

**Message: “Unshakable Family”, Week 3 of “Unshakable Series” presented by Rev. Kristen Lowe on 09-04-2016 at Crossroads United Methodist Church, Waunakee, WI. With gratitude for Nelson Searcy and his book Unshakable.**

Joshua is best known as Moses' second in command who takes over and leads the Israelites into the Promised Land after Moses' death. Joshua is considered one of the Bible's greatest military leaders for leading the seven-year conquest of the Promised Land, and is often held up as a model for leadership and a source of practical application on how to be an effective leader. There are many things even today we can learn from Joshua. He modeled his faith at home. He said:

**Joshua 14:14-15**

“Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”

The author of Chronicles encourages us to keep God ever before us, always giving thanks, always praising and always telling others about God. The author reminds us that God is the source of our strength.

**Chronicles 16:8-1**

Give thanks to the LORD and proclaim his greatness.

Let the whole world know what he has done.

Sing to him; yes, sing his praises.

Tell everyone about his wonderful deeds.

Exult in his holy name;

rejoice, you who worship the LORD.

Search for the LORD and for his strength;

continually seek him.

Also, Jesus lays out this image to guide us:

**Matthew 7:24-25**

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock.

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God's word to our hearts. Praise be to God!



There's a little sign in my friend's kitchen that reads, "Remember, as far as anyone knows, we are a nice, normal family." I've always liked this little sign. It speaks to me. I think we can all acknowledge that Cleavers and the Cunninghams are not real. Deep down, I think we all have a picture in our head of what a "normal" family should look like, but let's face it, there are skeletons in our closets. There are old scars and new wounds and countless disappointments both big and small.

Even though we don't like the word, most of us worry at some point that our families may border on being (gasp) dysfunctional!

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So, we do our best to portray a nice, normal outward image. Check Facebook. This is a great place to witness what everyone wants you to see.

Here's some comforting news: Every family is dysfunctional! The question is, to what degree. Family can be a source of great comfort and grounding, but it can also be a hotbed for conflict, unresolved tensions and grudges that have the potential to whip up major storms. Thankfully, there are steps we can take to keep our families strong and to ensure that they are consistently safe havens of love and support. We can lift one another up on our shoulders – we don't have to struggle through family strife with plastered on smiles. God intends for us to cultivate unshakable families so that when the storms of life threaten to undo us, we can withstand anything together.

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Nelson Searcy in his book Unshakable, talks about the principle of first. He holds that God will bless the areas of your life where you put him first. First equals blessing. If you want God to bless your finances, you have to put him first in your finances. If you want him to bless your friendships, put him first in your friendships. The same goes for family. Putting God first in your family means actively trusting him as the foundation for your family’s life, as you relinquish your desire for control.

There are three practical steps you can take to put God first.



Talk about building a solid foundation – you can’t control the future for your family, but you can control the foundation it’s built in. Build a strong house capable of standing through the toughest storms.

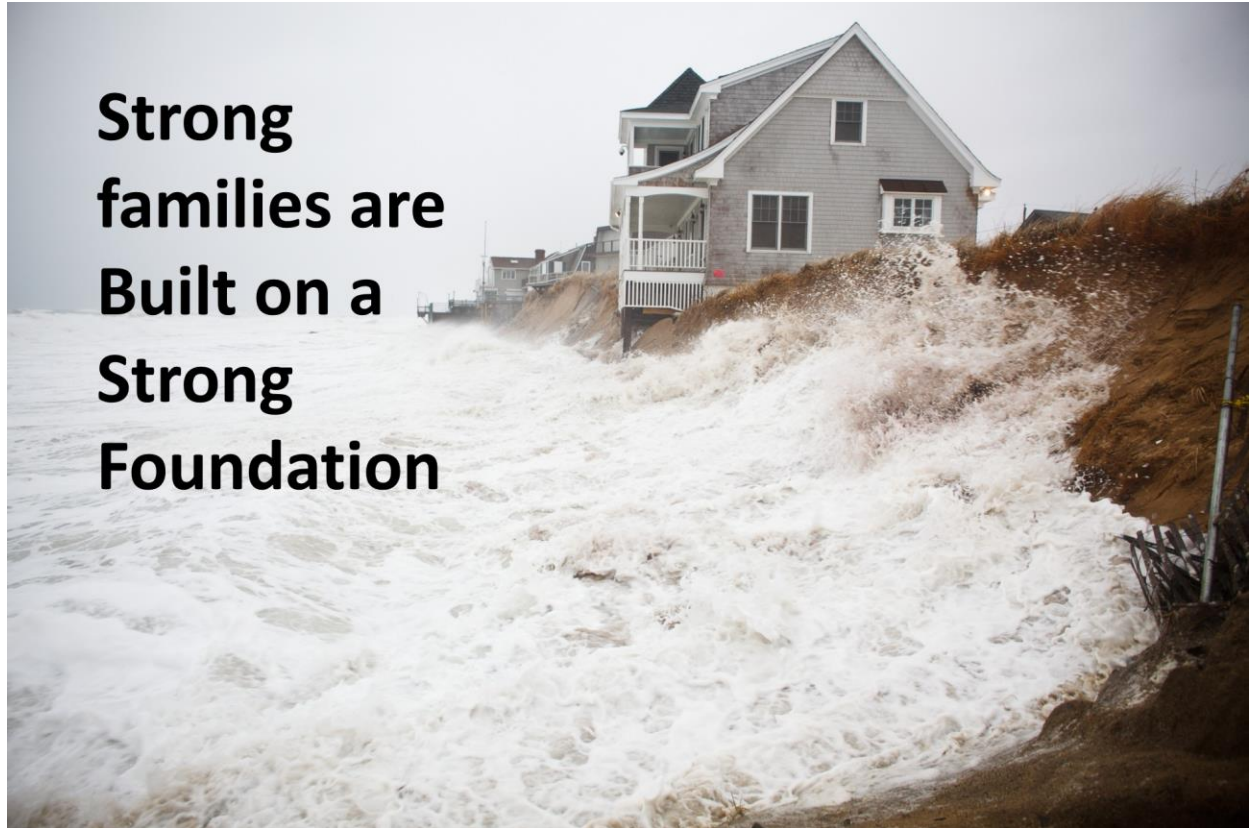
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1. Intentionally focus your family on God every day.
  - a. Prayer
  - b. Bible study
  - c. Bringing God into the conversation
  - d. What are the challenges to this?
  - e. Don't let God get crowded out... be proactive
2. Be quick to forgive your family members when they wrong you.
  - a. Every family is made up of flawed human beings.
  - b. You aren't going to get through life without being hurt.
  - c. Part of this process makes you who you are.
  - d. We'll face broken promises and disappointments and deeper issues that leave painful scars.
  - e. Grace (Ephesians 4:32)
  - f. This does not mean tolerate bad behavior
  - g. Release
3. Prioritize quality time with your family.
  - a. Be present
  - b. Dinner together
  - c. Celebrate

We have the responsibility to build God-centered families...



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Simultaneously turn them over to God. We can't mandate the choices our family members make, but we can choose to trust God in the midst of them.

By putting God first, we submit our family to a power higher than our own and provide the best foundation possible.