



Equipping Hour

The Unity of the Family

Key Verse: Proverbs 19:11

“A man’s discretion makes him slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook a transgression.”

Overview

The way society looks today is a reflection and result of the families of our society. When families are broken, this will have a devastating impact on society. As Ken Connor, writer for the Christian Post, says, “Traditional marriage (specifically, Christian marriage) has through the centuries served as a critical civilizing force in society. It has been, quite literally, the glue that holds communities and peoples together.”¹ When marriage is broken, the family is broken. And when the family is broken, the glue becomes weak, and society begins to crack and fall apart.

Over the last two decades, the marriage rate in America has declined, resulting in a lower divorce rate. However, while the rate of divorce seems to be declining in America, the cohabitation rate is rising.² The number of children who are growing up in single-parent homes is also on the rise. In 2019, Pew Research came out with an article that said this, “In the U.S.—the country with the world’s largest Christian population—about a quarter of children live in single-parent homes, making them more likely than children in any other country to do so. American children in Christian homes are just as likely as those in unaffiliated homes (23% each) to live in single-parent situations.”³

Ephesians 5 and 6 clearly shows that children need both a father and a mother to raise them. In Ephesians 6:4, God’s command is to “fathers.” That word in the Greek is a masculine, plural meaning it can be translated as “parents” referring to both fathers and mothers. God commands parents to “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (6:4). For parents to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, it begins with the parents having a strong marriage. A husband and wife must keep their marriage strong so that the family remains united. As the parent’s relationship continues to be strengthened and united, that will flow down to the children. The result will be a strong, united family.

How does a family grow in strength and unity? There are two key virtues that will help a family remain solid. These are love and forgiveness. Even though a Christian couple has been redeemed by Christ, there is still a battle with the fallen, sinful flesh. This means Christian couples will sin against each other and fail each other at some point in their marriage. This means Christian parents will sin against their children and children will sin against their parents. This means disappointment and conflict will arise in the family. However, the key to overcoming the conflict in the family is love and forgiveness.

¹ <https://www.christianpost.com/news/marriage-matters.html>

² <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/11/06/marriage-and-cohabitation-in-the-u-s/>

³ <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/12/12/religion-and-living-arrangements-around-the-world/>

A Loving Family

1. Mark 12:30–31. What are the two greatest commandments? _____

2. John 13:34–35. What does Jesus command us to do? _____
 - a. What are we showing by our love? _____
3. 2 Timothy 3:1–2. What will people be “in the last days”? _____
4. Colossians 3:19. What is the duty of the husband? _____

5. Titus 2:3–4. What are older women to teach the younger women? _____

6. Philippians 2:2–4. How can one maintain love and unity of spirit? _____

7. 1 Peter 4:8. What are believers to do “above all”? _____
8. Colossians 3:14. What does love produce? _____

“Training yourself to love involves doing loving things for the other person, whether or not you feel like doing them. It involves putting their interests and welfare above your own. It involves sacrificial giving of yourself to others for their sakes, not for the sake of appreciation or returned love or favor.”

—John MacArthur

A Forgiving Family

1. 1 Peter 4:8. What does love cover? _____

2. Proverbs 19:11. What is man’s glory? _____
3. Ephesians 4:32. What is to be our grounds and motivation to forgive? _____

4. Ephesians 5:1. What are we doing when we forgive? _____

5. Colossians 3:12–13. What are we demonstrating when we forgive? _____

“No act is more like God than forgiveness. Never are you more like Him than when you forgive someone who has offended you.”
—John MacArthur

A Churched Family

1. Hebrews 10:23–25. What must we not forsake? _____
2. What happens when we gather? _____

3. 1 Corinthians 14:26. What is the purpose of gathering as a church? _____

How can you be a churched family?⁴

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Application

1. What are ways you can grow in your love for your spouse and children?
2. What sins are you holding on to that you need to forgive?
3. How important is the church in your family’s life?

⁴ Paul Shirley, “The Christian Home” (Wilmington, DE: Grace Community Church, 2019), 98-104.