

Family - The Biblical pattern for the Family

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[0:00] Ephesians 5, we'll get to that shortly. My address tonight is what is the family? The biblical pattern for the family.! We know in the world we're living in the very concept of family.

The definition, the concept is under attack of itself and it's a warfare. What the creator of the family unit has designed and designated and ordered and commanded is being disrupted and defaced and defiled.

Marriage, the sanctity, the very holy sacred union of a man and a wife in a marriage union is being corrupted and perverted and called something else today in our very nation.

It's a warfare that we're in when we see such things turned upside down and the family soiled and spoiled and disrupted with such a mockery of what a marriage is, what a family is.

The family is important. It's where we are trained, where we're taught, where we learn how to be, to know that we belong in a family, a mother, a father, brothers and sisters, parents and children.

[1:18] It's God's blueprint for life. And the marriage bond is something very special. That marriage bond, that marriage union, it should be protected. In our present day godless culture, the family is in crisis.

It's like the enemies just bombarding and trying to demolish the very foundation of society. One out of three marriages ends in divorce.

It seems like marriages and families are falling apart all around us. Sometimes we are the innocent party in that. I acknowledge that.

But the family, sadly, is undermined. It's being redefined by the world, by the change agents who rule this world in government authorities and such.

In the law-making of our world, there's a redefinition. They're turning everything upside down. How we need a strong family. And as God's people, as believers, as those born again by God's Spirit and made his new creations.

[2:28] How we need to understand the maker of marriages and family. What he wants. What is his design for godly relationships and solid, good, godly families.

Yet confusion reigns in this fallen world. The concept of family is broken and immorality prevails. The divine pattern has been perverted and largely abandoned.

This god-forsaking world has turned away from truth, from the right, from that which is decent and honourable. That which has been wonderfully designed by God.

We desperately need to counteract that. To be the salt and light that this corrupting world needs. To restore that biblical view of marriage and the family.

And Paul outlines here in Ephesians 5 the functions that make for a successful, orderly, operating, God-honouring, God-blessed marriage and family.

[3:32] We see that in Ephesians 5 from verse 21. I'm just going to read this passage and then we'll comment at a later time in the message along this theme.

This is just setting the scene here, setting the theme here of the family. And God's designed for it. In Ephesians 5 from verse 21. It reads,

We see God's order here for a functioning family. What God has joined together, let no man put asunder.

Yet there is much that threatens this sacred union. I made a bit of a typo in my notes here and I wrote scared union. But it's sacred union.

It's a sacred union. It's something that God has made. It's sacred. It's special. Very special before God. And these words that we've read, we'll explore some of that in more detail a bit later in my message here.

[6:08] The marriage bond. Two shall be one flesh. A great mystery. Marriage. Married couples spend an average of 27 and a half minutes per week talking to each other.

According to a speech communication expert. That's pretty bad, isn't it? I must confess I'm probably failing miserably in that regard.

Married couples spend an average of 27 and a half minutes per week talking to each other. Imagine it's the wife does more of the talking in my home.

And you wonder about how can we improve that. That kind of woeful statistic, isn't it? And however they spend 46 hours a week watching TV.

Says the same expert. 27 and a half minutes, 46 hours. Big contrast, isn't it? How can we truly nurture that which is so important?

[7:18] It's so important to God. And it should be so important to us. That nurturing. And how can we truly nurture that? What is God's idea for us?

The blessed family unit. Verse 33, it goes on. Nevertheless, let every one of you husbands, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself.

And the wife see that she reverends her husband. God's word. God's word. It shows us God's order. The man is accountable. The buck stops with us, fellas.

Men, we have to display loving leadership. Loving leadership. God has ordained an order and a leadership in the home. We lead by example, don't we?

And sometimes not well. I say for myself. It's God's order. That leadership in the home.

[8:25] He has given authority and responsibility to the husband. And we also have much need of Godly parents. Godly parents. Motivated by love and biblical convictions.

Think of the children. How precious they are. There was a story told about a church service where they had a family, a big brother and a little brother.

And the little brother had a dedication. The parents brought the little baby, newborn baby boy to the church to be prayed for. And for the pastor to bless the family with some prayerful words.

And on the way home from the church, little Johnny was sobbing all the way home in the back seat of the car. And his father asked him three times, what's wrong? What's wrong, Johnny? What's wrong?

And finally the boy replied, that pastor said he wanted us brought up in a Christian home and I want to stay with you guys. He thought he was going to have to move house to go to a Christian home.

[9:33] As if his present home wasn't a Christian home. How we need a Christian home. To be a godly home. A God-fearing home. God-fearing parents. God-loving families.

How can we have a home like that? Where godliness prevails. Where Christ is the ultimate head of the home. God's word sets out the pattern for us.

The right foundations about what makes for a strong family. We read on in Ephesians 6 where Paul addresses the children and the parents relationship.

In Ephesians 6 from verse 1. Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise.

That it may be well with thee. And that thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

[10:39] Fathers. Much is said to the fathers here. Let's just walk through some of the things said to the fathers here. I think there's three things in particular here.

Fathers, bring them up. Raise them up to maturity. Rear them. Nourish them. Nurture them emotionally and spiritually.

Set a good example, fathers. I'm speaking to myself. Set a good example. Pray for them. Someone has said, don't handicap your children by making their lives easy.

We help them to learn. We help them to strive. But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. There's a lack of godly fathers.

You know, someone has said, judging by church attendance, heaven will not be crowded with men. I think we've got more men than women here tonight. But in some churches, it's like it's full of

females.

[11:41] Not that that's a bad thing. But it's a fact, isn't it? That in many church circles, there's scarcely any man. Judging by church attendance, heaven will not be crowded with men.

You need men, men of God, men to rise up. Stand up. And bring them up. And it's not easy. Dance. Here tonight. Mums and dads. You know, someone has said, insanity is hereditary. You can get it from your children. You know, they can drive you mad. Can't they?

At times. And someone has said, the trouble with being a parent is, that by the time you're experienced, you're unemployed. Because you learn through all your mistakes and then they fly the coop.

And someone has said, train up a child in the way he should go. Then go that way thyself. You know? We need to set the example, don't we? Brothers and sisters, train up a child in the way they should go.

[12:43] And when they are old, they will not depart from it, of course. But go that way thyself. So we see, bring them up, fathers, it says. Secondly, the word here is nurture. Bring them up in the nurture.

The word nurture, it means training and directing, correcting. It means discipline. We know in Hebrews 12, 6, it says, whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.

There's a need for developing of character as we set limits, as we set boundaries. In loving discipline. And a lack of discipline can make a child selfish and insecure.

There's need for boundaries. A lack to that one I said before, Spurgeon put it, train your child in the way you know you should have gone yourself.

That's true, isn't it? Train the child up in the way you know you should have gone yourself. You know, hopefully we try to guide our children to not make the same mistakes we have made.

[13:42] Parenting is quite a task. Someone has said, if mothers, if evolution is true, how come mothers still have only two hands? Being a mum is just, you've got to be an octopus to keep up with it all.

But we call to that, to nurture. And secondly, to admonition. To admonition. Admonition, it means to instruct and encourage. It literally means a putting in mind, a training by word, of providing, a teaching, of counselling, of instruction, of exhortation.

Family life specialists, a man called Holbrook and his wife were lecturing across America and they surveyed hundreds of children, the Holbrooks, and they came up with three things fathers say most in responding to their children.

Three things fathers say most. I'm too tired. Took first place. We don't have enough money. We're second. And keep quiet. We're third.

That's bad, isn't it? Pretty bad. Dads, come on. You know, I'm too tired. We don't have enough money. Keep quiet. The three things fathers say to their children in responding to them the most.

[14:55] What a reproach it is. Dads, we've got to lift our game. Fathers are exhorted to encourage them. Encourage your children. Don't provoke them to anger, to wrath, by unreasonable commands.

Someone has wisely put it like this. When the child gets up to mischief, the father needs correction. You know, I know I could lift my game.

The evangelist Gypsy Smith used to say there are five Gospels. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and you. You may be the only Gospel that some people read.

You are to be an example. Brother, sister, be an example to your children. Let them see Christ in you. Especially your children.

Parents to children. And children to parents. You might be a saved one and your parents are not saved. You can be an example to them too. Amen? You can set an example to them.

[15:54] And point them to the Saviour. Parents are exhorted here to exercise that wise and loving authority. You are training your children whether you realise it or not.

Even if you're really not making any effort to train them, you are training them because they are watching you. They are learning. They are learning your bad habits, your bad attitudes.

Children are being trained. Whether we realise it or whether we really make an effort or not, we are training them. And sadly sometimes for the worst. And these are exhortations through the Word of

God.

We are just picking some bits here and there. There is such a big smorgasbord of instructions from God's Word about marriage, about family.

And the fact is we must set ourselves for the defence of the family. It is under attack. The marriage, the family is by God's design. God has designed it. He has given us the blueprint of this sacred union, of this blessed haven that he wants for us.

[16:57] Let's make it our aim. A Christ-centred home. Vance Havner, an old time preacher said, We are not at home in this world because we are made for a better one.

We are not at home in this world because we are made for a better one. But our home here below can be a heavenly one. Christ can be the head of the home. That unseen guest as it were.

At the conversations, at the meal times, at the gathering times of the family. That Christ is the head of the home. And we can make our earthly home a heavenly one.

A foretaste of the heavenly one to come. And how so? By following the Master's instructions. the home the blessed home is the basic building block of society the family unit and the enemy hates it doesn't he doesn't our enemy hate the godly and the godly mums and dads the godly wives and husbands the devil hates that he wants to undermine and attack that and we see that happening I've seen it in my circle and we know there's numbers here that have been in that situation of the enemy's attack and how hard it is the hostility towards the family from our very society from our very government but really it boils down to it comes from the enemy of man's soul may we stand up against this onslaught this attack and encourage our family in the lord how sad how sad it is when we see sad things happen to families my heart grieves when I see what the devil is doing the damage that he has done colossians tells us furthermore about these instructions to the mums and dads wives and husbands we'll just explore that together a little more colossians 3 verse 18 it tells us wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as it is fit in the lord there's a story told about the principle of honour within marriage there was a drunken husband as a drunkard and he would spend the evening with his jolly companions down at the tavern boasting that if he took a group of his friends home with him at midnight and asked his christian wife to get up and cook supper for them she would do it without complaint there they were getting sloshed getting tanked getting paralytic and the crowd thought yeah that sounds like a good idea they made this vain boast they thought it was a vain boast from the man and they dared him to try it yeah come on then let's go down to your your place and see what the wife will do and so this drunken mob followed the man home and he made the unreasonable demands of his wife and she obeyed she dressed she came down she prepared a nice supper and served it as cheerfully as if she had been expecting them and after supper one of the men asked her how could she be so kind when they had been so unreasonable and when she did not approve of their conduct and her reply was sir when my husband and I were married we were both sinners it has pleased God to call me out of that dangerous condition my husband continues in it

I tremble for his future state were he to die as he is he would be miserable forever I think it my duty to render his present existence as comfortable as possible and not long after that her husband was saved what a glorious testimony of God's wonderful works and what a testimony of the actions of that godly wife even in such trying circumstances of course we know there's situations where it's very difficult for a wife to obey or submit to her husband but the context the proviso there is as it is fit in the Lord as it is fit in the Lord because it's not saying to do evil verse 19 it goes on to say husbands love your wives and be not bitter against them love your wife and this love it's the same love that God has for man this love is the love a man is to have to his wife is such a love that God has to his own people it's unconditional this word love also it denotes continuous action here it's not just a little bit of love it's an ongoing continual love husbands we're addressed here it's our duty to love our wives as Christ loved the church we can just gloss over that can't we but how did Christ love the church he gave himself for it unfortunately too many of us love our wives with strings attached my role as a husband is to love my wife with all that I have a happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers because we know there's tensions in the home there's there's not always agreement in the home there's differences but we can forgive can't we love one another it's been said even if marriages are made in heaven man has to be responsible for the maintenance there's a there's a maintenance that we have here on earth and marriage is a hard work we know there was a golden anniversary party thrown for an elderly couple my husband was moved by the occasion he

wanted to tell his wife just how he felt about her and she was very hard of hearing however and often misunderstood what he said and with many family members and friends gathered around he said my dear wife after 50 years

[23:09] I found you tried and true everyone smiled their approval but his wife said hey he repeated louder after 50 years I have found you tried and true and his wife moaned and shot back and said well let me tell you something after 50 years I'm tired of you too that can happen marriages can be that testing ground can't they of human emotions of human dynamics of giving and taking and sometimes it seems not always fair but God has made families a wedding has been described as a ceremony at which a man loses complete control of himself we have to give of ourselves as Christ gave himself for the church and friends here tonight that decision of marriage should be taken very carefully if you are a child of God and you marry a child of the devil you'll be sure to have constant trouble with your father-in-law you know a child of God don't marry a child of the devil and it's a very bad move very foolish thing of course we should not be unequally yoked there's that mismatch that will just never never work there are three rings to each and every marriage people might have heard this one three rings to each and every marriage the engagement ring the wedding ring and suffering you know there's a sense of suffering of that giving and taking of that complimenting of that sandpaper effect at times of course i've got to be careful what i say i'll avoid putting any humour in here verse 20 so children obey your parents it says children obey your parents in all things for this is well pleasing unto the lord verse 20 of colossians there obey your parents children obey your parents this word obey it's got that sense of continuous action again of being always obedient always obedient in all things obey your parents in the lord it's what the lord jesus wants it's our responsibility to him and obedience it means restrictions it means correction parents correct because they love their children you know sometimes as parents we have to be a bit hard down the line straight down the line with our children and god willing they will receive our counsel it says this is right that children obey it is right it's the righteous thing it's the proper thing to do and all of us while they're still alive have mums and dads we can show that respectfulness can't we that reverence to our mums and dads the bible says it's a righteous thing it's the proper thing to do it's rightful for the harmony of the home for the good of the child and for god's glory and what's happening today when we see this truth being abandoned we're seeing this massive epidemic of delinquency of rebellion lawless lawlessness because we've got a whole generation growing up without that rightful authority in the home without that rightful respect without learning that there's rules to obey there's rightful authority and so we see this lawless generation a generation that's been taught you don't need to obey no one no one's going to tell me what to do that attitude of obedience is vital because without it we get ourselves into all kinds of trouble and then we see a parent's responsibility to their children in verse 21 again

addressing the fathers it says fathers provoke not your children to anger lest they be discouraged now this command for children to obey their parents doesn't give the parents license for harsh treatment children must be handled with care they need firm discipline administered in love and the purpose of parental discipline is to help children grow not to exasperate and provoke them to anger or discouragement they're fragile and parenting is not easy it takes lots of patience to raise children in a loving Christ honoring manner let's pray for these younger parents in our midst here tonight younger parents it's such a task for younger families we've got a lot ahead of you your children are going to be constantly attacked bombarded by messages that are anti God they're anti Christ we're living in this world that parenting is not easy and it's not getting any easier because of these

conflicting messages of ungodliness that threaten to pull our children down the wrong pathways and so for parents it calls for much need of patience of knowing that loving Christ honoring heart how we need to sustain marriages and families with that godliness that godly intent in 2 Kings 20 verse 1 it says as I said to Hezekiah he said thus saith the Lord set thine house in order set thine house in order we all need to prayerfully respond to his call for us to set a house in order there was a woman who came to a place a point where she had enough she wanted to throw it all in she wanted to divorce her husband she said she came to a man a counsellor and she said I do not only want to get rid of him I want to get even before I divorce him I want to hurt him hurt him as much as he has hurt me and this doctor this counsellor suggested a brilliant plan go home and act as if you really love your husband tell him how much he means to you praise him for every decent trait go out of your way to be as kind considerate and generous as possible spare no efforts to you love him and after you have convinced him of your undying love and that you cannot live without him then drop the bomb tell him that you're getting a divorce that will really hurt him and with revenge in her eyes she smiled she exclaimed beautiful beautiful will he ever be surprised and she did it with enthusiasm for two months she showed love kindness listening giving reinforcing sharing and when she didn't return the counsellor called her up and said are you ready now to go through with the divorce divorce she exclaimed never

I discovered I really do love him her actions had changed her feelings motion resulted in emotion the ability to love was it's not established not so much by fervent promise as often repeated deeds those actions that she took turn things around in her marriage and God can turn marriages around when these sad things happen there's still at times those opportunities that things can turn completely around marriages and families are important to God and today they're struggling many times because the God ordained roles that we call to we're missing that we're not fulfilling that when a woman submits to the loving leadership of her husband and follow God's intent for her she is fulfilled and so is the husband and for the man too the man truly loves his wife as

Christ loved the church that is just overwhelming and Joshua stood before the people in Joshua 24 verse 15 and he called the people to a decision they had to choose to follow the false gods the gods of the Amorites or the true God the Lord God and he urged the people at this point of a line in the sand of drawing the line between serving the false gods and serving the true and living God he says in Joshua 24 15 people would know this one likely and if it seemed evil unto you to serve the Lord choose you this day whom you will serve whether the gods which your father served that were on the other side of the flood or the gods of the Amorites in whose land he dwell but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord as for!

[32:37] me and my house we will serve the Lord let's make that decision for our own families for that biblical pattern that godly foundation of the home of a Christ honoring home and God helping us let's be prayerful as parents that we will be wise in how we administer that nurture and admonition that bringing up of our children let's be wise husbands as true loving leaders of our wives that God will help us to have a love that goes beyond our kind of constricted idea of love that it is that all encompassing love that unconditional love the love of God and that godly order of the home is such a precious truth children to parents parents to children we've only just touched the surface here tonight of that precious truth of the marriage bond of the family unit in a world a fallen world where that counts for nothing to many and it's just been soiled and spoiled by godless men godless governments and have that truthful regard of that family truth we pray for families that have been torn apart and where they cannot be reconciled lord we pray that you'd soothe hurting hearts when these circumstances happen lord we pray for wisdom and strength to help us to be a godly witness to our loved ones and family help us to be practicing the truths of your word pray for these young families these young mums and dads here tonight and the road that is ahead of them that you will grant them wisdom to make these truths live in the practical realities of life lord help us to have loving hearts towards one another in

Jesus name we pray! Amen