

# Christian Families

Joshua 24:15

## INTRODUCTION:

A. **Joshua 24:15** – “If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

1. To endeavor to have a Christian family is a deliberate choice.
2. To fail to choose to have a Christian family is a tragedy leading to many lost souls.
3. Joshua chose for him and his family to serve God.
4. What choice have you made for your family?

B. The break-up of families today underscores even more the need to examine the Biblical concept of the family as God would have it. Individuals make up the family unity and the family unit constitutes a home.

1. By way of definition: **THE HOME IS A SPIRITUAL RELATIONSHIP/ INSTITUTION ESTABLISHED BY GOD FOR MAN’S GOOD AND GOD’S GLORY.**
2. God has a plan for the family unit . . . So does the devil.

C. Permit me to illustrate the importance of having a Christian family.

**Illustration:** A study was once done on two early American families. One was headed by Max Jukes, and the other by Jonathan Edwards. The results are interesting and support the importance of the family and its influence on generations to come.

**Max Jukes** lived in New York and had nothing to do with the Christian faith. Of 1,026 of his descendants who were studied:

- 300 died prematurely.
- 100 served an average of 13 years in the penitentiary.
- 100 became public prostitutes.
- 100 became alcoholics

The same study examined 720 descendants of Jonathan Edwards, a man who served God. Of these:

- 300 became preachers.
- 65 became college professors.
- 13 were university presidents.
- 60 became authors.
- 3 became U. S. congressmen.
- 1 became Vice-President of the United States.

D. Look at what a man who had nothing to do with Christianity produced as compared to one who endeavored to serve God produced. You are a product of the family that brought you into this world, and others will be products of your family as well . . . But what will they be like?

### THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIVIDUALS IN THE FAMILY

A. Of the some 65,000,000 million families in the United States, some of them are members of the Lord's church. May their numbers become legion.

B. In the Bible I find:

1. The word "families" appearing but one time.
2. On the other hand, "family" appears some 285 times. Out of those 285 times:
  - a. 284 are in the Old Testament.
  - b. One in the New Testament, and that in **Ephesians 3:1 5** wherein Paul writes "From whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named."

C. The Lord's church is made of up individual Christians, and Individual Christians identify with a specific congregation under the oversight of Elders and have a working relationship with a specific part of God's overall family.

1. The family is made up of individuals.
2. You and I are those individuals that make up families, congregations, and the church.
3. You and I are the common denominators of the family, a congregation, and the church.

D. Please listen carefully to the next six statements, for they will constitute some of the foundation upon which the remainder of the lesson will be based.

1. A **STRONG CHURCH** will contribute to making **STRONG FAMILIES**.
2. A **WEAK CHURCH** will contribute to making **WEAK FAMILIES**.
3. **STRONG FAMILIES** will contribute to making a **STRONG CHURCH**.
4. **WEAK FAMILIES** will contribute to making a **WEAK CHURCH**.
5. **STRONG FAMILIES** are made up of **STRONG INDIVIDUALS**.
6. **WEAK FAMILIES** are made up of **WEAK INDIVIDUALS**.

E. Therefore:

1. To have a stronger church, we must have stronger families.
2. To have stronger families, we must have stronger individuals.
3. To have stronger individuals, we must become stronger individuals through spiritual growth.

F. Does it not stand to reason that:

1. If I want a stronger thee I must become a stronger me, and therefore will become a stronger we.
2. When I help me I am helping my family, and when I help my family, I am helping the church.

3. When I hurt me I hurt my family, and when I hurt my family I am hurting the church. Listen to the apostle Paul as he writes in **Romans 14:7** - For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.
  - a. No one lives in a vacuum.
  - b. Every word we speak affects more than ourselves.
  - c. Every behavior impacts others.
  - d. Every mood swing . . . temperament change . . . attitude change . . . affects others . . . and often those others are our precious family members.
  - e. Sadly, we fail to realize the determinant all this has on the souls of our family members.
4. When you are strong in the church, you should be strong in the family.
- G. The weak cannot carry the strong anymore than the blind can lead the blind.
  1. Jesus said in **Matthew 1 5:14** - . . . And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch.
  2. Paul said in **Romans 15:1** - We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Why? In order not to make ourselves weak, but the make the weak strong.
- H. Therefore:
  1. If I want a **STRONGER CHURCH** . . . I must be a **STRONGER ME**.
  2. If I want a **BETTER CHURCH** . . . I must be a **BETTER ME**.
  3. If I want a **MORE ACTIVE CHURCH** . . . I must be a **MORE ACTIVE ME**.
  4. If I want a **HARDER WORKING CHURCH** . . . I must be a **HARDER WORKING ME**.
  5. I help to **BUILD UP THE CHURCH** as I **BUILD UP ME**.
4. And all of this bettering of self will also help better your family.
- I. When you build up you, and the building up of you helps build up your family, and you and your family help build up the church . . . then the church helps to build up weaker families.
- J. Parents, will your children be faithful Christians in the church of tomorrow? There is no stronger indicator than the home in determining this.
  1. A number of congregations have conducted in-depth studies of all the factors available to learn what is needed to keep the young people faithful.
  2. One central truth emerges for the materials gathered: Faithfulness of the young person to Jesus Christ doesn't have anything to do with special programs or teachers. It is not dependent on whether they are members of a large congregation or a small one. **The single-most important factor is their own immediate family.**
3. Look at the statistics:

- a. **Where both parents were faithful to the Lord**, and that includes active interest in the local congregation's programs, **93% of the youth remained faithful**.
- b. **If one of the parents was faithful**, that figure dropped to **73%**.
- c. **Where the parents were only what we call reasonably active** in the Lord's Work, **53%** of the young people remained active.
- d. The shocker! **In those case where both the parents attend only infrequently**, the percentage of children who remained faithful to the Lord dropped to **6%**. So many . . . far too many . . . fit into this last category.

### **SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO ALL FAMILY MEMBERS.**

- A. As a family unit, faithfully attend all the services of the church.
- B. Be an active participant in you Bible class.
- C. Participate in the programs of work in your home congregation specifically.
- D. Be active with other members of your age groups specifically and other age groups as well.
- E. Attend special services such as gospel meetings . . . Vacation Bible Schools . . . seminars . . . works-shops . . . Lectureships . . . ladies days . . . etc.
- F. Have family devotionals at home.
- G. Subscribe to good, sound Christian publication and read them . . . discuss them together.
- H. Watch sound brotherhood television programs and listen to sound gospel radio programs.
- I. Spend **QUALITY** time together.
- J. The **QUALITY** of time may be more important than the **QUANTITY** of time.
- K. A family night each week with each family member taking turns planning them.
- M. Concerning communications within the home.
- O. Communicate . . . communicate . . . communicate.
- P. Talk to . . . and with . . . one another.
- Q. Use pleasant tone . . . not harsh ones. Remember the great hymn . . . "Angry Words"?
  - 1st stanza . . . "Angry words O let them never from my tongue unbridled slip: May the heart's best impulse ever Check them ere they soil the lip.
  - 2nd stanza . . . Love is much too pure and holy, Friendship is too sacred far, For a moment's reckless folly Thus to desolate and mar.
  - 3rd stanza . . . Angry words are lightly spoken, Bit-t'rest tho'ts are rashly stirred, Brightest links of life are broken By a singly angry word.
- R. laugh with one another
- S. Listen to one another.
- T. Weep with one another.

- U. Rejoice with one another.
- V. Hurt with one another . . . and help each other get over the disappointments and hurdles.
- W. Understand one another.
- X. Recognize problems. Don't ignore them but rather resolve them according to the Bible.
- Y. Love each other . . . and each other love God more.
- Z. Be good to each other every day.
- AA. Be helpful to each other.
- BB. Be supportive of each other.
- CC. Be a good example to each other. Offer encouragement to each other. Lift each
- DD. Pray for one another . . . pray together . . . pray separately . . . pray often.
- EE. Don't wait until a "little" problem becomes a "big" problem before dealing with it.
- FF. Establish good family rules. sometime negotiate . . . always be fair.
- GG. Always . . . And I mean always, put God first!

### **HOW CAN THE CHURCH BUILD UP FAMILIES.**

- A. Every congregation should be what Christ wants it to be and should minister to its families.
- B. Some suggestions as to how the church can build up it families.
  1. Provide proper Biblical teaching in the classrooms and from the pulpit.
  2. Know your families and know them well.
  3. Be prepared to help families when problems arise.
  4. Serve families in health and sickness . . . success and failure . . . from birth to death.
  5. In ministering to hurting families, do it as quietly as possible and in complete confidence. As families become stronger privately, it will become obvious publicly.
  6. Work with husbands, wives, counselors, attorneys, judges, and the courts in reclaiming home that are in trouble and on the verge of breaking up.
  7. Find a vital place for every family and every individual in the congregation.
    - a. Make the family feel wanted . . . needed . . . and important.
    - b. Feelings are fragile . . . handle them prayerfully.
  8. Be aware of the developmental needs of every age group and look for pressure points in individuals and families.
  9. Teach families how to conduct family devotionals at home. Explain.

### **CONCLUSION:**

- A. Brethren and listening friends:
  1. Never stand guilty of weakening yourself.

2. Never stand guilty of weakening your family . . . your home.
3. Never stand guilty of weakening your congregation.
4. Never stand guilty of weakening the Lord's church. The church is the lord's bride, and you don't do something against another man's bride (wife) without getting the other man's attention. Christ is watching!

B. Is your family covered under the blood of Christ? **Illustration:** It was a dark night in old Egypt. The merciful Jehovah had instructed each captive to take a lamb in its prime, shed its blood, and place the blood upon the lintels and the side posts of their houses, that they might be spared when the avenging angel passed over the land. Out of this background comes this beautiful traditional story.

She was a little crippled, Israelitish maiden, lying upon her pallet that Passover night. As the hours passed under the cloak of darkness, the little girl called to her father, "Father, is the blood on the doorposts of our house?" "Yes dear, the blood is on the doorposts of our house." A short time later the little girl again asked, "Father, are you sure that the blood is on our house?" The father replied, "Certainly dear, I sent one of my faithful servants to place the blood on our house." A short time later, the little maiden said, "Father, would you pick me up and carry me out so I can see the blood on the doorposts of our house?" Gently, the father picked up his crippled daughter and carried her just outside the door. Much to his shock and amazement, there was no blood on the doorposts. Quickly he took her back inside then returned . . . secured the necessary blood from a lamb . . . and just at the last moment of grace . . . sprinkled the blood on the doorposts moments before the death angel passed by.

- C. Friends, are you sure the blood is on the doorposts of your life? . . . Your home? . . . Your family?
- a. Don't take chances, for safety and salvation is found only under the protecting blood of the Lamb of God "Who takes away the sins of the world" . . . your sins . . . and mine.
  - b. I do not want to see this service close without giving you the knowledge you need . . . and the encouragement to come to Jesus Christ in obedience to His divine will for you . . . your lovely family members . . . and all others as well.
  - c. The souls of future generations can be influenced by the decision you make this very hour . . . Remain a Max Jukes or become a Jonathan Edwards.

#### D. God's Plan for Man's Salvation