

# THE BIBLICAL FAMILY

## WEEK 2: WHAT PRIORITIES DO PARENTS HAVE IN THEIR FAMILY?

### INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

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- In this 6-week series we are going to discuss the Biblical family. This is going to be an overview of what the Bible says about some key topics, roles and patterns that should be in every family.
- Week 1: What is a Biblical family?
- **Week 2: What priorities do parents, husbands & wives, have in their family?**
- Week 3: How do husbands and wives' function in the family?
- Week 4: How can conflicts be handled and resolved Biblically? Part I
- Week 5: How can conflicts be handled and resolved Biblically? Part II
- Week 6: How can conflicts be handled and resolved Biblically? Part III
- There are obvious caveats which need to be talked about before diving into the series.
- The overall goal of this class is to give theological understanding and practical wisdom on the purpose of the family and how God desires to use the family for His glory and for our good.

### INTRODUCTION

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- It is common for families to just “drift” through life, hoping that their children grow up and add something to society one day.
- Speaking of parenting teenagers, Paul Tripp says “They [parents] are told to expect the worst and to be thankful if they come out of the valley sane, with their teenager alive and their family intact.”<sup>1</sup>
- While Tripp is speaking about parenting teenagers, this is the mindset that we can fall into for our single life, our married life and our parenting.
- Our hope should not be just to come out alive and intact, our hope should be for a family and life which honors Christ, glorifies God and leaves a lasting heritage for others to follow.
- When we speak of priorities in the family, we are not necessarily speaking of roles in the family.
- While each spouse is going to have their unique role in the family, **the couple together should have priorities which are not unique to them individually but those which they both are striving for in their family.**

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Tripp, *Age of Opportunity*, p. 13.

- The point is that for the overall family to function (if the family includes children or not) the husband and wife must be together in their goals, focus, priorities and the way they are going to attain such things.
- While you may have put goals in place for your family, do you have a plan in place to achieve them? Do you know why and how you are striving to meet the goals that you have determined are best?
- This class is going to cover both families with and without children. Those families without children must still strive for unity but their overall responsibility is going to look different.
- If you are not putting things in place with children, it most likely will not start after you have them.
- For families with children, your responsibilities are going to be much broader as you are going to be taking care of your children.
- What is the same for both families with and without kids is that the husband and wife must be together. They must not have two separate agendas for their marriage, nor can they be living two seemingly separate lives.
- What we are going to look at this morning is twofold. Firstly, what are some of the duties of the parents. This is universal for all parents of all kids. This is where you need to be on the same page with your spouse.
- The second thing we are going to discuss is what building a heritage for your family looks like. What are some things that you can teach your children that are going to outlast you and continue on even after you die? We will talk about physical actions and spiritual ones.

## THE PARENTS' DUTY

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- As we start with the duty of parents, we are going to look at what disciplines should be taught in the home by both the mother and the father.
- Often times it is the mother who is spending the majority of time with the kids, so it is important that she is setting the spiritual and practical expectations for the children.
- The father is of equal importance as he is disciplining his wife and kids so that they are all going in the same direction spiritually.

### **Nurture and admonition <sup>2</sup>**

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- Children have the easy role in the family. All they have to do is obey their parents. The parents' duty is what is really hard. They have to set a good example, be diligent teachers, give regular correction, and provide consistent discipline—all without frustrating their kids in the process.
- Someone has pointed out that we spend the first twelve months of our children's lives teaching them to walk and talk, and the next twenty years trying to get them to sit down and be quiet. Parenting is not for the faint

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<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur, *The Fulfilled Family: God's Design for Your Family* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson Publishers, 2005), 105.

of heart. The skills and patience necessary to be good parents don't come naturally for parents any more than obedience comes naturally for children.

- Our children cannot reach maturity on their own, but they need the nurture and admonition of their parents.
- Parents must play an active role in their children's life. There is no room for parents who simply decide to let the "system" or someone else raise their child.
- There are no more important people in the lives of your children than you.
- Proverbs 29:15 "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother."
- From a young age, parents need to be involved in their children's life. We all know that kids who always get their own way grow up to be discontent and entitled adults.
- The Bible also tells us how we are to do that.
- The command to parents in Ephesians 6:4 "Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."
- Parents are not to provoke their children to anger. It is parent's duty not to provoke your children.
  - Provoke means *to rouse* or *to exasperate*. What Paul is saying is that parents should not do things with the explicit intention of getting your children angry.
  - Parents are going to anger their children as they give them rules and discipline. That is not what Paul's talking about here.
  - It is when parents are intentionally doing things and saying things to their children to get a reaction out of them. It is withholding something from them for no reason other than you can and it will cause them to become angry.
- So, what do your children need?
  - The **discipline** and **instruction** of the Lord. Interesting correlation between what Paul is commanding and what Jesus commanded.
  - Matthew 28:19-20 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."
  - We, as Christians, are to make disciples by teaching them to observe (to obey, to guard) what Christ taught. As we are disciplining our children, they are learning by instruction which aims at increasing their virtue.
  - When we instruct our children, we are admonishing them, warning them that the way they are on is a way to destruction.
  - We teach either by experience or knowledge, but we must speak into their lives.

- For your nurture and admonition to be consistent and filled with love, it must be Biblical.
- 2 Timothy 3:16-17 “All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.”
- God’s Word has all that we need to properly raise our children. It provides the guide and grounds for discipline. It gives us the purpose of being parents and how we are to treat our family.
- We should never think that God has left us alone or without any resources for how to handle our family. God has ordained that *you* are a part of *your* family and is working in and through it.
- When we stray from what the Bible says, we should not expect spiritual results. If you are trying to raise your kids by the world’s standards, you are going to have a worldly child.

### **Speak to their heart.**

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- While we are correcting behavior in our kids, especially when they are younger, they need to have their hearts addressed.
  - It is the duty of the parents to correct their kids, but also to point out that they need a new heart. Parents are responsible for disciplining their children, but they are also responsible for giving them hope.
  - Jesus says in Mark 7:20-23 “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”
  - Your children need to know that you are not just trying to get them to change their behavior so that life will be easier. You know that they need a new heart, they need to be born again, they need the gospel.
  - All families have rules, some more than others. The question is not *do you have rules...* the question is *why do you have the rules that you do?* Does every person in your family know why they can or can’t do something?
  - Is it just because mom or dad says so...or is there something in that rule that is going to help point them to Christ?
  - Be able to “back-up” your rules and restrictions with Bible verses.

## BUILD A POSITIVE HERITAGE / LEGACY FOR YOUR FAMILY<sup>3</sup>

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- “I shall leave this book with you as a legacy of my dearest love, desiring the Lord to make it far greater and sweeter legacy than all those carnal legacies that are left by the high and mighty ones of the earth to their nearest and dearest relations.”<sup>4</sup>
- As Brooks points out, there are many things that the world sees as important to leave as a legacy or heritage for your family. **He also says that his dearest love, that for Christ, is what he desires to leave behind.**
- Families can prove highly skilled at nursing a bitterness regarding some wrong suffered.
- You may be part of a family which loathes getting together for the holidays. Perhaps you somehow “always” have to work when the family parties happen.
- Do you have people in your family that when their name is mentioned, everyone groans? Maybe it is someone who is labeled as a cheapskate because he only buys used gifts for everyone.
- Perhaps someone stole the family fortune and now your family has split their ties with one another.
- When dealing with your kids, your spouse or your own heart, *how do you deal with these things?*
- Building a positive family heritage / legacy is going to take work because none of us come from a perfect family.
- We all have family members who may rub us the wrong way, who have taken what we have said the wrong way and they may just be someone that we struggle to get along with for any length of time.
- If you have kids, how do you describe those family members to them? If you are without kids, how do you talk about your family with your spouse? Single...how do you prepare your heart to meet with your family that you may not really want to have face time with?
- Here are a couple of ways that you can build a positive heritage for your family. Your family may not have this type of focus now, that’s okay. Every family must start somewhere.

### Teach forgiveness

- The discipline of forgiveness is essential to building your family and enhancing your heritage.<sup>5</sup>
- What happens when someone in your family sins against you?
- Forgiveness is something that we can only do because of God’s grace. Something may have happened to you in the past and how you react (or continue to react) will communicate to your kids how they are to react as well.

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<sup>3</sup> Kent Hughes and Barbara Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Family*, Revised Edition. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 22.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Brooks *Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices*, 1652.

<sup>5</sup> Kent Hughes and Barbara Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Family*

- When we teach forgiveness, we are showing our kids that God’s grace and mercy are enough. We are choosing to show love and kindness to someone who has wronged us.
- We must discipline our own hearts to forgive those who have wronged us.
- After we forgive someone, we must be careful not to keep bringing those wrongs up.
- If you have a family that has deep hurts and a long history of sin, this may be difficult but it is something that can be achieved through the grace of God.
- While teaching forgiveness, it is also important to teach how to ask for forgiveness. Nobody goes through life without sinning against someone.
- We teach our families by doing this discipline. Spouses seek each other’s forgiveness when they have been wrong, and parents seek the forgiveness of their children when they sin against them.
- This is not only setting the household up for peace but also building a discipline of forgiveness.

### **Cultivate positive attitudes & focusing on the good.**

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- This is more than being positive for the sake of being positive.
- This is not a mere exercise in thinking that everything is okay.
- This is displaying a belief for our children to see that we truly know God is going to take the current situation that you are in and use it for good.
- This is not looking for the “silver lining” but knowing that you may not understand, but God does.
- This is teaching your kids (or your spouse) how to train their minds to think on things from God.
- **Philippians 4:8-9 “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things. The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.”**
- When you have hard times in your family, where does your mind go? When you train your own mind and the minds of those in your family to think on these things, you are teaching them Biblical principles which are going to serve them throughout their lives.
- Notice the promise that Paul has with this, *and the God of peace will be with you.*
- If we decide to rather entertain false or negative thoughts, **we are not going to have the peace which is promised.** We are going to rather have an unsettled mind and that translates into an unsettled life.
- No matter what life circumstance we are in, if we are born again, there is always a good that we can focus on. We have been saved, our sins are forgiven, and we will one day be with Christ.

## BUILD AN ETERNAL HERITAGE / LEGACY FOR YOUR FAMILY

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- In building a heritage, Christians have a vast advantage over those who do not know Christ. Scripture says, “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Cor. 5:17). Gone with the old are a life dominated by sin and the power of destructive relational habits that inhibit a healthy heritage; come are a new heart, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and a new moral sensitivity and power to do right. **No matter what your past heritage, all is new in Christ. Christians have a deep reservoir of heritage from which to draw—one that is grounded not in fleeting life but in eternity.**<sup>6</sup>

### God is your heavenly father

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- Relating to God as Father can be difficult for those who have had extremely poor earthly fathers, but it is not impossible because everyone can imagine what a good father is like. As parents we must discipline this blessed reality into our minds as essential to our heritage—right now, in this world. We must passionately believe it.<sup>7</sup>
- As we believe that we have a good heavenly Father and we live out that reality, we are setting the example for our children and our spouse.
- You live as if God is going to take care of your needs, because He will. It is this faith that you are able to show and pass down to your kids. It is this faith which is going to encourage your spouse to keep going.
- **Psalm 103:13 “Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him.”**
- We need to have this belief in our own hearts so that our children will as well.
- As a father, you are pointing your children to the ultimate Father, the perfect Father, the Father that will never leave them nor forsake them. As flawed as you are, their heavenly Father is not.

### Building a culture of prayer

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- As you are training your children and building your family’s heritage, we must not forget about the importance of prayer.
- **Matthew 5:44 “But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...”**
- When you are wronged, when things come against you that you do not expect, how do you react? How do you teach your children to react?

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<sup>6</sup> Kent Hughes and Barbara Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Family*, Revised Edition. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2007), 26.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

- As Jesus says, we are to pray. Prayer is not a “last resort,” and it is not a way of doing nothing. Prayer is setting your heart right before God, asking Him for needed wisdom and seeking the way you are to go.
- Are you praying for your child’s salvation? Are you praying with your children for the salvation of your family members? Their friends, teachers, or others in their life?
- **Romans 10:1** “Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation.”
- Paul prayed for his countrymen (Israel) to be saved.
- As Paul is giving a list of what it looks like to not be conformed to the world, he says in **Romans 12:12** “...rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer...”
- Praying with your family and for them shows that you love them, care for them and take an interest in what’s happening in their life.

### **Building a culture of hope**

- **Romans 12:12** “...rejoicing in hope, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer...”
- Our families and children get to hear how bad things are and how much worse they are going to get. We live in a hopeless society. A society which thinks the best way to preserve itself is to kill itself.
- We live in a time when people don’t know what gender they are, who they love, how to dress, etc. We need to be able to instill hope in our children that there is far more to life than what they know.
- This means that we too must have this hope. Our hope is not in a government, it is not in an educational system, it is not in anything other than Christ Himself.
- This is where we need to point our children if we want to leave a lasting and worthwhile legacy.
- **Galatians 2:20** “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.”
- We have hope because it is Christ who lives in me, it is faith in Christ that we live by. We are no longer known as the old man and bound to sin and destruction but known now as new (**2 Cor 5:17**).