

All right, hey everybody. From wherever you are, let's welcome each other together today. Hope is here, everyone is welcome, and Jesus changes everything, and Jesus even changes seasons. It is summer at Valley Creek, and we're so excited about all that God has for us. I want to encourage you – don't miss the things. Be part of all that God has for us here at Valley Creek. Use this card, follow on social media, go to [valleycreek.org](http://valleycreek.org). Tuesday Night of Prayer this Tuesday, we've got Serve the City coming up, we got Circles, we got all kinds of stuff at student summer. You don't want to miss any of it, it's going to be a great summer at Valley Creek.

We just came off of an amazing series called the Hope Carrier Initiative. An unbelievable move of God across our church family. A hope carrier – a disciple of Jesus living on mission to change their world. One that becomes like the one that they follow. Can I just tell you, Jesus is teaching us, and we are following Him. Jesus is moving. We're trying to go wherever He leads. Hope carrier isn't just the end of a series, it's the beginning of a brand new lifestyle. It is foundational for everywhere that God is going to lead us as a church family. I'm so excited for the future, for what God has for us as Valley Creek Church. But here's the question. How do you follow that up? What do you do next? The answer is, you take one next step; because one next step can lead to an entire life of discovery. A great next step is found right where we live, right with the people we live with.

A great next step is found right at home. Which is why today we kick off a brand new series called 60 Days: Learning to Live as a Healthy Family. Every single summer for the last few summers, we take June and July, and we just take 60 days to focus in on an area as a church. In the midst of all the travel plans, and the vacations, and all the stuff, we want to really spend time to focus this summer on living as a healthy family. 60 days of family. I know as I say that, the word family's got all the baggage, all the stuff that goes along with it. It's all the good, it's all the bad. Like, it's the good things. It's the birth of your child. It's the Christmas traditions. It's those family vacations that you love. It's the bad. It's that history of divorce. It's the unnecessary sibling rivalry. It's the harsh words. It's generational sin. We have all these things that come into our hearts when we think about the word family. Much of how and what we think about family isn't actually being defined by God and His kingdom.

It's defined by what we've experienced in the world. I want to encourage you, family's not defined by what you've and how you've experienced it. It's defined by what God says. I don't even know, maybe where you are and where your family is this summer. Maybe you feel like you are loving your family. Maybe you feel like you're losing as a family. Maybe you are really enjoying the season of marriage, or maybe you're like, you like, desperately want to be married. What's even more likely is that one portion of your family is going really well, and the other portion, not so much. We're going to take this summer, we're going to let God define what family is. We're going to let God define what healthy family looks like. Our prayer for you is that you would experience a deep healing in your heart and in your home. In fact, even right

now, Jesus, we just say as we kick things off, would You heal our hearts? Would You heal our homes?

Would You show us what healthy family looks like? Would You reveal Yourself to us this summer? See, one of our hopes is not just a healing in your heart and in your home, but I believe that God is going to use this church family to heal what might be broken in your family. In Jesus' name, may it be so. I believe that God's perspective on family can begin to change and reframe our perspective on what a healthy family can look like. In Jesus' name, may it be so. God's design for family can help you dream differently about what your family could look like, how it could be designed. In Jesus' name, may it be so. Where do you start with this pursuit of healthy family? Well, you start in Scripture. Every single week, we're going to go to Scripture, we're going to pull out principles from Scripture for all of us. We're going to have seven principles over the course of the summer.

When I say healthy family, when I say family, I'm talking about everybody. I'm talking about blended, fractured, single, large, small, newly married, with kids, married without kids, adoptive families. If you got roommates, if you don't even know if you got a family, this series is still for you because it's for all of us to learn what it looks like to live in a healthy family. We're going to let God define it each and every single week by going to Scripture. Each week is not going to be like, the parenting week, or the raising kids' week. It's going to be all the principles for all of us because Scripture really is the playbook for how to win as a healthy family. Check this out. "All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true," about our families. "and to make us realize what is wrong," inside of our families and, "in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and it teaches us what to do what is right," for our families. "God uses it to prepare and equip His people to do every good work." See the pattern here?

As a family, all of Scripture can show us, can speak to us about what healthy family looks like; because Scripture is the playbook for winning as a family and all of Scripture is the story of God building a family unto Himself. All of Scripture is the story of God actually building a family for Himself. You've got to understand, God lived in healthy family, in perfect family, in perfect relationship since before time began. God the Father, God the Son, the Holy Spirit lived as a family and it was good and it was perfect. Then, He invited mankind into His family with the creation of Adam, the first son of all creation. We were invited to join the Trinity. Then, God looked at Adam, and said, "It's not good for man to be alone," so He created Eve. With the creation of Eve, we learned that marriage between a man and a woman was going to be the bedrock and the foundation for a family. Then, Noah saved all of the earth through His family by obeying God.

God started to rebuild off of Noah and his family. Moses leads all the families of the Israelites from Egypt through the desert towards the Promised Land. Even the word Israelite literally is like, "from one family," so Israel is the word from Jacob, and Jacob came from Isaac, and Isaac came from Abraham, so all of Israel is literally one big family. All the way into verses like,

"Children obey your parents that it may go well with you, that you'll live long in years," all the way to this final verse in the Old Testament, "He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the hearts of the children to their parents." The final verse in the Old Testament. Now, hear me, every time, parents, you pray for your child, you are setting this prophecy in motion in your family. Like, kids, every time you honor mom and dad when it's really hard to do, you're living out this declaration over your homes. Moms, when you pray for your teenager and you contend for their soul, for their spirit, you are setting this in motion.

This final verse of the Old Testament and it goes into the New Testament, "Yet to all who'd receive him, to those that believed in His name, He gave the right to become the children of God." Of all the ways that God can describe salvation, He describes it as children in a family, bringing the family home. Then, the New Testament goes on, and it says things like, "Love one another, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ." Wives, submit to your husbands. Husbands, love your wives. Parents, lead your children. Do not exasperate them. Don't frustrate them. Children, obey your parents. All the way towards the very end of Scripture where it says this, "I will be their God and they will be my children." From the beginning of Scripture to the end of Scripture, from the Old Testament to the New Testament, from the creation of all things to the end of all things, family belongs to God.

Family is God's, which is why Satan hates it, which is why he attacks your family. You ever feel like your family's under attack? It's because when your family is following Jesus, your family is a revelation and a reflection of God building His family to the world. Satan hates that because he hates the Trinity, he hates God, so he attacks your family, but this summer we're going to win in Jesus' name. We're going to live from a place of victory. We're going to fight back and learn what family really should look like, what a healthy family really does look like. Family is a big deal. Family is that reflection, that revelation to the world. Family is the beginning, the middle, and the end of the very story of God, and God wants to write a brand new chapter in your family this summer. I believe He's going to, in Jesus' name.

As you hear me say that, you might be thinking, "Okay. Sounds great, but my family's like really hard. Like really hard. Like, if you knew. Like we look good in pictures, we take great family vacations, our kids are okay in sports. We got, like, a cute purebred sheep-a-poodle golden-doodle that costs like \$10,000, but our family's got a lot going on. Like, if you only heard how we talk to each other in the kitchen, if you only knew the secrets we're keeping from one another, if you only heard the way that sometimes we just straight-up like, curse one another with our words. Like, I don't know if my daughter's ever going to come home, I don't know if my marriage can ever be reconciled, like it's just really hard. I'm not sure about any of that." Okay. Okay, here's my question for you. What if you were willing to try?

What if all summer long, you were just willing to try, you were just willing to point your feet in the direction you want your heart to go by placing your family right at the feet of Jesus? Because this is going to be like a "by faith" kind of series. Open hands, open heart, one next

step at a time, we're going to follow. A "by faith" kind of series that's going to take a little bit of the courage and the resolve of Joshua, "But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord." Joshua said in a time when nobody held a regard for God and nobody really wanted to follow Him, "I will. My family will." At a time in society when nobody cared about God's word and wisdom and way, Joshua's like, "We will. We're going to do that." Check out what it says. There's really two parts to it. It says, "as for me," then "my family." "As for me" comes first, and then "my family." Husbands, like, as for me; wives, as for me; students, as for me.

Why is that important? Well, the order really matters. You can't reverse it, because if you reverse it, you think, "Oh, this series will be for my family, and then it'll be for me." Here's the problem. You'll try to get your family to do that which only Jesus will do, and none of it will work. Because "as for me" is so critical to healthy family, why? Because we think the primary problem is them. We think the primary problem is them – their annoying hobby, their bad budgeting, their weird parents, which have now turned into my weird in-laws. We think the primary problem is them. Side note, I cannot wait to be a weird in-law someday. That's going to be the best. We think it's them. We think it's their stuff; but, in reality, it's as for me. The primary problem in my family is my own individualistic, selfish, un-surrendered heart.

Can I just encourage you, the "as for me" portion of this entire summer is going to be really, really, really critical. "As for me, then my family, we will serve the Lord." It's going to be by faith. It's going to take some initiative to say like, "I'm in. As for me, I'm going to walk forward, open hands, open heart, one next step at a time." Check out this verse from the mouth of Jesus. "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters – yes, even their own life – such a person cannot be my disciple." Let's be really clear, this verse does not sell well at Hobby Lobby. But what is it trying to say? What does Jesus mean when He says this? Because we know that Jesus says things like love one another. What is He saying right here? What He's saying is, if I love anything more than I love God, that's a problem.

If I loved my work more than I love God, that's a problem. If I love working out more than I love God, that's a problem. If I love my pursuit more than I love God, that's a problem. If I love my family more than I love God, that's a problem. Because God must come first before my family in order for me to have a healthy family. Jesus must come before my family in order for me to truly love my family and see it become everything that God wants it to be. Anything I love more than Jesus as an idol, and an idol sets itself up against God, and it must be and will be torn down because God loves us so much that He will remove everything till He gets to have first position, and then we can rebuild from there. Here's my question. Do you love your family? Because I know you do, even the ones you don't like you love.

Do you love your family enough to put Jesus first? Do you love your family enough to make him head of everything? If so, then everything begins with this first principle, and it's this: surrender. In order for me to have and to live as a healthy family, I must live with a posture of

surrender; as for me, then my family. Surrender, if you're going to have a healthy family, you've got to live with a posture of surrender. A healthy family is a surrendered family made up of surrendered individuals who have surrendered heart, mind, soul, and strength to God. The kingdom flows through a surrendered will, and the kingdom flows within a surrendered family. You've got to catch it. It's all the un-surrendered things that are killing our families. It's the un-surrendered expectations, it's the un-surrendered plans, it's the un-surrendered hopes.

Like, it's the un-surrendered expectations regarding what I thought my family would look like at this stage in the game. It's the un-surrendered hopes of how our blended family would beautifully blend together, we'd all come together and be one big happy family. It's the un-surrendered plans of all the stuff I thought was going to look a certain way, and it just hasn't turned out at all like that. You've got to catch it. It's all the un-surrendered things in our life that are just killing us. Why? Because un-surrendered expectations lead to ongoing frustrations. Un-surrendered plans lead to cluttered up calendars. Un-surrendered hopes lead to an entire life of disappointment. Think for a second. Could any of your ongoing frustrations, any of your crazy calendar, any of like, your disappointments in your life have anything to do with the fact that we haven't yet surrendered them to Jesus? We haven't yet said, "Jesus, You can have this. This is Yours, the whole thing."

Going into summer, are those your family vacation plans, or are those God's plans? Are those your desires for your kids, are those God's desires? Are those your expectations for [dot, dot, dot], or are they the Lord's? A side note is, one of the ways you can answer that is if you feel like you're really trying to hold on really tight to it and if anybody messes with you, you'd like, go off on them, then it could be that that's the un-surrendered thing in your life. It could be that that's the area of idolatry that God wants to free you from. I mean, do you remember the story of Abraham? A man of faith, followed God lots of different places. God's like, "I'm going to make you the father of many nations." He's like, "I'm super old. I don't know how that's going to happen." The story of Abraham. Abraham was a man of surrender. One day God comes to him. "Some time later, God tested Abraham's faith. 'Abraham!' God called. 'Yes,' he replied. 'Here I am.'" Pause. That's a great response from Abraham.

"Here I am." What's going to happen next? "Here I am." "'Take your son, your only son – yes, Isaac, whom you love so much – go to the land of Moriah. Go and sacrifice him as a burnt offering on one of the mountains, which I will show you.'" Okay, what? You're going to have to say that again in my good ear. I might have misheard you. Did you just say that I'm going to sacrifice my firstborn son, whom I love so much? By the way, a lot of what you're going to surrender is not the stuff you hate, it's the stuff you love. You're going to have to surrender and show that you love God more. He doesn't always tell you exactly how it's going to work out. "One of the mountains I will show you," just start walking, just start going forward. What you see here is that Abraham is willing to lay it out there, to lay out Isaac, whom he loves so much. Can I ask you, who or what in your life is your Isaac right now?

Which person or which situation is actually your Isaac whom you love so much? Like, "God, I'm just going to surrender my husband, who wants nothing to do with you. I just got to hand it to you, God." "I'm going to surrender my marriage right now because it doesn't look anything like I thought it was going to, but I'm going to choose to surrender, I give it to you." "God, my teenager, man, we need some breakthrough. I choose to surrender to you. I choose to hand that over to you." "God, my desire to be pregnant, we want it so bad. It hurts so much, we just hand it to you, God. We can't do it on our own. We have to hand it over to you. We just choose to lay it at your feet. We surrender." Open hands, open heart, one next step, we surrender.

What we see from Abraham is that he knew something that we often forget – it's easier to surrender when you know it's not yours in the first place. "Everything comes from you. We've only given you what comes from your hands." Part of how Abraham could do this is that he actually knew Isaac's not mine. He's a child of promise. I'm just handing it back to the rightful owner. Abraham quickly shows us the greatest thing you can do as a dad is follow the Father. Can I just say it to you, dads, the greatest thing you can do as a dad is follow the Father. That's true for moms, that's true for students, that's true for grandmas and grandpas. The greatest thing you can do is choose to live with a posture of surrender, to lay Isaac on the altar. It goes on, and you probably know the rest of the story. He puts him on the altar. He's about to do what God says.

The angel comes and literally stops him. He's like, "Now I know that you are a man of faith. You fear God. Take him back off the altar," so he does. He takes him off the altar. They go and find a ram. The ram gets sacrificed. They clean up everything. They walk down the mountain. Isaac immediately goes to a professional therapist and counseling. Then it says, "I will certainly bless you. I will multiply your descendants beyond number, like the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will conquer the cities of their enemies." Hear me. Your surrendered obedience leads to blessing for your family. Your surrendered life leads to generational breakthrough for your kids and for your home. Some of you have just drawn a line in the sand in your life, and you're like, "It stops with me." Like, alcoholism, verbal abuse, broken homes. It stops with me. I'm drawing a line in the sand. I'm calling out blessing. I'm calling out generational significance and victory for those that are still to come.

Like dads, every one of you right now, that's like leading your family in the reading plan, you know what you're doing? You're releasing blessing over your family. Grandmas that are praying for your teenagers because they're struggling right now. You know what you're doing? You're actually saying like, they're going to live in a victory. They're going to conquer the cities of their enemies in Jesus' name. Your obedience and your surrender and your open hands, open heart, one next step at a time is going to release blessing and victory all through your family and in generations yet to come. In Jesus' name, may that be so. May we believe that by faith. But here's where it starts. It starts with us choosing to surrender our own selves. It starts with us saying, "I surrender. I give up. I want to follow Jesus for myself."

Can I ask you, are you surrendered to Jesus? Like, personally, have you ever had a chance to say, "Jesus, You are Lord and You are right and I'm going to follow You"? Because spiritual orphans can't create healthy families. See, only sons and daughters live in families. Orphans live in orphanages, and Jesus didn't come so that we could be a spiritual orphan living in the orphanage of this world. He came that we would be beloved sons and daughters living in healthy, surrendered families. I have to learn how to become part of this family and His family before I will ever know how to live in my family. Honestly, many of our families are being run by spiritual orphans wondering why home feels like an orphanage – isolated, selfish, "I've got to get mine before you get yours." Pride is a sense of protectionism.

Always looking out for me first. Does your home ever feel like that? Does your heart ever feel like that? Because, if so, it's possible that you haven't yet said, "I surrender myself. The Isaac is me. The Isaac on the altar is me. I give up. I lay my own life down and I follow You, Jesus. I follow Your wisdom, Your word, Your ways." We have to choose to surrender ourselves first. "As for me," then "my family." I will serve the Lord. Let me just give you two real quick practical things you can do to surrender your family this summer. First one is this, say, "I surrender," and then actually do it. It wouldn't have been enough for Abraham to be like, "Here I am. Oh no, I've got something else to do." No, I surrender, and then actually do that. That's the first thing. The second thing is this.

Choose to align your family with God's family. Meaning, choose to align your family with the church; meaning if this is your church, choose to align your family with Valley Creek. Here's why. God is building a big family for himself by inviting all of our families to come and join in what He's doing. I have to first align my family with his family before I'll ever experience all the health and the blessing that comes with it. Can I ask you, do your time, your talents, and your treasures, do they align with what God's doing across His church family? There's a whole bunch of things that the Hillier family has to say no to in order to align our schedule, our time, our resources, our life, with what God is doing here, what He's doing across our church family, but there are amazing blessings that come with that. I also want to take a moment. I just want to speak to any of you that may be the only one following Jesus in your family.

If you're the student and you're the only one following Jesus, if you are parents on this side of a 50/50 custody battle, you're the only one following Jesus. If you're a single mama, you're the only one following Jesus. I just had to say this today. God sees you, and He's for you. We see you, and we're for you. Do not grow weary in doing good. For at the proper time, you will reap a harvest in your heart and in your home, in health, in the blessings, in generational breakthrough for your family. You will reap that if you do not give up. I just want to speak that. Because the greatest thing you can do for the family that you love so much is live as a beloved son or daughter. When you do, everyone else will see that. They'll recognize that looks a lot different than the orphanage of this world.

We're for you. You keep moving forward by faith. We're going to keep moving forward as a church family this summer as we lean into everything that God has for us. I've got one more for you. One of the verses that could sum up Jesus' entire life in earthly ministry is this verse. "Not My will, but Yours, be done." We follow the surrendered Savior. We follow Jesus who just constantly said, "It's not My will, it's Yours be done, oh God." Which, for us, it would sound something like this, "It's not my husband, he's Yours, oh God." "It's not my wife, she's Yours, oh God." "It's not my child, they're Yours, oh God." "It's not my expectations, but Yours." "It's not my plans, but Yours." "It's not my future, it's Yours." "They're not my hopes, they're Yours, oh God." "It's not my family, but it's Yours, oh God."

Can I just encourage you, go on this journey. Every single week, go on this journey of becoming healthy, living healthy, become more and more surrendered, more and more obedient. Open hands, open heart, one next step at a time. Choose to have a posture that says, "Not my will, but yours, oh God. Not my family, but yours, oh God." As for me, then my family, we are going to serve the Lord. Can I just invite you to stand up with me wherever you are, every campus. Stand up with me right now to kick things off and as a show of faith, I invite you to open your hands or open your hands like this as a sign of faith. By the way, this is part of why we worship like this. Open hands says, "I surrender, Jesus." Open hands says, "Jesus it's yours."

Even now as we begin this 60 days of family, we just say, "They're not ours, but Yours, oh God." Your will be done in our family as it is in heaven. As for me, then my family, we will serve the Lord. We're going to follow wherever You lead. We're going to say, like, "I don't want to do it my way. I don't want it to be my plans. I don't want to live in my expectations. I want it to be Yours, Jesus." For each one of us, I declare that blessing and that generational breakthrough for your family. Exactly what was declared over Abraham because he laid Isaac on the altar, as you surrender this summer, may you experience that. Blessing for generations to come. Generational significance for your grandkids you haven't even met yet. Lord, we just choose by faith to believe that You're moving in a profound way among us.

You're going to move in our families, because family is Your idea. Family is Your design. Family is the way that You are changing things in the world, and we get to partner with that and live as a healthy family at home. That's amazing. Jesus, we just choose by faith to surrender. Open hands, open heart, one next step at a time. Thank You, Jesus, that You are on the move in our hearts and in our homes. We believe it and we receive it. In Jesus' name, amen.