



Managing My Family, Thinking and Commitment

Lesson 1: Managing My Family

The Big Idea:

*“If anyone does not know how to manage his own family,
how can he take care of God’s church?”*

1 Timothy 3:5

Remember:

**Decisions help us start in the right direction.
Discipline helps us finish.**

Three more areas we must master in our personal growth are the management of our family, our thoughts, and the commitments we make as leaders.

Our Family: My Family Today Gives Me Stability

My family is my primary network for expressing grace and truth. Everyone needs family. Let’s begin our study by assessing how well we’ve managed and cared for our families:

1. What percentage of your waking hours do you give to your family? _____
2. Do you manage your ministry/career better or your family better? _____
3. If you listed one regret you have about how you’ve led your family, what would it be?

A Question to Consider:

How well have you managed and cared for your family?



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More than any other single factor in a person's formative years, family life forges character. As Perry F. Webb noted, *"The home . . . is the lens through which we get our first look at marriage and all the civic duties; it is the clinic where, by conversation and attitude, impressions are created with respect to sobriety and reverence; it is the school where lessons of truth or falsehood, honesty or deceit are learned.; it is the mold which ultimately determines the structure of society."*

The Apostle Paul asks a sobering question in 1 Timothy 3:5: *"If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?"* God intended for our spiritual leadership to begin in the home - then, expand from there. We're not to form categories and separate our leadership in the home from our leadership in our careers. The home is the "laboratory" where we practice leadership first, and if it doesn't work at home, we shouldn't try to export it!

Biblical Case Study: Lot (Genesis 13, 19 - on pages 4-5)

These two chapters reveal much about a man named Lot, Abraham's nephew. Although he was a fine public servant, he failed in leading in his home. Note his fatal mistakes:

1. He placed emphasis on financial rather than _____ prosperity (13:8-11).
2. He assumed his family could live in Sodom and not be _____ (31:12-13).
3. He thought he could change society without taking _____ (19:1-11).
4. He felt his family would accept his words instead of his _____ (19:12-14).
5. He didn't realize how much the world had _____ them (19:12-26).

Lot Could Have Benefitted From Making These Three Decisions:

1. Establish _____ as priority.

Where does your family fit in your list of priorities?

2. Develop a _____ strategy.

How do you deal with adversity at home?

3. Establish a strong _____ base.

What are the values you will cultivate over the years?



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Managing the Disciplines of Family:

If you desire to strengthen your family life, try practicing these disciplines:

1. Put your family on your calendar _____.
2. Create and maintain family _____.
3. Find ways to spend _____ together.
4. Keep your _____ healthy.
5. Express _____ for each other.
6. Resolve _____ as quickly as possible.

A Thought to Ponder:

Choose two actions from the list above.

How would you put them into practice?

What Difference Would It Make:

*What difference would it make if
you were intentional about putting them into practice?*



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Genesis 13

¹So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. ²Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold. ³From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier ⁴and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD. ⁵Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. ⁶But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. ⁷And quarreling arose between Abram's herders and Lot's. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time. ⁸So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives. ⁹Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left." ¹⁰Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) ¹¹So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: ¹²Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. ¹³Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD. ¹⁴The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. ¹⁵All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. ¹⁶I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. ¹⁷Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you." ¹⁸So Abram went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he pitched his tents. There he built an altar to the LORD.

Genesis 19

¹The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. ²"My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning." "No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square." ³But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate. ⁴Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. ⁵They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them." ⁶Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him ⁷and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing. ⁸Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof." ⁹"Get out of our way," they replied. "This fellow came here as a foreigner, and now he wants to play the judge! We'll treat you worse than them." They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door. ¹⁰But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door. ¹¹Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door. ¹²The two men said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here—sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, ¹³because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it."



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Genesis 19 (continued)

¹⁴ So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry his daughters. He said, "Hurry and get out of this place, because the LORD is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking. ¹⁵ With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished."¹⁶ When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them. ¹⁷ As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, "Flee for your lives! Don't look back, and don't stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!" ¹⁸ But Lot said to them, "No, my lords, please! ¹⁹ Your servant has found favor in your eyes, and you have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can't flee to the mountains; this disaster will overtake me, and I'll die. ²⁰ Look, here is a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it—it is very small, isn't it? Then my life will be spared." ²¹ He said to him, "Very well, I will grant this request too; I will not overthrow the town you speak of. ²² But flee there quickly, because I cannot do anything until you reach it." (That is why the town was called Zoar.) ²³ By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun had risen over the land. ²⁴ Then the LORD rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and Gomorrah—from the LORD out of the heavens. ²⁵ Thus he overthrew those cities and the entire plain, destroying all those living in the cities—and also the vegetation in the land. ²⁶ But Lot's wife looked back, and she became a pillar of salt. ²⁷ Early the next morning Abraham got up and returned to the place where he had stood before the LORD. ²⁸ He looked down toward Sodom and Gomorrah, toward all the land of the plain, and he saw dense smoke rising from the land, like smoke from a furnace. ²⁹ So when God destroyed the cities of the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he brought Lot out of the catastrophe that overthrew the cities where Lot had lived. ³⁰ Lot and his two daughters left Zoar and settled in the mountains, for he was afraid to stay in Zoar. He and his two daughters lived in a cave. ³¹ One day the older daughter said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no man around here to give us children—as is the custom all over the earth. ³² Let's get our father to drink wine and then sleep with him and preserve our family line through our father." ³³ That night they got their father to drink wine, and the older daughter went in and slept with him. He was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up. ³⁴ The next day the older daughter said to the younger, "Last night I slept with my father. Let's get him to drink wine again tonight, and you go in and sleep with him so we can preserve our family line through our father." ³⁵ So they got their father to drink wine that night also, and the younger daughter went in and slept with him. Again he was not aware of it when she lay down or when she got up. ³⁶ So both of Lot's daughters became pregnant by their father. ³⁷ The older daughter had a son, and she named him Moab; he is the father of the Moabites of today. ³⁸ The younger daughter also had a son, and she named him Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the Ammonites of today.



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Managing My Family, Thinking and Commitment

Lesson 2: Managing My Thinking

The Big Idea:

“Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”
1 Timothy 4:15-16

Our Thinking: Today's Thinking Gives Me an Advantage

Developing my mind may be the one asset that sets me apart from others. One author said, *“What is important are ideas. If you have ideas, you have the main asset you need, and there isn't any limit to what you can do with your business and your life.”*

Effective leaders develop their minds. They become good thinkers over time, and they think differently than followers do. A clinical psychologist by the name of Dr. J. Robert Clinton said, *“The primary difference between followers and leaders is perspective. The primary difference between leaders and effective leaders is better perspective.”* It is a discipline, however, that very few people possess.

Take a moment and assess your present thought life:

1. Do you set aside time for disciplined thinking about certain issues?
2. When do you take time to think? When is your best time?
3. What prevents you from the discipline of a strong and healthy thought life?

A Question to Consider:

What is the present condition of your thought life?



Biblical Case Study: Solomon's Priorities (1 Kings 3:4-15)

Solomon had just assumed his reign over God's people, following his father, King David. God told King Solomon He would give him whatever he asked. In that pivotal moment, Solomon had the good judgment to ask for wisdom instead of selfish gifts that most men want. He knew that his thinking would make or break his life and leadership.

Solomon based his thinking on God's perspective:

1. His _____ was not his own, but a grateful response to God's goodness (v. 6).
2. His _____ revolved around his God-given leadership responsibility (v. 7).
3. His _____ was for wisdom that would match his large task (v. 8).
4. His _____ recognized that the people he led were not his people, but God's people (v. 9).
5. His _____ was rewarded with more than he expected (v. 10-13).

1 Kings 3:4-15

⁴The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. ⁵At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you." ⁶Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. ⁷"Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. ⁸Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. ⁹So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?" ¹⁰The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. ¹¹So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, ¹²I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. ¹³Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. ¹⁴And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life." ¹⁵Then Solomon awoke—and he realized it had been a dream. He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord's covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court.



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Different Kinds of Thinking

(Based on John C. Maxwell's book, *Thinking for a Change*)

1. _____ Thinking
The ability to think beyond yourself and your world in order to be more objective.
2. _____ Thinking
The ability to think with clarity by removing distractions from your mind.
3. _____ Thinking
The ability to break out of your "box" of limitations and explore totally new ideas.
4. _____ Thinking
The ability to build a solid foundation on facts in order to think with certainty.
5. _____ Thinking
The ability to implement plans that give direction and increase your potential.
6. _____ Thinking
The ability to unleash your enthusiasm and hope to find solutions for the impossible.
7. _____ Thinking
The ability to revisit the past in order to gain perspective & understanding for the future.
8. _____ Thinking
The ability to reject the limitations of popular thought to gain uncommon results.
9. _____ Thinking
The ability to include the ideas of others in order to gain compound results.
10. _____ Thinking
The ability to consider others and their journey in order to achieve collaboration.
11. _____ Thinking
The ability to focus on maximum results to reap your thoughts' fullest potential.



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Managing the Discipline of Thinking

Here are some practical steps to take to begin the discipline of thinking:

1. Find a place to think.
2. Set aside time every day to think.
3. Find a process or system that works for you.
4. Capture your thoughts and record them.
5. Put your thoughts into actions quickly.
6. Try to improve your thinking every day.

A Thought to Ponder:

Which kind of thinking is your strongest?

Which kind of thinking would you like to improve the most?

What Difference Would It Make:

*What difference would it make
if you were intentional about making improvements in your thinking
using the practical steps above?*



Managing My Family, Thinking and Commitment

Lesson 3: Managing My Commitment

The Big Idea:

“Be diligent in these matters; give yourself wholly to them, so that everyone may see your progress. Watch your life and doctrine closely. Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.”
1 Timothy 4:15-16

Our Commitment: Today's Commitment Gives Me Tenacity

What were you born to do? What do you think your future holds? Do you believe you have a purpose or a destiny? If so, will you fulfill it? To become the person you have the potential to be, you will need great tenacity. That quality come from commitment. Take a look at these truths concerning commitment:

1. Commitment can change your life.

Discussion: Think about a time in your life when you made a real commitment to do something differently. How did that change the course of your life?

2. Commitment helps you overcome many of life's obstacles.

Discussion: What is a past adversity that you overcame by making a commitment?

3. Your commitment will be tested every day.

Discussion: Commitment is not a one-time event. What is one decision you made that was tested? How did you do in daily committing yourself to keeping that decision?



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A Question to Consider:
How committed are you?

Biblical Case Study: Noah and the Flood (Genesis 6-8 - on pages 5-6)

Noah might be the epitome of commitment. His classic story about building an ark to prepare for a flood required a step of determination. Consider the situation he found himself in, when he made his commitment to obey God:

1. Society was corrupt, so Noah had no outside friends to encourage his decision.
2. Noah was instructed to build an ark, something he'd never done before.
3. It had never before rained on earth, so the possibility of a flood seemed illogical.
4. With no evidence of water, he gathered every kind of animal to board the ark.
5. The ark took several decades to build, and Noah was likely ridiculed.

So What Enabled Noah to Keep His Commitment?

1. _____ to God.
2. Protecting his _____.
3. A vision bigger than himself: _____



Managing the Discipline of Commitment

Commitment comes with the territory of leadership. You cannot lead well without it. Once you count the cost of a decision and decide it is worth the price - stick with it. Consider these statements as you make commitments:

1. Expect commitment to be a _____.

The greatest honors are reserved for those who endure the biggest struggles. Often, the higher the stakes, the higher the reward. Decide that the prize is worth the price. Every great committed leader in the Bible had to struggle.

2. Don't rely on _____ alone.

Your talent can blind you to the need for commitment. We often get lazy in our areas of talent because it comes easy to us. Apply discipline especially in your strength areas. Continue to develop your spiritual life and your skills.

3. Focus on _____, not conditions.

Be focused on your inward choice, not on outward circumstances. Conditions change and you cannot control them. Your choices are all you can control.

4. Be _____.

Nothing enhances commitment like single-minded effort that results in achievement. Remove distractions and options once you've decided what is right. "This one thing I do."

5. Do what's _____ even when you don't feel like it.

Nothing is easier than saying words. Nothing is harder than living them day after day. Don't let your fickle feelings prevent you from keeping a right commitment. Let the examples of Daniel, Joseph and Moses encourage you to persevere.

6. Finish what you _____.

Don't make excuses. When you start something - follow through until it is finished. Commitment enables you to finish even when things are inconvenient. Be grateful for Genesis (how it all began) and Revelation (how it all ends).



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A Thought to Ponder:

How would others describe you when it comes to . . .

Prioritizing Family?

Good Thinking?

Keeping Commitments?

What Difference Would It Make:

*What difference would it make
if you listed one decision and action step
you can take in each of these areas
and committed to following through with them?*



Genesis 6-8

6 When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, ²the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. ³Then the LORD said, “My Spirit will not contend with^{al} humans forever, for they are mortal; their days will be a hundred and twenty years.” ⁴The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown. ⁵The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. ⁶The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. ⁷So the LORD said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.” ⁸But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD. ⁹This is the account of Noah and his family. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. ¹⁰Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth. ¹¹Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. ¹²God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. ¹³So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. ¹⁴So make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. ¹⁵This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high. ¹⁶Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an opening one cubit high all around. Put a door in the side of the ark and make lower, middle and upper decks. ¹⁷I am going to bring flood waters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. ¹⁸But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you. ¹⁹You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to keep them alive with you. ²⁰Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. ²¹You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them.” ²²Noah did everything just as God commanded him.

7 The LORD then said to Noah, “Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. ²Take with you seven pairs of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, ³and also seven pairs of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. ⁴Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made.” ⁵And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him. ⁶Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. ⁷And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. ⁸Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, ⁹male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. ¹⁰And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth. ¹¹In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. ¹²And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights. ¹³On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. ¹⁴They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. ¹⁵Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. ¹⁶The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.



Genesis 6-8

7 (continued)

¹⁷For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. ¹⁸The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. ¹⁹They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. ²⁰The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than fifteen cubits. ²¹Every living thing that moved on land perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. ²²Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. ²³Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark. ²⁴The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

8 But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded. ²Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky. ³The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, ⁴and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. ⁵The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible. ⁶After forty days Noah opened a window he had made in the ark ⁷and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. ⁸Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. ⁹But the dove could find nowhere to perch because there was water over all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark. ¹⁰He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. ¹¹When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. ¹²He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him. ¹³By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. ¹⁴By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry. ¹⁵Then God said to Noah, ¹⁶"Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. ¹⁷Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number on it." ¹⁸So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. ¹⁹All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds—everything that moves on land—came out of the ark, one kind after another. ²⁰Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. ²¹The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done."