

## The Family

The Bible has much to say about the family. In fact, the Bible is a book about families. The Bible is about a husband and wife, Adam and Eve, and their three sons Cain, Abel, and Seth. The Bible is about a husband and wife named Abraham and Sarah and their promised son Isaac. The Bible is about a husband named Noah and his family who got safely in the ark before the flood came. The Bible is about a husband named Lot who mistakenly took his family to dwell in Sodom and Gomorrah and paid a great price.

Do you believe in the Bible? Do you read the Bible? Any person who places priority on the Bible in their life is a *family* person. A preacher of the gospel must be a *family* man. A deacon and pastor must be *family* men. To ignore the family and its place in society is to ignore God's Word.

### ***Family is God's idea***

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth, as we are told in Genesis chapter 1. When God had arranged earth and the heavens in a way that was pleasing unto him, he then created man. He named man Adam. Adam was alone with no other person in the garden. God lined up all the animals and paraded them before Adam and allowed him to name them. When all the animals had passed by and had been named by Adam, there was still something missing. This is when God saw Adam was alone and needed someone to be with him. Please see the picture— nothing in creation could satisfy Adam. God took a rib from Adam's side and went away. He returned with the woman and presented her to Adam as his helpmate. The family had been formed. Yes, the family is God's idea! Family was not invented by man. Family was not invented by the church. The family was God's invention. Bear that in mind, and it will explain to you why the family is so hated throughout history. We will discuss that more in a few moments.

God gave Adam and Eve the commission in Genesis 1:28 to "*multiply and replenish the earth.*" From their union came two sons—Cain and Abel. Now we have mom and dad and two children. What a beautiful sight! God's creation was not complete with just the oceans,

the mountains, the beautiful land, the animals and the forest. A family is the crowning achievement of God's creation. A family is more beautiful than anything on planet Earth ever been beholden by human eye. Yes, the family is God's idea.

### ***Family is first institution set forth by God***

Before there was a government, there was a family. Before there was a church there was a family. Before there was a corporation there was a family. Before there was a ball team there was a family. Before there was a school there was a family. God is a family man. You may not put family first, but God does. A person cannot say that God is first in their life unless family is first. To put family first in life is to put God first. Our priorities are wrong today. Jobs come first. School comes second. Recreation is next. Somewhere down the line is family. You cannot say you love God and that you honor God in your life unless and until you give the family proper place in your life.

Some folk degrade the family to a status of being nothing more than a byproduct of sex. This is a shame. Men father children and turn away from them and leave them and fail to provide for them. They were only interested in the pleasure of their flesh and have no interest in bringing a human being into this world to love and cherish and provide for. Folk who behave in this fashion should be locked up in the basement of the jail.

### ***The Bible is a book about families***

A family got on board the ark. A family went down to Egypt and grew into a nation. The manger where Christ was born was a family scene. Christ was a family man. He revered Joseph and his mother. When his death was imminent on the cross of Calvary, He called apostle John forth and asked him to care for his mother Mary. Jesus Christ was a family man.

Do you recall Christ's first public appearance? He went to a wedding to watch a family being formed by marriage. By the way, the only way a family can be formed is through marriage. Man, the woman you live with that you are not married to is a whore and not your wife. Likewise, woman, the man you live with who is not your husband by marriage is a whoremonger. No arrangement other than marriage can substitute for the formation of a family.

### ***The Devil hates the family***

Here are some reasons:

- The family was God’s idea, not the Devil’s.
- The Bible, which is hated by Satan, is a book about families.
- God is a family man- He calls Jesus his “**son**” and his son calls Him “**father**.” When a sinner is saved, he is called by a family term- “child of God.” Yes, God is a family man.
- It takes families to make up churches. A group of singles or divorcees does not form a church.
- It takes families to form good schools.
- Families make good communities and neighborhoods and great nations.

Pornography, a vice of the Devil, is an attack on the family. Abortion, a vice of the Devil, is an attack on the family. Divorce is an attack on the family. God hates divorce and that includes your divorce. Every divorce is against God’s will. Gambling is an attack on the family. Look at the six reasons given above and you will understand why families are being torn apart. The first murder in the Bible was one family member killing another when Cain slew his brother Abel. Why? The Devil got in Cane and tried to destroy the family through him. Pharaoh ordered all the baby boys to be thrown in the river in Egypt. Why? He was trying to destroy the family. At Christ’s birth Herod said kill all children two years old and under. Why? Herod was attacking the family.

Child pornography is a multibillion-dollar business. Little children’s bodies are being exposed by vultures, demon-possessed devils. This is an attack on the family. Child abuse is an attack on the family. The lowest-down rascal in the world is someone who abuses a child or an elderly person. When we read about child abusers, we know why there has to be a place called Hell. Where would you send them?

### ***The Biblical structure of the family***

Ephesians Chapters 5 and 6 give us the most comprehensive picture of the family of any single group of verses in the Bible. **You will now need to open your KJV Bible to Ephesians chapter 5 and 6.** If we look at Ephesians 5 and Ephesians 6, we will understand what God wants the family to be like. It is not a helter-skelter arrangement.

The family is a very structured arrangement. Let us look at the parts that make up a family:

### *The wife*

Ephesians 5:22 tells us the wife is to submit unto her own husband as unto the Lord. What does the word “submit” mean? Genesis 3:16 says concerning the woman “*thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee.*” Submit means to be in *subjection*. Submit does not mean a wife is to be a slave to her husband. Submit does not mean a wife is to give herself to her husband as a punching bag. If your husband hits you, have him arrested. The best place for him is the jail. Genesis 3:16 tells us that God made woman with a natural desire for her husband. Thus, the desire a woman has for a husband is totally natural. Only one place in the Bible is a woman told to love her husband. Why is this? Because God placed in a woman a *natural* desire unto her husband as a result of the fall in the garden of Eden. God does not have to instruct a woman to love her husband— it is natural.

A wife does not have to subject herself to sin at the request of her husband. Husband, if you request your wife to participate in sin, I hope she tells you NO. She has the right to do so.

### *The husband*

Look at Ephesians 5:23. The husband is the head of the wife. He is the head of the wife even as “*Christ is the head of the church.*” Christ is the head of the church and the church is His body. Verse 24 instructs the wife to be subject to her husband just as the church is subject unto Christ. Christ does not abuse the church. Christ does not starve the church. Christ does not cheat on the church. Christ does not ridicule the church. Husband, you have a very tall order to fill. Can you love your wife as much as Christ loved the church? The Bible instructs you to do so.

Verse 25 tells us “*husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.*” Husband, do you love your wife enough to die for her? If not, you don’t love her as much as you are commanded to. Remember, she’s waiting for your love, for God put a natural desire in her to crave your love. If a husband will love his wife as much as Christ loved the church, there will be few marriage problems in our land. Again, how much does Christ love the church? He died for the church!

Verse 28 exhorts the husband to love his wife as much as he loves “*their own bodies.*” How much do you love yourself, husband? Do you beat yourself up? Do you starve yourself? Do you mistreat yourself? Do you ridicule and talk down about yourself? Do you take a knife and cut your hand off? Do you cheat on yourself? I don’t know about you, but I love my body. I don’t abuse it, or starve it, or ridicule it, or endanger it. Husbands are to love their wives as much as they love their own bodies. Verse 29 says “*for no man ever yet hated his own flesh.*”

### *The marriage, Two shall be One*

What is marriage? A partnership? No, a partnership is 2 people or more. Is it teamwork? No, the team is two or more. A marriage is none of these things. Why? Ephesians 5:31 says “*they two shall be one flesh.*” How dare any doctor to take two people and sew them together and make one. The whole world waits to see this! The point I am trying to make is that marriage is the work of God, for only God can make *two* objects into *one* object. Only God can make two people one person. If the Bible is correct, and it is, it is hard to see how any marriage fails.

Why is divorce so ugly and painful? If I take a knife and cut my index finger on my right hand into two pieces I will scream and cry and bleed. Why?- because I have made one become two. Divorce is the undoing of a marriage. It is taking a knife and cutting one object into two pieces. Blood, strife, sorrow and tears are the result. Do you now understand why divorce is so awful?

Marriage joins a man and a wife into one flesh. Verse 31 says therefore the man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife. I know a young man who married a beautiful young lady. The marriage failed. Why? The young man would not leave family. Finally, and rightfully so, the wife said to the husband “I married you. Not your family.” Divorce was the result.

How can two become one? Can two cars become one car? Can two houses become one house? The only way it is possible is for each car to give up something. In marriage, if two are to become one the bride must give up something, and the groom must give up something. That’s the only way two can become one. Husband, you may have to give up golf- heaven forbid! Wife, you may have to give up shopping five nights a week with the girls. What a great sacrifice! I

gave up some things I liked when I got married because they were not compatible unto my wife. I stopped running around with my old buddies and went home to my wife. Some men don't do this. My wife, I know, gave up some things in order to make our marriage **one**.

The children are addressed in Ephesians 6:1-2. Children are an important part of the family. I am a family man. If you come to our church, you will find almost all activities are family activities. We don't have parent's night and leave the children at home. We have family night. Children are told to "*obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.*" Verse two says to the children "*honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise.*" Children are to obey and act in an honorable way toward their parents. I despise going to the grocery store or the department store. I know I'm going to see some undisciplined, rude child taking a "kicking and screaming fit" toward their parent. Of course, this is the parent's fault for allowing the child to be this way. Children talk back to their parents. Children disobey their parents. Children tell their parents "NO." I didn't have that option growing up and that is foreign to me. My parents were the boss- end of discussion. Now, just about every conversation between a parent and a child is a negotiating session. There was no negotiating at our house growing up. I never negotiated with my two sons either.

Honoring father and mother is termed the "*first commandment with promise.*" What does this mean? If we look back at the commandments of Moses where we are told to honor our father and mother we find a "promise" is attached. What is that "promise" for honoring father and mother? It is found in Ephesians chapter 6:3 "*that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.*" Do you want a good life when you grow up? Who wouldn't? Well, honor mom and dad. God said it would be "well with thee." Not only "well with thee" but the Lord promised your days would be long on earth! What a deal! It is important to note that we are to honor father and mother until their death. When you get married, they do not cease being your parents. Many elderly folk are mistreated today by their adult children.

I will share the story of Brother Oliver Greene as best as I remember. I heard him say in a message that he knew that he would die at an early age. He said when he was a young, rebellious, unsaved

man he would come home at night from carousing around the town. He would lie down on his bed and his mother and sister would come to his bedside to kneel and pray for him to be saved. He said he would blow cigarette smoke in their face and ridicule them. After he got saved, he regretted his actions. He also fully understood God's word carries no exceptions. Therefore he testified that he knew his life would end at an early age. God let him stay on this earth until age 61. I sure wish he could have stayed with us many more years and preached and taught us the Gospel. But God has no favorites and God makes no exceptions. Of many people today we say "they sure died at a young age." They were not diseased or necessarily sick. They simply died without explanation. Could the explanation be that they dishonored their parents?

### *The rearing of children*

Ephesians 6:4 says "*and, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*" Is it possible for a father's actions toward his children to cause his children to be wrathful? The answer is *yes* according to this fourth verse of Ephesians 6. The way in which a father administers his oversight rearing a child has much to do with the behavior of the child. It is possible for a father to administer oversight in such a way that the child is rebellious, wrathful, and unruly? Yes- a father can make a child disorderly and unruly. Could this explain the bad behavior of many in society today?

Be firm and fair as a father. Be reasonable as a father. For sure, don't be double-minded and have dual standards. One day something is "no" and the next day something is "okay." This blows a child's mind. Be consistent in administering discipline. Be fair in administering discipline. Never favor one child over another.

Note that Ephesians 6:4 does not speak to the mother. It speaks only to the father. Why? The father is President and CEO of the home. The buck stops with him. No home is complete without a father. We hear today about single moms rearing a child. Good luck. That is one reason the world is in the mess it is in. Homes are broken. A home without a father is a home that is not biblical. Shame on any man who conceives a child, leaves the mother to rear the child, and forsakes his fatherly responsibilities. That person belongs in jail. As head of child rearing, father, you are admonished to bring them up in the "nurture

and admonition of the Lord.” If God is not included in your home, good-luck in having a stable, successful home. A home without God can only hope for God’s mercy to guide the home in stability and success. God must be included in the family. Teach the child the things of God. Mothers and fathers in Israel were told to put the Word of God on the necklace around the neck of the child. They were instructed to paste the Scriptures on the wall of the home so that children could see biblical instruction. Mom and dad, are you attending church with your children as a family? If not, start now. Give your home and family a chance to be successful- include God in the home.