

KING DAVID AND FAMILY SYSTEMS

Introduction – Family systems is an approach to counseling that sees some individual problems as symptomatic of stress from the emotional bonds of family. Roles and responsibilities can be passed down multi-generationally. This tends to be something of which we are not conscious. We experience it as the irrational pressure of anger and anxiety.

Matthew 13:22

- A. God guided the prophet Samuel to the village of Bethlehem where God promised He would find the new king to replace Saul's rule.

1 Samuel 16:4-13

1. The "baby" in a family usually is not given the role of leadership, nor is much expected of them compared to the older children.
2. David appears not to be close to his family. He is not even called to be a part of the family ceremony, but was given the least important task and despised job of watching the sheep.
3. We are all familiar with the story of young David confronting the giant warrior, Goliath. But notice the homeostasis (resistance to change) at work in his family of origin.

1 Samuel 17: 28

4. David's family of origin never plays an important role before or after he becomes king. This suggests that there were pressures within this family system that caused them to reject him and for him in turn to ignore them.
- B. Scripture presents the example of David dealing with Saul's dysfunctional family in as healthy a way as is possible under the circumstances.
1. Jonathan was Saul's eldest son who should have become the next king upon Saul's death. This should have created conflict between Jonathan and David.

1 Samuel 18:1-3

2. Saul reluctantly gives his daughter Michal to David in marriage, because of his rash promise over killing Goliath.
3. Saul becomes jealous of David's popularity among the people of Israel and decides to kill him to eliminate this threat to his dynastic rule.

4. Triangulation is created by Saul's irrational rage and anxiety over David. Jonathan and Michal protect David from Saul's intent to murder him.
5. Saul pursues David into the desert. David had a chance to kill Saul in a cave, but refuses the temptation. David confronts Saul directly after this and Saul relents his murderous intentions. This is an example of healthy direct interaction by David that had positive results.
6. God fulfilled His promise of an eternal Davidic kingdom through Christ.

Romans 1:3-5

Conclusion – Christ has created a new family of those who choose to make Jesus Lord and consider His followers their extended family. The leadership of Christ in individual congregations are to be men of character and good family men.

1 Timothy 3:1-5

Discussion Questions

1. What example in David's life of how family systems work impressed you?
2. Why is it important for congregational leaders to have exemplified healthy management of their family?
3. How can a healthy church family help us deal with family anxiety in a healthier way?