

**MY  
FAMILY –  
A GIFT  
FROM  
GOD**

## MY FAMILY – A GIFT FROM GOD!

February 15, 2015

**Sermon in a sentence:** Everything God intends for our physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing should be found at home, within our family.

**Congregational reading:** Colossians 3:12-24 NKJV

**Scriptures (all NKJV):** Gen. 2:18-25; John 15:16a; Rev. 21:9; Col. 3:18-21; Rom. 12:9-10

Colossians 3:12-24 NKJV Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. <sup>14</sup> But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. <sup>17</sup> And *whatever* you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. <sup>18</sup> Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. <sup>19</sup> Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. <sup>20</sup> Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. <sup>22</sup> Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. <sup>23</sup> And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, <sup>24</sup> knowing

that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

In our society, we use words that we often don't fully understand and appreciate. Words like "family".

As the Ontario government has designated the third Monday in February as "Family Day", let us take a little time to celebrate our families.

What would your definition of family be?

A quick Google search yielded "About 417,000,000 results" in "0.20 seconds".

The 1<sup>st</sup> hit defines family as: "A group consisting of parents and children living together in a household".

The 2<sup>nd</sup> is similar, but a little more expansive:

1. A fundamental social group in society typically consisting of one or two parents and their children.
2. Two or more people who share goals and values, have long-term commitments to one another, and reside usually in the same dwelling place.

The U.S. Bureau of Census defines family as "a group of two people or more (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together".<sup>1</sup>

Bishop Desmond Tutu says: "You don't choose your family. They are God's gift to you, as you are to them."

---

<sup>1</sup> Quoted by Melanie Mallers, <http://cccfc.com/uploads/Family%20Studies/FS%2010/chil dren%20view%20on%20family-final.pdf>. Accessed 08/28/2012

**Barbara Ehrenreich, an American feminist and political activist says: “At best the family teaches the finest things human beings can learn from one another – generosity and love. But it is also, all too often, where we learn nasty things like hate, rage and shame.” As she notes, family has the ability to bring out both the best and the worst in us!**

.....

**The first account we have of a family in scripture is recorded in Genesis 2 as God looks at Adam and observes that it is not good for him to be alone. In response to his need, He creates Eve to be his companion and helper.**

**When God brings her to him, Adam responds in a manner that gives us a wonderful insight into what family is all about, and how we should think about it.**

**“And Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”” (Gen. 2:23)**

**So our first, basic understanding of family is that we are joined together by blood – bone of bone, flesh of flesh. Certainly, this is how a child comes into a family, and they grow up with the understanding that they come out of, and are given life by their parents.**

**But the very next verse expands our understanding into what every man and woman experiences as they enter into the life-long covenant called marriage:**

**“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” (Gen2:24)**

**This verse indicates that we can actually *choose* who our**

**husband or wife will be, separate ourselves from mother and father and begin an exclusive, new family together.**

**(We see this perfectly modeled by God Himself as He *chose* the Church to be His bride, eternally linking Himself to us!)**

**“You did not choose Me but I chose you....” (John 15:16a)**

**Then one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls filled with the seven last plagues came to me and talked with me, saying, "Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." (Rev. 21:9)**

**We are now a part of God's family!**

**Here is the big problem we find in today's society, as stated by Pope John Paul II: "The great danger for family life, in the midst of any society whose idols are pleasure, comfort and independence, lies in the fact that people close their hearts and become selfish."**

**In other words, some people come to the place where they believe family life is 'all about ME!' *My* way and what *I* want, and if I don't get it, I'm gone! How many times have we seen this attitude play itself out in both our natural and spiritual families!**

**This is one of the main reasons why I believe God puts us into families from birth. As a little child is going through all the tantrums and turmoil of wanting her own way and not getting it, she just has to learn to deal with it, because she's not yet old enough, smart enough and bold enough to run away from home!**

**That's why it is so crucial for parents to be parents to their children, not pamperers and facilitators of bad behaviour. If we don't teach our children that the world doesn't**

**revolve around them, they will grow up to become spoiled teens and adults, without respect for anyone or anything. This also sets them up for very bad one-sided relationships in the future.**

**We are meant to learn the important lessons of submission and obedience, fairness and selflessness in the context of a family, where love reigns, and where we are treasured by those who around us.**

**A parent, a teacher, a pastor, a boss, a coach, or whoever may be over us in a particular setting will not always be right, or treat us with kid gloves, the way we would want to be treated! In those cases, the lessons in understanding and forgiveness we learned at home as children will stand us in good stead.**

**At other times, the things those above us may say or do are absolutely right and necessary, and we need to receive their correction with a humble spirit, and not throw a tantrum or run away from home.**

**The truth is, everything God intends for our physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing should be modeled (and learned) at home within our family!**

**This is where we should learn about compassion, caring, unconditional love, truth and honesty, preferring others above ourselves, helpfulness, going the extra mile, self-giving, the value of time and attention, sharing dreams without ridicule, celebrating triumphs without jealousy, enduring defeats without shame, the blessing of boundaries, the joy of companionship and the intimacy of lovers.**

**(Yes, our children need to learn that spouses can actually love and respect each other in the context of a pure, loving,**

**committed marriage. This will provide them a stark contrast to what they typically see in our society.) Home and family is where we ought to learn “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One!” This is where we ought to learn of the saving power of Jesus’ name. This is where we pray for the daily empowering of the Holy Spirit to fulfill His mission in our world. This is where we pray for each other that the Lord will strengthen, uplift and preserve us until the day of His coming. This is where we study and discuss the Word of God so we can be formed in His image. This is what needs to happen in our homes and in our families.**

**Colossians 3:18-21 “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. 20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.”**

**Rom. 12:9-10 “Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.”**



**Consider the upbringing the young child Samuel received in his home in Ramathaim Zophim, under the loving care of his mother Hannah and his father Elkanah. He was a child born out of sincere prayer, with a father who was totally loving and supportive of his mother. Obviously he learned such respect for his elders that even when he heard what he thought was Eli’s voice in the middle of the night, he promptly jumped up and ran to him, with no thought of shouting an exasperated “WHAAATT??” from his bedroom!**

**It doesn't matter where you find yourself today in the process of building a Christian family. We must build well, to the honour and glory of our heavenly Father. As long as we are engaged in the process, we are headed in the right direction.**

**If things have been rough and you have given up, pick up your tools again and get back to work. This is an incredibly important activity that we must actively engage in!**

**It is crucial that we maintain and enhance our personal relationship with God, but He is looking to us for so much more than just that. He has blessed us with spouses, children, siblings, other relatives and dear friends that He wants us to help draw closer to Him.**

**The Lord is looking for us to establish and maintain thriving Christian families, because everything He intends for our physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing should be found at home, within our family!**

**Gather your family together and pray with them and for them.**

**Have a nice family dinner together, without cell phones and TV.**

**Take your family on a nice vacation, or 'staycation'.**

**Take your family bowling, to play mini-putt, to the zoo or the symphony - anything that you would enjoy doing together as a family.**

**Share life together with your family in the cocoon of unconditional love.**

