

Family: God's Masterpiece

The masterpiece that reveals more about God than anything else is the family (Genesis 1:28; 2:24, 4:1). The love between husband and wife is a picture of Christ's passionate love for his followers, his bride. The ups and downs of parenthood give us a picture of God's tenderness and patience toward his people. Jesus himself was born into a family, where he "*grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and men.*" Luke 2:52.

Three Core Purposes for the Family:

1. To _____ (Teach Morality)

- a. "*Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.*" Colossians 3:20. Our culture struggles with amorality, a loss of knowing right from wrong. "*Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter.*" Isaiah 5:20.
- b. Parents give their children a moral compass. They should be taught to love and obey God and his commandments. "*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.*" Deuteronomy 6:7.
- c. "Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered...given free rein to their impulsive actions to satisfy each want, every child would grow up a criminal, a thief, a killer, a rapist." (Minnesota Crime Commission, 1926). "*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*" Romans 3:23.

2. To _____ (Mold Identity)

- a. If you believe you are here as a result of chance evolutionary processes, you may struggle with anonymity. Why am I here? The Bible teaches you are the crown of God's creation, made in his very image (Genesis 1:26). You are entitled to love and respect, which your parents are to model for you.
- b. "*Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.*" Colossians 3:18-19. Children learn healthy masculinity and femininity from their parents.
- c. If you didn't grow up in a godly family, you can change the culture of your home. Let love and respect reign in your marriage and as you parent your kids.

3. To _____ (Provide Community)

- a. God created us as social creatures. "*It is not good for man to be alone.*" Genesis 2:18. The "screen age" has led to a growing sense of alienation and loneliness. We need life-giving human interaction which is to be modeled in

our families. *“Fathers [or Parents], do not embitter your children or they will become discouraged.” Colossians 3:21.*

- b. Parents, before you discipline, pray and seek to be in agreement with your spouse. Don't embitter (stir up, provoke, irritate, nag) your children! We can do this by:
 - i. Overprotecting
 - ii. Showing favorites
 - iii. Depreciating their worth
 - iv. Setting unrealistic goals
 - v. Failing to show affection
 - vi. Not providing for their needs
 - vii. Lacking clear boundaries
 - viii. Criticism
 - ix. Neglect
 - x. Harsh discipline

Some grow up in families that were full of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) and God-honoring morality, identity, and community. You can embrace this and make it your own...or reject it. *“God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction.” Galatians 6:7-8.*

Others grow up in families that were marked by the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21). God-honoring morality, identity, and community were not present. But you can choose to follow the Lord anyway and go in a new direction! *“The one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.” Galatians 6:8.* The choice is yours!