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For the Love of the Family Ministries™

Missionaries to America's Forgotten Mission Field, the Family

Where Are The Fathers?

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Where Are The Fathers?

Text: Joshua 24:14-15 *Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you this day whom you will serve: whether the gods of the Amorites in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

As I have been sharing with you the past few weeks, I am greatly burdened about the family in America. The direction we are going today is total destruction. There are many reasons for this. We live in a day when words like love, commitment, responsibility, compassion, faith, church, righteousness, common sense, God, The Word of God, mean virtually nothing. I believe that much of that is due to the breakdown of the family.

Folks, the Bible strongly emphasizes the family. Today, if you try to encourage a family to do as God

has commanded you will hear comments like “that church or Pastor is weird, strict, a legalist or a cult.” Most of these people have no idea what a cult is and are too spiritually stupid to see the breakdown that is affecting their family.

During this series of messages I want to give you Biblical principles in regard to the family, locate the problems and discover what are the Biblical answers. Are the answers different from what the average person thinks? Very much. Do they work? Absolutely. It is my prayer that God will help each person here to truly understand these messages before it is too late for your family.

The question comes to mind is it possible to have a Biblical, godly family today?

II Timothy 3:10-15, *But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

The theme of II Timothy deals with apostasy. We live in a wicked day. II Timothy 3:12 makes it plain that if you desire to live for Christ and have a godly family, people will persecute you and you will be looked upon as weird, antisocial, etc. How do we survive in this ungodly wicked apostate society? The answer is found in **II Timothy 3:14-15**, *But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.*” Where did he learn them? **II Timothy 3:15** notice the phrase, “*And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures*”. Folks, the only way we can survive is to have a relationship with God through His Word.

The weakness of the family today is lack of knowledge of the Word of God as well as an unwillingness to obey the Word of God. Notice in verse 15 that Timothy said “**from a child**” thou hast known the holy scriptures? Folks, it is important for our children to know the Word of God. A child must learn to have a relationship with God through His Word. It takes parents who are willing to make the commitment to study the Word of God and then to teach it to their children. A family can never be right with God as long as the parents are not having a relationship with God through His Word.

The family is a divine creation. **Genesis 1:27-28** *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them; and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

The family was created before the church. The family is a unit. Certainly, the family affects the church. The family is a divine institution. **Exodus 20:12** *Honor thy father and mother: that thy days*

may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

I want you to notice something very important here; *father and mother* are a unit. Something very important about that unit is that there is fidelity in that unit.

Folks, the family is important in the eyes of God, especially a godly family. This kind of family is rare today. Ephesians 6:22-33

How far away have we gotten from a godly family today? How far are we away from what the Word of God says on this issue? Unfortunately, we are very far. It is like night and day. The church today has done a miserable job. Most Pastors are under tremendous pressure today to compromise the Word of God for entertainment. Many Pastors do compromise because they are afraid they will lose people. Many Independent Baptist Church bulletins look like an airline flight and departure schedule. The less time we can give to the Bible the more the average Christian likes it. They believe that activities, rather than a relationship with God through His Word, make them spiritual. Many Pastors seek to find out what works to draw a crowd rather than what is right. You have homes that are running themselves to death thinking they are doing the work of God.

Many churches today have ungodly music to appeal to the flesh so they can draw a crowd. These churches cancel services where the word of God should be preached so they can have a southern gospel sing. Folks, these people do not worship God, rather they worship music and activities. It is nothing more than idolatry. Then they wonder why their kids grow up to live wicked, immoral, ungodly lives and have no desire for spiritual things. Divorce is rampant and we have many people living after the lusts of the flesh right in the church ministry. **II Timothy 4:2** *Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.* Folks, that time is now! You have people today running from church to church until they can hear it like they want it rather than what God really says. The way to build godly families is to have a good church that preaches the Word of God and stands for it. The parents who attend that church must desire the Word of God and take the time and have the commitment themselves to study the Word so they can teach the Word to their children.

I looked at some statistics for America. The numbers are alarming:

1. Divorces granted 1970-708,000, 1980-1,170,000 up 65%
2. Unmarried couples 1970-523,000, 1980-1,346,000 up 157%
3. Persons living alone 1970-10,851,000, 1980-17,202,000 up 58.5%
4. Children living with two parents 1970-58,926,000, 1980-48,295,000 down 18%
5. Children living with one parent 1970-8,230,000, 1980-11,528,000 up 40.1%

6. Families with both husband and wife working 1970-20,327,000, 1980-24,253,000 up 19.4%

Folks, these statistics reveal some serious problems that we are facing in the family and these numbers were from 21 years ago and are much worse now. The divorce rate rose by 65.3% while unmarried couples living together rose by 157.4%. These numbers are staggering. Folks, the power of the unified family is the churches most undeveloped resource. We are doing a miserable job.

Studies have shown that children whose families are unified, secure, and whose parents are actively involved spiritually in their children's lives make the most progress spiritually and academically. Teachers agree that with few exceptions, their better students are from unified homes and have spiritually involved families. Folks this morning I am going to give you some reasons for this problem of unhappy and fractured families.

In the pre-World War II era, happy, unified families were strengthened by working together on the family farm. Children were trained by a mother who was always available and who made mealtimes, under the father's leadership, a time of interaction, problem solving, hearing Christian virtues and family values and standards.

After the war, a rural life declined, and the erosion of the family began to accelerate. Television became the teacher of values and standards. Mothers worked outside the home, and mealtimes degenerated into individual snack time. According to a 1991 study by GPD Marketing Group, only 31% of American families eat together for at least one meal a day.

Folks, the most important factor in the breakdown of the home is related to fathers not fulfilling their Biblical role of leadership in the home. This is the most important reason for unhappy families.

Genesis 18:9 *For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.* God says, worship is to be lead by the father.

Most fathers I know could care less. This is a wicked thing. There is more to being a father than just producing children. The lack of leadership by the father today in every area is the most important factor in the breakdown of the American home. I pray the Lord will give us more men like Joshua.

Joshua 24:14-15 *Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* There has to be a consecration by dad. There is more to a marriage than just living together in a physical relationship.

Lack of godly male leadership brings about the disastrous consequences of rebellion, delinquency, and sexual promiscuities. Divorce is usually caused by a father not taking his Biblical responsibilities

and is something God hates, Malachi 2:12-17. Matthew 19:56 God forbids it.

The most important cause of divorce in America is the lack of proper, godly leadership by the father and husband. It is also the most frequent cause of children's feelings of rejection, behavioral problems, and anxieties, Ephesians 6:1-4. Notice in verse 4—***“And ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord”***. The word wrath means a strong desire to avenge. How does a father provoke a child to wrath? By not bringing him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Nurture means training with structure. Most fathers have no desire for the Word of God and they are raising angry vengeful children because they are not committed to training their children in spiritual principles as God commands. Of course, a father cannot train his child if he is ignorant of God's principles himself. That is a picture of the American father.

The 1990 US Census reported more than 7 million single parent families which at the time was 30% of all American families, 63% of the nations black families. Remarriage after divorce is not a solution, for that only compounds the problem because 75% of all second marriages end in divorce. Of all the industrialized nations in the world, the United States continues to have the highest percentage of children born out of wedlock 35.5%. More than 68% of black children and 22% of white children come into the world without the love of an intact family.

David Blankenhorn in his 1995 book: *“Fatherless America”* says “the culture change from a stable, two parent home to the father's abandonment of his responsibilities of marriage and parenting is America's most urgent social problem. The father's absence is the main reason for unhappy homes, many current social problems, and is a national crisis of our time.”

According to the National Fatherhood Institute, 40% of the children in the United States have not seen their father for a year! In the last 15 years “fatherless” children jumped from 10.2 million to 15.6 million. 70% of juveniles in detention centers and reformatories are children of fatherless homes. Statistics indicate that “violent criminals” are overwhelmingly males who grew up without a father's leadership. This includes 60% of America's rapists, 72% of adolescent murders, and 70% of long-term prison inmates. One out of every four high school seniors graduate functionally illiterate. Fathers must have more than a physical presence. There are many homes where a father is there, but that is all. They want all their needs fulfilled, but do not want to take the spiritual, godly, or normal leadership that God intended. Instead children grow up listening to their parents fight, cuss, yell, scream, and spend money on all kinds of entertainment and material possessions trying to be happy.

The father's failure to take responsibility and leadership in the home has created a valueless, unhappy, fractured home and society. This failure has had a devastating effect on our children and has spawned a multitude of wicked societal problems including delinquency, sexual promiscuity, drug use and violence.

The family is in trouble in America because men fail to be the leader God wants them to be. We

desperately need to pray for the men of this country to do as God has commanded. The results of the men not obeying God have been disastrous. The great need is for men to repent of their sins, to really come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and then to be obedient to the commands of God from His Word. Men must be the leaders God desires them to be. May God help us to pray for the men of America.