

DIGGING DEEPER: How to Lose Your Family in 10 Easy Ways — Fail to Read the Instruction Manual

Text: Genesis 1:27–28; 2:15–22 • Preached at Northland Church, Aug 23–24, 2025

BUILDING FAITH BEYOND SUNDAYS

At Northland, we believe discipleship starts at home and grows in community. This weekly guide helps families and small groups revisit Sunday's message, talk about it around the table, and practice it throughout the week—so faith forms a steady rhythm Monday through Saturday.

THE MAIN THEME

God designed marriage and family as the launchpad of His mission in the world. When we “read the Instruction Manual” (Scripture), we discover marriage's purpose (advancing God's Kingdom), God's vision for how humans flourish together (relate, create, operate under His authority), and the complementary roles that make families strong (husband as provider/protector/pastor; wife as escort/encourager/enhancer). Ignoring God's design breeds dysfunction; embracing it produces health, unity, and mission impact.

DIGGING DEEPER...

From the first pages of Genesis, marriage is not an end in itself—it's a covenant partnership crafted to reflect God's glory and extend His Kingdom. Adam and Eve are placed in a garden to work, keep, and obey under God's authority. Their union becomes the first “home base” of mission: fruitfulness in relationships, meaningful work, and surrendered living.

This vision still holds. When a husband lovingly leads as Christlike head and a wife powerfully strengthens as a God-given helper, the marriage is “right-sized” for mission, not self. And because the Church is the family of Jesus, singles, widows, and widowers are not sidelined; the household of God becomes the place we all learn to relate, create, and operate under King Jesus.

WHAT NOT TO MISS...

- **Marriage serves God's mission.** It's a covenant partnership meant to reflect God's image and extend His Kingdom (Gen 1:27–28).

- **A working definition:** *Marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman to work harmoniously to form a family that reflects God's glory and advances His mission.*
- **God's vision for humanity in marriage:** **Relate** (life-giving relationships), **Create** (vocation and culture-making), **Operate** (life under God's authority).
- **Husband's role: Provider, Protector, Pastor**—loving, sacrificial leadership that nourishes the family spiritually and practically.
- **Wife's role: Escort, Encourager, Enhancer**—strong, wise partnership that rounds out the team and multiplies impact.
- **Children's formation:** Learn the Word, learn to love (God/parents/others), learn to live under authority, and grow to relate/create/operate.
- **Church family matters:** The Church supports marriages and also functions as “family” for singles, widows, and widowers to live the same vision together.

LIFE APPLICATION...

Take inventory this week: Where is your household aligned with God's design—and where have you been trying to “assemble without instructions”? Choose one relational habit (Relate), one work/vocation habit (Create), and one surrendered habit (Operate) to practice together.

Husbands, identify one pastoral step to lead spiritually; wives, identify one encouraging/enhancing step that strengthens your shared mission. Singles, pick one Church-family habit that helps you live this same vision in community.

Let grace lead. The Gospel covers our past missteps and fuels forward movement. Start small, be honest, and keep Jesus at the center.

VERSE OF THE WEEK

“Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.’” — *Genesis 2:18*

Use it: Families and groups—memorize this verse and discuss how God's “fit” help looks in real life: mutual support, shared work, and mission alignment.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In your words, what is the biblical *purpose* of marriage and family? How does that reshape expectations of “happily ever after”?
2. Which part of God's vision—**Relate, Create, Operate**—needs the most attention in your home right now? Why?
3. Where have you been “assembling without instructions”? What Scripture speaks directly to that area?
4. Husbands: What does it look like this week to **provide, protect, and pastor** in Christlike humility?

5. Wives: What does it look like this week to **escort, encourage, and enhance** with wisdom and strength?
6. Singles/widows/widowers: How can the Church family help you live out **Relate/Create/Operate** this month?
7. Parents: Which practices help children learn the **Word, love, and authority**? What will you start or restart?
8. Where might cultural expectations (tradition) have replaced biblical design? How can your group gently realign?
9. What boundaries or rhythms could your household adopt to keep everything under Jesus' lordship (devices, time, money, rest)?
10. Share one "first step" of obedience you'll take this week. Who will check in with you?

THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

As a group, identify a simple household rule or rhythm that brings your life **under Jesus' authority** (Operate)—for example, device-free dinners with prayer and a brief Scripture. Practice it five days in a row, then share stories next week of how it shaped your relationships and focus.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL (Mon–Fri)

Monday —

Faith That Reads the Manual

READ: Genesis 1:27–28; Psalm 119:105

REFLECT: God made us in His image and gave us a mission. His Word is our lighted path; without it, we drift.

RESPOND: *Reflection:* Where am I “winging it” instead of seeking God's Word?

Activity: Set a 15-minute household Scripture time today. Read, ask one question, pray one prayer.

Tuesday —

Relate: Life-Giving Relationships

READ: Genesis 2:18; John 13:34–35

REFLECT: God calls us into relationships that mirror His love—pursuing, serving, and building up one another.

RESPOND: *Reflection:* How can I breathe life into my spouse/roommate/child today?

Activity: Do one unprompted act of service (dishes, errand, encouraging text) and tell why you did it—because Jesus loves you.

Wednesday —

Create: Called to Meaningful Work

READ: Genesis 2:15; Colossians 3:23–24

REFLECT: Work is worship when we reflect God’s character and aim at shalom. Marriage and church family help us discern calling.

RESPOND: *Reflection:* Where do I see God’s purpose in my work (paid or unpaid)?

Activity: Name one task you’ll do *unto the Lord* today. Share with your family or group at dinner.

Thursday —

Operate: Living Under Jesus’ Authority

READ: Genesis 2:16–17; Matthew 6:33

REFLECT: Flourishing grows where God’s will is prioritized. Obedience isn’t restriction; it’s alignment with life.

RESPOND: *Reflection:* Which area—time, tech, money, rest—needs to come under Jesus today?

Activity: Choose one boundary (e.g., no phones at the table, budget check-in, lights-out time) and practice it.

Friday —

Households on Mission

READ: Deuteronomy 6:4–9; Ephesians 5:25; 6:4

REFLECT: Homes are training grounds for love, truth, and mission—shaped by sacrificial leadership and mutual encouragement.

RESPOND: *Reflection:* What one practice will help our home carry the Gospel forward?

Activity: Plan a simple weekend “mission moment”: invite a neighbor for dessert, write a thank-you note, or serve together.

SMALL GROUP LEADERS

FACILITATOR TIPS

- **Scripture first:** Open Bibles before opinions. Let Genesis frame the conversation.
- **Stories over theories:** Ask for concrete examples of Relate/Create/Operate in daily life.
- **Practice, then reflect:** End with one doable habit for the week and set peer check-ins.

PRAYER POINTS

CONNECT — with God and others

- Hunger to read and obey God's "Instruction Manual."
- Deeper love and unity in marriages, families, and spiritual friendships.
- Welcoming Church family for singles, widows, and widowers.

CARE — for people and resources

- Wisdom to steward time, bodies, finances, and technology under Jesus.
- Comfort and strength for homes under stress or strain.
- Grace-filled speech that builds up, not tears down.

CULTIVATE — disciples and leaders

- Husbands to grow as humble providers/protectors/pastors.
- Wives to flourish as escorts/encouragers/enhancers.
- Children and students to love God's Word and honor authority.

COMMISSION — to neighbors and nations

- Households to shine the Gospel through everyday hospitality.
- Courage to invite friends into community and conversation about Jesus.
- Eyes to see practical ways to serve our city this week.

CLOSING PRAYER

Father, thank You for Your wise and loving design. Forgive us where we've tried to build life without Your Word. Jesus, lead our homes—teach us to relate with grace, to create with purpose, and to operate under Your good authority. Holy Spirit, empower husbands to lead like Christ and wives to strengthen with wisdom, and form our children into joyful disciples. Make our households outposts of Your Kingdom, for Your glory and our neighbor's good. Amen.