

INTRO:

Today I'd like to let you know we are talking about Family. Not so much of how we see family, but what God intended for family to look like. As we are in this series "Christ Above All" I want to speak on the subject "A Family Re-Union."

Of course **re** - means to do again and **union** the action or fact of joining or being joined. I believe today's word is going to be sort of like family: It will make you laugh, make you cry, some of it may not taste good, but it is good for us.

BOOK FOUNDATION: Instructions for Christian Households

Colossians 3:18-21 New Living Translation (NLT)

Instructions for Christian Households

18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.

20 Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord.

21 Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged.

Point #1 ~ FOUNDATION:

Since the beginning of man's life on earth, the family has served as the cornerstone of society. The standard for society from the beginning of time was set by the integrity of the family.

In the Book of Genesis, we read the story of creation through God's direct intervention. God breathed life into Adam and then removed one of his ribs to create a woman by the name of Eve. Notice He took a rib from the man's side, signifying man as an equal to woman and she to him. He did not take a piece of the man's head so that woman would dominate him, nor a bone from the his foot so that he should dominate her.

Genesis 1:27-28 New Living Translation (NLT)

27 So God created human beings[c] in his own image.

In the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

28 Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."

We must understand the foundation of family in-order-to live it out as God intended. The human family within itself teaches us about God. I'd like to bring your attention to the Holy Trinity: the Christian Godhead as one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This means that He is a triune God!

Define: consisting of three in one

Tri - meaning three & **Unity** - meaning one

When we reflect on the nature of the Holy Trinity, we see it is a loving, self-giving unity of three Divine Persons—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. This loving union is procreative (capable of reproducing; generative), in that the Holy Trinity brought creatures into existence to share in its' divine love for all eternity.

Likewise (As the Trinity), a husband and wife join in a loving, self-giving, procreative union. It is not merely about a individual man and woman. It is about the human family itself bearing the very image of God. Together man & woman form a union of love from which proceeds the fruitfulness of children. The family is a representation of the ongoing humanity, which is God's creation. Anything outside of this goes against the divine nature and plan for family!

The Trinity because of the love between its members and the fruitfulness of that love doesn't just create life and leave it alone. God loves what he creates, calls that creation into deep union with himself and rejoices in the life He shares with His creation.

~ **God loves what He creates...**

~ **Genesis 1:**(verses 4, 12, 18, 21, 25)

4 And God saw that the light was good.

12 The land produced vegetation—all sorts of seed-bearing plants, and trees with seed-bearing fruit. Their seeds produced plants and trees of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

18 to govern the day and night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

21 So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

25 God made all sorts of wild animals, livestock, and small animals, each able to produce offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

God calls His creation into deep union with Himself and rejoices

Romans 6:5 American Standard Version (ASV)

5 For if we have become [a]united with *him* in the likeness of his death, we shall be also *in the likeness* of his resurrection

Psalms 104:31

31 May the glory of the Lord endure forever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works—

Here the psalmist is exulting in a certainty that will come to pass. There is no doubt behind the shout, "May the glory of the Lord endure for ever!" "May the Lord rejoice in his works!"

Moms and dads don't just have babies, they love their children, rejoice in those children and work to create a communion of love that grows stronger in its unity. God extends an invitation to the world to join His family through the loving witness of your family.

NOTE: If families are called to be the picture of God's face to the world, we are held to a standard to assure the world sees the image of God when they look at our families. God wants your family to become an amazing work of art that shares His face and love to the world. God wants your family to paint a masterpiece with your lives that will change the world and have His children come home to Him.

If we are going to have foundation as a family there are three things I'd like to bring to your attention:

FOUNDATION:

- **Worship together**.... As a family you should go to God in Prayer, read His word, and assemble yourselves together under His authority. For when worship, we learn to love God together, which teaches us how to love one another.

1 John 4:19 New Living Translation (NLT)

19 We love each other, because He loved us first.

- **Love without limits**: The love between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit knows no bounds.

1 Corinthians 13:7 New Living Translation (NLT)

7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance.

Romans 15:5 New Living Translation (NLT)

5 May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus.

We cannot simply be a collection of individuals who so happen to share a roof and a data plan. Family time must be intentional. We must honor each other with inconvenience; because love inconveniences you.

A family that doesn't have time to be together is one whom has lost its foundation and cannot represent the togetherness of the Trinity. A family who can love, laugh, play, and rejoice together experiences a little heaven on earth.

Loving without limits doesn't mean that you allow someone to do what they want to do in-order-to keep them happy, but is about loving them enough to challenge them with what is right!

Hebrews 12:6 New Living Translation (NLT)

6 For the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child."

At this point I cannot let parents, husbands, and wives off the hook. Often we want to do what we want to do, but never ask ourselves the questions of: Is it beneficial for the family? If so, according to whose principle (yours or God)?

Family time and parent-child time must come first.

- **Induce Intimacy**: (w/ God and each other)

Openness, vulnerability and honesty

I'd like to provide an example of this with David.

David was down; his soul felt empty. He was honest and open enough to talk about it:

Psalm 35:11-18 New Living Translation (NLT)

11

Malicious witnesses testify against me.
They accuse me of crimes I know nothing about.

12

They repay me evil for good.
I am sick with despair.

13

Yet when they were ill, I grieved for them.
I denied myself by fasting for them,
but my prayers returned unanswered.

14

I was sad, as though they were my friends or family,
as if I were grieving for my own mother.

15

But they are glad now that I am in trouble;
they gleefully join together against me.
I am attacked by people I don't even know;
they slander me constantly.

16

They mock me and call me names;
they snarl at me.

17

How long, O Lord, will you look on and do nothing?
Rescue me from their fierce attacks.
Protect my life from these lions!

18

Then I will thank you in front of the great assembly.
I will praise you before all the people.

Like David, speak to God about all the challenges. Like wise families speak to each other. Do not pretend that all is well. Speak from the depth of your heart. Openness, vulnerability and honesty that draws you into an intimate relationship with God and each other.

As a family **Openness, vulnerability and honesty** must be key characteristics of the home. **There has to be relationship in Fathering & Mothering!** Parents should have time for one-on-one time with each of their children. This enables you to communicate the intimate love God has in His heart for you and them. When this doesn't happen it in-turn hinders intimacy from being created between parent and child.

NOTE: Intimacy is birthed out of the clarity a family has for its' authority.

Point #2 ~ AUTHORITY:

The first dictionary **definition of authority:** is "the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience."

We know that authority enforced by holding power over a team or group of people does little to motivate them to work at their personal capacity. We all know leaders (teachers, bosses, parents) who inspire and motivate us as well as ones we resist and obey through fear.

A family works the same way.

The difficulty in the family, however, is that team members begin as dependents and then grow into separate individuals with minds of their own while still on the team. The leaders grow accustomed to controlling members during their dependency and often feel threatened when independence grows.

This is where motivation becomes paramount. Because of the family's relational bond, it gives an advantage over the ordinary team. The bond is strengthened through relationship. When we as parents allow personal power and growth, it supports the child's self-interest of growing to a strong, productive, self-confident individual. The child's sense of purpose, creative and intellectual growth and sense of well being are fostered by an authority figure that inspires greatness rather than instills fear.

Note: In the debate over the meaning of authority, social scientists argue that authority is not a "capacity" (of holding power, knowledge, etc.) but a "relationship".

To expand on that, relationship (authority) requires intimacy, mutual trust and respect in order for any member of the team to feel comfortable and important. Few of us want to be in relationship with someone who threatens, watches for shortcomings, loses emotional control, and criticizes and blames our actions more than encourages and motivates. Think of the teachers, coaches, and bosses you have worked the hardest for. Chances are they are the ones who respected you and accepted you for who you are. That respect, that relationship, not only did not undermine their authority, it enhanced it.

Authority has less to do with power and fear, more to do with influence and motivation. **Influence flows smoothly from a parent to a child through a pipeline of connection.** The child trusts that their parent understands and supports his/her needs (**Parent share:** The most important need that an individual has is to be understood). People resist any team effort when they feel alienated by fear or misunderstanding.

Here's the challenge behind this:

Back in the day when you took medicine it may have been from the source of "Castrol" or the pink bottle and the brown bottle.... *Some parents are quick to provide the pink bottle of medicine because they know it taste good to the child, but withhold the brown bottle because they know the child will not like it..* **Your authority is to parent and then friend!**

Parent: *Mother or Father*

Parenting means raising a child or children from babyhood to adulthood (maturity - the state or condition of being fully grown or mature), in an environment of nurturance, support, encouragement, direction, guidance and love.

- Thus the older a child gets, the higher the level of influence & motivation needed (parenting).

John 15:15

15 No longer do I call you servants,[a] for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

Through a personal relationship, experience and interaction with Jesus on a daily basis for 3 years, those disciples who obeyed and followed Jesus became His friends.

Point #2 ~ AUTHORITY:

For a family to function and function well, it takes teamwork. Within any family there are many things to be done and it goes much better when we share the responsibilities.

Where there is authority, there is also responsibility

Biblical Authority Structure

God ordained human authority and established a specific chain of command in each area. This structure does not express superiority or inferiority. Just as each member of the Trinity is essential to express the fullness of God, so within social structures each role in the chain of authority is necessary for the success of the relationship.

Family: Husband—Wife—Children

God entrusts husbands with the leadership of the family unit. A husband is to love his wife as he loves himself. A wife is to submit to the leadership of her husband, coming alongside him as a helpmate. Parents are responsible to train their children, and children are to honor and obey their parents.

Children:

Ephesians 6:1-4, "Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. **2** "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: **3** If you honor your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth. **4** Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord."

Quote: *"The parent-child relationship is an echo of our relationship with our heavenly father."*

Husband:

Ephesians 5:25

25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

Ephesians 5:28-29 *New Living Translation (NLT)*

28 In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. **29** No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church.

Wife:

Colossians 3:18

18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord. We all have strength individually, but we must place our strength under control (That is submission). In-other-words carry out Ephesians 5:21.

Ephesians 5:21

21 submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Point #3 ~ THE CALL:

Acts 2:39 English Standard Version (ESV)

39 For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to Himself.”

Anything that has a calling also has an attack that follows.... **The family is under attack.** Evil forces have set their sights on the dissolution of marriage and the uprooting of family life. Sodomy, abortion, contraception, pornography, the redefinition of marriage, and the denial of objective truth are just some of the forces threatening the stability of our society, which is family. Satan knows all too well the value that the family contributes to the fabric of society, as well as the future of God’s work on earth as it is in heaven.

The argument is that we have a generation who makes an idol of the family vs. a ministry of it.

“One person stated that life has become all about the family,” she said, “baseball games and dance recitals, family vacations and play dates.”

Harsh? Maybe.

Truthful? Partly.

For we do not live to glorify family, but to live as a family to glorify God.

Our intentions might be right — we want to establish healthy relationships within our families, to be fully present for our children, and encourage them in their gifts — but **family is about so much more than sporting events and family game nights!**

Some parents and families today have tried to swing the opposite direction and engineer a life that is *all about the family with a little sprinkle of Christ.* We want what we didn’t have and that is the reason you see people are volunteering and joining small groups, just not in the church.

In ministry we are passionate about getting back to the core of making disciples.

While we search for a solution we miss the glaring truth that God has already solved that problem! While we strive to get people to join our small groups we forget about the first small group **Family! There is “A Family Re-Union that has to happen right now!**

God didn’t create the family to be self-serving, self-reliant cocoons of people. God created families as a vehicle to advance the gospel and fulfill the Great Commission!

All throughout scripture we see *family* as a multi-generational plan for our world! God instituted families for a specific purpose, and He has a specific call for every family! Our families are to be a deeply loving symbol of Jesus Christ where we invite other families to share in that love. Although we first have to commune with Christ and each other.

A Family Re-Union

Pastor A, 8

Deuteronomy 6 Reminds us as parents that we are called to impress the hearts of our children with a love for God, teaching them diligently through everyday living — family discipleship.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7 English Standard Version (ESV)

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”

Parents I want to provide you some relief and teens a revelation:

Isaiah 54:13 English Standard Version (ESV)

13 All your children shall be taught by the Lord,
and great shall be the peace of your children.

God promises that He will bring your children into perfect shalom. That means He will bring your children into perfect wholeness, perfect unity with Himself, perfect healing, and perfect victory through Christ Jesus.

Closing:

Be like the friends who lowered the man through the roof and lift your children up and lower them through the roof of the almighty saying:

**Lord I lift my children up to you right now and release their lives into your hands
Touch them that they become sensitive to your presence
Give them a heart for worship and a increased desire for your word
May your love be revealed in their hearts**