

Series -

Date/s - 15 November 2015

Topic - Families Under Attack

Speaker/s - Jason Wong

Welcome [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

www.thesource4ym.com/games/

www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like "Just let me say", "Give Thanks", "It is well with my soul" or "As bread that is broken".

Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

1. Understand that family is God's design and that it is under attack.
2. Adopt the Christian response to such attacks on the family.
3. Respond by rising up to mentor the next generation.

Word [45 min]

Our guest speaker, Jason Wong, was a former Deputy Director of the Singapore Prisons Service and was instrumental to the start of the Yellow Ribbon Project and later, Dads for Life. He is passionate about the family and of its central position in our Christian faith. Jason started the sermon by emphasising that family is God's idea as mentioned in the book of Genesis. Family is the basic unit and the bedrock of our society. Family is where God-man, man-woman and parent-children relationships can be lovingly expressed.

Satan is out to destroy the family, as it is God's idea. We see these attacks prevalent in popular culture, including the Ashley Madison website that promotes marital infidelity and in TV sitcoms that promote LGBT relationships as an alternative lifestyle. This is also evident in the worldwide movement by some to legalise same-sex marriages, with the latest countries, USA, Ireland and Vietnam doing so. Singapore is not immune and is being targeted by this movement. The current position by the Singapore government is to stay one step behind to observe the impact of such radical departure on the definition of marriage. Jason said that Singapore should however stay far behind on this. He also highlighted the danger of re-defining marriage. Once redefined and God taken out of the picture, marriage may risk becoming further extended to include other deviant sexual preferences such as threesome, incest, etc. In Leviticus 18:1-5, God instructs to stay away from forbidden sexual practices (see Leviticus 18). There are consequences when we move away from God's design. As our Creator, God knows us and knows what is good for us.

Jason then outlined a strategic framework to counter this growing homosexual agenda. The intervention is divided into four approaches: (a) for activists promoting this lifestyle (e.g. Pink Dot), we are to engage; (b) for moderate people living the lifestyle, we are to befriend; (c) for those struggling with their gender identity or orientation, there should be ministry; and (d) for those who have overcome, they have power testimonies to share which would counter the deceptive narratives put out by LGBT activists. The Bible tells of the inspirational story of Saul becoming Paul. In today's context, can Saul become Paul? The answer is definitely

Yes!

We then have a testimony of an overcomer, who was previously homosexual. He shared his struggle with same-sex attraction since young; on his loneliness, on his misunderstanding of the Bible to justify his relationships with other gays and the use of gay dating websites to satisfy his need for companionship through one-night stands. He later claimed God's promises found in Matthew 6:33 and Proverbs 3:5-6 when God told him to trust in Him and He will take care of his sexuality and the deep sense of loneliness. God told him that he does not need to act on his same-sex attraction desires and shared with him the beauty of singlehood and of marriage. Through close mentorship under Jason who acted like a father figure to him - in the same way Elijah was to Elisha; he was able to see that his same-sex attraction originated from a longing for his father's love. In church, he responded to an altar call for anointing of the Holy Spirit. Thereafter in the toilet, his belt buckle broke into 3 pieces which was a sign that God had broken his chains. Henceforth, he lost his desire to masturbate and moved away from a gay lifestyle. Through the love and help of God, he is healed and given a clean slate after the HIV test in late 2013.

What is the role of the church? The church must pray and intercede for the LGBT activists and for the government. The church must also offer pastoral care to those struggling with these issues. The church can also proactively promote the following: (a) Christian or Biblical worldview as opposed to the prevailing secular, humanistic system of values which over time, especially among the young could engender greater support for same-sex marriage if left unchecked; (b) strong families as it is the result of broken heterosexual relationships that many societal problems emerge - we need to go back to God's design because God's design leads to blessings and benefits; and (c) the fathers' movement. Fathers are the solution in God's eyes and the key to the prevention strategy. Therefore, Jason led a rallying cry for Christian fathers to rise up - see Malachi 4:5-6, saying that a constructive, affirming character modelling relationship with a father or a father figure will avert boys looking elsewhere for a masculine, affirming relationship with another man.

Discussion Questions

1. **Jason Wong shared that family is under attack. What makes this an important issue? Share with the group on the ways family is under attack.** [10 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a recap question. As mentioned in Genesis, family is God's idea. It is God's design through which blessings flow. And when blessings flow, we will enjoy the benefits. Family is also the basic foundation of society and when it breaks down, many societal problems will emerge.*

Satan is out to destroy families. These attacks are prevalent in popular culture. Jason Wong cited examples such as the marriage infidelity website of Ashley Madison, TV sitcoms, movies and songs also seek to portray alternative and/or promiscuous lifestyles as normal or glamorous. These can influence and change societal attitudes over a generation.

2. **Jason Wong outlined the role of the church in responding to this attack on families. How could we, both as a church and as individuals, respond in practical ways to those having same-sex attraction?** [10 min]

Leader's Notes: *This is a relate question. We should not be hostile towards homosexuals. Rather, we love them just as Christ would. However, as Christians, we should take a stand against homosexuality as it is not part of God's design for man. According to the speaker, intervention is required for those who are (a) activists; (b) moderate homosexuals; and (c) struggling homosexuals.*

(a) We should pray, reach out to and engage the activist in love, even while we stand in opposition to the activist's promotion of a homosexual agenda in the social/political/legal realms. See Matthew 5:44 on the call to love our enemies and to pray for them. We must remain civil and gracious, even as we reasoned with someone we disagree with.

- (b) We are to befriend the moderate homosexuals. The priority, as in reaching out to anyone, is to bring the Good News to them and to love them.
- (c) For struggling homosexuals, we can minister to them as they struggle with their sexual identity and sin. This means providing support and love. The church can create a safe environment which do not seek to ostracise or is fearful of homosexuals.

3. **Read Malachi 4:5-6. This is a call for parents (especially, fathers) to rise up and take on spiritual leadership of the children, bringing about reconciliation of relationships with God and with each other. Discuss practical ways where you can help, guide or mentor the younger generation in your family and in the church.** [15 min]

Leader's Notes: This is a reflect and response question. Members are encouraged to share ideas on how to reach out and teach the younger generation Biblical values. Members can offer themselves as mentors and in character modelling relationships to younger Christians in the church, workplace, school, etc. Organising and involvement in inter-generational activities can also be helpful. Nurturing them with the Word of God. Fathers, be intentional and disciple godly children to be the next bedrock of Christ-centred families in the future.

4. **What might be the impact in family when there is fatherless-ness or the father does not fulfill his role? List some of the consequences and take time to pray.** [10 min]

Leader's Notes: Help members to see that 'fatherless-ness' includes father who is absent in the family; be it physically, socially or emotionally (besides those of single-parent family). Name the influence or outcomes when fathers do not:

- provide basic needs for the family
- teach and practise the Word of God
- inculcate a 'culture of honour' at home
- take the lead to pray as a family etc.

While the mother, an older relative or a family friend can sometimes stand in the gap on behalf of the father; this is not following God's ideal for the family on the upbringing of godly sons & daughters. Go into pairs and pray specifically for families in the cell group or families with single-parent.

Works [10 min]

Let's pray:

1. Every father will lead the family in the way that God intended it to be.
2. Every Riverlifer will take time to intercede for the LGBT activists and for the government and offers pastoral care to those struggling with these issues.