



# *WHY YOU NEED TO STAND ON YOUR OWN?*

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Sermon Link: <https://realfaith.com/sermons/why-you-need-to-stand-on-your-own/>

Pastor Mark here, a special, special, special, uh, series of conversations with my wife, grace. We've been married faithfully 31 years, and, um, in a series right now leaving Cleave on family systems and how to architect you immediate and extended family to bless your marriage and children for generations. It's basically what to do and what not to do. In addition to the sermons you can find at [realfaith.com/cleve](http://realfaith.com/cleve), I've got a special four-part series with my wife, grace, where we talk about this very practically and share from our own marriage and experience. And so I really hope you enjoy it. And again, you can find all the content including the workbook, along with the sermons, [realfaith.com/cleve](http://realfaith.com/cleve) cl ave. Alright, beauty of the beast here. Uh, welcome back to the, uh, real Marriage podcast. We're doing a series of episodes Leave and cleave. Mm-Hmm. Based on Genesis 2 24 and the King James. You leave your family and they become your extended family so you can cleave, pursue, connect with your spouse to start your new family. So here's kind of where we've covered so far. Um, here's my bad penmanship again. Uh, on the one side is enmeshment, and maybe you explain that while I write the next word. Uh, everything is still connected to your extended family. Even though you're newly married, you have financial dependence or, uh, emotional dependence or spiritual dependence, or there's just some strings attached still and you can't fully, uh, leave in cleave and then cutoff. There's full independence. You've kind of just wiped the slate clean and you want nothing more to do with them, which in the last one we discussed good and bad versions of cutoff. And then I have terrible ship on a whiteboard. Yeah. It's hard to write on a whiteboard, But it's, yeah. No, I appreciate you supporting me emotionally. Yeah. And uh, and yeah, so we dealt with enmeshment too much too close. You've not left your mother and father emotionally, physically, spiritually, financially, even physically. You're just like you, you don't have good boundaries. It's not two families, it's one big mess. Cutoff. I'm out. I'm done. I'm gone. I'm, you know, I'm not responding to, I'm ghosting you on social media. I'm not responding. We're not gonna meet. You won't see me for Christmas ever again. We're done moving across the country. Um, differentiation is what we're gonna talk about in this one. Um, so when we got married, honey, usually this is what leads to some tension in a marriage. Which one of these would you have, if you had to pick one, which direction would you have leaned between enmeshment and cutoff? Enmeshment. Enmeshment. I would've done cutoff. Cutoff. I'm out. I, at 15, I had, uh, I worked a job. I bought a car and I was driving myself to work and I wasn't even old enough to have a license. So, um, I was, I was more independent. Yes. And you would be more dependent. Mm-Hmm. Um, and you were the baby in the family. Sometimes this, that's kinda interesting. Sometimes has to do with birth order. Mm-Hmm. Oftentimes the oldest is more independent and the baby's a little more dependent. Mm-Hmm. Differentiation is between the two. Um, differentiation is, um, we are a family and then we have extended family, but we're different from our extended family. We do some things differently. We believe some things differently. And, uh, and that's your family. And this is our family and we get to differentiate and do things differently 'cause it's different families. Yeah. So examples of, and we had, we had argue, we arguments, I dunno if that's that a good word, as a married couple young, it was like you had just expectations Yeah. Of enmeshment. I was like, what are we doing? What are we doing? Like, I didn't agree to any of this. You're just like, I just assumed. I was like, well, no, I thought that's the way it was supposed to be. So without being too honest to dishonor our mothers and fathers, um, what would some of these early friction points be for you and I in our marriage? Uh, I thought we needed to celebrate all the holidays with Extended family. Extended family, um, vacations. I thought that we were supposed to still go on their vacations as a couple then. Yeah. Yeah. Like, um, birthdays we needed to, you know, as many as possible. So On the birthday, Um, Yes. No, no, I didn't. No, I'm just telling you, it's,

I'm still working it through with the therapist. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. So the expectation was we get together for everybody's birthday, we get together for all the holidays and we go on vacation together. Mm-Hmm. I mean, I, I just, I kind of feel triggered just thinking about it. And so then when your siblings get married, it's like, now we're adding all these people that I didn't pick. This is how I feel and that's what really what matters how I feel. And so, um, I didn't pick these people for my birthday. Yeah. I didn't pick them for my vacation, and I didn't pick them for my Christmas and just 'cause they married in, I don't, I didn't pick 'em. And so, um, so this led to tension in our relationship Little bit. Yeah. So for me then I, I, I'd be like, no, the answer's no. We're just no, it's my birthday, it's my Christmas, it's my life. And, and then you would feel like I was being mean. Yes. Okay. And, uh, and so then we tried to do co Well, now you got two sides of the extended family. So maybe explain why we, we didn't get this right. Like what Thanksgiving looked like. For example, We did two thanksgivings, one with my extended family, one with your extended Family. So we ate two Thanksgiving dinners. Yes. And, uh, and then we do Christmas Eve with one side Christmas day with the other side. And then what happened when we started adding children, and I'm a pastor working on all the major holidays, We still tried to do it. Yeah. And so now we moved to Arizona. It's then meant we didn't have any of our own traditions and, And immediate family. So it's like I, you know, if it's Christmas and Christmas Eve one day at one side and Christmas day at the other, and I'm working, how are we supposed to get with our five kids and just have our family Christmas traditions? We can't. Right. Um, and so what I didn't want to do was have everybody in the extended family, um, fully connected to you and the kids for all the sacred memories, but I also didn't want our kids to not enjoy the holidays and such with their grandparents. Like, your folks get an a plus at their love for our kids. Mm-Hmm. My folks get an a plus for the love for our kids. They're very good to our kids. So I didn't want to cut our kids off. Right. So what that becomes then is differentiation. And differentiation is we have different homes, we have different bank accounts. We, uh, how about a different last name? Let's talk about that. I'll let you, I'll let you Jump. Yeah. Blow that one up. Yeah. When a woman decides not to take the last name of her husband, it's literally saying, I will not be one with you. And I know this is a sticky issue for women, but you really need to think about it. If you're a Christian and you, what About a hyphenated last name? It's still not, it's like, I'm halfway, halfway. One left my husband. It's not one, it's not leaving your old, Your father, Your former and cleaving to the new. And some people are like, well, I don't really like my husband's name, so I wanted to keep mine. Or, you know, I I just What about the guys who take their, just in Case I wanted To, so we're, we'll go next level. So the guys who take their wife's last name Oh Yeah. Then they need to listen to the Elijah series. Ahab And Jezebel. Yeah. That's not cool because The Bible talks about marriage as a covenant, and the covenant has a head That's right. And the head of the marriage covenant is the husband. Mm-Hmm. And you're not honoring the head of your covenant. If you are still, um, operating by your father's last name. You're wanting to keep old identity. And even when you become a Christian, God gives, we become children of the Lord and he gives us a new identity. When we get married, we're under the headship of our husband, and that he's supposed to love and cherish and not rule over with an iron fist. That's not what headship means. Right. Um, but if you are, if you're going into the relationship opposing that by not taking his last name, you are setting yourself up to be divided instead of one. And that's not what God intends for marriage. So differentiation. Um, it be so differentiation is a process. And in a healthy parental child relationship, as the kid grows up, they differentiate. Literally, when a baby is born, there's no differentiation. Right. Between the mother and the baby. The baby is in the mother, and the mother is sustaining the life of the baby. Yes.

There's no differentiation. Yes. Then the baby is born. Now there's, there's, there's somebody who can too much eat and breathe on their own. So now there is a differentiation. Now as the child grows up, there's more and more differentiation. At some point they're like, I don't want to eat that. I want to eat this, and, you know, I don't wanna wear that. I wanna wear this. And now they go to school and now they have friends, and now they're getting to make some decisions, and now they have chores and responsibilities. And now they're working toward, um, being more independent and self-sufficient. The teen years are more complicated because the kids usually are pushing back. And what they're trying to do is they're trying to move the boundaries. Mm-Hmm. And differentiate. Um, as you become an adult, you have to differentiate. That means you have your own ideas. Mm-Hmm. You know, you may come from a family that's like, you know, here's what we believe politically, or here's the right kind of church or theology. And then you grow up and you're like, actually I'm different. Mm-Hmm. I don't, I don't agree with that. I have my own opinions. Um, so I don't just believe what my family believes. I, I have my own differentiated opinions. Um, what is this? Sometimes this comes from for a woman, um, from wounding from men in her past. And so she doesn't even realize she has a despise or a, a hatefulness toward men going into marriage. And so she'll do things like the name thing or other ways of, of kind of starting it out so that she does, she can only put her, you know, foot in the water, but not jump into the marriage fully. And so instead of doing that heal from your wounding, whatever that is, whether it's trauma or just, you know, men just being awful to you in whatever way, heal from that. So then you can enter in to a healthy relationship and build trust with the man that loves you, and it's going to be your partner and spouse for life. Well, and that's where the differentiation is, you leaving Cleve so you can become one. Yep. You know, and within that, so maybe, maybe we'll take the remainder of our time. So you and I, we're a family. We've got a kid in college and a senior in high school. And so the daughter is differentiated. She's moved out, she's working, she's going to school. So she's, you know, she's differentiating. And then the son is still at home. He's, he started differentiating a while ago. He's, I mean, even this summer at, uh, 1617, he is like, I wanna go outta state. And, uh, I got a job at a construction crew and I want to go volunteer at a church to learn ministry, and I'm gonna live on my own for a few months as a minor. Okay. So we did, and he did great. Now We put some healthy guardrails around that farm. We coach him in that. Yeah. We didn't just, you know, it wasn't Just free floating in another stay with people he didn't know, but he was taking that next step differentiate differentiation. Like, I'm not gonna be in the house. I'm gonna be outta state. I'm gonna go work a job. I'm gonna go make some decisions. And, And he had good desires. And as a mom, I had to pray through not freaking out or not over worrying or anxiety because oh my gosh, she's my last one. And what if this, I had to really pray through that because he wanted to do the right thing. It wasn't a bad thing, it just, I had to work through my emotions and, And well, and I had that too with our oldest daughter. Um, she was getting ready to graduate and, um, we were getting, we were getting ready to move. We weren't exactly sure what country or state we were moving to. We reset our whole life some years ago. And so she's like, you know what, I wanna go to Costa Rica for six months to a bible college that, um, you know, has basically next to no internet. And I was like, ah, ah, that's quite a differentiation. I mean, it almost feels like, I was like, are you coming back? She's, I'm coming back. So this is not a cutoff. You are coming back. But I'm like my 18-year-old girl in another country and I don't have direct access to her. And I was like, okay, well I'll fly there and check it out. She's like, Nope, I'm gonna go by myself. Ah, ah, you know, boys, it's a little different. It's like, get off the payroll, you know, move on daughters, you're like, Hey, I'm still your dad. Like, you know. Um, So we did research,

we checked it out for Her. It was a good bible college. Yep. Safe country. But I'll never forget taking her to the airport. She had her backpack. She was the firstborn, and I was getting ready. I was like, okay, let me park so I can walk you in. She's like, no, just drop me off on the curb. I was like, oh, I don't even get to say goodbye. I don't get to, you know. And so she's like, but gimme a kiss. Love you dad. Bye. Walks away. I keep waiting for her to turn around, you know, emotionally and to have a nervous breakdown and run into my arms and never happened. She just, boom. She, she gone. And that was not a sinful desire and that was the Lord that had put that in her heart. And we, and he confirmed it with us. But it's still an emotional process as parents to let them do what God has asked, calling them to do. She differentiated. That's right. She's like, she's like, that's your country. This is my country. Oh. And it was one of the greatest things that happened because she got time with the Lord. She got to heal up, she got to work on her Spanish, she got to travel all the things she loves. And for her, it was just her sort of differentiating so that when she moved back and she did move back, she was, you know, a responsible, she's always been responsible. She's a responsible adult. And 'cause if we would've kept her Yeah. And said, no, you can't go, you gotta stay with us, you gotta live under roof, da da dah da. She would've cut us off. She would've done cutoff. Mm-Hmm. And so it's like, you know what? We're gonna let the rope out so that you don't cut the rope. Mm-Hmm. And she was godly, filled with the spirit, loved the Lord. It was one of the greatest experiences of her life. Mm-Hmm. We trusted her and it was a great thing for her. Uh, me, I'm still in recovery. Um, so let's talk about this then. Today we've got you and me, the daughter who's moved out in college, the son who's home and is already, like we said, started the differentiation process. Nope. He's a great kid, but he's, he's ready to be a man. Um, and then we've got three kids who are married, two of whom have got beautiful baby boys or grandsons, their sons. Um, so what does differentiation look like now that we've got four families? So like, maybe practically family dinner or holiday Christmas, Thanksgiving, just as our family, it's not one big family. There's four families. We differentiate and we do some things differently. So how, how practically, maybe just share with them what that looks like for us as an example. So we have a family group chat so that we can communicate with everybody and then they can make their decisions and then get back to us. So we kind of present ideas on it, or What do you guys want to do? Whatever they wanna upload for photos or comments or whatever. They can communicate through There. And it's all positive. We don't do negative in the family text thread. Yep, yep. It's just, uh, you know, here's, you know, here's a date and here's the baby. And, and we don't make, we don't give orders on the No. It is like, Hey, you guys gotta be at our house for Thanksgiving at for Cox. No, no. What do you guys want to do? Yep. When they first, when the first two got married, initially we were doing family dinner every Sunday. It was, you know, manageable. They wanted to, we'd get together at our house, then slowly as they were building their lives and their friendships and their marriage together, then we'd do it every other week. And then, you know, after a couple, I guess it's been three or three years now, we added another son that got married. So now we just recently had a family dinner and talked about what they want to do. What do You guys want? Do you wanna do once a month? Do you wanna do once every couple? Do you not wanna do it for a season? Um, but we're opening our home whenever. Um, and they decided we would do once a month. This is just a method. This isn't what everyone should do. This is just, It's a lot of conversations though. It Is a lot of conversations and it's a lot of us holding our tongue and not just expressing our opinion, what we want, but letting them show their desires and what they wanna do as far as a relationship with us going forward. And we need to give them that space because they're building other relationships that are healthy in the church,

other couples, other families. It's a good thing. Um, and so we landed on doing once a month. And so we're gonna, and we changed the day from, you know, one day of the week that was working in one season. Now that doesn't work anymore and everybody's tired on that day, so let's change it to this day of the week. Um, and we'll do that and see how that goes. But they wanted to have ideas for the, you know, doing stuff together. Now we've got two babies involved, so what does that look like? They wanted to, you know, have it at different homes and not just at ours. So we're, we just have to be open to whatever they wanna do. If they wanna spend time together, we'll take it. Like we love getting time with them whenever they want. How about, uh, like, uh, Thanksgiving and Christmas? We'll use those to as case and we're not saying we've nailed it. No. We got, you know, young married kids and we're figuring it out, but we Yeah. And it'll change. It just does as they change and we change Well as they have their own kids. Mm-Hmm. So like, uh, so Thanksgiving, yeah. We're gonna be going away for the first time ever for Thanksgiving. And so we still wanted to allow an opportunity for family Thanksgiving, so we're gonna do it on a different day, and then they can do whatever they want on Thanksgiving Day. And one family's gonna go away, one family's gonna stay and then go up somewhere else for a season or for a couple days. I mean, they're all choosing different things and it's, it's awesome. They're getting to do things that they wanna do. And then Christmas, we, you know, gave some options of what we, when we're available and they said, Hey, let's do it on this day at this time, and we'll all get together and do gifts and dinner and games or whatever they wanna do at our house. Great. Sounds good. Well, and in that, like, we're all in ministry, so Yep. Christmas Eve is a very busy time. Yep. And Christmas morning, they're like, especially the ones that are married and or have their own young children. Like, we wanna be with our spouse, we wanna be with our baby. We want to start our new traditions own tradition. Like Yeah. No, that you, you just said, you know, und differentiating when, when you're a kid, you're like, Christmas morning, I'm with my mom and dad. Now you're like, I'm with my spouse and kid And they're doing it better than we did when we first got married, which we take full joy in that they're already creating a, a better legacy from the first holiday, you know? Yeah. But there's been Thanksgivings where couples will be like, we're gonna be outta town. We're not around for Thanksgiving. Yeah. Okay. I mean, you get to differentiate, you get to make a different decision. And like you said, I mean, you know, we are gonna get together for Thanksgiving, but not on Thanksgiving day. It's finally a break. And because, uh, a lot of us are gonna get that time off, they want to make plans with their spouse and with their kids. And, and, and it is as a, as a mom and a dad, it's like, we would love to have you. Yeah. And there's a little bit of a heart funeral if we don't Yeah, absolutely. But if you're really prioritizing your marriage and building your new family, we rejoice in that. Yep. Because we want your new family to be as strong and healthy as possible. And, And part of the reason we're going away is because we're all entering into an almost empty nest season as our youngest graduates from high school. And so we're spending time investing in our marriage Mm-Hmm. So that we have a health, continue to have a healthy relationship going forward so that we can do all these extended family things and enjoy them and, and they can enjoy us because we're continuing to work on our marriage and health. Well, in closing too, sometimes we all pull together and, and we do things together. Like a couple years ago, um, Graduation trip, Graduation trip, when the kids graduate, it's like, you get to pick a trip. And we go, so, uh, high school graduation correlated and they both were like, we're gonna go to Iceland. So I was like, okay. If anybody, if any of you extended families, you know, the kids and their spouses, if you guys wanna come to Iceland, I'll pay for it. I'll get you your own car and I'll get you your own hotel room so you can differentiate. If you want to see us for dinner or at sites, we can intersect.

If you want to grab different people and jump into different cars and get time together and go exploring, you can do that. But what I want to do is I wanna try to, as much as I can, have an open hand and try to be generous and try to give them the freedom to make good memories with their immediate family and then intersect as they wish with the extended family. Mm-Hmm. And that, that was fun. I, but now that they're all launching and leaving, we gotta make sure that we're doing good. Yeah. And that our marriage is a priority and that this family that started as two people and eventually is going to be two people with a lot of extended families and kids and grandkids, um, that we're doing good. So we still have two kids to launch. So we need to make sure that we're still doing good so that we can launch them well and not just forget them. Well, and I'll close to this, if you have a dysfunctional family system, mom and dad aren't as close as they should be. And the kids are like the glue that hold the family together. Mm-Hmm. So then as the kids are trying to differentiate and launch, mom and dad are trying to pull them back. 'cause mom and dad aren't gonna probably be doing that good on their own. Or if the kids do launch, then it's like, when are you gonna give us grandkids? Mm-Hmm. 'cause the only thing that really held the marriage together was little people. And it's like, that's not a healthy family system. Mm-Hmm. So we've recorded these before the holidays, and so they'll probably answer, uh, or, or air rather after Thanksgiving and maybe even after Christmas. But if you'd like to get the rest of this, go to [realfaith.com](http://realfaith.com). You can grab the entire sermon series. Um, it's happily never after the n in quotation marks or in parentheses with a question mark at the end. And the subtitle is Leave and Cleave. And then there's a full workbook leave and cleave that you can do individually share with your spouse, and then figure out what you want to do with your extended family. Uh, we love you. Thanks for tuning in.