



• PASTOR'S STUDY •

Jews around the world will be celebrating Passover this year on April 15. The Passover is a holiday of remembrance and prophecy. It celebrates God delivering Israel out of Egypt. (Exodus 12) The meal and readings are to be enjoyed as a family. The experience is a re-telling of God's deliverance so that future generations will not forget what God accomplished so long ago.

As followers of Jesus the Messiah, we have the privilege of retelling the gospel of deliverance through Jesus the Messiah. Every time we observe the Lord's Supper we "proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." (I Cor. 11:26) The gospel story needs to be told and retold to our families and church family again and again. The gospel proclaims that sinners can find new life and forgiveness of sin by trusting in Jesus Christ's perfect life of obedience and all-sufficient atoning death on the cross and resurrection from the dead. As we reflect upon Christ's crucifixion on Good Friday (April 18th @ 7:30pm) and Resurrection Sunday (April 20) I hope and pray all of us will be telling and re-telling the story of God's redemption in our homes and with each other in the days and weeks ahead. We need to once again hear the old, old story of Jesus and His love. (In keeping with the well known hymn.) There are many reasons to find joy in the significance of what God accomplished in Jesus Christ so long ago. Peter offered this reminder: "...through [Christ we] are believers in God, who raised [Jesus] from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God." (I Peter 1:21)

Pastor Mark Musser.



Christian Family

Busy All the Time: The Fallout from Over-Programming Children

The Gospel offers followers of Christ the power to lean against this cultural norm of madness and to experience freedom

Wake up at 5:00AM. Grind out 5,000 yards in the pool. Cram in some homework. Attend six academic classes. Sneak in lunch during biology lab. Meet for Student Government. Pump out an article for the newspaper. Lift weights. Swim another 7,000 yards. Study, study, study. Fall asleep on the breakfast room table at 11:30. Do it all over again.

This is not the schedule for the President of the United States; this was the schedule of a sixteen-year-old boy back in 1996. It was my schedule. It was miserable, but I wasn't aware of this because it was so normal. Every kid in my community lived on the same treadmill. As a ten year old, I would attend two swim practices and two baseball practices many summer days with golf clinic mixed in.

I ran on my treadmill in the 1990's, but the problem of child over-scheduling has grown even worse over the past twenty years. Below the problem of over-scheduled teens resides a mentality comprised of fear, obligation, and performance that robs families of precious intimate time and negatively impacts the mental health of children. The Gospel offers followers of Christ the power to lean against this cultural norm of madness and to experience freedom. For people who do not know the Gospel, this freedom may make Jesus the most attractive thing they've ever considered.

Framing the Problem and Recognizing the Negative Effects on Children

The issue of over-scheduling exists predominately in suburban settings where the primary goal is gaining admittance to an upper-tier college. Consequently, families pile on extracurricular activities from the basics of football, debate, piano, and track to the extras of ACT tutors, batting coaches, speed trainers, and summer scholar programs.

Parents should not feel shame for wanting to fully develop their children and encourage them to grow in their gifts. Luke remarks that Jesus grew in wisdom, stature, favor with man, and favor with God. Some commentators use this verse to categorize four areas where Jesus matured as a man: intellectual, physical, spiritual, and social. Furthermore, studies show that students who are not encouraged to pursue extracurricular activities and have little after-school supervision are some of the most likely to struggle with substance abuse. Part of a parent's role is to help a child discover his or her gifts and to encourage the use of them for God's glory.

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<http://www.rootedministry.com/articles/busy-all-time-part-1-fallout-over-programming-children>

Memory Verse

He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. - Romans 4:25

Can Christian Theology Save the Family?

My wife and I recently returned to the restaurant where we spent our final Saturday evening before our wedding. As we settled in, our eyes focused across the room to the table where we sat 16 months ago, sharing plans of travel, butchering the pronunciations of French dishes, and preparing to create a family.

We recollected how a middle-aged couple at the bar overheard our conversation that night and turned to offer their experienced input. “Just wonderful, you two look so in love,” chimed the tipsy husband. “Go large with the wedding,” the wife interjected, “everything goes downhill from there.” Her cynical tone and disillusioned eyes undermined her husband’s every word.

Evil Hits Close to Home

It didn’t take long after our wedding for us to discover that the opportunities to wreck a family are legion. “An entire army of evils besieges the life of the family,” wrote the Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck (1854-1921) in his timeless work, [The Christian Family](#). Bavinck listed just a handful of evils that threaten the well-being of the home:

the infidelity of the husband, the stubbornness of the wife, the disobedience of the child; both the worship and the denigration of the woman, tyranny as well as slavery, the seduction and the hatred of men, both idolizing and killing children; sexual immorality, human trafficking, concubinage, bigamy, polygamy, polyandry, adultery, divorce, incest; unnatural sins whereby men commit scandalous acts with men, women with women . . . the stimulation of lust by impure thoughts, words, images . . . glorifying nudity and elevating even the passions of the flesh in the service of deity.



When “marriage loses its delight,” Bavinck observed, “it turns into unbearable drudgery.” The couple at the bar knew this grim reality all too intimately. The truth is that no family evades the consequences of evil.

Is the Family a Failed Project?

“There has never been a time when the family faced so severe a crisis as the time in which we are now living,” Bavinck declared. During his age, scientists attempted to reduce the origin and nature of the family to naturalistic explanations. Monogamy, fidelity, and nurture had no legitimate moral or sacred foundation. Science determined the utility of the family, rendering it too flawed for modern people. Intellectuals suggested replacing marriage with free love, familial bonds with social compacts, and parenting with scientific nurturing methods.

Bavinck found that shifts in artistic expression subverted the family as well:

Today, now that realism has taken over in art . . . people take pleasure in describing life after the wedding and in marriage, presenting it as one huge disappointment, as an intolerable cohabitation, as a desperate situation of misery and duress. Poetry is then introduced into this situation by means of sinful passion, forbidden affection, unnatural lust; these are glorified and smothered with glitter at the cost of love and fidelity in marriage.

There never has been an ideal age for the family—and we certainly aren’t in one today. From music award ceremonies to Woody Allen films, popular culture has not smiled kindly on the family. Even more, the hunger for financial success has brought injury to many existing families and diminished the appeal to create new ones.

According to Time magazine’s [Top 10 Things We Learned About Marriage in 2013](#), “our in-laws have an evolutionary reason to hate us,” “low drama divorce is possible,” and “same-sex marriage keeps winning.” Number one on the list concludes: “a person could get dizzy trying to pin down the definition of a family.” Dizzying indeed.

Does the problem lie in the institution of the family itself? Would the world be better off if we abandoned the family altogether?

Call for a Theology of the Family

Bavinck believed that Christian theology alone could offer hope for the family in his day and ours. He wrote, “Christians may not permit their conduct to be determined by the spirit of the age, but must focus on the requirement of God’s commandment,” showing “in word and deed what an inestimable blessing God has granted to humanity” with the gift of family. The following points—deduced from Bavinck’s work—provide a helpful foundation toward developing a theology of the family.

God created the family beautiful and good. God is the most committed advocate for the family. “The history of the human race begins with a wedding,” and God himself officiated it. He created a compatible partner for Adam as a gift, blessed the couple, and commanded them to bear his image, multiply families, and subdue the earth ([Genesis 1:28](#)). As Bavinck said, “God’s artistic work comes into existence bearing the name of home and family.” God created humans to reflect the relational love within the Trinity, and he appointed the family as the supreme instrument toward this end.

Sin has ravaged the family. When Adam and Eve first disobeyed God, they “sinned not only as individuals” but “also as husband and wife, as father and mother.” Sin delivered a devastating blow to the home. It introduced “disunity between Adam and Eve,” filled “Cain with hatred against Abel and incited him to fratricide,” and it “led Lamech into polygamy.” Sin poisons the health of our relationships—first with God and consequently with spouse, parent, child, sibling, and neighbor.

APRIL 2014

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 Fusion Youth Group	2 Mid-Week Bible Study and Prayer	3	4 Ignite Youth Group Men's Volleyball @ 9.00 A.M	5 Café Chocolat Women's Retreat @ 9:00 A.M
6 Sunday School @ 9:45 A.M Worship Service @ 11 A.M	7	8 Fusion Youth Group	9 Mid-Week Bible Study and Prayer Men's Romans Study 7:30 P.M @ Church	10	11 Ignite Youth Group	12 Men In The Morning
13 Sunday School @ 9:45 A.M Worship Service @ 11 A.M	14	15 Fusion Youth Group	16 Mid-Week Bible Study and Prayer	17	18 Ignite Youth Group Good Friday @ 7:30 P.M	19
20 Sunrise Service in the Church Field Easter Sunday	21	22 Fusion Youth Group	23 Mid-Week Bible Study and Prayer Men's Romans Study 7:30 P.M @ Church	24	25 Ignite Youth Group	26 Men In The Morning
27 Sunday School @ 9:45 A.M Worship Service @ 11 A.M	28	29 Fusion Youth Group	30 Mid-Week Bible Study and Prayer			