

RULE 1 ■ Know Yourself

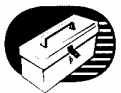
The Influence of My Family

SESSION 2



Surveying the Site

1. Make a list of at least five characteristics you have inherited or acquired from your parents (e.g., big feet, bad temper, good money manager, etc.)
2. Take turns with the other apprentices sharing from your list. Give a brief description of how each characteristic has had an impact on your life.



Checking Your Toolbox

Have you ever had the following words spoken to you? “You are starting to act more and more like your father every day.” For some of us these words come as a compliment. For others of us, the words are not so flattering. But it does seem to be true. The older we get the more we take on those characteristics of the significant male role model we have or had in our lives. It seems as we face certain situations in our lives that we saw our fathers or surrogate fathers face in theirs, we often adopt their ways of handling the situations. By observing their actions, we unconsciously allow our male role models to draw up blueprints of behavior for a number of life’s situations, and we store them for future use deep within us. Instinctively, as we encounter similar situations, we turn to those blueprints and respond in kind. Some of them are good, and some are not so good. In fact, some may be downright harmful to us and to the ones we love. It is important to understand, though, that many of these

male blueprints have been passed down generation to generation!

The influence of our immediate family cannot be overestimated. It is one of the most significant forces in making us who we are today. In our scripture reading for this session, we see the blueprint of faith in Timothy. This faith, according to Paul, first appeared in Grandma Lois. It was handed down to Mother Eunice. Then passed along to Son Timothy. The influence of faith on Timothy had a family history of two generations before him. No doubt, Timothy grew up watching his grandmother and mother pray, read scripture, regularly attend worship, share the fruits of their labors with the poor, care for the sick and homeless, and share their faith with others. In essence, they drew up the blueprint of faith in Timothy through their example and lifestyle.

- What kind of influences did you grow up with: church, alcoholism, abuse, loving support and encouragement, absentee parents, a single parent, television, sports, arts, wealth, poverty...?

As stated before, the importance of understanding your family’s influence on you cannot be overestimated. It is a part of who you are. So name it and claim it. It is you. There is no need to be angry or bitter. You cannot change the past. You can only change your response to the past and how you let it influence your life today, tomorrow, and the next day. When you name it and claim it, you make it your servant. Until you do, it is your master. Remember that you may be a product of



your past, but it does not have to determine your present or future any longer.

- Are there one or two experiences in your past you can identify right now as being shaping influences? What are they? If you are comfortable doing so, discuss these with your fellow apprentices.



Conversation with the Master Carpenter

Close your session with prayer. Thank God for the family of each man in the group and for how it has helped to shape and influence each man. Ask God to help you name and claim who you are, right here and right now. Thank God for bringing you together.



On-the-Job Experience

1. Ask an older adult (father, mother, uncle, aunt, etc.) who observed you growing up to spend time reflecting on what they remember most about you as a child and as an adolescent. Use this conversation as a way to further reflect on the plumb line that you developed at the beginning of the last session.
2. Take an index card and write on it one blueprint of a behavior that you would like to change. This is for your eyes only! Each morning begin your day by reviewing your card and asking God to provide you with all the strength and

Blueprints

I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

2 Timothy 1:5-7

courage you need that day to draw up a new blueprint for your life to replace the one you want to change. (Remember, saying “no” is not enough. You must have something to say “yes” to in its place.) Continue to do this each day throughout Rule 1.