

Godly family relationships

Family is God's idea, not the creation of man. However sin has wreaked havoc in the family. World family statistics tell us that, in 2015 in South Africa, 32% of children live with 2 parents, 35% live with 1 parent, and 33% live with no parents. If the family is the cornerstone of society then it is no wonder that South African society is as it is. God intended strong healthy families and personal salvation has its outworking in the family.

Colossians 3: 18 – 21

1) Family is God's idea

- Genesis 2: 18 – 20, 23 – 25
- From the beginning God made families starting with the husband and wife
 - Genesis 2: 18 The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.
 - God knew that it wasn't good for man to be alone and would make a suitable helper for him.
 - The same Hebrew word used for helper is used for God as our helper (Psalm 33: 20; 70: 5)
 - Proverbs 18: 22 He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favour from the LORD.
 - Thus God didn't make the wife to be the servant of the husband but to make up for what was lacking – to be a strength to him. To enable him to do what he wouldn't be able to do on his own.
 - It was after naming the animals that again it was stated that no suitable helper was found.
 - This could mean that Adam alone could not reproduce by himself as the animals could.
- The husband and wife are to be one flesh
 - They are to leave – forsake, relinquish the hold of – mother and father
 - They are to be united with one another as one flesh – inseparable until death
 - God intended one man to be with one woman for their entire lifetime.
- God had included children in His purpose for the family
 - He was commanded to be fruitful, and increase in number. (Genesis 1: 28)
 - Psalm 127: 3 Children are a heritage from the LORD, offspring a reward from him.
- The family is a symbol of God and His people
 - God is a husband: Isaiah 54: 5 "For your husband is your Maker, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth.
 - Israel is referred to as a bride: Jeremiah 31: 4 Israel, my bride, I will rebuild you. You will be a country again. You will pick up your tambourines again. You will dance with all the other people who are having fun.
 - Christ and the church: Ephesians 5: 31 - 32 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

2) Families are destroyed by sin

- In Genesis 3 we see that Adam and Eve sinned which affected their marriage relationship
- How were families affected?
- Whilst they lived as one flesh in wholesome relationship accusations against each other infiltrated the marriage.
 - Adam blamed eve for them eating the forbidden fruit. Even blamed the devil. No personal responsibility was taken for their wrong doing. It's always someone else's fault.
 - Whilst they live a life together without shame sin brought shame into the relationship. Trust and honesty were broken.
 - Pain entered the family particularly in the way of childbirth.
 - The godly family structure was obscured by sin with women desiring the man's position as the head of the home and the man dominating his wife.
 - Sibling rivalry was introduced with the first children – Cain and Abel.
 - As time went on adultery, and divorce were introduced
- The stats of parentless homes in South Africa is due to sin.
 - Some cultures believe that a woman has to prove that she can have children before they can get married!

- Cohabitation instead of marriage is becoming the norm.
- Whereas the family was intended to be the cornerstone of society it has failed and thus we live in a failed society.
- Whenever the norms of God are substituted by ungodly norms we will have failure.
- Moses permitted divorce because it had become the norm but divorce was never within God's will
 - Matthew 19: 8 Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning."

3) The restoration of families

- With salvation the family structures are restored.
- God intends for renewed families in Him to reflect His relationship with His people again.
 - If we don't have a wholesome family then we aren't honouring God
- The godly family order is restored
- Wives submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord
 - Husbands love your wives and don't be harsh with them. Love them as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. Ephesians 5: 23 – 32 in fact tells husbands to love their wives 4 times.
 - Submission is never demanded. A wife will always be ready to submit to a husband who loves her. And normally resists submitting to a dominant husband.
 - Ephesians 5: 21 says "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" and then goes on to "Wives, submit to your husbands"
 - There is a mutual respect for each other in marriage.
 - However Ephesians 5: 22 clearly states that the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. This is God's order in the family.
- Children are obey and honour their parents
 - Honouring parents is the 5th commandment of the 10 commandments.
 - It is very unfortunate that honour and respect have largely been lost in today's children.
 - We can't always blame the children as the parents are often to blame not raising their children to be respectful
 - Fathers are commanded not to embitter or exasperate their children.
 - Don't live lives that will turn children away from the Lord and to disrespect authority.
 - Ephesians 6: 4 tell fathers to bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.
 - Proverbs 22: 6 Start (initiate, discipline, train up) children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.
- Deuteronomy 6: 5 – 7 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.
- Joshua 24: 15 As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.