

Family Life and Marriage Encouragement

FLAME

KEEPING THE SPIRITUAL FIRE BURNING BRIGHT



ANNE FREY

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Introduction

Keeping the Spiritual Fire Burning Bright

FLAME is for everyone. The principles and inspired teachings of the Bible give us a way to live and experience the greatest life possible on this earth. The amazing truths of the Bible not only transform our own personal lives but also transform the lives and atmosphere of our entire family.

FLAME is all about encouragement. Everyone needs extra encouragement in making life work in our homes. FLAME is about training and coming alongside parents for the purpose of implementing a vision of loving and serving God within the family. The hope of FLAME is to see families light a spiritual fire in their home and keep it burning bright.

FLAME is about connecting. Connecting with God and connecting with our family brings about a deeper sense of fulfillment, peace, and purpose.

FLAME is about communication. Learning healthy ways to communicate in a family provides each family member with a feeling of safety and love. Parents learn and practice ways to listen to the heart of their spouse and child.

FLAME is about serving. When a person takes their eyes off of themselves and serves another person, the result is an overflowing joy. Families are training grounds for serving the world. A purpose-filled life starts in the home, and FLAME is about parents creating a spirit of service in each family member.

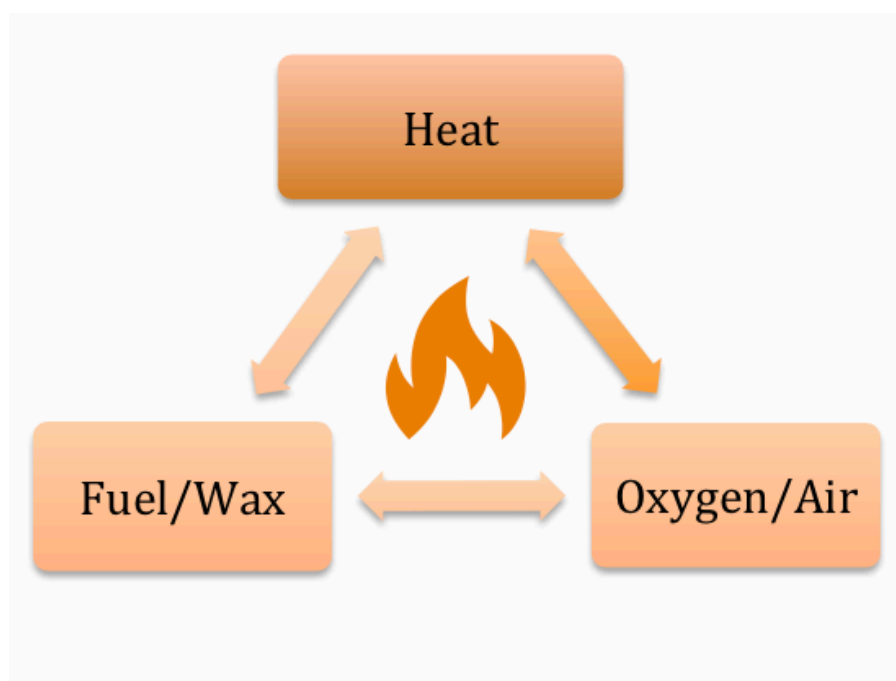
FLAME takes an on-going commitment. Everyone has a tendency to start something new and then slowly drift back to our comfortable habits. In order to keep a spiritual flame going in the home, parents need everyone on the team to push toward the goal. Everyone has to work hard for victories, to depend on the strength and wisdom that comes from God, and to be open to hear about areas of growth. A strong wind can blow out a flame, so the flame needs to be protected. The spiritual fire in families needs to be protected so that the home becomes an environment of peace and encouragement.

Let's light a flame in our own hearts and in our homes! This choice could be the most crucial decision of a person's or family's life. Do not wait for later. The later is now.

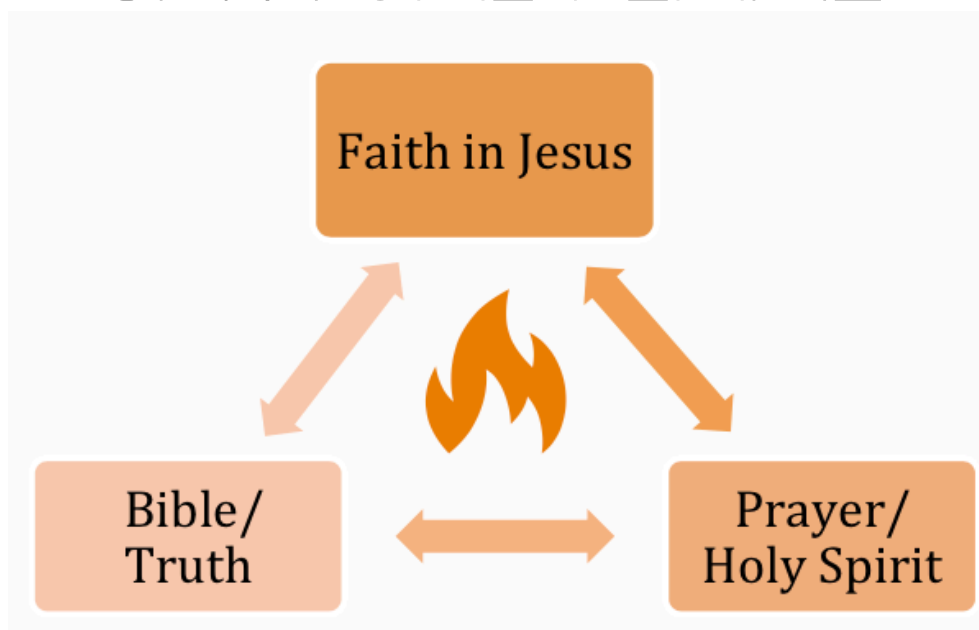
Light the flame today.

Scientific and Spiritual Flame

SCIENTIFIC FLAME



SPIRITUAL FLAME



FLAME LESSON #1

Leading by Example

How would you describe an ideal family?

How would you describe your own family?

Having the family that we want starts with the parents. We are leading others even if we are not aware of it. Our children are using our lives as a model for their lives. Every word or action that we say or do has an affect on those around us. Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, our words and actions will either encourage and build up or they will discourage and tear down. We are responsible for our words and actions and cannot blame anyone else. As a parent leader in the home, we need to be following the correct set of “rules” in our own life in order to lead our children in the right direction.

***A leader leads.
But a leader also follows.
Before parents can
lead in the home,
they need to follow God.***

MY PERSONAL STORY

When my daughter, Morgan, was ten years old, we were experiencing a lot of conflict. She was being defensive to things that I said and was showing a bad attitude with me. One day, I decided to pray for her with a friend. On that same evening, I told my husband, Ernie, that I had been praying for Morgan to change her rebellious behavior. As soon as I finished talking, I heard a voice in my head that said, "You are the problem!" Shocked, I literally looked up to God and wondered why I would hear these words. In the days and weeks following this experience, I started asking God, "Why am I the problem?" Slowly and sweetly, God showed me that my expectations for Morgan were unrealistic. If she brought home a B on a paper, I would ask her why she did not make an A. I was asking her to not yell at me, yet I was yelling at her.

God showed me that Morgan needed encouragement to be who she was created to be and not who I wanted or expected her to be. He showed me that I needed to put myself on the same "rules" that I was imposing on Morgan as well as on my other daughters. From that time on, everyone in the family (especially Ernie and I) are now under "God's rules" to show love and kindness, to be joyful, to not be anxious but have peace, to be patient, to be thankful, to be faithful, and to have self-control. We are all under God's command to serve one another and put others' needs above our own.

Putting myself on "God's rules" has helped to transform our home. This decision has helped to unify our family and keeps us accountable to one another. If one of my daughters wants to do something like go to a movie, I will say, "Pray about it, research it, and ask God if this is something that you should do." It is more important for children to learn to obey "God's rules" rather than "My rules." I cannot be with them all the time, so my girls need to learn to make decisions based on what God says. Although hearing the phrase, "You are the problem" was not a pleasant experience, I now understand why God says to take the log out of our own eye before trying to take a spec out of someone else's eye (Matt. 7:5). As a mom, I know that I am an example to my girls, for good or for bad, so I am trying to love God and love others with my whole heart, and I am continuing to pray that they will do the same. By His grace, we can all follow Christ in every area of our lives.

***It is more important
for children to learn
to obey "God's rules"
rather than "My rules."***

- How can you relate to this story?
- Where do you see conflicts in your home?
- How are **you** the problem?

WHAT GOD SAYS

In the book of Leviticus, the Bible describes many laws about bringing offerings to God. Thankfully, Jesus became our offering through his death on the cross, and through His resurrection, we can live each day with freedom and thankfulness. This Leviticus passage for the priests gives us an analogy of the spiritual fire within ourselves and our homes.

“The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it must not go out. Every morning the priest is to add firewood and arrange the burnt offering on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship offerings on it. The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.” Leviticus 6:12-13.

A parent is like a priest in the home. Parents are responsible to keep the spiritual “fire” burning at all times. It must not go out. Parents must “arrange” the schedules and atmosphere of their home in such a way that keeps the “fire” burning.

In the book of I Peter, we learn that as believers, we are chosen to be a part of a royal priesthood that has now received God’s mercy.

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” I Peter 2:9,10

- Can you see yourself as the one who represents God to your family members? Why or Why not?
- How can we “arrange” or maybe rearrange our home to make room for Jesus?
- What does it mean to **not** let the flame go out?
- Because we have received mercy, how can we show mercy?

LET'S GET PERSONAL

- How can I prepare my heart to be a “priest” in my home?
- What am I **not** doing that I am asking my children (or my spouse) to do?
- What do I need to change in my own life?
- How can I live out my faith through my actions instead of just through my words?

NEXT STEPS

1. **Commit to reading God's Word and doing two FLAME Devotions just for yourself.**

After reading a verse or verses, practice asking these 4-H questions:

Head: What do the verses say?

Heart: How do I feel about what the Bible said?

Hands: What should I do in response to what I read?

Helps: Who can I tell about what I learned from the Bible?

2. **Commit to catching yourself doing what you have asked others not to do.**

Ask God to forgive you, ask your family to forgive you, and ask your family to keep you accountable to do what you say.

3. **Commit to obeying God's Word yourself.**

Do not worry about what anyone else is doing. Just keep your eyes on yourself.

Let the fire of God's Spirit burn in your own heart. Listen to God and what He says in His Word and do what He says.

**We cannot pass on
what we do not have.
Let's get real with God
so that His love will
fill us and our home.**

FLAME STARTER

Be a Praiseworthy Priest



FLAME LESSON # 2

Leading by Listening

What questions would you ask a friend?

Examples of questions might include:

“What feels good about your life right now?”

“What are you looking forward to this year?”

“What is something that is hard about your life right now?”

What is a question that you would like someone to ask you?

Leaders know the people that they are leading. How do they know them? They listen to them. Leaders ask questions and seek to understand before telling. Leaders know the right questions to ask. Leaders are not quick to judge. A listening leader is a loved leader.

**Listening requires having
a humble heart focused
on the needs of others.**

As parents, we cannot lead our children in a loving way without intentionally asking them questions in order to show them respect and understand their feelings and opinions. Asking questions is key to any relationship. It is so easy to interject our own solutions into others' problems without listening to the entire situation. Listening does not feel natural. It is a skill that has to be developed. Listening requires having a humble heart focused on the needs of others. We all have a tendency to want others to hear our thoughts or opinions and to want our needs to be met. As a listening leader, a parent will put away their own needs or thoughts in order to understand the needs of their child. Listening takes practice, so let's make a commitment to start and continue conversations with good questions. It will be incredible to see what we will learn about ourselves, our spouses, and our children as we ask compassionate questions and listen to their heart.

MY PERSONAL STORY

After I picked up my daughter, Madison, from her Christian school, tears slowly began rolling down her cheeks. Just as a leaky faucet seems to never stop dripping, the tears continued to flow from her beautiful green eyes. Hoping to be strong, Madison tried to hold back the tears as she explained her feelings about events that happened at school, but the pain was coming from a deep spring.

We sat in our driveway for over an hour as Madison talked, cried, and even hit the door. I wanted to tell her that she was going to be okay. I wanted to judge or take up an offense about the individuals who hurt her. I wanted to quote scripture and say that she needs to rely on God more. I wanted to get out of the car and go on with my busy day, ignoring the issues. I wanted to tell her what I thought she should do or think. I wanted to do a lot of things instead of just listening and feeling Madison's tears.

But I loosened my seat belt and turned to look at her, knowing that I could not rush inside. I decided to be intentional and only ask questions. "How did that make you feel?" "Can you tell me more details of what happened?" "How long have you been feeling this way?" "What can you do to overcome this situation?" "What would God say to you right now?" "How can we pray?" Asking questions leads to longer conversations, but those conversations can lead to healing. My afternoon with Madison in our stuffy car from the Texas heat led to a deeper understanding of her heart. It was worth the sweat!

I am thankful for this listening moment with Madison. Sometimes, I need someone to just listen to me and help me know that I am heard and loved. In the end, Madison figured out what she needed to do. Through her tears, she answered my questions, understood God's Truth, and decided that she could move on, forgive, get out of the car, take a step toward the front door of our home, and even go back to school the next day. Although her eyes might have been more red than usual, her heart was more prepared for the new challenges that a new day brings. Taking time to listen made all the difference.

**Asking questions leads
to longer conversations,
but those conversations
can lead to healing.**

- How can you relate to this story?
- What is the value of asking questions?



WHAT GOD SAYS

The Bible speaks clearly about how we should treat and respond to people. It says that our tongue expresses what is in our heart. (Matt. 12:34) If we are quick to say what we are thinking in our relationships, we might not say the right thing. As James says, we need to be quick to use our ears instead of our tongue. Easier said than done!

“My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.” James 1:19

“So also the tongue is a small member; yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire...”. James 3:5,6

The battle of the tongue is fought in our hearts and mind. Just as we cannot put toothpaste back into the tube, we cannot take back our words. Words have the power to hurt or to heal. We need to be quick to use our ears and not let our tongue go out of control as it follows our thoughts. These next verses remind us how important it is to keep our minds filled with the right things.

“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is - his good, pleasing, and perfect will.” Romans 12:2

“We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ... You are judging by appearances. If anyone is confident that they belong to Christ, they should consider again that we belong to Christ just as much as they do.” II Corinthians 10:5,7

Jesus asked questions many times in his conversations. Through questions, Jesus was able to understand hearts and reveal motives. We can model the life of Jesus when we ask questions and listen instead of speaking out judgements. As parents, we need to be leaders in listening. As we listen more to others, they just might listen more to us.

- What results did Jesus have when He asked questions and listened?
- Why is it so easy to speak and hard to listen?
- What are key phrases about our mind and thoughts that will help us with our tongue?
- How can “renewing” our mind transform us?
- How can we take our thoughts captive?

LET'S GET PERSONAL

- What is keeping me from listening to individuals in my family?
- What are some good questions that I can ask?
- How am I trying to "conform to this world?"
- How are my thoughts not obedient to what Jesus says?
- Who am I judging by appearances?
- What do I need to do in order to be quick to listen instead of speak or judge?
- When can I practice and improve my listening skills by asking good questions?

NEXT STEPS

1. **Ask God to forgive you for your thoughts and actions that are not right.**
Ask God for forgiveness for judging other people and for not showing compassion. Ask Him to forgive you for the words that you have spoken quickly that have hurt others. Ask God to give you a heart of grace and love towards people.
2. **Ask family members or friends to share if you have said or done something that hurt them. Ask them to forgive you for these words or actions.**
Ask them to forgive you for not renewing your mind with God's Word but having thoughts of this world or your flesh. If they share a time when you hurt them, listen to what they say without defending yourself and sincerely ask for forgiveness.
3. **Make a commitment to start practicing listening. Ask questions that do not have a YES or NO answer in order to connect from the heart.**
Before you give advice, ask two questions such as: 1. "Can you tell me more about what happened?" and 2. "How does that make you feel?"
4. **Watch out for your thoughts. Notice how your words follow what is in your mind.**
Be aware of negative thinking and self-oriented complaining. Quickly, try to renew your mind with truth from God's Word so that your words will be life-giving and encouraging instead of hurtful or destructive.

FLAME STARTER

Be a Loving Listener



FLAME LESSON #3

Leading By Connection

How do you connect as a family?

(Think about how electronics and media such as cell phones, TV, movies, video games, etc. affect your connection? How do sports or other activities help or hinder your connection?)

When do you feel most connected as a family?

Having a “connection” with family members is powerful. These connections are powerful because life-giving words can be said that changes a person’s life. In addition to conversations, a “connection” can involve doing activities together such as having a meal, watching a movie, bedtime stories or pillow talk, playing games or sports, taking a walk, cooking, or reading. Deep connections can be made during a times of prayer or reading God’s Word before work or school. But a connection might be a simple hug or a pat on the back. Connections are as simple as saying “I’m proud of you or I love you.” In our world of technology, sending a quick but meaningful text can make a connection. The how of making a connection is not as important as simply making a connection.

We all need some kind of connection every day. The key to connecting is being intentional. Connections do not just happen. We have to consciously decide to connect with people, especially family members. We need to be intentional about being relational. God made us relational. Relationships or connections are important for each person to feel loved. Even if someone does not seem relational, that person needs a connection, because we were created for it. We were created with a desire to know God and know others. It is part of us.

**The key to connecting
is being intentional.
Connections do not
just happen.**

One of the best ways to connect as a family is to have a family devotion. Having a devotion can be hard with everyone’s schedules (and attitudes), but a devotion time with everyone is well worth the enormous effort that it can take. Start small with one verse and one question once a week before bed as a family. This small step will lead to more times together for longer times around the Bible. Because we live in a culture of changing values, we need to know what God says. We need to know how the Creator of this world says to live in this world. A creator knows its creations best, so we need to know what God says about us.

MY PERSONAL STORY

Finding ways to connect with my girls and husband has always been difficult because of our busy schedules. With work responsibilities, school activities, sports events, church programs, family or social gatherings, and managing a household, I can become distracted by good projects and not truly connect with my good people. When I finally sit down at the end of a day, I want to relax. Sometimes, I just want some Me-time. Even if we are at home with nothing to do, I can let the TV, my phone, or my hobbies take me away from connecting with my family.

When my oldest daughter, Morgan, started high school, she asked me to do something that was a big surprise. She asked me to be home with her in the afternoons after school. In my mind, Morgan would be more independent in high school and be consumed with her friends and the difficult curriculum of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program that she had been accepted into at her school. Why would she want me to be around?

Afternoons were actually my work time. As a music teacher, I had to be available when my music students were available after school in the afternoons. This simple request from Morgan meant a big change for me. But of course I wanted to be there for her, so I made the decision to try to teach music during the day so that I could be with Morgan and my other daughters in the afternoon. I found a private school that allowed me to teach lessons to their students during school hours. This change in my work schedule helped me to more available and have more connection time with Morgan.

**We must let go of
our projects in order
to focus on people.**

When my second daughter, Meredith, started high school, she needed me even more in the afternoons when she came home from school. We had recently moved to a new city, so Meredith came home with lots of tears as she encountered a new culture and a big transition. Although it was hard to change my schedule, I am very thankful for my afternoon connections with my girls over tea and a snack that gave us time to share what was going on in our hearts. And although I always have other distractions of things that I need to do going on in my head, I try to intentionally give time to my girls.

Connections at night can also be a great time for hearts to open up. Before bedtime, I intentionally try to ask questions to my husband and girls that might reveal what is going on inside. When we make time for a family devotion, I am always amazed how a little time of “togetherness” brings out deep conversations and a feeling of unity within our family. I keep praying that my husband and I will make more time for each other and for our daughters. Lord, please help us to let go of projects and programs in order to focus on people.

- How can you relate to this story?
- Why are connections so important?

WHAT GOD SAYS

God is all about connecting. He wants us to connect with Him and each other. Many verses in the Bible tells us to meet together in order to encourage each other to love and do good things for God. Every business, school, or organization has a time for its people to meet together. A family functions like a small organization and needs times to meet together in order to be unified, trained, and connected. These “meetings” can take place at home or on the move and in the morning or evening.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deed, not giving up meeting together... but encouraging one another...” Hebrews 10:24,25

“These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.” Deuteronomy 6:6,7

If two of the greatest commandments are to love God and love others (Matt. 22:36-40), we need to be intentional about obeying these commands. Here is a formula to help us:

Love + Time = Connection

- According to these verses, what is the purpose of meeting or talking together?
- How can you connect with and encourage each member of the family?
- Why did God say that He wanted His commandments to be on our hearts?
- What are ways to “impress” God’s truth on our children?

LETS GET PERSONAL

- How am I loving and connecting with God?
- What can I do to deeply love and connect with my spouse and with my children?
- What do I need to change in my heart, schedule, or mindset in order to be more intentional in my relationships?

NEXT STEPS

1. **Be intentional every day to connect with your spouse and children.**
Look for ways to encourage them and pour God's Truth into them.
2. **Find time in your schedule to have a family devotion.**
As a "priest" or your home, arrange your schedules so that you can connect as a family and be encouraged to obey what God says. Find a time with everyone is awake and not in a hurry.
3. **Write a note or Bible verse to encourage members of your family.**
Put the note in their lunch, on their bed, on a mirror, or somewhere that you know that they will see it. Connections can be created even if you are not around.
4. **Decide as the "priests" how your family will obey what God says in His Word.**
Talk about it as a family. Here's an example question to discuss: If God says that we are to love one another, how can we love each other in our home?

**Remember to be intentional
about making a connection.
You will be amazed at what
happens in your relationships.**

FLAME STARTER

Be an Intentional Connector



FLAME LESSON #4

Leading by Serving

When did someone serve or help you?

How did it make you feel?

How are you different because of someone serving you?

Serving does not come naturally to most people. Our wish or natural tendency is to have someone serve us. Very seldom do we wake up with the question, “Who can I serve today?” Although as parents, we are always trying to meet the needs of our children, we sometimes forget to find joy in serving as well as encouraging our children to serve.

In the hierarchy of most societies, a servant is not at the top. Who would want to purposely put themselves in a servant position? Because everyone wants to be the best or be at the “top,” an intentional decision must be made to serve. If a person does not willingly serve, they will never experience the joy that only comes from serving. God planned an up-side-down way of thinking about being great. In Matthew 23:11 and Mark 9:35, Jesus says that the one who serves will be the greatest. Let’s try to be the greatest by serving the most. And let’s teach our families to be great by being a servant. We cannot serve effectively outside our home until we start serving inside our home. Having a home that focuses on serving each other becomes a home that has joy, unity, and the accomplishment of great things. Ready, set, serve!

**God can give us a new heart—
A heart that is not focused
on ourselves, but a heart that
also sees the needs of others.**

MY PERSONAL STORY

God has worked on control in my life through miscarriages. I reluctantly learned about humility and serving others after one of those unwanted miscarriage moments. When I married Ernie and we started thinking about having children, the thought that I might lose a child never crossed my mind. Our first daughter, Morgan, was born in Kenya while we were serving as teachers at a missionary boarding school. We were not planning on having children in Africa, especially our first child, but God had other plans for us when I lost all my luggage including my birth control pills on the way there.

After we came back to the U.S. after two years in Kenya, we found out that we were pregnant again. Unfortunately and sadly, we lost that baby at 13 weeks. We moved to Pennsylvania where Ernie became the pastor of Grace Community Church. About a year later, we were pregnant again and so excited. We had gone through a tough time in our marriage, and I believed that this baby was a sign of hope coming out of the pain. Once again, sadly we lost this baby at 14 weeks. I started to question God about what He was doing. My plans were out of my control. Another year went by, and finally, I became pregnant and carried our second daughter, Meredith, to full term. She was even two weeks late, arriving on January 1, 2000 and became the first millennium baby to be born in Doylestown, PA. What a blessing!

Then another year went by and guess what? Another miscarriage. This time our precious baby was 16 weeks when we lost it. Almost a week after another D&C to remove the baby, I started feeling dizzy and passing out. I was rushed to the hospital to be checked for a blood clot. As the doctors put dye into my body, I began to have an allergic reaction. At that point, I felt like I was dying. It took a couple of days in the hospital to recover from this experience, and the doctors discovered very low levels of blood but no clots. When I came home, strange feelings began to happen to my body. I did not know what it was at first, but I was having panic attacks due to my hormones and all the strain that had been placed on my body. Stress in my marriage also contributed to these panic attacks as I internalized my pain.

What do all these miscarriages and health issues have to do with serving? I am almost there in my story. We had planned to go to Tennessee so that Ernie could begin a Ph.D. program, but when I started having anxiety and panic attacks, we were not sure if we should move forward with that plan. After thinking and praying about our situation, we decided that we needed a fresh start. However, my body was in a state of panic, so I could barely function. I did not have the energy to pack and even drive.

Now is where the serving part comes into my story. Several ladies in our church came to pack up our house, while the men loaded a trailer with all of our things, including a grand piano and two harps. We were so grateful. In the midst of all the packing, I will never forget a lady named Connie who brought her broom. She did not say anything much but just started sweeping out our house. This beautiful lady had just been through cancer and knew about suffering from her own health issues. Watching her serve me was a very humbling moment in my life. I felt like I should have been serving her. I would never be able to repay her in any way. A "thank-you" seemed so small. It was hard for me to be served when I was used to being strong and helping others.

Connie has been my example of what it means to serve. Just show up. Bring a broom if you can, but be there. Even in our busy schedules and overwhelming issues that each of us face, we can put those aside and take time to help someone else in need. Serving does not just happen, but as we practice serving in our homes, it will feel more natural to develop a lifestyle of service. Thank you, Connie, for your example to me. I want to serve others like you served me.

- How can you relate to this story?
- What makes someone willing to serve?

WHAT GOD SAYS

Jesus gives us our example about serving. As we humble ourselves and serve, God raises us up. As Jesus humbled himself to even death on a cross, he was raised to life and now sits with God in heaven. The scripture about Jesus washing His disciples' feet shows how a respectful leader, the Lord, bend down to serve His disciples. Jesus told them to "wash one another's feet." As we serve one another, especially in the family, God will raise us up in love and freedom. He will give us a new heart, a heart that is not focused on ourselves but a heart that also sees the needs of others. Let's soak in these verses and let God soften our hearts to want to serve.

"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." -Matthew 20:28

"It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was retiring to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, 'Lord, are you going to wash my feet?' Jesus replied, 'You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.' 'No,' said Peter, 'you shall never wash my feet.' Jesus answered, 'Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.' 'Then, Lord,' Simon Peter replied, 'not just my feet but my hands and my head and my head as well!'

Jesus answered, 'Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.' For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not everyone was clean.

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. 'Do you understand what I have done for you?' He asked them. 'You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.'"-John 13:1-17

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” - Philippians 2:5-11

- How has the example of Jesus shaped your understanding of what it means to serve?
- What mindset does a person need to have in order to serve?
- How does Peter react when Jesus starts to wash his feet?
- What was the message that Jesus was teaching to his disciples?

**Serving
brings Joy
to your life
and value
to others.**

LET'S GET PERSONAL

- Is serving easy or hard for me?
- How can I lead as a servant to my spouse and children?
- How can I instill a heart of serving in my home?
- What are the barriers for me or my family in serving?

NEXT STEPS

1. **Start serving each person in your family with a cheerful heart.**
2. **Meet together as a family to discuss the idea of serving each other.**
Do a FLAME Devotion about serving. Talk about needs that each person has and ways to serve each other.
3. **Start noticing and encouraging each person who serves another family member.**
4. **Ask each family member to serve with joy instead of obligation.**
5. **As you learn to serve inside your home, look for needs outside your home where your family can serve together.**

**Ready,
Set,
Serve!**

FLAME STARTER

Be a Humble Servant



Concluding Comments

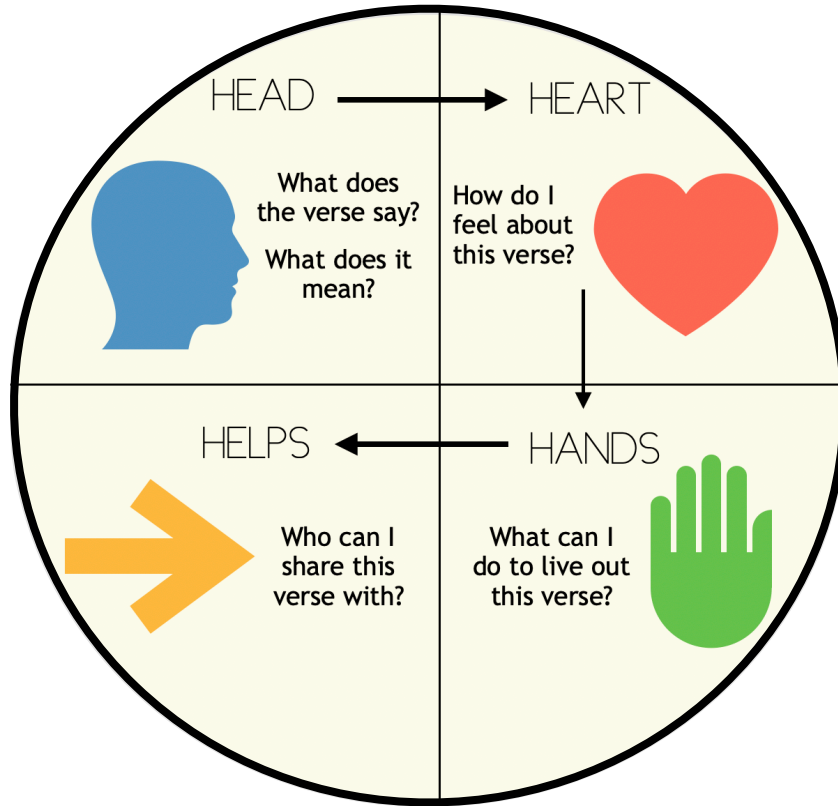
The FLAME lessons in this study provide a basis for family discipleship. Each lesson must be reviewed and practiced. Having a loving and connected family does not happen without intentional effort and without the power of the Holy Spirit working in the hearts of each family member. Prayer also plays a major role in the family. Pray alone and pray together. Always find other families to walk the journey with you and to provide accountability so that you will not feel isolated or alone. FLAME seeks to encourage every family to keep the spiritual fire of Jesus burning bright in individuals, marriages, and families. Let's protect our *flame* and not it go out!

- How has your life/heart changed during FLAME?
- How is your family different after this study?
- How are you a better example, listener, connector, and servant?
- How can you protect the flame in your home?

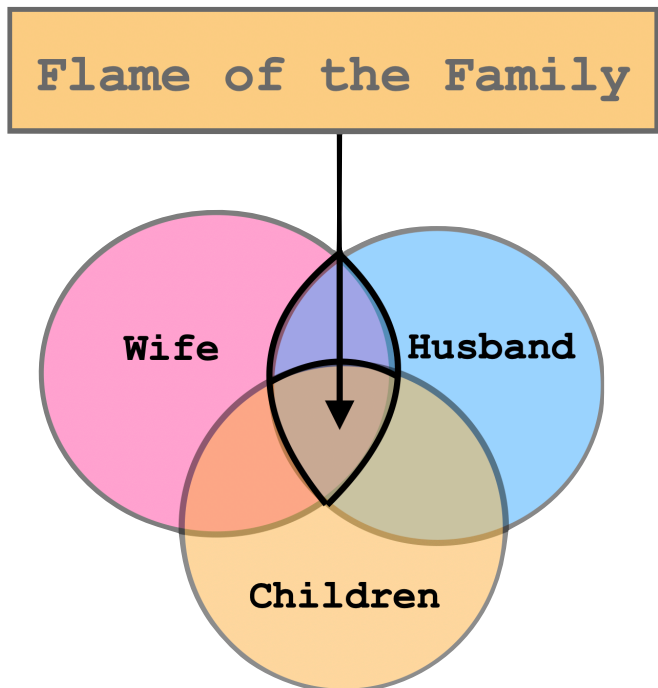
Let's light up our home!



FLAME 4-H MODEL



FAMILY FLAME MODEL



FLAME DEVOTION

Following Jesus

Leading by Example - Devotion #1

Opening Question:

- When have you done something that you did not really want to do?

Scripture Passage:

Luke 5:1-11

4-H Questions to Discuss:

- Head:
- What did Jesus ask Peter to do?
 - How did Peter respond?
 - What happened after Peter did what Jesus asked?
 - What did Jesus say to Peter that changed his life?
 - What choice did Peter and his partners make?
- Heart:
- How am I afraid to follow Jesus?
 - What does it mean for me to go “into deep water?”
 - What do I need to “leave” in order to follow Jesus?
- Hands:
- How can I listen and obey Jesus better in my life?
 - What do I need to do that Jesus says to do even though I do not really want to do it?
- Helps:
- Who can I share with about this devotion?
 - Who can I encourage to follow Jesus with everything?

Closing prayer:

Lord, we want to follow you with everything! Show us what we need to leave behind and take away our fears. Help us to obey what you tell us to do even though we do not really want to do it. Forgive us for our lack of faith. Draw us closer to You and to each other as we all follow what You say to us. Amen.



FLAME DEVOTION

Keeping Spiritual Fire Burning

Leading by Example - Devotion #2

Opening Question:

- When and how did you feel the heat of a fire?

Scripture Passage:

Leviticus 6:8-13

4-H Questions to Discuss:

- Head:
- What are God's commands about the burnt offering?
 - What did the priests do to keep the fire burning?
- Heart:
- How is the altar like by heart?
 - Why is it hard to keep the spiritual fire burning inside my heart?
- Hands:
- What can I do to arrange my day to read God's Word and pray?
 - How can I protect my flame of faith?
- Helps:
- Who can I share with about this devotion?
 - How can I be an example to my family?

Closing prayer:

Jesus, thank you for your sacrifice on the cross. Thank you for being our "high priest" so that we can go to God directly through you. Help me to be like a priest and keep my life totally surrendered to you. Please keep my spiritual fire burning bright in my heart and in my home. Help me to be a model of your love. Amen.



FLAME DEVOTION

Listening to Others

Leading by Listening - Devotion#1

Opening Question:

- When was a time that someone listened to you?

Scripture Passage:

Acts 28:22-28

4-H Questions to Discuss:

- Head:
- What does this passage say about listening?
 - Why was the gospel of Jesus brought to other people besides the Jews?
- Heart:
- Why do I have a hard time listening to others?
 - When do I hear but not truly listen or understand?
- Hands:
- What can I do to become a better listener to God and to others?
 - With whom do I need to schedule time to listen?
- Helps:
- Who can I share with about this devotion?
 - How can we listen better as a family?

Closing prayer:

Lord, help us to listen to what you say in your Word. Help us to be good listeners of You and of others. Help us to understand with our heart, repent of things that are not pleasing, and feel your healing in our own hearts and in our relationships. Thank you for listening to us and help us to be good listeners to others. Amen



FLAME DEVOTION

Listening to God

Leading by Listening - Devotion #2

Opening Question:

- How do you pray or listen to God?

Scripture Passage:

1 Samuel 3:1-10

4-H Questions to Discuss:

- Head:
- What happened to Samuel in this story?
 - What did Eli tell Samuel to do?
- Heart:
- When do I “hear” the voice of God?
 - How can my heart be ready to listen and obey?
- Hands:
- What can I do to listen to God more?
 - How can I hear God’s voice through reading God’s Word?
- Helps:

Closing prayer:

Lord, I want to hear from You. Thank you for speaking to me. Help me to make time to be still and listen. Reveal your Word to me through your Spirit.
Help me to live out and obey what I hear from you.
Thank you for the peace and joy that comes when I hear and obey your voice. Help me to truly hear your voice and be able to pass on what You say to others. Amen



FLAME DEVOTION

Gentle Connections

Leading by Connection - Devotion #1

Opening Question:

- Has anyone ever cried with you?

Scripture Passage:

Galatians 6:1,2 (The Message is a good version to read)

4-H Questions to Discuss:

- Head:
- What does this passage say about dealing with others?
 - What does this passage say about dealing with yourself?
- Heart:
- Why does my heart want to judge instead of gently showing compassion or forgiveness?
 - Why is sharing someone's burden something that I need to do?
- Hands:
- How can I be gentle in my relationships?
 - What should I do when I see someone who has done something wrong or someone who is sad?
- Helps:
- Who can I share with about this devotion?
 - How can our family bear each other's burdens?

Closing prayer:

Lord, thank you for being gentle with me when I make mistakes. Help me to gently forgive my family members. Help me to come alongside and encourage everyone around me, especially when they are going through a hard time. Thank you for helping me to connect with you and others from the heart. Amen.



FLAME DEVOTION

Connecting from the Heart

Leading by Connection- Devotion #2

Opening Question:

- Who is a good friend to you and why?

Scripture Passage:

I Samuel 18: 1-5

4-H Questions to Discuss:

- Head:
- How did Jonathan, Saul's biological son, feel about David?
 - What did Jonathan do to show his love for David?
- Heart:
- Why do I feel jealous and compare instead of celebrating others?
 - How can I train my heart to want to connect and include others?
- Hands:
- What can I do to knit my heart with my family members?
 - What should I do to show my love and admiration to others?
- Helps:
- Who can I share with about this devotion?
 - How can our family connect and love people outside our family?

Closing prayer:

Lord, thank you for loving me. Thank you for showing me how to love others by giving your life. Help me to love others as you have loved me. Help me to connect my heart to you and to others. Help me to celebrate others and not be jealous of them. Thank you for giving us the example of Jonathan in the Bible to show what it means to truly connect and love. Please give me a heart of love. Amen.



FLAME DEVOTION

Being Great by Serving

Leading by Serving- Devotion #1

Opening Question:

- When do you have the feeling of being great?

Scripture Passage:

Matthew 20:20-28

4-H Questions to Discuss:

- Head:
- What did the mother want for her sons?
 - What does Jesus say about being great?
- Heart:
- Why is it harder for me to serve than be served?
 - How can I be ready to “drink the cup” that Jesus is asking me to drink?
- Hands:
- How can I develop a heart to serve?
 - What can I do to serve others?
- Helps:
- Who can I share with about this devotion?
 - How can I serve others outside my home?

Closing prayer:

Lord, thank you for serving us with your life. Thank you for showing us what it means to serve. Help us to be willing to give our lives to others. Help us to serve each other with a humble heart. Thank you for making us the greatest as we become a servant. Amen.



FLAME DEVOTION

Serving Others Like Jesus

Leading by Serving- Devotion #2

Opening Question:

- When did someone share something with you?

Scripture Passage:

Philippians 2:3-11

4-H Questions to Discuss:

- Head:
- What does this passage say to do for others?
 - What did Jesus do when He came to earth?

- Heart:
- Why is putting others' needs first so hard?
 - What does humbling myself look like?

- Hands:
- How can I put others first at home?
 - How can I develop the "mind" of Christ?

- Helps:
- Who can I share with about this devotion?
 - Who can keep me accountable in having a humble heart to serve others?

Closing prayer:

Lord, thank you humbling yourself by becoming obedient even to death on a cross. Give me humility to see the interests and needs of others instead of only looking at what I need. Help me to make myself a servant and be obedient to your Word. Thank you for changing my heart to look like yours. Amen.

