

Basic Training: What Does It Mean? Lesson 7-2
What Is the Meaning of Family?

Matt 18:4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

- I. Review previous lessons
 1. Lesson 1: What does it mean to receive the Holy Ghost? The beginning of a relationship with God in you leading to a changed life.
 2. Lesson 2: What does it mean that God wrote a Book? He preserved His Words and Will for us to grow our relationship.
 3. Lesson 3: What is the meaning of prayer? (3 parts) How to deepen our relationship with God
 4. Lesson 4: What does it mean that there is one God? That the one God, known as Yahweh in the OT, came as Jesus, God in flesh, to establish the closest possible relationship.
 5. Lesson 5: What is the meaning of worship? An expression of physical acts that lead us into the greatest depths and highest heights in God.
 6. Lesson 6: What does it mean to live godly? (2 parts) Being transformed from worldliness by the Holy Ghost to conform to God's will as expressed in His Word.
- II. Review of Lesson 7-1: What is the meaning of family?
 1. There are three reasons we are including a lesson on something so basic as family.
 - a. Families are the basic unit of structure of our civilization.
 - b. The family was God's idea (*Gen 1:27-28*) and God chose to bless the world through the family, through the lineage of Abraham (*Gen 12:2-3*). And of course, God Himself chose to be born into the human family in order to redeem it. (*Matt 1:18*)
 - c. The family is under attack. Research in the area of sociology has demonstrated that collapsing families play a major role in many forms of human suffering like neglect, abuse, hunger, homelessness, poor health, and criminal behavior.
 2. So, what is the meaning of a godly family?
- III. The family should
 - A. Create a nurturing and safe environment for vulnerable, dependent children
 1. We gleaned several positive family principles from the young life of Jesus raised in the home of Joseph and Mary.
 2. **Keep safe from danger:** We saw that Joseph moved his young family of Mary and Baby Jesus from a dangerous environment. (*Matt 2:13-14*)
 3. **Grow in strength and find purpose:** And Luke 2:40 and 2:52 show that children raised in a safe environment can grow strong, not only physically but spiritually, which helps them find purpose.
 4. **Show God's house as high priority:** Luke 2:41-42 shows how faithfulness to the house of God is important in the upbringing of children.

5. **Have a safety net:** Luke 2:43-45 shows that having family members and close friends around a part of a safety net is important, to help keep an eye on the kids to keep them safe.
- B. Introduce us to God and establish our initial ideas of right and wrong
 1. Not only did Abraham have a great faith in God, but God had great faith in Abraham to raise his children to keep the way of the LORD. (*Gen 18:17-19*)
 2. Not only taking them to church but demonstrating a walk of faith through hard times and uncomfortable sacrifices to God.
- IV. Be a mirror image of the relationship between Christ and the church, enduring, trustworthy and dependable
 - A. Upending the standard
 1. It is not uncommon to have a group of unrelated people living in a house, changing it up every so often, and calling it family, and raising children in that environment.
 2. I mentioned that families are under attack, and that is by redefining a longstanding definition.
 3. Let me give this unpleasant illustration of our world.
 4. Although it is not acceptable with scripture, same-sex marriage became legal in the U.S. on June 26, 2015 after a US Supreme Court ruling.
 5. The CDC and National Center for Health Statistics, maintains the statistics on marriage in the US, as a percent of the total population.¹ Their tables show a rate per thousand.
 6. In 1990, there were 11.6 people per thousand who were married. It was down to 9.8 in 2000. In 2010 it was down to 7.6. In 2014, the year before same-sex marriage became legal, the rate was 7.7, in 2016, the year following, the rate was 7.4. It has continued its downward trend in 2018 was 7.0 per thousand.
 7. The point of this review of statistics is that while the expressed desire for making same-sex marriage legal was to allow for more people to marry, the net result was a decline in marriages ever since.
 8. So the focus was not as much about changing marriage laws, but altering people's opinions on what is acceptable as a family.
 9. As further evidence, that 2015 Supreme Court case was cited as the "most crucial" cultural shift in an August 12, 2020, New York Times opinion article, "The Poly-Parent Households Are Coming."²
 10. The subheading is: "We're on the cusp of a technological revolution in baby making. **What it means to be a family could be next.**"
 11. "...technologies that could enable two women (or two men, or four unrelated people of any sex) to conceive a child together are already under development."
 12. And this technology is "likely to reshape some of our most fundamental ideas about what it takes to make a baby, and a family."

¹ https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/marriage-divorce.htm?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fnchs%2Fmardiv.htm

² <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/12/opinion/ivg-reproductive-technology.html>

13. [slide] “For most of human history, after all, families across the Western world were **defined in largely biblical terms: one man, one woman, with children** conceived through sex and sanctified by marriage. ... Things first began to change in the 1960s...”
14. The technology called I.V.G. (in vitro gametogenesis) “could allow individuals...mixing and matching between genders and genes, and enabling more than two people to create a child together. And in the process, **our basic notion of families is liable to be upended as well.**”
15. “But once we start imagining, and then living in, a world of fluid parenting, it becomes increasingly likely that we will also undo or at least revise our centuries-old conviction that procreative unions — like Noah’s animals — come only in pairs. Maybe our species’ new ark is composed of a motlier crew, of threesomes and foursomes, old and young, men and women and those across the spectrum of gender identity, reproducing with whomever they choose and loving as they desire.”
16. The primary idea that was promoted in the 2015 Supreme Court case was what was called, **creating marriage equity**. Equal access to the legal status of marriage. But as the statistics demonstrate, access to marriage was not the end goal as much as it was to legitimize the most crucial cultural shift in upending the basic notion of families.
17. The one thing I appreciated about the article was the recognition that for most of human history, the biblical definition of family and marriage were the standards we lived by.
18. The point of this part of the lesson is this, when you “upend” the ageless historical standard of the family as the basic unit of structure in society--when you tear apart society’s foundation, society experiences an earthquake.

B. Restating the standard

1. Let us reexamine the biblical foundation of family, going back to the beginning in first two chapters of the Bible.
Gen 1:27-28
27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.
28 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.
2. Right after creating them as male and female, God blessed their union as the means of building society.
3. And then established the pattern with a command:
Gen 2:24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.
4. So the first man and woman were commanded to multiply—creating family—and the command to repeat that pattern was established early in human history.
5. And when God came in flesh as Jesus, He restated that original, foundational principle as the permanent standard:
Mark 10:6-9
6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.
7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;

8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

6. Jesus anchored family back to its origin at creation.
 7. And when Paul taught about marriage, he restated that same passage Jesus quoted, but added another timeless anchor to it.
Eph 5:31-32
31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.
32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.
 8. Man joining to his wife in marriage, is parallel to the relationship between Christ and the church.
 9. You could see that as the marriage union being anchored from creation, and again being anchored at the time of Jesus as still relevant.
 10. But Paul states that family structure is further anchored through the church age, as the husband/wife relationship is a mirror image of the relationship between Christ and the church.
Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;
 11. By comparing the husband/wife marriage to how Christ loved the church sacrificially, the apostle tied the structure of family and marriage to an eternal principle.
 12. As such, the husband/wife pattern is not tethered to an evolving opinion of society, like a sail that shifts with the winds, but on an eternal principal.
 13. So family and marriage is anchored as a biblical doctrine, not to be tossed to and fro:
Eph 4:14 That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;
- C. Husbands and wives in a godly home
1. A home that has a husband who loves his wife with the same kind of sacrificial love that Christ demonstrated for the church, is a secure place—a godly home.
 2. And part of parenting is working to provide for the needs of the family:
1 Tim 5:8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.
 3. And Titus 2:4 adds that in this godly family, the wife loves her husband and her children.
Titus 2:4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,
 4. And in the godly family, the father nurtures his children and instructs them in knowing the Lord:
Eph 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.
- D. Children in a godly home
1. And in the godly home, the children honor and obey their parents:
Eph 6:1-3

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.

2 Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

2. And if you remember, there was a characteristic of little children that Jesus said adults must take on:

Matt 18:4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

3. That humility is reflected by the child trusting, being willing to be dependent, and receiving instruction and provision from parents.
 4. In the godly home children honor and entrust themselves to their parents.
 5. So it is this stable societal framework of husband loving wife and kids, wife loving husband and kids, children loving and honoring parents, parents taking care of their family, that is the foundation of a godly family.
 6. It is not perfect, but it is molded to follow Christ as the example. And if every family member seeks to mirror Christ's love, that makes for a strong foundation.
- V. Be bound within a moral framework blessed by God
1. In a former lesson on what it means to live godly, we addressed morality and immorality.
 2. In a godly home, there is no place for immoral sexual acts, unfaithfulness, rage, drunkenness, violence, and jealousy.
 3. Adultery on the part of husband or wife is a sin which results in missing heaven, so that is definitely not part of a godly home. (Gal 5:19)
 4. And Jesus called it adultery of the heart for a man to look after another woman to lust after her (Matt 5:28).
 5. And sexual acts between unmarried people is the sin of fornication, which also has the consequence of missing heaven. (Gal 5:19)
 6. However, within the godly home, marriage involves physical intimacy that is honorable and undefiled:
Heb 13:4 Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.
 7. Read 1 Corinthians 7:1-9 for more details about it being part of a godly marriage.
 8. God created the moral framework for the family and marriage, and tangible and meaningful expressions of love are part of that design.

VI. Conclusion

1. And I want to close tonight by reading a passage with you that shows the depth of the kind of love that God designed for marriages and families.
2. The family of God is a safe place. Godly families are a safe place.
3. Comfort. Cheer. Relaxation. Joy. Friendship. Sharing. Prayer.
4. Churches and religious people are called haters with one or more phobias about nontraditional lifestyles.

5. But it is not a fear or hatred that drives the church. To teach the Word of God and God's original standard is no more hatred than it is for an engineer to discuss deviations from the standard that can lead to design flaw for a bridge or building.
6. And since families are more important than bridges or buildings, it is love that led Jesus to a cross as a willing sacrifice. He demonstrated that "no greater love than this."
7. And it is that kind of sacrificial love that keeps the family relationships strong and on the godly path.
8. Let us read about that kind of love, called agape love.

9. *1 Cor 13:1-8*

13 If I could speak all the languages of earth and of angels, but didn't love others, I would only be a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I had the gift of prophecy, and if I understood all of God's secret plans and possessed all knowledge, and if I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing. 3 If I gave everything I have to the poor and even sacrificed my body, I could boast about it; but if I didn't love others, I would have gained nothing. 4 Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud 5 or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not irritable, and it keeps no record of being wronged. 6 It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. 8 Prophecy and speaking in unknown languages and special knowledge will become useless. But love will last forever!

Holy Bible, New Living Translation