

The Culture Of God's Family

Key Verses

Ephesians 1:3-14

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

Principles

This section of Ephesians is one of the most extensive in the entire Bible that describes the plan of God from before the creation of everything to have human beings be part of His Family, a.k.a., to have a relational place within the Trinity and viewed as sons and daughters of Himself. It also communicates the depths of God's love that He demonstrated to ensure this vision would become a reality for all those who would choose it. All of this was possible because of the unique position of Christ with respect to the Father and the unique position of believers in Jesus Christ. This is why Paul repeats the phrase "in Christ/Him" throughout this passage.

This passage is not only meant to communicate what God did and to demonstrate His amazing love, but also the Spirit inspired Paul to write this **to provide believers with a rich sense of security** knowing that God had all this planned out from before the beginning and that His children are sealed and secured in

Christ to experience the fullness of this plan, beginning now and extending throughout all eternity.

One of the other aspects of God that we see here is his posture of grace. It is this grace that draws people to Him. As we consider this passage, we see a particular culture that God established for His Family that He himself modeled and carried out. This Family culture has one main purpose: To draw broken image bearers into a deeper relationship with Himself through His **Family Culture of love, grace, and security** so that His vision of multiplying relationships within the Trinity would come to fruition.

When love, grace, and security are experienced within the Family context, there is **peace** between the Family members and a resulting **joy** that supersedes external circumstances. This is how it operates within God's Family and **He has set this as a model and vision for us as parents** in the way we lead our families. God knows that His vision and model provide fertile ground for your children to grow into becoming a member in His Family (Our motto should be, "From Our Family To His."). Note: We must be careful here not to view these as a promise; you could be the model parent and your child could still reject you and God. Yet, these do create a ripe environment for your children to desire a relationship with Him.

Questions/Discussion

With all this being said, here are a few discussion questions to help you as you work to equip parents. The vision above was highlighted so you would know what you're aiming for as you help parents lead their families. Parenting can be one of the greatest joys of living (or one of the worst nightmares). Perspective and aim make a big difference.

1. The family culture modeled by God includes love, grace, and security resulting in peace and joy within the family context. Think through your own family culture in growing up. How did your family culture growing up compare to God's Family culture?
2. As a parent, you create a family culture with your spouse and children. How does your family culture as a parent with children compare to your family culture growing up? How does your current family culture compare to God's Family culture outlined in Ephesians 1:3-14?

[Note: The purpose of these first two questions is to help your disciple(s) understand how their own upbringing has shaped the way they parent. They are also to help you get an idea of what kind of culture, from their perspective, is created in their current parenting style].

3. What does it mean to you to show love and grace to your kids?
4. How do your attitudes and behaviors affect the family culture that you create with your spouse and/or children?
5. What are some of the biggest challenges you have in modeling love and grace to your children?
6. What could be two changes you make as a parent that you believe would help move you closer to God's model of parenting? What biblical beliefs do you have to embrace to make this a consistent lifestyle for you?

Further Study/Discipleship

Creating a family culture that mirrors God's Family Culture appears to be a daunting task, but is very possible with the help of His Spirit teaching us as we come under His authority and are shaped by His Word. Consider the following areas of study to help you navigate through creating a family culture that would help usher your children into God's Family.

Genesis 3:8-24

In this passage, God is responding to Adam and Eve after their choice to reject Him, His love, and His provisions for them.

1. What attributes of love and grace did God display to Adam and Eve despite their rebellion?
2. What do you notice about God's discipline of Adam and Eve because of their choices (It could be God's posture, His actions, etc.)?
3. In what ways was God being fair in his discipline of Adam and Eve (refer also to Genesis 2:16-17)?
4. Do you think it's possible to discipline in love? Do you believe God demonstrated this in this passage? Explain.

Romans 8:26-39

Paul explains God's plan from the beginning for those who are His sons and daughters.

5. There are many provisions from God explained in this passage that are to contribute to creating a culture within God's Family. Identify these provisions.
6. Thinking of the provisions from question 5, what type of Family culture do you think God is wanting to create as a result of these provisions?
7. What might it look like if your family culture began to mirror the Family culture you described from question 6?
8. In what ways could you contribute to creating a family culture that mirrors God's Family culture, considering the provisions that God has given to us in this passage? (For example, verse 28 says that "God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God." In what ways can you make decisions that would be for the good of your own children - even if they don't view it as "good" in the moment?)

Ephesians 4:11-16

The Church is where believers in Jesus are to experience God's Family culture in a very tangible way. This passage depicts a healthy functioning Church Family.

1. What was the purpose of the leaders that are listed in verse 11?
2. What other observations do you notice that contribute to an experience of God's Family culture within the Church?
3. How does your family culture compare with this healthy Church Family culture described in this passage?
4. How might you implement some of the principles in this passage into your family dynamics to create a family culture that is growing toward mirroring God's Family culture? What biblical principles from this passage do you have to consider to make this a consistent lifestyle for you?