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## **Living Life Well**

**Genesis 9:18-29**

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Have you ever noticed how often the “mountain top” experiences in our lives are followed by times down in the valley. It seems like that is a common pattern. I remember several years ago, Patti and I took a week off in October and went down to Branson. It was the first time that we had gone away and spent a week alone like that since we had children. It was one of those trips where everything worked and came together. The weather was beautiful, we had a great time and really enjoyed ourselves. But I remember when I came back, I was immediately greeted with a number of situations that had to be dealt with, and the ongoing pressures of ministry. Normally I don’t really feel the stress of that, but when you’ve been away and had this mountain top experience, it just seemed like the weight was crushing me. I remember going down and hitting the bottom, and I thought to myself, “I don’t want to preach another sermon. I don’t want to hear another problem. I don’t want to see another person.” As a matter of fact, what I wanted was out. There were about two weeks when I said, “I just want out of all of this.”

It was during that time frame that I had a conversation with a friend of mine, and I responded in such a way that it was hurtful. I remember having to call that person back after I had hung up and apologize for my behavior. But I realized I was in this frame of mind, going from the mountain top, down into the valley. I was in a vulnerable state, and needed to pull back up onto the level plain, where I need to be. I don’t think that’s uncommon. People experience that, for example, when they are in the Easter or the Christmas drama. All of that work comes to a point of crescendo where you have a week of the come/see event itself, and the presentation. God is moving and people’s lives are being changed – and it’s really a mountain top experience. Then, for a couple of weeks afterwards, those people often tend to hit bottom and crawl away. The same thing happens with young people who go to camp and have a great camp week. But for a couple of weeks afterwards, they feel like they have hit bottom and need to crawl back out of that and get back up on the plain.

I personally go through that on a weekly cycle. For me, my crescendo is Sunday, and I reach that at Sunday noon. I always understand that this is the high point of my week, and that Sunday afternoon and evening is the crashing point. And I feel the vulnerability of that. I am spiritually and emotionally spent. I understand that those are my most vulnerable moments. If I’m going to say something I shouldn’t say; if I’m going to do something I shouldn’t do; if I’m going to watch something on TV I shouldn’t be watching – it’s going to typically happen Sunday afternoon or evening. And knowing that is coming, I try to take appropriate measures. That means I pretty much just hide from everyone, and it seems to work out fairly well for me.

I find that to be a consistent pattern in the Bible. Elijah makes a good example of that. One of the great chapters in all of the Bible is 1 Kings 18, when Elijah challenges the prophets of Baal (in a sense) to an old western duel. They’re going to have it out between the god Baal and the God Jehovah. “Let’s see who wins – and whoever wins, then we’ll say he is God and we’ll worship him. And Elijah puts forth those wonderful words, “Choose you this day whom you will serve.”

In 1 Kings 18, God emerges as the clear winner and demonstrates His power, and totally blows away the prophets of Baal. And at the end of the chapter, everyone says to Elijah, “Your god is God and we’re going to follow Him.” It’s one of the high points of the Old Testament.

But in the very next chapter, we find Elijah in a pit of despair. He is in depression and he cries out to God, “God, take my life. I don’t even want to live anymore.” We find several of those patterns throughout scripture – people often having their high moments, and then those are followed by times in the valley. Well, certainly that’s true of Noah.

If I were to pick the top five men of faith in all of the Bible, Noah would make my list. I can’t even put into words how impressed I am with the obedience and the faith of this man, who literally stood against the world for 120 years. Noah was so obedient to God in a very difficult environment – in a world that was filled with violence and immorality. Here was a man who stood rock-solid! And even in his obedience on the ark and exiting the ark, he really is quite an amazing man. Peter called Noah a preacher of righteousness – and he shows up in God’s faith hall of fame in Hebrews 11.

His life was so impressive, that I am stunned in Genesis 9, when I read that Noah was found lying naked and drunk on the floor of his tent. It is just shocking and contrary to everything we had come to believe about him. I know the burning question in your heart is, “What happened to Noah?” That’s a great question. Let’s see what we can find out in Genesis 9.

One point of information related to the literature of the Bible itself: it is helpful, in the interpretation process, to notice the pace that is put forth in the literature. The pace helps us understand something about the interpretation. For example, Genesis 1, 2 and 3, have a fairly normal pace. But when you get into chapters 4 and 5, understand that we are covering hundreds and hundreds of years, in a matter of a few verses. And so, the pace is accelerated, where we’re taking these gigantic leaps through hundreds and thousands of people, and hundreds of years. And then you get to Genesis, chapter 6, and for Genesis 6, 7, 8, and 9, we are talking about one family. So, in a few verses we were talking about thousands of people and hundreds of years, and now for four chapters we’re talking about just one family and the different lessons in life we learn from this one family.

God had established some big principles in those previous chapters, and now He fleshes them out in the life of one family – Noah and his family. Everything that we’ve learned so far is very, very positive in terms of Noah. We learned about Noah’s faith; his obedience; what God wants from us; and God’s salvation that was poured out to Noah through the ark. But now suddenly, in the last part of chapter 9, we see a different side of Noah, and we are reminded that Noah was still a man. Noah wasn’t perfect; and here Noah crashes and burns spiritually. That’s what this text is about.

Genesis 9:18: “Now the sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem and Ham and Japheth. And Ham was the father of Canaan. These three were the sons of Noah; and from these the whole earth was populated.”

Verses 18 and 19 are really an introduction to the characters of the drama that follows. In the first half of chapter 9, we talked about a principle of the sanctity of life – the value of human life – and why that needs to be guarded and protected. The question that arises is: If human life is to be guarded and protected, then what do we do with that life? It's not just to keep people alive, but it's so that their lives would be lived well. That people's lives would be lived for God. That's the whole point of preserving life.

The question coming out of the second half of the chapter is: *Now that we've honored life, how should that life now be lived?* It's demonstrated through the lives of these main characters, Noah and his three sons. It is staggering to realize that every single person, in every single nation of the world today, literally came out of one of these three sons. Every person in this room is either a descendant of Shem, or Ham, or Japheth. That's what it says in verse 19: "From these three the whole earth was populated."

It's also interesting to notice that when Ham is introduced, he is introduced as the father of Canaan. Now, Shem had sons and Japheth had sons. Why is it that Ham is identified as the father of Canaan? There's a couple of reasons for that. One is the great emphasis in this passage on how the decisions that Noah's sons made strongly affected their children. Noah's sons' decisions affected their children; their children's children; which affected the next generation of children, etc. In a sense, it set the direction that the entire nations would go. Next week, when we talk about the division of nations, we understand that the decision that Ham made affected how his son was going to live. That affected how he would raise his son; which in the end determined the entire direction of the Canaanite people. In other words, his heart affected thousands and thousands of people for generations to come. And that's really the emphasis in this text.

When we read "the father of Canaan," we may shrug our shoulders and say, "I don't know what that means." But the first readers would not have read it that way. The first readers would have been people during the time of Moses. (Moses was the writer of Genesis.) We have what we call the law of the first reader. That means, how would the first readers have understood these statements? They would have clearly understood the Canaanites as being those people who are idolaters – pagan people who are determined to fight against God. As a matter of fact, the Canaanites were one of the arch enemies of the Hebrew people. So, they would have often thought, "Why are these people so bent on fighting against God, and so bent on living these immoral (pagan) lifestyles?" When Moses wrote that, Moses would have been saying, "You can track this entire nation all the way back to the heart of one person who chose to walk away from God. That determined, then, how his sons would be raised; how they would raise their sons; and an entire direction for an entire nation was established out of one person by the name of Ham.

So that's a part of what is going on here, which actually makes it a wonderful text for Mother's Day, because it's a reminder of the influence that we have as parents. How a mother treats her child, and how a mother lives out her life in the choices she makes, will determine, to a large degree, how that child lives out his or her life; which determines how their children will live out their lives. Literally, that one mother can affect hundreds of people's lives, as the descendants continue on generation after generation.

Well, having established the characters, starting in verse 20, we get this strange story: “Then Noah began farming and planted a vineyard. And he drank of the wine and became drunk, and uncovered himself inside his tent.” In verse 22, it’s referred to as “Noah’s nakedness” – which, of course, is a concept we’re familiar with that showed up in Genesis 2 at the end of the chapter, when it said, “Adam and Eve were both naked and unashamed before God.”

When Adam and Eve sinned against God in Genesis 3, they became aware of their own nakedness, and they hid from God. This is both literal and symbolic of the shame and the nakedness of sin before God. So, there’s no question that what Noah did was extremely offensive in the eyes of God, and it’s recorded in a kind of matter-of-fact way, but it’s recorded clearly in this text.

When we read this, we are shocked. It’s completely out of character with everything that we know about Noah. Up until this point, we have been so impressed with the faith of Noah; the obedience of Noah; and the character of Noah. Then this just comes at us out of nowhere, with no warning, that suddenly here is this great pillar of faith, and he’s lying naked and drunk on the tent floor. We find ourselves backing up, saying, “Who *is* this guy?” and, “What happened to Noah?”

Within the text are some things that tell us what happened. Because, when it tells us that Noah was a farmer and that he had a vineyard, and an abundance of wine, that is symbolic in the Old Testament of God’s goodness and God’s blessing. It’s important not to read in all kinds of twentieth century things about alcohol into this passage, because throughout the Old Testament, wine was symbolic of God’s blessing. It was the fruit of the vine. The Hebrew people even said that as part of the prayer: “Blessed be the God who is the giver of the fruit of the vine.”

Let me show you an example of that in Psalm 104, in verses 14 and 15. David is referring to the blessings of God, and in the process of extolling the blessings of God, he refers to the abundance of wine. He says, “He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, and vegetation for the labor of man, so that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine which makes man’s heart glad. So that he may make his face glisten with oil and food which sustains man’s heart.” That would be a very common understanding of the Old Testament, that this is symbolic of God’s goodness--of God’s blessing.

What is being said in this text in Genesis 9, is that Noah really was experiencing the faithfulness of God. He was experiencing the fruit of his own faith and the blessing of God. It was then that Noah “crashed and burned.” It’s interesting to notice that when Noah was in the trenches – when Noah was battling against the world and was standing strong against all of this pressure – that Noah kept focused. Noah walked in obedience. But now the pressure was off and Noah was once again in a garden of grace, where he was alone with just his family; and his family was starting over. God was pouring out His blessing on them, and that’s when Noah became careless. It’s then that Noah acted shamefully in the presence of God.

All of that sounds very familiar, if you go all the way back to Genesis 2, because it’s the same thing. God had put Adam and Eve in a garden of His grace and wanted to pour out His blessing on them. (That’s what God has always wanted for us.) But as God poured out

His blessing upon Adam and Eve, they could not handle it, and they chose to sin against God. That's why, in chapter 3, when God outlines the consequences of sin, God says that both in the conceiving of life and in the sustaining of life, it's going to be a struggle. It's going to be a battle, because you need that battle in order to be reminded that you are not God. We need to be reminded that God is God and that we will be dependent upon Him. So, it is for our own good that God brings those struggles into our lives.

It's interesting to see how Noah fleshes that principle out. Noah did great when the pressure was on – Noah did great when he was in the trenches. But now that God is pouring out His blessing upon Noah in this new garden of grace, it's then that Noah loses sight of God, and acts in a way that is shameful before God. When I see that, I am reminded that it is true of my own life. I know that when I am in the trenches (when I'm really struggling; when I'm really going through a trial and I'm battling it out) that I'm very aware of God's presence. In those difficult times, I'm very intense in my prayer and in my reading of scripture. In those times of adversity, we're aware of God all the time. But it's when life is going so well; when we just put life on cruise control, that suddenly, the intensity goes out of our prayer life. Suddenly, we're not nearly as aware of God's presence. We become careless in how we live our life; and it can be in those times of blessing that we find ourselves making some of the worst decisions of our lives.

The reality is that we don't do well with the blessings of God. As a matter of fact, there's something within us that causes us to become less dependent upon God, and more dependent upon ourselves, in those times. We start to think "You know, I think I can handle this." And we start to live our lives on our own; we start to drift away from God. I think that there's no question that what God wants to do more than anything else, for every person here, is to pour out His blessings upon us. He really wants to pour out His blessings on us in a way we can't even imagine. But, the reality is – that would destroy us, because we can't handle that. And so, God holds back what He wants to give us, and just gives us what we can handle. And often times it is necessary to have those struggles and trials to keep us focused on Him, and on the right path.

For example, many of you could look back and see that it was a struggle or difficulty that brought you to a relationship with God. What caused you to begin pursuing God and His Word and truth? It might have been the struggles or the trials; something going on in your life related to your marriage, or your family, or one of your children; or something related to a disease. There was a time in your life when you were really struggling, and so you began searching. And in that searching, you became very intense trying to find out the truth, and looking into God's word and trying to listen to God's voice. You really were on a very intense path to God.

But, perhaps today, things are going fairly well and you're cruising along. And you need to ask yourself, "Am I as intense about God as I was? Am I pursuing God as relentlessly now as I did when things really weren't going too well? Am I dependent upon God? Am I praying like I was then?" The reality is that, in the good times, we tend to drift away. Consequently, God often pulls back what He wants to give us, because we don't handle it well. And that's what you see in the story of Noah. When Noah was in the trenches, he did great! But when the pressure was off, and it was just Noah and his family living out their

faith, he didn't do very well. Noah got careless, and Noah crashed and he burned. And we learn something about ourselves from this incident with Noah.

But, even more than that, it's about how Noah's sons reacted to Noah's sin. I don't think that Moses is saying that this particular event set the direction for their lives. I think he is saying, "Let me tell you a story that reveals the hearts of Shem and Ham and Japheth. Let me show you how their hearts and their ways of life would determine where their descendants would travel. Genesis 9:22 says:

And Ham, the father of Canaan, (*again, that's a designation*) saw the nakedness of his father, and he told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it upon both their shoulders and walked backward and covered the nakedness of their father; And their faces were turned away so that they did not see their father's nakedness.

It will become obvious in the verses to follow that what Ham did was very wrong, and what Shem and Japheth did was very right. There's a lot of debate about exactly what Ham did. The reality is, we can't know for sure, but it seems from the text that the emphasis is on the fact that Ham was somehow delighting in his father's sin. Some commentators say that the statement that is made when Ham told his brothers, could actually be translated, "he told with delight, his brothers." In other words, Ham did not have a heart for God. And Ham was living his life his own way. Ham was determined he would be God himself; and he would live life his own way. So when his father crashed and burned morally, Ham rejoiced in that. Because he was tired of his dad's preaching; he was tired of his dad's message; he was tired of his dad telling him how to live. This was Ham's way of delighting in the fact that his dad was no different than he was, and he tries to justify his own behavior.

And so in this, Ham found a measure of delight, because he was able to say, "Dad is just a big hypocrite; he's no different than anybody else." And it really exposed what was in his heart – which was a determination to live his life his own way. I'll support that a little more in just a minute, but I think that is where Ham's heart was at, and that's revealed through this incident.

Now when, exactly, Ham cultivated that kind of a heart, we don't know. I'm not convinced that the sons of Noah were godly men when they entered the ark, because we're never told that. The only thing we're told is that Noah was righteous, and because of Noah's righteousness, then his sons were allowed to enter the ark. So, it's possible that Ham had never had a heart for God. It's possible that he did at one time, then he drifted away. I don't think that we know the answer to that. What we know here is that Ham, as the head of the race of the Canaanites, chose no longer to serve God and decided to be God himself. He would then mentor his own son in that behavior; and his son would mentor his sons; and pretty soon an entire nation would fight against God.

The contrast of that is found in verse 23, when it says that Shem and Japheth responded very differently. They were obviously very disappointed in their father's behavior, in their father's sin. But, they took a blanket, and they covered his nakedness. It's a picture of restoration – of them coming alongside of their father, who had sinned, and being a part of restoring him back to what he should be before God. And of course, even in that, is this picture that Noah's life matters; therefore, Noah needs to get back to living life well, and that his sons had a responsibility to be a part of that process. So, while Ham celebrated his father's

failure, the other two sons respected and loved their father, and were a part of the process of restoration.

I think we learn a lot about what's in our hearts by how we respond when fellow believers crash and burn morally. We learn a lot about whether or not we believe in grace. Because, if we really have lost sight of grace and start to think that this is a competition, then when others fail, in a sense, that puts us one step ahead of them. We can then "glory" in other people's failure; we can snicker at the fact that somebody else, who was such a preacher of righteousness, has crashed and burned, and we say, "You know, they weren't so great after all." In a sense, that kind of elevates us a notch, and we're now one step ahead of the race. And that's what happens when it becomes a competition.

But, when we're mindful of grace, we're reminded that, "I don't claim to be a child of God because I think I'm better than anybody else. I claim to be a child of God because I've bowed my knee, acknowledged my sin, and confessed Jesus as my Savior. I've simply confessed my need for God, and that's the basis upon which I claim to be a child of God. Therefore, I am a recipient of God's grace, and I am responsible then to mediate out that grace to others who fall morally."

As a matter of fact, what Shem and Japheth did is clearly spelled out in Galatians 6:1 and 2. It would simply be the New Testament principle that is talked about in Genesis 9. It says, "Brethren, (*which is another way of saying 'fellow believers'*) even if a man (*or a person*) is caught in any trespass, (*which is sin*) you who are spiritual (*you who are filled with the spirit of God; you who are understanding of grace; who are walking in obedience*) restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ."

That New Testament principle is what is being lived out in Shem and Japheth. They are taking upon themselves the responsibility of walking their father back through a process of restoration to living life well again. Over the years, there's been numerous times where I, as a pastor, have been criticized for loving and embracing some believer who has sinned morally. It becomes a public sin, and for some reason, there's some thought that we need to kick them when they're down, or we need to kick them out, or somehow we just aren't suppose to respond with love, but rather to make them pay for what they've done. And why we do that, is because we lose sight of grace, and we lose sight of the fact that "I've been extended grace, and I am to extend grace to others." If someone has confessed their sin, and they're repentant of that sin, it is our responsibility to put our arm around them, and tell them we love them, and walk them back through a process of restoration. Because their life is going to affect other people's lives, and so it's very important that we get them back on track because of what is at stake. Our responsibility is to come alongside, lift them up, bring them back to what they should be in Christ; and that is born out of an understanding of grace.

Well, Shem and Japheth had a heart for God, and that's born out in the way that they respond. Ham did not. He was determined to live his life his own way. Verse 24: "When Noah awoke from his wine, he knew what his youngest son had done to him." (And how he knew that: he probably woke up, found a blanket, wondered how he got there, started asking questions – it's really not that hard to figure out, I suppose).

Verse 25: “So he said, ‘Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants he shall be to his brothers.’” Now that’s an interesting statement. Why is the curse on Canaan? It wasn’t Canaan that did the behavior, it was Ham, his father. I don’t think what Noah is saying is, “These people are cursed; therefore this is how they’re going to live their lives under that curse.” I think it’s the other way around. I think he is saying, “Because these people have made a decision to live life this way, they will experience the curse of God, rather than the blessing of God, because they are choosing to walk away from God.” So, I think Noah is simply saying this will be the consequences of Ham’s choice. He will mentor his own son in that lifestyle; who will then mentor his sons; and on.....and on.....and on.

I believe the reason that Noah refers to Canaan is because that’s the point he is making: “Ham, this is what you’ve done to your son. And understand, because you’ve done that to your son, your son will raise his children in the same way; and those children will raise their children in the same way; and pretty soon, your choice, Ham, will have affected the lives of thousands of people who will fight against God and experience His wrath, rather than His blessing.” That’s really what’s being said.

Look at what Noah says to Shem in verse 26: “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Shem.” Notice there he is referencing blessing to the LORD, rather than blessing to Shem, and he talks about the Lord in all caps, (LORD) which means Yahweh, or Jehovah – the God who is intimate. What he also talks about is that Shem’s God is God, Elohim, Creator God. The God that we’ve seen in Genesis is the God that we bow a knee and submit to. It is saying that Shem was intimate with God, but Shem also bowed a knee and acknowledged God as God. It’s the theme we’ve wrestled with all the way through Genesis. Shem has said, “I will bow a knee; I will acknowledge God as God.” Ham is contrasted with that, implying that Ham had determined, “I will be God; I will make my own decisions; I will live my life my own way,” and that’s why he responded the way he did to his father’s sin.

I think, in the description of Shem, you also have an affirmation of what was in the heart of Ham, his brother. “...with Canaan be his servant.” We understand, as we read on, that Abraham would come from the line of Shem; and from Abraham would come the Hebrew people; and from the Hebrew people would come the Messiah; and every nation, every people of the earth would bow and acknowledge Jesus, the Messiah, to be LORD. So, in a sense, all of the nations of the world would come to serve the God of Shem, and the Hebrew people who flowed out of the descendants of Shem.

Verse 27: “May God enlarge Japheth, and let him dwell in the tents of Shem; and let Canaan be his servant.” He’s really saying that Japheth, too, had acted in a way that was right. He would mentor his people in the ways of God, and they would, in a sense, experience some of that blessing with the people of Shem.

Verse 28: “And Noah lived three hundred and fifty years after the flood. So all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years; and he died.” Rather an abrupt ending to a remarkable story. But the reason the ending is so abrupt is because this is no longer a story about Noah. It’s now a story about the nations of the world, and how the decision of three men (three sons of Noah) would determine the pathway that entire nations would travel. Literally, the moral choices that these men made determined, eventually, the direction that entire nations would go.

Noah really isn't the focus anymore, it's his sons and what they reproduce because of their own heart for God, or lack of a heart for God. What's really emphasized in this text is the reality that the decisions and choices we make have the potential to affect hundreds of people generations from now – and to realize the importance of living life well – which is a great message for Mother's Day.

This past week, as I thought about this text, I thought about the funeral on Monday for eleven-year-old, Ben Howell-Burke, and I thought about his mom and dad. There was a time when they already had five children. By their own admission, they really didn't need any more children. But Jim saw this picture in a magazine of four little Brazilian children, in a poverty-stricken orphanage, and God laid it on his heart that, "these children need to be your children." He really felt like that's what God was saying. And so he shared that with his wife, Dina, who felt they didn't need any more children. And Dina said she wrestled through a sleepless night of trying to figure out what was God's will in all this. And to her credit, by the end of the night, she realized that Jim was right and this was what God wanted. They spent the next year and a half "jumping through the hoops" to eventually adopt these four children from Brazil.

I thought about how these four children's lives were dramatically changed. But not only their lives, because they dramatically changed the lives of all the other family members. And then you extend that out to friends and other people. And then, through Ben's recent death, the number of people that were affected, and heard the gospel, and will respond to that. It will change the way they will raise their children; and those children will then raise their children differently; and you could go to literally thousands of people that have significantly been touched, all because one man was willing to listen to the voice of God and be obedient. One choice affected the direction of thousands of people's lives, and I think that happens all the time. It's just sometimes we fail to realize the significance of choices that we make.

I understand that the choices I make will dramatically affect my children; and it will affect how they will raise their children. It will then affect how their children raise their children, and this continues to go on. We determine our heritage, often, by the choices that we make.

I talk to people that are sixty years old who will tell me that every day their life is still affected by decisions their parents made fifty years ago. That is amazing – the impact that a parent can make on a child! Fifty years later, the way they live each day is dramatically affected by decisions their parents made; which means that dramatically affected the way they raised their own children ..... and on it goes.

The emphasis of Genesis 9 is really upon the importance of living life well because of the effect that it has for generations to come. It's easy to think sometimes our decisions aren't that important. We start to get careless, and we rationalize. We justify our choices, and we really don't think about how our life is going to affect many other people's lives. I want to close with this reading, which seems appropriate on this Mother's Day:

When you thought I wasn't looking, you hung my first painting on the refrigerator, so I wanted to paint another. When you thought I wasn't looking, you fed a stray cat, and I

thought it was good to be kind to animals. When you thought I wasn't looking, you baked a birthday cake just for me, and I knew that little things were special things. When you thought I wasn't looking, you said a prayer, and I believed that there was a God and that I could talk to Him. When you thought I wasn't looking, you kissed me good night, and I felt loved. When you thought I wasn't looking, I saw tears come from your eyes, and I learned that sometimes things hurt, but it's okay to cry. When you thought I wasn't looking, you smiled and it made me want to look pretty, too. When you thought I wasn't looking, you cared, and I wanted to be everything I could be. When you thought I wasn't looking, I looked, and wanted to say "thanks" for all of those things you did – when you thought I wasn't looking.

The message of Genesis 9 is that our children **are** looking. And the people around us are looking. And our friends are looking. The question is: Are we living life well? Because it will affect people for generations to come.

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