

A BRIEF HISTORY OF FAMILIES

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(acknowledgment to Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*)

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Sermon in a sentence: Despite all the forces against it, God intends our families to be a places of love, worship, acceptance and safety.

Scriptures: Deut. 6:1-15; Psalm 78:1-8; Col. 3:12-21

From the beginning of time, God established families as the basic unit of society, the primary way in which human relationships are experienced and developed.

After creating Adam, God looked at the situation and said "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him" (or 'fit for him') (Gen. 2:18).

When God created Eve and brought her to Adam, he immediately recognized her as "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23). This was the inception of the human family, which God instituted for the benefit, blessing and continuity of the human species.

However, families have been under severe attack since day one! Families fight against exceptionally strong forces including Satan himself, to say nothing of our own inherent selfishness.

Let's take a quick look at some Bible families.

- **Adam and Eve: Adam followed his wife into sin, their relationship changed from one of equality to one of inequity and their eldest son murdered his younger brother (Gen. 3 - 4:15).**
- **Noah and his family served God faithfully and survived God's judgment. Subsequently, Noah got drunk, his middle son showed him great disrespect and Noah cursed him (Gen. 6:9 - 9:27).**
- **Abram and Sarah were childless, so Sarah gave her maid Hagar to him. The descendants of Hagar's son and Sarah's son have been fighting and killing each other ever since (Gen. 16; 21:1-3).**
- **Lot was a righteous man (2 Pet. 2:7-8), but he lived in such a manner that when he spoke to his sons-in-law warning them to flee God's judgment, he seemed like a jester to them (Gen. 19:12-14). He couldn't even lead his own wife to salvation (Gen. 19:26).**
- **The dysfunction, scheming and deception between Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Esau led to Jacob lying to his father, stealing his brother's blessing and having to run for his life (Gen. 25:21-34; Gen. 27)**
- **Then, Jacob's sons couldn't get along and ended up selling their brother Joseph into slavery and causing their father to believe he had been killed (Gen. 37:28,31-33). Thank God, there was unity and reconciliation before Jacob died, but even in his final prophesy and blessing regarding them, it was clear some of them had serious issues to deal with - things like violence, immorality and inconsistency (Gen. 49).**

(And all of that was just from Genesis, the 1st book of the Bible!)

We could speak about

- **Moses' family, (whose siblings rose up against him and his sister was struck with leprosy);**
- **Gideon's family, (who became idol worshipers and one brother killed 70 others);**
- **Eli's family, (who's son's were corrupt and immoral, desecrating the Tabernacle);**
- **Saul's family, (as he tried to kill his own son and chased his son-in-law all over Israel trying to kill him);**
- **David's family, (where one son raped his own sister and another son chased David off the throne trying to destroy him and steal the throne); or**
- **Job's family, (as his wife's best advice to him was to curse God and die)!**

You will quickly observe there is no such thing as the perfect family. The Bible is filled with stories of lying, hatred, murder and intrigue within the families of kings, priests, the rich, the poor and the powerful.

Hopefully you're saying "my family is nowhere close to those"! This should let us know that no matter what our current situation is, God can turn things around and help us to leave a positive mark on our world, even as those in the dysfunctional families we've just spoken about. The Lord has a strong interest in helping you and your family get to a place of health, happiness, love, support and joy - if you will allow Him to do His divine work in your home.

So, where do we begin? First, by asking ourselves some very important questions:

- **“What kind of family do I want?”**
- **“What were my goals and objectives when I started this journey?”**
- **“Where is our family now versus where we want to be?”**
- **“Am I willing to commit myself to doing what is required to build a successful family (with God’s help)?”**
- **“Have I already made so many mistakes that I believe there’s no hope for recovery?”**
- **“If I knew what to do, would I actually do it, or am I beyond caring?”**

There is no doubt that your home is under demonic attack. The devil’s design is to destroy anything good God has given for our benefit.

John 10:10 (NASB) The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

**But God has a different plan!
For husbands:**

Genesis 2:24 (NASB) For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.

Proverbs 5:18-19 (NASB) Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice in the wife of your youth. 19 As a loving hind and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; Be exhilarated always with her love.

Ecclesiastes 9:9 (NASB) Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun.

Ephesians 5:25 (NASB) Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her

1 Peter 3:7 (NASB) You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

For wives:

Esther 1:20 (NASB) "When the king's edict which he will make is heard throughout all his kingdom, great as it is, then all **women will give honor to their husbands**, great and small."

Proverbs 31:27 (NASB) She looks well to the ways of her household, And does not eat the bread of idleness.

1 Peter 3:1-4 (NASB) In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, **2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.** **3 Your adornment must not be merely external**—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; **4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.**

Colossians 3:18 (NASB) Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

For raising children:

Genesis 18:19 (NASB) "For I have chosen him, so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him."

Deuteronomy 6:1-15 (NASB) "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, 2 so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. 3 "O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. 4 "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! 5 "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 "You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. 8 "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. 10 "Then it shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, 11 and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied, 12 then watch yourself, that you do not forget the Lord who

brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 13 "You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name. 14 "You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, 15 for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.

Psalm 78:1-8 (NASB) Listen, O my people, to my instruction; Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. 2 I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, 3 Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us. 4 We will not conceal them from their children, But tell to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done. 5 For He established a testimony in Jacob And appointed a law in Israel, Which He commanded our fathers That they should teach them to their children, 6 That the generation to come might know, even the children yet to be born, That they may arise and tell them to their children, 7 That they should put their confidence in God And not forget the works of God, But keep His commandments, 8 And not be like their fathers, A stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation that did not prepare its heart And whose spirit was not faithful to God.

Proverbs 22:6 (NASB) Train up a child in the way he should go, Even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Ephesians 6:4 (NASB) Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Proverbs 19:18 (NASB) Discipline your son while there is hope, And do not desire his death.

And for children:

Colossians 3:20 (NASB) Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

Ephesians 6:1-3 (NASB) Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3 So that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

Proverbs 20:11 (NASB) It is by his deeds that a lad distinguishes himself If his conduct is pure and right.

We all have responsibilities to God and our families to do what is right and show forth His glory in our homes.

We know that, but we allow many things to steal away what God has for us and our families: multiple jobs, sports, entertainment, internet, friends, tiredness, lack of discipline, bitterness, unforgiveness, unfaithfulness, other interests, etc.

May God help us to start on the road back to experiencing His perfect will and plan for our homes, relationships and families.