**Heritage Christian Community Baptist Church Handout for EH Spirituality**—

Session 3

May 7, 2024

**Going Back in Order to Go Forward**

**Introduction (1 minute)**

Emotionally healthy spirituality involves embracing God’s choice to birth us into a particular family, in a particular place, at a particular moment in history.

That choice to embrace our past grants us certain opportunities and gifts. It also hands us a certain amount of “emotional baggage” for our journey through life. For some of us this load is minimal; for others, it is a heavy burden to carry.

True spirituality frees us to live joyfully in the present. Living joyfully, however, requires going back in order to go forward. This process takes us to the very heart of spirituality and discipleship in the family of God—breaking free from the destructive sinful patterns of our past in order to live the life of love that God intends.

**Growing Connected (10 minutes)**

How did the family you grew up do conflict and how did that impact you? (eg, blaming, Jealousy, appeasing, yelling etc.)

**VIDEO: Going back in order to go forward** (12 minutes) Watch the video teaching segment for Session 3. Use the space provided to note anything that stands out to you.

**Group Discussion (45 minutes)**

**Starters ( 10 minutes)**

Our need to go back in order to go forward can be summed up in two essential biblical truths.

1. The blessings and sins of our family going back two to three generations profoundly impact who we are today.
2. Discipleship requires putting off the sin patterns of our family of origin and relearning how to do life God’s way in God’s family.

Q1: What concerns or fears might you have in looking back at your family of origin to discern unhealthy patterns and themes? (Explain)

**Bible Study** **(33 minutes**)

Read aloud the introductory paragraphs and then answer question 1. The “family” is an emotional system of two to four generations who move through life together in different places at different times. When we are born into families, we inherit their ways of relating, their values, and their ways of living in the world. (Adopted children inherit not only birth family traits but draw on traits from their adoptive family.) Your family’s story and your individual story cannot be separated.

Joseph is an excellent example of that reality. He was born into a complex, blended family where his father Jacob, Jacob’s two wives, two concubines, and their children, all lived under one roof. Joseph was Jacob’s favored son. As a result, his brothers grew jealous, leading them to sell Joseph to a merchant who took him to Egypt. The brothers never expected to hear from Joseph again. After he was sold, Joseph’s life became tragically difficult. For the next ten to thirteen years, Joseph lived first as a slave, and later, as a prisoner falsely accused of rape.

1. Imagine yourself in Joseph’s shoes sitting in a prison cell without any hope of freedom. What thoughts, feelings, or doubts might you have about your family?About yourself? About God? (7 minutes)

Now read aloud the next paragraph and Scripture passage before discussing the remaining questions.

Through God’s miraculous intervention, Joseph was pulled from the pit of prison and made the second most powerful person in Egypt. Later, when his brothers came to Egypt for food during a famine in Israel, Joseph invited them to return for their father and live in Egypt---which they gladly did. But after Jaxon died, the brothers began to worry. Read Genesis 50:15-21.

**Genesis 50:15–21 (NKJV)**

15When Joseph’s brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, “Perhaps Joseph will hate us, and may actually repay us for all the evil which we did to him.”

16So they sent messengers to Joseph, saying, “Before your father died he commanded, saying,

17‘Thus you shall say to Joseph: “I beg you, please forgive the trespass of your brothers and their sin; for they did evil to you.” ’ Now, please, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of your father.” And Joseph wept when they spoke to him.

18Then his brothers also went and fell down before his face, and they said, “Behold, we are your servants.”

19Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God?

20But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive.

21Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones.” And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

**Q2:** What assumptions are the brothers making about Joseph in verse 15? (4 minutes)

**Q3**: Why do you think Joseph weeps (cv. 17)?

**Q4:** Joseph chooses to break the “normal” way his family deals with hurt feelings and conflict by forgiving his brothers. How might you have responded if you were in Joseph’s position? (Be sure to honestly put yourself in Joseph’s shoes.) (6 minutes)

**Q5:** Slowly, reread verses 19-21. Here we see Joseph’s response to the enormous losses he experienced in his life. Carefully consider the different aspects of this response noted below.

* “Don’t be afraid.”
* “Am I in the place of God”?
* “You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good.”

As you think about your own life story, and view of God, which one of these three statements speak the most to you and why? (8 minutes)

**Application: ( 15 minutes)**

Complete question 1, on your own using the chart below. Joseph had a rich sense of being part of his family of origin and how it shaped his life- both good and bad. We must honestly face the truths about our family of origin as well. Prayerfully complete the chart, even if you have done a similar exercise before. There is often new insights to be gained.

* First, list the life messages you received from each of your parents or caregivers (education is important, don’t be a pushover, be careful of who you trust etc.)
* List the earthquake events that sent aftershocks into your extended family ( abuse, premature deaths, losses etc)
* Review the three separate boxes and summarize what messages about life/yourself or others you internalized, then fill in the bottom box “the cumulative messages I received.”

Father Mother Earthquake Events

**Messages**

**Received**

**Cumulative Messages**

**VIDEO: Closing Summary (8 minutes)** Watch the closing video summary for Session 3 and use the space provided to note anything that stands out to you.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

1. **Scazzero, Peter; Scazzero, Geri. Emotionally Healthy Spirituality Expanded Edition Workbook plus Streaming Video (p. 19-22). HarperChristian Resources. Kindle Edition.** [↑](#footnote-ref-1)