

# EMMAUS EQUIPPING COLLEGE

## Grasping God's Word - Assignment 7

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### Assignment 7-1

In three or four pages, describe your family background in regard to cultural influences. Discuss as well as you can both your mother (and her family) and your father (and his family).

Include any other families that may have influenced you as well.

For each, discuss attitudes and views toward religion, family, work, education and wealth. Describe the socioeconomic location of your family and its religious context.

Also, how do members of your family tend to relate each other? Does your family tend to be warm and "huggy" or cold and distant?

Finally, try to relate your family background to your own set of values and outlooks.

What have you retained?

What have you rejected?

### FAMILY BACKGROUND

**Father:** Pasquale Liberato Tedesco - born c1933 in Calabria, horticultural Southern Italy, in a small/medium sized town made. Second eldest of four sons. His father, Agazio Tedesco was a decorated WWII army veteran. Post WWII Agazio worked in Germany, commuting between the two counties for several years, while His wife Carmela took care of their four sons. Then in c1954, Agazio arranged for his and the three younger sons, Pasquale, Agazio-Jnr and Alfredo's immigration to Australia. Agazio's wife remained in Italy while their eldest son, Nicola, completed his mandatory military service. Travelling from Italy to Australia by ship, they disembarked at Freemantle and then were transported by train to South Australia where they were stationed in the remote country town of Quorn where Agazio worked as a fettler on the railway line and Pasquale worked in the train yard and quickly worked his way to steam locomotive driver assistant, often called a "fireman".

Several months later, Carmela and Nicola travelled to Australia and were reunited with the rest of the family.

Soon after, the family travelled to Adelaide and settled there. Pasquale attended Technical College by day, training to be a Fitter & Turner while his nights were occupied with attending English Language lessons. Once having graduated from the Technical College, Pasquale soon gained employment at GMH Holden – Woodville SA, where he remained employed for over 30 years.

**Mother:** Pasqualina Bellocco - born c1944 in Calabria, horticultural Southern Italy, in a large town with farming surrounds. The eldest of three daughters. Her father, Antonio Bellocco, was a decorated WWII army veteran, his military service included time in what was referred to as Italian East Africa - Abyssinia (modern-day Ethiopia), Somaliland and Italian Eritrea. Post WWII, Antonio and his wife, Assunta, worked and managed the family farm-lands. They both came from generational farming families with substantial land holdings. Antonio was a graduate in horticultural sciences. All family members were required to work including the children, apart from their time in school.

After the "washaway floods" in Calabria in the 1950s, a series of severe floods and landslides that occurred in 1951 and 1953, Antonio was advised by a close friend to travel to Australia as the Australian government was promoting strong and steady employment opportunities for migrants. So, Antonio departed, leaving his family behind to tend to the farm-lands and home affairs until he had established himself in the new country. Antonio disembarked in Adelaide, South Australia.

It was a tough and very lonesome time for Antonio. After some time, having worked and saving enough money to put a deposit on a house, he sent for the rest of the family to join him in Australia.

Pasqualina and her sisters attended the local Catholic School. Pasqualina soon left school to join the workforce to help support the family while her mother Assunta established their new home and her father, Antonio, after spending time in diverse and laborious employs, finally settled in his new role working at GMH Holden – Woodville SA, where he remained until retirement.

Pasquale and Pasqualina met and immediately began a formal courtship under the strict supervision of her parents. Within a relatively short time, they were married and began their lives as husband and wife – Pasqualina being 16 and Pasquale 26 at that time. They eventually had four children, Elizabeth, Carlo, Linda and Francesco.

## **CULTURAL INFLUENCES**

### **ATTITUDES AND VIEWS TOWARD;**

### **RELIGION:**

**Dad** – raised in a Catholic family and community, he has verbally expressed his belief in God. Sporadically attended church on Sundays but seemed more concerned with doing jobs around the home and tending to a large back-yard garden complete with two work sheds, wine-press, chicken pen, grafted fruit trees, vegetable patches, etc.

**Mum:** - raised in a Catholic family and community, has an obvious faith in God albeit one aligned with Catholic doctrine. She sometimes spoke of her Sunday School attendance as a child, *la dottrina religiosa per i bimbi*, in her home town where she was instructed on papal laws, canons, Mariology and the saints. I remember her telling me that when she was a child, she quoted the “priests back home” saying “*don’t do as I do but do as I say*”. She has always had a strong prayer ethic. She prays on a daily basis, in gratitude for God’s providence and for His protection over family and friends. In times of difficulty, her prayer life became ever fervent. When I was very young, she would often call be to join her in prayer. We would kneel together beside her bed and pray for extended periods of time. She often attended Sunday mass with me in tow. We had a family Bible at home. It was presented to Mum and Dad as part of their Australian Citizenship Ceremony. I would read from this Bible only to find that what I heard from the pulpit at Sunday mass seemed to be in stark contrast to what the scriptures proclaimed. And in particular, why were we going the church on Sunday when the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment clearly states that the believer is to assemble on the Sabbath (Saturday). I know she loves God. I also know that she defends the Catholic Religion more so as a family tradition than the true faith.

I recognise this is a pride thing and unfortunately pride can lead to ignorance. It’s also a response to my having recanted being a catholic – in whatever sense that may have been. At the time Mum took it as a great offence to her personally and as an embarrassment to the family. Over time, that opinion has somewhat changed.

### **WORK:**

Both Mum and Dad have always had a strong, moral work ethic. They have continued to live out this work ethic and in doing so, have set the benchmark for their children, teaching us children that “*hard work never hurt anyone*” and “*if the opportunity is there, take it.*” They both worked and still work hard, doing almost everything themselves so to “*not disturb*” anyone or put a burden on others.

### **EDUCATION:**

Mum and Dad have always stressed the importance of education.

They always knew that the benefits of education go beyond academics – it develops ones problem-solving, communication and critical thinking skills. It helps build character, confidence, intellect, teaches values, creates opportunities and helps establish stability of sorts in one’s life. While they believed in our abilities, they never held unrealistic or ridiculous expectations for us children. They just wanted us to do the best we could which would enable ourselves to progress into an occupation which we would thrive in.

## WEALTH:

Mum always says that strong faith, a loving united family, good health and a charitable heart are the true wealth in this world.

When it comes to money, Mum and Dad have what I would call a healthy respect for money. Mum would always say that *“it’s not how much you earn but how you spend it, that will make the biggest difference in your home economy.”* Useful wisdom. They learned that it took a lot of hard work to earn and save money... to *“get ahead”*. They always wanted us children to have more than they did without blurring boundaries as to what it takes to acquire even the simplest things. They worked, scrimped and saved, never splurging on themselves, always making sure that we had everything we needed and certainly **not** everything we wanted. We lived simply. I remember when roller skates were all the craze, my sister came home from school one day asking if Mum and Dad would buy her a pair of roller skates just like the ones her friends at school had. Dad had a better idea... *“Buy... why buy, I can make!”* You wouldn’t believe it; Dad went to work on his home-made solid timber work bench adorned with the classic Made in Australia DAWN Metal Vice plus a large front drawer packed with an array of tools. After what seemed like hours and hours and a cacophony of drilling, banging and clanging, Dad emerged from his work-shed with what appeared to be a pair of steel and leather strap roman sandals with metal soles and wait for it... four steel ball bearing wheels on each sandal. *“Here’s your roller skates!”* he proudly stated as he handed them to my sister. We took turns with them. It was great fun, kind of skating up and down the newly laid concrete strip under our rear veranda. We skated so much that the metal wheels dug shallow narrow ruts into the concrete. That’s when dad said *“Enough with the skates now!”* What a great experience and lesson in saving money.

## SOCIOECONOMIC LOCATION AND ITS RELIGIOUS CONTEXT:

One might say that our family fit in as “Middle Class” people – whatever that means.

Historically, the middle class has been associated with certain religious values like diligence, respectability, and self-discipline. It was easy for Mum and Dad to continue in the Catholic tradition in this new country. We children went to public schools, but there was a Catholic church within a five-minute commute by car in almost every direction from where we lived. The people who frequented the church we attended were a mixed bag, mainly Australians of English heritage. I remember the first home visit from the Parish Priest. It was a hot summers day and Dad offered him a cold beer and the priest gladly took it... from a glass of course.

## **FAMILY TENDANCIES:**

My family has had its fair share of lumps and bumps but overall, I'm grateful for the love, devotion and support my parents have given us and the moral backbone they have fostered in each of us.

## **THE INFLUENCE OF FAMILY BACKGROUND ON MY SET OF VALUES AND OUTLOOKS:**

**WHAT HAVE I RETAINED:** That which is good and true.

**WHAT HAVE I REJECTED:** That which is not good nor true.

## **AND PLEASE NOTE: THIS PROCESS IS STILL IN PROGRESS.**

It has been said that children are "victims of circumstance" or "products of their upbringing". We carry certain "baggage" along the course of our lives.

We have read that we are to "Honour" our Mother and Father.

We long to look up to our parents (or parent depending on the circumstance) believing that they have all the answers and all the wisdom, or at least most if not all.

We can be deeply affected when we disappoint them or when they disappoint us.

We want to love them and want to be loved by them.

Over time we learn what it means to be a parent and in turn what it means to have parents.

Amongst the many things I've learned there is one thing that truly stands out...

Apart from all of the above and more, my parents don't know everything and I shouldn't expect them to...

But they tried to do everything good with what they know and for that I'm grateful.

As we mature in our faith in God we should realise where the expectation lies.

It's up to every individual to seek out that truth and that infinite wisdom which can only come from God.

And to unconditionally love and where ever necessary forgive our parents because no one is perfect. Bring joy to them at every opportunity we are given.

Regardless of the past.

Because one thing we are assured of now is that we have the perfect Father,

And His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.