

Follow-up Studies: The Christian Family —————

Parents and Children

The family is the basic social unit, and to understand the desperate plight our society is in, you need only to look at the desperate straits the average family is in! In stark contrast to families in the world, with their narrow outlook, poor communication, brewing resentments, undisciplined children, and decaying marriages, the Christ-centered family is a breath of fresh air and a ray of hope.

The family following God's Word is a happy, communicative, warm, loving, committed and fruitful family. Just as marriage is God's wise plan for men and women to love and live together, so the Christian family is both God's answer to the ungodliness and selfishness of society and his plan for character growth in his most precious gift to parents: their children.

Spiritual focus

- Chain of command (Christ—husband—wife—children)
- If you want a great family life, you need input!
- Aim to have an evangelistically fruitful family!

Bringing up children

- Basic need for security and happiness:
 1. Time—you'll need to re-order your priorities!
 2. Affection—without it, they will become insecure, cold, introverted, awkward around strangers.
 3. Spiritual examples (parents)—Ephesians 6:4, Deuteronomy 6:5-7. God's commandments must be upon the parents hearts before they can be impressed upon the children
- Discipline—it's unloving not to give it (Proverbs 23:13-14). Discipline is training.
 1. Encouragement is necessary (Colossians 3:21)
 2. Discipline is essential
 - a. God commands it (Proverbs 22:15, 29:15, 17, 19, 21)
 - b. The husband is the chief discipler.
 - c. Wife and husband should agree on the "rules," lest the children pick and choose whom to obey!
 - d. Areas of training (Proverbs 22:6)
 - Respect toward authority
 - Speech and openness
 - Moodiness
 - Affection
 - Manners
 - Tidiness
 - e. Regular spiritual times with each child!

Other Important Matters

- Regular, consistent family devotionals.
- Be on time to church. Allow extra time, particularly considering the children. Plan to come to church early!
- Pray with the children before they go to bed.

- Have a weekly family time.
- If you have Christian children, work with the pre-teen or teen ministry. Embrace feedback. Don't be defensive.

Practicals

- Create a simple system of allowances and incentives for the children.
- Take the whole family out evangelizing. Reach out to other families as a family.
- Ask Christians you respect to recommend helpful books.

Follow-up Studies: Closing Considerations

Follow-up studies can be covered at the rate of about one or two per week over the period of a few months. Depending on the needs, they may be used in any order. And, by all means, do not consider that your work with a young Christian ends after the follow-up studies have been completed! No, for you are still only in the middle.