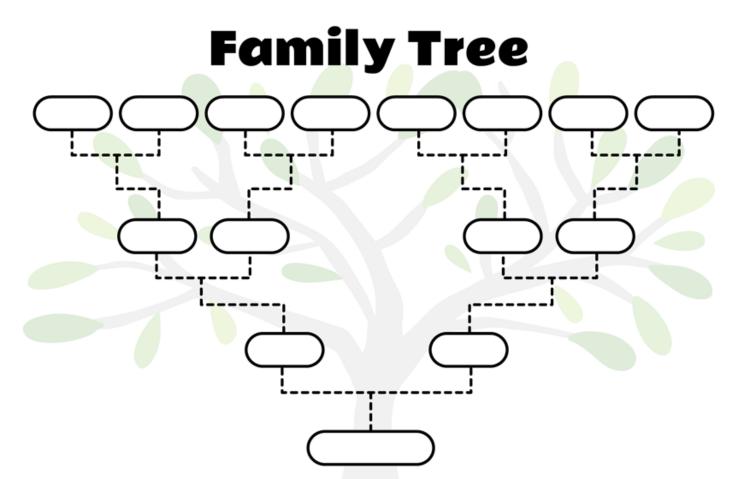
Living the Creed

Family Genome Project

Where is reconciliation needed?



Creating a Genome Family Tree is fairly simple. First, fill in your name in the bottom box. Add your parents, then your grandparents. And add spaces for siblings. Use additional paper if necessary. On this simplified family tree, you do not need birth, marriage or death dates. Simply place a cross symbol next to a person who has died.

Next, draw lines, according to the below chart, between family members as it best reflects your understanding of their relationships.

A solid, thick line between those who are extremely close.

A broken, thick line between those who have an extremely contentious relationship.

A thin line between those who get along.

You do not need to draw a line between everyone. You are simply looking for the closest relationships and the most contentious relationships.

After you have drawn the lines, you may begin to see patterns. You can even ask, why are the contentious lines where they are? What factors led to a broken relationship? How can you help bring reconciliation?

What can a Family Tree Genome show us?

We are aware of the people in our family who do not get along, we are aware of those who do get along very well. But sometimes, seeing it on paper helps make connections for why those relationships exist.

Take Jacob's family in the Book of Genesis. Jacob loved Joseph more than the other 11 brothers and 1 sister. And later, Jacob was very hesitant to send Benjamin to Egypt with the 10 brothers to get food during the famine. And the brothers were also hesitant to go home and bring him back.

As we look at the family tree and see the both Joseph and Benjamin were sons of Rachel, the wife Jacob loved more than Leah or either of the two concubines, we begin to see where the contention between the brothers and Joseph exists, and why later the brothers are so protective of Benjamin. They protect Benjamin out of their guilt of selling Joseph and lying to their father about it. It is this protective nature the brothers develop toward Benjamin that leads Joseph towards reconciling with his brothers and reconnecting with their father.

Seeing the thick lines and the thick dashed lines in our own family may not be an initial surprise. What may be a surprise is how different two people may understand the family tree. Maybe where you see a strong connection, someone else only sees a normal connection, or perhaps even a contentious one. This exercise isn't meant to say one understanding of the family is correct over another. It is those very differences that open the way to a more complete understanding of the family.

As a Living the Creed exercise, the family tree genome project leads us to be honest about our family. Being honest leads to discovering roots for extreme closeness (which is a good thing) and extreme contention (which may need reconciliation). I invite you to take a few moments to draw up your family tree and reflect on the relationships. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at any time.