

PRINCIPLES FOR A GODLY FAMILY
(Lesson #1 – Male and Female)

Introduction –

The Family of God – Psalm 127:1-5

Breakdown of the family unit

If all else fails, read the directions

I. The Beginning

The Creation of male and female – Genesis 1:26-27 (Gender is at the level of the soul)

Male – Wild at heart – created outside the garden – Genesis 2:7-8 -- Moses, Jacob, Elijah, John the Immerser, Jesus – adventures in the wilderness. Desire for a battle to fight, an adventure to live, and a beauty to rescue.

Female – Wants to be wanted – created to be sought and desired. Woman wishes to be fought for. She wants an adventure to share. She wants a beauty to unveil.

God gave us eyes to see, ears to hear, wills that we might choose, and hearts that we might live. A man must know that he is powerful and has what it takes. A woman must know that she is beautiful and is worth fighting for.

Made for each other – Genesis 2:18-24

7 times at Creation, God says, “It is good.” Once He says, “It is not good...” It is not good for man to be alone. God has Adam name animals to help him feel alone. Man leaves and cleaves -- what God has joined, let no man separate – Matthew 19:3-9 (infidelity isn’t simply adultery, but “quitting”). You get what you deserve – Proverbs 18:22, Proverbs 19:14.

Responsibilities – Ephesians 5:22-33

Husband – Love his wife – leadership, consideration, honor.

Leadership – Lead by example and sacrifice. Husband is accountable for wife and family. He is responsible to work out problems within the family and to guide it. Don’t let wife lead by default. Don’t take the easy way out by declaring yourself the “owner” and your wife the “manager.”

Consideration – agape (sacrificial), phileo (friendship), and eros (physical). Five love languages – 1. Words of affirmation, 2. Quality time, 3. Gifts, 4. Acts of service, and 5. Physical touch. Let your wife know that she is the most important person in your life.

Honor – 1 Peter 3:7 – Lift up your wife. Your children will give her as much honor as you do. Encourage her – talk about your purpose, goals, and faith picture of your family. Take time to be sensitive – do the important, not the urgent.

Wife – Respect her husband – encourager, submissive, appreciative.

Encourager – wife is emotional hub of family – Proverbs 14:1. Some husbands don't want to go home, can hardly blame them. Husband should be top priority after God. Don't make mistake of putting children before husband. Proverbs 27:5 – important to express love and care. Don't put your husband down in front of your children or others – Proverbs 31:23.

Submissive – Willing submission; even God doesn't force people to do anything. Submission doesn't imply that husband is superior being – example of police officers. Husbands don't break your wives to depression, anger, or apathy. Wives entrust yourself to Him who judges righteously – 1 Peter 2:21-3:12

Appreciative – Express thanks for the sacrifices your husband makes with money, time, etc. Husband needs to know that what he is doing makes a difference and is worthwhile. Four most important 4-minute periods – 1) 1st 4 minutes in morning, 2) 1st 4 minutes after work, 3) last 4 minutes before work, 4) last 4 minutes before sleep.

PRINCIPLES FOR A GODLY FAMILY
(Lesson #2 – Two into One)

Genesis 2:21-24 – The two shall become one – Don DeWelt used to ask, “Which one?” It requires a lot more work to “stay in love” than to “fall in love.” Marriage begins with commitment and is sustained by discipline. Focus on maintenance and preventive care, not simply emergency care. There are two major obstacles in the process of joining two into one – 1) Selfishness, and 2) Lack of communication.

I. Finding a life partner – five essential elements for successful relationships. 1) Spiritual foundation – you can’t pound a square peg into a round hole. 2) Quality of character in love – you can’t love someone deeply whom you can’t trust deeply. 3) Maturity – willingness to accept responsibility. 4) Common interest – continue to develop things which you mutually enjoy. 5) Good disposition – the way a person takes life.

II. Selflessness – Luke 6:35-38. This is a really important concept – give, expecting nothing in return. Marriage can’t be 50 – 50, must both give much more than 50%. Best marriages are 100 – 100. I Corinthians 13 – isn’t talking about the way 2 people feel, but about the way they treat each other. “The trouble with us is me.” You can’t change your spouse, but you can change you – Matthew 7:1-5. Old person by nature is child of wrath – Ephesians 2:3. Selfishness leads to resentment and bitterness. The solution is to put on the new self – we have been given possession of everything in the heavenly realm, so there is no need to fight for possessions or rights in the physical. We can follow example of Christ who washed apostles’ feet, including Judas who betrayed Him. You draw a person to yourself as you die to yourself.

III. Communication – one of the most complex and emphasized topics of Scripture. Tower of Babel → Day of Pentecost. God stopped project with communication problems and started Church with clear communication. Our words result in eternal life or eternal punishment – Matthew 12:37, Proverbs 18:21. Couples spend only 27 minutes a week in focused conversation – Brecheen and Faulkner. 85-95% of problems in marriage go back to communication. Communication killers include: 1) difference between men and women, 2) overscheduling, 3) television, and 4) criticism. Dialogue is to love as blood is to the body. Good communicators are good listeners. Jesus emphasized that he who has ears to hear, needs to hear. Good listeners listen to another person all the way through. Actions speak louder than words – it is easier to act your way into a better way of feeling, than vice-versa. Suggestions to increase communication: 1) Describe how you feel. 2) Learn about your spouse’s interests. 3) Double reading – highlight in different colors. 4) Pray together. 5) Solitary prayer and meditation – time to prioritize. 6) Use a scale for intensity (1-10). 7) Written communication.

PRINCIPLES FOR A GODLY FAMILY
(Lesson #3 – Imparting Faith to the Coming Generations)

Introduction – Psalm 127:1-5 – Children are a gift of the Lord; make sure you're on the Lord's side. Children are arrows in the hand of a warrior – arrows do you no good unless you can aim them and hit the target. What is the target; what's the goal? Our goal for our children is the same as God's goal for His children – to help them live by faith!

I. Leaving a Legacy

Proverbs 22:6 – God has promised us that *if we train our child in the right way, then* he will not depart when he gets older. Proverbs 13:22 – While faith can't be inherited, the greatest legacy that a man can leave to his grandchildren is a strong spiritual foundation for life. Psalm 78:1-8 – A faithful man will teach his children to teach their children. The torch of faith will be passed from generation to generation. Exodus 34:6-7 – While God visits the iniquities of fathers to the third and fourth generation as the fruits of sinful man, God keeps His lovingkindness to a thousand generations as a heritage of the faithful (see Psalm 105:8-11). A good example of legacy is the house of the Rechabites – Jeremiah 35.

II. Imparting of Faith

Romans 4:13-15 – faith cannot be inherited; it is not granted through physical lineage. Faith must be generated, must be built in the heart of an individual. Malachi 4:6 – if our children are going to have faith, we must win their hearts. As parents, we really need to pray for discipline and wisdom – James 3:17-18. Many religious parenting books, classes, etc. take the approach of law. What has the Bible taught us about the fruits of law? **DEATH!** Instead of imposing law, we need to have wisdom to work with children on an individual basis. Don't compare children with others – who determines what's normal? As parents and as a congregation, we want to help each individual be all that they can be. Wisdom from above is **PURE** – no other interests than that child. Children don't really belong to us; they belong to God. God didn't give us children so that we could live vicariously through them. He gave them to us for a short time so that we could help them learn to live for Him. It's not about the parents; it's God's home, so we need to ask what is best to help this child get to where he/she needs to go. Wisdom from above is **PEACABLE** – peaceful environment. If mom and dad are always fighting or pulling different directions, how do the kids feel? One of the major problems with divorce or dysfunctional families is the impact it has on children for the rest of their lives. Wisdom from above is **GENTLE** – it takes true strength to act in a gentle manner. Children are real people; they have souls and feelings; they even have tough days. Gently guide, teach, and coach when dealing with children and their emotions. Wisdom from above is **REASONABLE** – one sure way to provoke children to anger is to have unreasonable expectations. We need to honestly assess the present position of our children and set achievable goals for them. Unreasonable goals cause resentment, which leads to rebellion. Wisdom from above is **MERCIFUL** – children make mistakes. Show mercy when they spill milk, break things, are careless, etc. Save wrath for willful disobedience. Wisdom from above is

UNWAVERING – be consistent. Whatever your boundaries are, be consistent in enforcing them. Parents need to win every time. Wisdom from above is **WITHOUT HYPOCRISY** – guess who knows everything about you. You can't hide from your children – the apple doesn't fall very far from the tree. If you ask your child to have a certain behavior, you must model it. Our goal is to produce in our children righteousness by faith. “The seed whose fruit is righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

PRINCIPLES FOR A GODLY FAMILY (Lesson #4 – Training our Children)

Introduction – Psalm 127:1-5 – Aim the arrows! If you want your children to be average, do the average things. If you want to raise winners, you must do exceptional things. Raise children who will change the world. Proverbs 22:6 – we must *train* our children. It is easier to raise boys and girls than to fix men and women.

I. The Beginning

What is the beginning of knowledge? Of wisdom? Proverbs 1:7 and 9:10 make it clear that the beginning of both knowledge and wisdom is the *fear* of the Lord. Where does that fear of the Lord originate with our children – from discipline administered by parents, particularly the father – Hebrews 12:4-11. Fear is the beginning, not the end! In our relationship with God, we know that perfect love casts out fear – 1 John 4:18. If we want to have a two-way loving relationship with our children as they mature into adulthood, it must start with a healthy fear of dad when they are young.

II. Necessity of Training

Good parents are good teachers, motivators, and coaches; they are good managers – 1 Timothy 3:4. Managers work with personnel they have (you can't fire your children). Understand the differences among your children. Mark out boundaries, assign responsibilities, communicate and teach achievement, reward and praise accomplishments, enforce and punish unacceptable behavior. Set ***reasonable*** expectations – take into account personality, maturity, strengths, and weaknesses. Reward maximum effort. Respond to rebellion – calm, but firm. Parents really earn respect (all respect is ultimately earned, not demanded) in response to challenges. One sure thing if you have children – there will be confrontation. Parents need to win every time – if you have a strong-willed child, you must have a stronger will – Philippians 2:13, Ezekiel 3:8-9. The goal is to shape the child's will – disciplined, determined, with a humble spirit. Disciplined children are good disciples with good habits. The most important thing you can do is to teach your child self-discipline – to do the right thing even when he/she doesn't want to. Titus 2:3-5 – Older women are to encourage the younger women (invest in them) – if people come to you, you have earned their respect; if they don't, you haven't. Moms are super important – formative years.

III. General Principles for Successful Parenting

1. Love – unconditional love, regardless of performance
2. Vision – great aspirations
3. Attitude – true belief in your kids, who they are and where they are going, brag (honestly) in front of others
4. Patience – nothing of value happens quickly, be patient and steady

IV. Specific Suggestions

1. Spiritual Foundation – children who love God and love people – Deuteronomy 6:4-9
2. Communication – children who can relate to their parents and talk about themselves – talk lots and listen lots (moms have kids at feet, no T.V.), read to increase development and education
3. Interaction – build imagination, creativity, and accomplishment – have children actively participate in playing, shopping, projects, etc.
4. Discipline – make disciples; develop self-discipline in children with the right attitude – teaching, coaching, pushing, pulling – how to set goals and achieve them
5. Competition – help children become true winners by understanding winning and losing – maintain humility in excellence, learning from mistakes and failures for future success
6. Working – children who are hard workers and are excellent at a particular skill – build strong work ethic and confidence, do things right the first time, every time.

Suggested Reading

To Train Up a Child, Michael and Debi Pearl

Bringing up Boys, Dr. James Dobson

Boys! Shaping Ordinary Boys into Extraordinary Men, William Beausay II

Girls! Helping Your Little Girl Become an Extraordinary Woman, William & Kathy Beausay

Raised Tough, Taylor Caldwell