



Guarding the avenues of our souls

Week 1	7 September	Fostering a positive mindset
Week 2	4 September	Handling socials- Don't be a slave to likes
Week 3	21 September	Resisting the pressure to conform by listening to conscience and God's guidance
Week 4	28 September	Dysfunctional families can still have righteous children

Welcome to another series: September 2025

The years of youth are years full of challenges as young people try to figure out who they are and where they fit in. And so, the series for this month is intended to help young people understand that their identity comes from being a follower of Christ, rather than conforming to the world's standards. This series seeks to encourage youth to develop spiritual disciplines that will lead to a deeper understanding of God's word and His will for their lives and help them grow in their relationship with God. In the end this will encourage them to live boldly for Christ.



Genesis 2:7 *"The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul"*. The way Old Testament uses the word "soul" – a human being becomes alive (that is, "a living being" or "soul") only when the 'breath of God' is breathed into him. The soul then is seen as the life possessing quality of humans, and it is that which makes them living beings. We can say the "soul" is the life-principle, or simply, life. The soul is the self or person. It is said to be the seat of spiritual as well as physical needs and cravings, including one's need for God's presence. It is the state of consciousness itself. The soul can be sad, grieved, weep, rejoice, bless the Lord, be distressed, be anxious and troubled, hate and love. It can stand for the full range of human needs, desires and feelings, including thought, memory and consciousness. The soul is integral to life itself.

The death of the soul then results in the loss of personhood. The soul is not something we possess as such as though the person existed as a person outside the soul. The soul is the person. The soul is what each person is as a human being. So, the word soul stands for the living person as a human being in this life.

Matthew 16:26 *"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

The soul in Scripture is really the person as human being, who has been created by God.

A philosopher by the name of Irenaeus viewed “soul” as the “*seat of knowledge, working in conjunction with the body’s senses to gather information, which it then evaluates and uses to form beliefs and understanding*”. He imagines the process by which the soul arrives at knowledge: First, the soul ‘perceives’ external phenomena through the bodily organs of sense perception – the eyes, ears, and so on. Then, the soul may form a “belief” – *pistis*, the biblical word for “faith” – “judgment,” “conception” or “apprehension” of a given aspect of reality. Furthermore, Irenaeus believed the soul, in its interaction with the Holy Spirit, plays a crucial role in humanity’s journey towards spiritual perfection.

Guarding the soul, therefore, means recognizing God’s presence with and for his people and actively fighting against the forces that dehumanizes and marginalize them. Guarding the soul means resisting forces that dehumanizes and diminish the worth of individuals and communities. It means facing the realities of life by drawing strength from scripture and people’s experiences and working towards a future where all people can experience grace and wholeness.

This emphasizes the significance of the soul as a valuable and vulnerable entity that needs careful attention and protection from negative influences. Our souls are vulnerable they need to be protected from harmful influences. This topic suggests avoiding exposure to anything that could corrupt our minds or lead to negative thoughts and desires. It speaks to the importance of the inner world as the source of our actions and words. It is about mindfulness, right speech and right action. We are encouraged to be discerning about the content we consume through our eyes, whether its media, images, or the actions of others. By guarding our souls, we can cultivate inner peace and reduce negativity in our lives and build stronger and more positive relationships with others.

HOME GROUPS AND CLASSES GUIDE:

1. *Open in Worship and Prayer: this is to invite God into the meeting. For example, you can light a candle, sing together, or use a YouTube Hymn or song.*
2. *Open your Bibles and read the Bible verses for this week (take turns?) see below.*
3. *Reflect on the Bible verses and the reflection written by a Minister or Lay Preacher.*
4. *Connect with each other and take the reflection deeper by answering the Questions.*
5. *Works out: What have we learned that we can apply in our lives in this session? Keep each other accountable for promises made or important steps taken. Pray for and over each other (after taking prayer requests).*

Week 4 - 28 September -

Dysfunctional families can still have righteous children

READINGS:

Genesis 37:1-11, 45:4

Matthew 1:1-17

WORSHIP SONG: Goodness of God by CeCe Winans <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9sE5kEnitqE>

DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILIES CAN STILL HAVE RIGHTEOUS CHILDREN

No matter how put-together a family may appear, every family has its own set of messes. Divorce, abuse, addiction, violence, infidelity, child-headed, chronic conflict etc hit many homes. We live in a broken world impacted by the effects of the fall. And the enemy likes to keep us in unhealthy cycles by perpetuating cultures of shame, silence and secrecy. The healthiest thing you can do to combat the unhealthy patterns in your life and your family’s life is to bring it into the light. They say, “shame doesn’t survive in freedom, silence doesn’t survive when we are not afraid, and darkness doesn’t survive in the light”. The rough and ragged details are there on purpose. Our God is a God of restoration. We can walk with God in a dysfunctional family. He can take our mess and work it for our good.

REFLECTION WRITTEN BY: REV. THABISO MCINGA

The Bible does not hide the fact that even God's chosen families had problems. In Genesis 37, we see Jacob's family filled with jealousy, favouritism, betrayal, and silence in the face of wrong. Joseph grew up in this broken home. His father Jacob loved him more than his brothers, which made them bitter and angry. Joseph's dreams from God made things even worse, and his brothers hated him deeply. But even in this kind of family, God raised Joseph to live with integrity and to hold on to the dreams God gave him. His righteousness did not come from a healthy family but from God's calling on his life.

Joseph's brothers threw him into a pit and later sold him as a slave. His suffering came from the pain inside his own family. But as we follow Joseph's story, we see that God's plans were not stopped by the family's brokenness. The dysfunction around him did not stop Joseph from walking with God and becoming a tool for God's redemption. Later in life, when Joseph finally stood before his brothers again, he had the power to take revenge. But instead, he chose forgiveness. He told them, *"I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt."* Instead of punishing them, Joseph saw that God had worked through his pain. This shows us that righteousness is not about where you come from, but about how you let God shape your heart and how you respond to hurt.

In Matthew 1:1-17, we see the family line of Jesus. That genealogy shows us the same thing: God works through broken families. Abraham lied, Jacob tricked his father, Judah acted immorally, Rahab was a prostitute, David committed adultery and murder, and Solomon was born out of that sinful act. Yet Jesus came from this same family line. God was not ashamed of their failures. His grace and His plans were stronger than their sins.

This reminds us that having righteous children in broken families is not an accident. It is God's grace at work. Joseph became righteous even through betrayal and hardship. The truth is this: no matter how broken your background may be, God's calling on your life still stands. Your past cannot cancel God's purpose. This message is very important for families today. Many homes struggle with division, favouritism, abuse, or generational sins. Many children grow up feeling trapped in that cycle. But Joseph's life teaches us that you can still choose righteousness. The story of Jesus' family tree teaches us that God can bring healing and redemption even through broken lines. No child should think they are doomed by their family history, and no parent should think their mistakes will stop God from raising righteous children. God's grace can write a new story. The message, then, is one of hope: Dysfunctional families can still have righteous children because God's purposes are greater than human sin. Just as Joseph went from the pit to the palace, and just as Jesus came from a family line with many failures, God can bring righteousness from our own broken families. Our part is to hold on to God's promises, to walk in faith, and to trust that our past does not define our future - God does.

GROUP/CLASS QUESTIONS:

1. When you think about Joseph's family story in Genesis 37, which part of his experience feels most relatable to you, and why?
2. How does Joseph's decision to forgive his brothers challenge the way you normally respond to hurt or betrayal?
3. Looking at the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1:1-17, what surprises you most about the kind of people God chose to include in his plan?
4. What lies or fears about your family background or past might you need to let go of, in order to believe that God's calling on your life still stands?

MEMORY VERSES FOR THE WEEK:

Monday: Genesis 37: 4

"When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him."

Tuesday: Jeremiah 1:5

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born, I set you apart."

Wednesday: Romans 8:28

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him...”

Thursday: 1 Corinthians 1:27

“God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise...”

Friday: 2 Timothy 1: 9

“He has saved us and called us to a holy life - not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.”

Saturday: John 16:33

“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

FAMILY TIME: WRITTEN BY Magogodi Nkuna (Children’s Volunteer)

Week 4: 28 September

Title: You’re More Than Where You Come From

Scripture: Matthew 1:1–17

Have you ever thought about how many people had to live, love, struggle, and survive just so you could be here today? Over 4,000 ancestors across 12 generations! That’s wild. Imagine all the heartbreaks, victories, mistakes and dreams that came before you. You’re not just a random person. You’re part of a story.

But here’s the thing: your past doesn’t define your future.

Matthew 1 lists the family tree of Jesus. And guess what? It’s full of imperfect people. Yet God used that messy lineage to bring Jesus into the world. That means your background, no matter how complicated or painful, doesn’t limit what God can do through you. You might come from a family with struggles. Maybe people expect you to follow a certain path, or maybe you feel stuck in someone else’s story. But God sees you as a new chapter, not just a continuation of the old ones.

Reflection (Teens)

- What parts of your family story feel heavy or hard to carry?
- Can you believe that greatness can come from your story, even if it didn’t start perfect?

Reflection (Preteens)

- Think about your grandparents, what do you love about them?
- What good habits or qualities would you like to have?

Family Activity

As a family create a family tree. See how far back you can go - 3 to 4 generations? Parents, tell your kids what you remember about the different generations, what you learned from them and how they influenced you.

Prayer

Dear God, thank You for the people who came before me. Help me learn from their lives but not be trapped by them. I trust you to do something new in me. Amen.