all.
        - iii. Mom wanted to protect her favorite son.
      - d. Go back to God's words... we knew this would happen... we will never know what plan A was.
        - i. We are seeing what God does with Plan B.
    - 2. Both parents are jealous for their own favorites child's wellbeing.
      - a. It is not that they simply want the best for them, it is that they are **manipulative and controlling**.
        - i. **The boys are full-grown men** at this point! → 40-50 yrs old.
        - ii. Esau has two wives!!!!



**b. Jealousy & Compassion start with the same root → Love & Care.**

- i. Jealousy breaks down into control & deceit.
- ii. Compassion has boundaries.
  - 1. It doesn't get its identity entangled with someone else.
  - 2. It doesn't remove personal responsibility.
    - a. Rebekah... "Listen to me..." 3 times!!!**
  - 3. It understands its own limitations.
    - a. You can't force someone to be healthy / wise / Godly.
      - i. This is the exact relationship God has with us.
      - ii. He sees the hurt we're in with our sin.
      - iii. He knows the fix and the cure.
      - iv. He will never force us to take it.
- iii. When we try to control (even when we know best) we ruin the futures of the people we love.
  - 1. Isaac and Rebekah had the best of intentions!
  - 2. Compassion always steers towards health & truth... it never controls.
    - a. I've never met a teen or a young couple that says... "I am so glad my boyfriend / girlfriend / husband / wife is controlling."
    - b. I've never met an older couple that is married 30... 40... 50 years and says, "We made it this long because so & so controlled every aspect of life for us."
  - 3. Compassion never removes consequences for sin. I.e. It never just fixes things.
    - a. Again, go back to Rebekah... "Go to your uncle Laban."
      - i. She will never see her son again because of her sin.
    - b. Compassion has the hard conversations and looks you square in the eyes and says, "I'm in this with you. I love you. But, you've got some work to do."**
      - i. Our daughter and tough classmates this year.
        - 1. Natural instinct is to fix.
        - 2. There is strong evidence forming that our most current crop of teens & adolescents are experiencing anxiety at higher levels due to their parents "fixing" things for them. → "Lawnmower parents".**



c. How do we live compassionately?

i. Keep the end goal in mind.

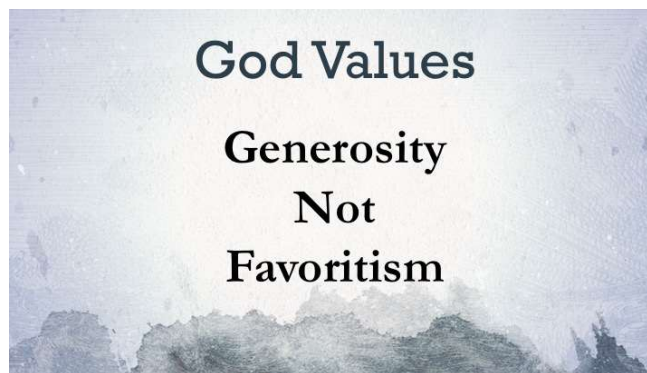
1. Your goal is to produce healthy, God loving, independent adults.
  - a. **Whisper:** "Well rounded" is a lie.
    - i. When you model you should try / value everything... you teach them to really value nothing.
    - ii. What is the one thing your family values more than anything else?
2. As Christians we have one goal → To be more and more like Jesus.
  - a. 1 Jn. 2:6 – **If you claim to be in him, then walk as he walked.**
  - b. As Christian parents, we have one goal for our kids → **To become more and more like Jesus.**
    - i. **As a parent, this is hard to say... I understand the discomfort in it... I feel it.**
      1. **If your son / daughter is following Jesus wholeheartedly, then everything else is gravy.**
      2. **This is a test of what we believe theologically.**
        - a. This applies to us as individuals too.



ii. **Personally: Other's won't make you healthy. You need to be healthy.**

1. Did Isaac & Rebekah not remember their identity & the promises of God to their family?

2. Do I know my identity in Christ?
  3. Do I struggle with boundaries in relationships... ie. Am I comfortable saying, no?
    - a. Am I comfortable in letting someone struggle to become healthy?
      - i. Heb. 12!
        1. **The exhortation not to treat discipline lightly is constantly needed since men have an inborn dislike of discipline and never more so than today. ... They cannot see the long-term benefits, nor the concern of God over them.<sup>1</sup>**
        2. Discipline is compassionate!
- iii. **How open is the communication?**
  1. Who does the talking? Or, who does the telling?
  2. If it is one sided... "Mommy / Daddy / I know best." Then it isn't compassion.
    - a. ie. The "teller" is really never listening!



#### **4. God values generosity not favoritism. → Joseph. (Gen. 37)**

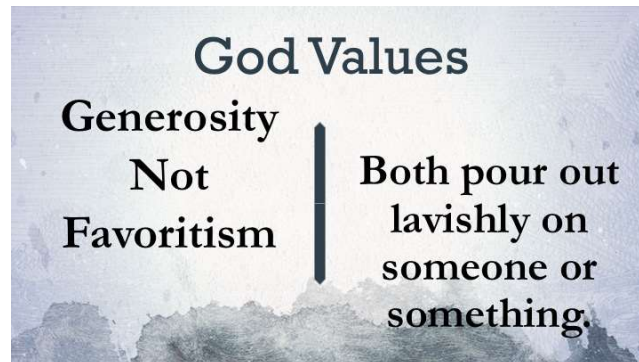
- a. Again... favorite son and some bad timing.
  - i. **Jacob a third-generation product of favoritism and jealousy.**
    1. He will have 12 sons. → One will be a clear favorite.
    2. He will dote on him, go easy on him, and be generous to him.
      - a. You feel bad for Joseph in this. → He didn't choose this. / What kid is going to say to his dad... "Hey, shouldn't you get something for Ruben and the other guys?!?"
    3. Jacob's favoritism will breed jealousy in the brothers.
      - a. Jealousy will breed contempt.
      - b. And then one day, Joseph's youth and naivete will be the straw that breaks the camel's back.

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<sup>1</sup> Guthrie, D. (1983). [\*Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary\*](#) (Vol. 15, p. 254). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

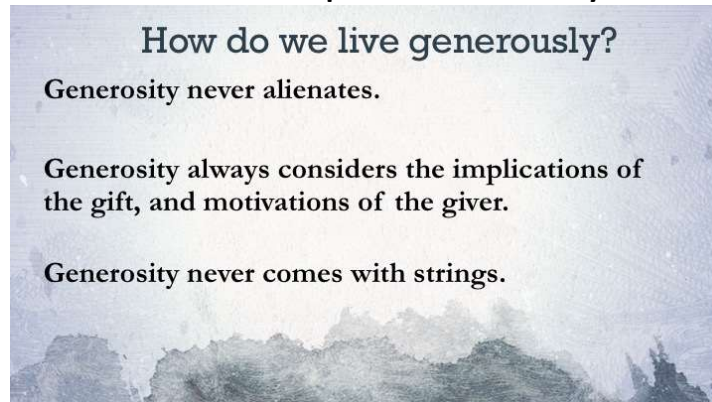


- i. Call a spade a spade... Joseph had some bad things dealt to him, he was young, but he was also a bit of a jerk.
- c. The brother's will hatch a plan for his demise, put him in a well, and sell him to slavery. → Convince their father he died.



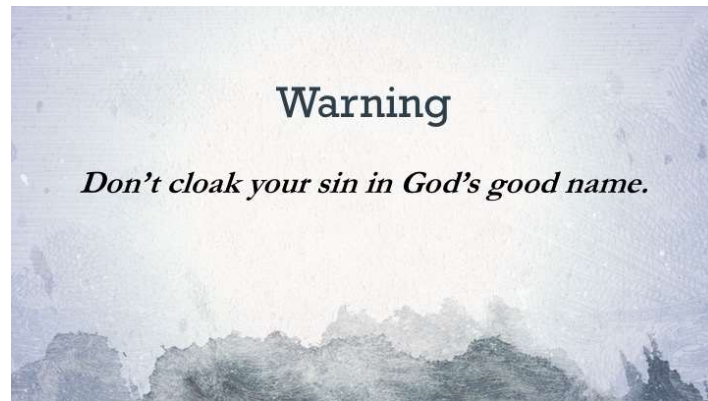
- b. Favoritism and generosity can look alike. → They both pour lavishly on someone or something.
  - i. Jacob loved Joseph and he wanted him to know it... not bad in heart... really bad in practice!

**1. Favoritism is a product of insecurity.**



- c. **God's value of generosity never alienates others.**
  - i. It is always inclusive and not exclusive.
- d. **God's value of generosity always considers the implications of the gift, and motivations of the giver.**
  - i. Why am I giving this?
  - ii. What do I hope to see happen or get in return from this gift?
    - 1. Let's just be honest... we rarely give totally freely.
- e. **God's generosity always comes without strings.**
  - i. It is not a gift, if it has strings attached!
- f. **God's generosity always values the welfare of the person on the receiving end, and not the status of the giver.**
  - i. **When we model God's value of generosity, it protects our hearts from bitterness.**
- g. We are going to see how the value of generosity should be lived out in the end.

- i. Joseph has every right to make life hard on his father & brothers. → He doesn't.
- ii. He plays a little game with them... Can't blame him for that! ;)
- iii. He gives them more than they deserve, because he has received more than he deserves from the Lord.



## 5. Don't cloak your sin with God's name.

- a. In every one of these stories each person cloaks their sin in God's name.
  - i. I've heard it said: "How easy is it for us as Christians to sin with God as a cover?"
    - 1. Dependence: "Well God called me to this."
      - a. No, your own selfish motives and reliance did.
      - b. Oh BTW, God doesn't call you to things the scriptures teach are wrong.
        - i. I see this in relationships all the time!!!
    - 2. Jealousy: "I am just trying love well."
      - a. No, you're enabling and /or smothering.
      - b. Grow a backbone and have a hard conversation.
    - 3. Generosity: "God wants us to be good stewards, right?"
      - a. Well yes, but you and God have two different definitions of that!
      - b. All too often it is an excuse for our stubbornness and wrong motivations.

From: Storm Strong Families – **Clearing the Fog: Eternal values from an Eternal God.**

Teaching Pastor: Kyle Bartholic

6.23.19



## Opening

If you have ever wondered, can God really us me, my family... you don't know us / me. Today is for you.

If you like reality tv, and peel your eyes away from the drama... today is for you. We are going to take a peek at 3 generations of God's family line that he first promised the messiah through. We are going to see that God has eternal values for us as people and families, that lead us to be Storm Strong. We are going to be encouraged because if God can use this hot mess of a train wreck family line... than he can use us. Not because of how good we are in comparison... but, because of how good God is in-and-of himself.

## Connect → Main Idea

We live in a world of subjectivity, in which we feel the draw to define what is right and healthy for ourselves. Family life and personal relationships are not immune to this. It might be the one area we have been most hesitant to draw clear boundaries for the longest time. After all, each family and person are unique. But, when we look in God's word, he clearly shows us precisely what we should value and what is healthy for our families and personal relationships.

## Context

Heb 12: 6 - **The exhortation not to treat discipline lightly is constantly needed since men have an inborn dislike of discipline and never more so than today.** It is all too easy to regard it *lightly* (*oligōrei*, to belittle or treat as insignificant). This is all the more evident when it is *the discipline of the Lord*. To many the concept is a contradiction, since they have so poor an understanding of the character of God. This whole chapter is bent on rectifying this. It is because men do not naturally recognize the need for discipline that they *lose courage* when *punished*. They cannot see the long-term benefits, nor the concern of God over them.<sup>2</sup>

## Communicate

### 6. Clear the Fog... Eternal values from an eternal God.

- a. We live in an era of unprecedented subjectivity.
  - i. It seems that everything in our lives is fluid or up to us to define / redefine.
- b. However, there is a level of subjectivity that has been pervasive within families for years.
  - i. "There are no two families that are exactly alike. What works for you, may not work for us."
    - 1. There is a grain of truth in this statement.
      - a. Families and people are not all the same.
      - b. Staff advance & TED talk. → Tension in family practices.

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<sup>2</sup> Guthrie, D. (1983). [\*Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary\*](#) (Vol. 15, p. 254). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

- c. I don't parent each kid the same. And, I shouldn't.
- 2. There is a deeper problem in this statement.
  - a. When applied to rhythms or disciplining it could stand true.
  - b. When applying it to values, ethics, and standards... It leaves us lost in a fog.

## 7. God values dependency not self-reliance. → Abraham

- a. When they take the plan into their own hands the plan fails.
- b. Gen. 12 → God wants to start again. He wants to prove himself trustworthy to the people of the world... he wants to prove himself to be worth following.
  - i. He promises to be a blessing to the nations via Abram.
    - 1. IE. You are blessed to be a blessing.
    - 2. **This is a big moment! → God doesn't need Abram to bless the world. God chooses to use him.**
      - a. **God chooses to use us to bless the world around us.**
  - ii. Abram gets it right... v.5 → They acquired people???
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  - iii. Abram gets it way wrong!!! → 12:10 & 16:1 & 20:1
    - 1. 12:10 ff → She is my sister to Pharaoh.
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      - a. Every time Abram & Sarai take God's plans into their own hands they make a royal mess of things!
      - b. **When they follow God's plan and depend on him, God proves himself to be trustworthy, blesses those around Abram, and provides for Abram.**
      - c. **Plan A vs Plan B → We see so much of God dealing with plan B, that we don't really know what plan A was supposed to be.**
        - i. **How much longer did it take for Isaac to come along??**
- c. If we think we can do it on our own we are fooling ourselves!
  - i. This is the gospel!
  - ii. **How do we live dependently?**
    - 1. **Listen to God's promises & truth. → Heb. 11... FAITH!!**
      - a. By faith... what is this faith?
        - i. **It is living wholly dependent on God to rescue, provide, and come through for you.**
    - 2. **Don't come up with our own creative solutions!**
      - a. Sin never fixes anything.
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    - 3. **Tell God's stories... "If we stop remembering, we will forget."**

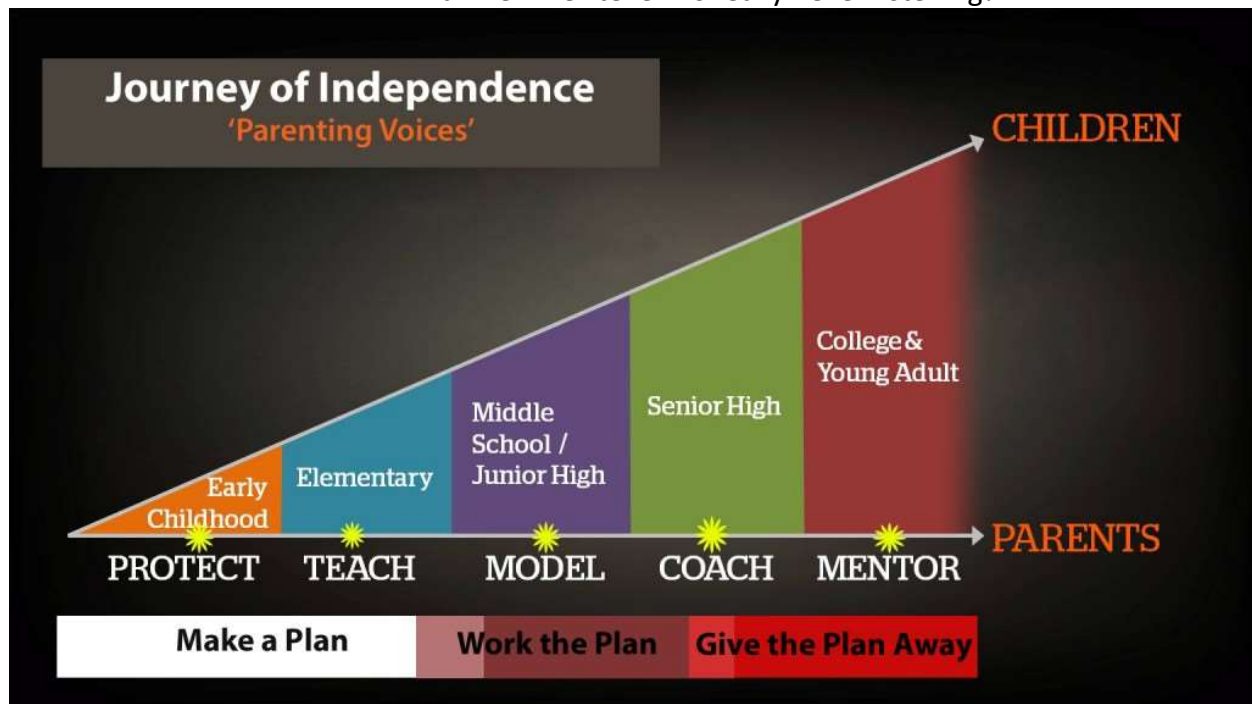
- a. How has God come through for me / our family?

## 8. God values compassion not jealousy. → Jacob & Esau

- a. Gen. 27:1ff → Rebekah hatches a plan for her favorite son.
  - i. Jealousy is ripe throughout this story. Mom has a favorite... Dad has a favorite.
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      - b. Esau gets everything... technically a double portion.
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        - i. Consider a transition of power.
        - ii. Dad wanted to make sure his favorite son got it all.
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      - d. Go back to God's words... we knew this would happen... we will never know what plan A was.
        - i. We are seeing what God does with Plan B.
    - 2. Both parents are jealous for their own favorites child's wellbeing.
      - a. It is not that they simply want the best for them, it is that they are manipulative and controlling.
        - i. **The boys are full-grown men** at this point! → 40-50 yrs old.
        - ii. Esau has two wives!!!!
    - 3. **Isn't God jealous? → Yes.**
      - a. He desires the best for us.
        - i. But, he never controls us. → Love requires trust.
- b. **Jealousy & Compassion start with the same root → Love & Care.**
  - i. Jealousy breaks down into control & deceit.
  - ii. Compassion has boundaries.
    - 1. It doesn't get its identity entangled with someone else.
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    - a. Again, go back to Rebekah... "Go to your uncle Laban."
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      - i. Adelaide and tough classmates this year.
        - 1. Natural instinct is to fix.
        - 2. **There is strong evidence forming that our most current crop of teens & adolescents are experiencing anxiety at higher levels due to their parents "fixing" things for them. → Lawnmower parents.**
  - c. **How do we live compassionately?**
    - i. **Consider the parenting voices chart: (Keep the goal in mind.)**
      - 1. Your goal is to produce healthy, God loving, independent adults.
        - a. **Whisper:** "Well rounded" is a lie.
          - i. When you model you should try everything... you teach them to really value nothing.
          - ii. What is the one thing your family values more than anything else?
      - 2. As Christian's we have one goal → To be more and more like Jesus.
        - a. 1 Jn. 2:6 – **If you claim to be in him, then walk as he walked.**
        - b. As Christian parents, we have one goal for our kids → **To become more and more like Jesus.**
          - i. As a parent, this is hard to say... I understand the discomfort in it... I feel it.
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        - 1. Did Isaac & Rebekah not remember their identity & the promises of God to their family?
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    1. **The exhortation not to treat discipline lightly is constantly needed since men have an inborn dislike of discipline and never more so than today. ... They cannot see the long-term benefits, nor the concern of God over them.**<sup>3</sup>
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- a. Again... favorite son and some bad timing.
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    1. He will have 12 sons. → One will be a clear favorite.
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## 10. Don't cloak your sin with God's name.

- a. In every one of these stories each person cloaks their sin in God's name.
  - i. I've heard it said: "How easy is it for us as Christians to sin with God as a cover?"
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      - a. No, your own selfish motives and reliance did.
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        - i. I see this in relationships all the time!!!
    - 2. Jealousy: "I am just trying love well."
      - a. No, you're enabling and /or smothering.
      - b. Grow a backbone and have a hard conversation.
    - 3. Generosity: "God wants us to be good stewards, right?"



- a. Well yes, but you and God have two different definitions of that!
- b. All too often it is an excuse for our stubbornness and wrong motivations.
  - i. I had a coach that said, “I don’t need you to lose.”

**Takeaway → Bring it home.**

Yes, different families / people will apply or see these expressed in different ways. But, every SSF & person should be able to see visible evidence of these values in their lives.