

**FEBRUARY 13-14, 2021 GENESIS 25:1-11 (NIV)**

**ALL IN THE FAMILY – PART 2**



**Alfred  
Street**  
BAPTIST CHURCH

# DENISE'S *different World*



A SERMON BY REV. DR. HOWARD-JOHN WESLEY, SENIOR PASTOR @PASTORHJW

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**Sunday, February 14, 2021**

**Preacher: Pastor Howard-John Wesley**

**Sermon: Denise's Different World**

**Scripture: Genesis 25:1-11 (NIV)**

# CURRICULUM GUIDE





## Sermon Summary

In the second installment of his series All In the Family: Denise's Different World, Pastor Wesley explores the theme of creating and leaving legacies in biblical families as well as on The Cosby Show. While Denise's departure from the show was a significant split in the Cosby family, we see themes of reconciliation in the story of Isaac and Ishmael. As Pastor tells the story of a classic spin-off, we learn about our own obligations to ensure a successful spin-off in the stories of our own lives

### Key Points:

1. Leave a legacy of financial freedom
2. Leave a legacy of family
3. Leave a legacy of faith
4. Leave a legacy of fortitude

# Notes for Facilitators:

This week, let's be very sensitive to the ways that people can hear the sermon differently. Take a careful look at the specialty questions; many of them apply to general audiences. For some, this week's issue of family and legacy may trigger past hurts in our lives. There is room for everyone in God's family; each of us may need extra support. Please be sure to utilize the referral resources in the handbook, and the self-care resources at the end of this guide.

Each week, be sure to utilize the Village Prayer Week Sheet included in this week's e-blast. Also, be sure to remind Villagers to check the announcements for upcoming activities in the life of the church like *Can I push It?*, the HBCU Festival, and *Ashes to Go*.

## Getting To Know You Questions:

1. Pastor Wesley talked about the range of dynamic characters who starred in *A Different World*. What TV character do you find yourself relating to today?
2. Pastor Wesley referenced several spin-off TV shows that have been created -- some good, some not so good. Do you have a favorite spin-off show? If so, what's appealing about the show to you? What are some shows you'd recommend, spin-off or otherwise?
3. If you are not a TV connoisseur, what stories have been helping you to think about family legacy?





# Into The Bible Questions:

1. As part of Abraham's genealogy, we learn that Abraham remarried to Keturah after Sarah's death. Moreover, we learned that marriage at that time elevated a woman's status as well as affected the inheritance of her children. Do you believe marriage and partnership has a similar impact on social status today? If not, what aspects of life, do you feel are primarily impacted when today's couples marry?
2. In this week's sermon text, we get a sense of Abraham's family tree. As you look through Genesis 25:6, the Bible says Abraham gave gifts while he was still living. What do you do, or what would you like to do while you are still living to give "gifts" to coming generations?

## Life Application Questions:

1. We learned that "legacy ought to be the objective of every family." Revisiting your definition of family, how is this connected to your understanding of legacy?
2. We are reminded that the two components of creating and leaving legacies are our past and our future. Which component is more important to you and why?
3. Pastor Wesley cited HBCUs as a place where many Black students get their fortitude. Where would you say you've learned fortitude from? Who have you learned fortitude from?
4. We know from this sermon that people can be sent away for being perceived as less than 'picture perfect'. Who in our family or community do we discard and how have you seen that play out in your own life? What are some ways that you have been called to 'love them anyway' in your family and friendship circles?



## "Can I Push It?"

1. We are encouraged in this sermon to be like Ishmael, who comes back to bring the family together. What challenges come with being the "Ishamel" in the family and what are your thoughts on this idea?
2. We learn that four cornerstones of our financial vocabulary should be debt, stewardship, retirement, and investment. Do you agree with this? If not, what other words should be included in the vocabulary? Do you think any of the words mentioned should be removed as cornerstones?
3. Pastor mentioned the legacy of the family and that we should not close the door on them and send them on their way. Are you currently struggling with a "closed door" in your family? How has this "closed door" moment affected the family? Can you envision any practical ways that can lead to the door being reopened?
4. Our society often thinks about legacy as something only parents and married people can create. How can we talk about legacy in relationship to all people, regardless of marital or parental status? In what ways can we all leave legacies?





## Activity:

1. Financial information seminars are taught regularly at our church. Find out when the next seminars take place and determine if you can attend them.
2. Stewardship as a concept can be applied to our gifts, influence, and relationships. On the back of an index card, reflect on how stewardship in these contexts is similar to and/or different from the stewardship of finances.

## Spirit Work:

1. Although we can't become gurus overnight in regards to dealing with debt, stewardship, retirement, and investment, we can certainly work towards it on a monthly basis. Within the next week, create one action item you can accomplish that will help you either deal with your debt, become a better steward, create a road to retirement, or learn how to become a savvy investor.
2. The first point of this sermon invites us to think about leaving a legacy of financial freedom. What has been your relationship to money? In a society facing mass unemployment, a global pandemic, and low wages, some would say money management is about systemic inequality more than budgeting. What would you say?
3. Where do you get your financial literacy information? Take ten minutes this week to do your own research for websites where savvy budgeting, saving, and investment information can be located. Schedule an appointment on your calendar, and spend thirty minutes

### **Additional Questions for Married Couples:**

1. In Pastor Wesley's final point, he talked about leaving a legacy of fortitude. In his message, he talked about this as an individual fortitude, but how have you learned to "make it" together in your marriage?
2. In Genesis 25:1, the Bible says Abraham "had taken another wife whose name was Keturah." Keturah invariably had to embrace all of Abraham's past as they built a new legacy. How have you embraced your spouse's past while also forging a new future?

### **Additional Questions for Young Adults:**

1. Many people might not have known how Debbie Allen contributed to A Different World's success after a struggling first season. Who has mentored, supported, or otherwise helped you in the struggling seasons of your life?
2. Pastor Wesley talked about leaving a legacy of faith. What legacy of faith was passed down to you and how have you embraced it as is, or wrestled with it in your adult years?
3. How have you felt the pressures to maintain a picture perfect image in the eyes of others? What impact did this have on you and what do you wish people would have done to embrace you in those moments?

### **Additional Questions for Parents:**

1. As your children grow, what have you been surprised by? How are they the same or different from you, or generations before? What feelings do you have as you notice these characteristics?
2. After Abraham dies, Isaac goes to live near Beer Lahai Roi where his brother Ishmael lives. How are you creating a home where your children can return to after hard times? How do you let your children know that they are still loved and welcomed by you, even if others don't accept/agree with them?
3. What traditions or experiences do you have that you want your children to carry on? Which would you like to start? Many people want their children to attend the schools, join the fraternities, play the same instruments, and follow the same faith traditions in the same way. How do you balance this with allowing them to chart their own path?



### **Additional Questions for Parents (cont.):**

4. This sermon encouraged us to see legacy as both past and future. As we head towards our annual HBCU Festival, what advice would you give our high school students as they inch closer to adulthood?

### **Additional Questions for Women:**

1. How have you felt the pressures to maintain a picture perfect image in the eyes of others? What impact did this have on you and what do you wish people would have done to embrace you in those moments?

2. Women are often given the care-taking responsibilities in the family. In what ways have you had to play the “Ishmael” in your family to bring the family together? What was that experience like for you?

3. Pregnancy is often a fraught experience for Black women, married or unmarried. After Lisa Bonet’s dismissal from *A Different World*, how do you see themes of judgment/legacy playing out in modern times?

### **Additional Questions for Men:**

1. In this week’s sermon text we find a man (Abraham) sending family away and we find a man (Ishmael) bringing family together. In what ways have you played both of these roles in your life and what have you learned from those experiences?

2. Even though Abraham sent Ishmael and Hagar away in Genesis 21, Ishmael returns to bury his father in Genesis 25: 9. What men in your life have you found yourself in complicated relationships with? What is it like to honor someone even when you may have been hurt by them before?

3. In the sermon, Pastor Wesley calls Bill Cosby’s treatment of Lisa Bonet (Denise Huxtable) “dead wrong.” If you can look back on interactions or judgment you’ve made of women, where have you been dead wrong as well? How can you prevent these same judgments from persisting in your family and communities?



## **Readings for This Week:**

Genesis 25: 1-11

## **Further Study and Resources**

Self-Care Guide: <https://www.alfredstreet.org/selah/>

Hezekiah Walker: I need you to Survive Lyrics [https://youtu.be/uMcJL\\_UDAvw](https://youtu.be/uMcJL_UDAvw)