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# A GODLY FAMILY – THE MISSING LINK



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“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)

John Bunyan once said, “A saint abroad, and a devil at home” in regards to hypocrisy. While

many believers today are searching for revival and chasing after signs and wonders it is interesting to note that in these revivals very little emphasis is placed on the importance of a godly family.

Although many sociologists emphasize that the foundation of a healthy culture is a healthy family, today’s churches place lesser emphasis on the importance of a godly family. I am convinced that one of the reasons we

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Speak less about the family, especially in Pentecostal-Charismatic circles, is because there is no “dynamic power” in speaking about the family. The battle for many is lost; the children of both ministers and believers often either unequally yoked together with unbelievers or are living in immoral situations; they are often arrogant and unruly. Attendance to services is exchanged for clubbing and friendships with those whose hearts are far from the Lord. The reason for this is clear and simple – parents often neglect foundational elements of a godly family, which is the missing link in a church that seeks to be an influential difference in society.

Often when believers marry, rather than living according to clear biblical principles, they begin to follow in their parents footsteps. If their parents are godly they become a blessing, but if their parents are unsaved many of their biblical standards, godly habits, and the foundation they were rooted in change; in deciding to become a godly family they throw out many of the biblical standards that make up a godly family. They no longer have time for devotions because they are busy with work, they no longer attend church regularly, the Bible is exchanged for the newspaper, and life’s decisions are influenced by the world, advertisements, and even television. In the

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end Christian couples become nothing more than an average family caught up with their careers, buying a house, purchasing a car, paying bills, and finding family time. The outcome does not bring about good results in their children because the elements that make up a godly family are not finances and owning a home.

► **1. GOD ALWAYS OCCUPIES FIRST PLACE IN A GODLY FAMILY, A LIFE THAT IS ENTIRELY ALIGNED WITH GOD’S WORD.**

James Dobson once said that our society will be only as stable as the foundation of the individual family on which society began. He further stated that our government, institutions, schools and lifestyle depends on healthy marriages and loyalty to our small children.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-7)

This message is the central theme of Deuteronomy and is very simple; God was giving a command of great value to the Israelites before they entered the promise land, which was filled with people who worshipped other gods. In that day, much like today, people put their trust in more than

one god. Today people put their trust in the god of their own religion, career, relationships, intellect, parents, cars, education, entertainment, houses, or their status symbols. These are “gods” from which people gain a feeling of security or greater value.

This is one of the key reasons why many Christians after marriage move God to the sidelines of their life instead of continuing to let God occupy first place and serving Him together with their spouse and children. They begin to make decisions in their own strength, their surrender and love for God is moderated according to the lifestyle of their ungodly parents and suddenly they begin to neglect God as they lack time for ministry, church attendance, and Bible reading because – and I quote – “I now have a family”.

How is it that all of a sudden our relationship with God and ministry for Him becomes something secondary, as if to say “when I find the time”? The Israelites were successfully only because their faith was built with the essential ingredients of family life.

Their faith was not built on information but with constant everyday application. In this area many believers become lost and are no different than the world. We have our own commitment to faith, we attend church whenever we get around to it and we say we believe in God but we live our life according to the standard of this world and according to the customs of our unbelieving parents. I am not saying that unbelieving parents are evil, but there is a great difference between

being a “good man” and knowing God and His Word because in the end we do not just want to be good people but faithful people. From what, then, must we be saved if all we aim to be is good citizens?

Before entering the Promised Land, in his instruction, Moses reviewed the important instructions God had given and said to them, “And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, *and* to keep the commandments of the LORD and His statutes which I command you today for your good? Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.” (Deuteronomy 10:12-13, 16)

If you are asking what God desires of you, these verses are a good reminder: fear God, apply His Word to your everyday life, love Him and serve Him with all your heart and soul. God is not complicated all we must do is honor Him, follow Him, love Him, serve Him, and listen to Him. If we do this we will find peace in our hearts and in our families.

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It is impossible to have a godly family when we are not aligned with God's Word. Life is filled with all kinds of frustration and failure, which is why we must place God at the center. This means we must find time for Him when we arise and when we lie down, we must faithfully keep His Word and apply it when making life decisions; we must love Him with all our heart and serve Him as a family.

Often we keep our spouse or our children from church, we fail to pray and renew ourselves daily in His presence, and we don't bring our children to church activities because we fear they'll be bothersome; and when our children become older we wonder why they do not serve the Lord. The answer is simple; we err when we do not put God at the center of our lives!

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► **2. A GODLY FAMILY DOES ALL IT CAN TO APPLY GODS WORD AND ITS PRINCIPLES IN EVERYDAY DECISIONS IN ORDER TO RAISE UP A STRONG FUTURE GENERATION THAT PUTS ITS TRUST IN GOD.**

"Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide *them* from their children, telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done. For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which He commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know *them*, the children *who* would be born, *that* they may arise and declare *them* to their children, that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments; and may not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, A generation *that* did not set its heart aright, and whose spirit was not faithful to God." (Psalm 78:3-8)

**"A godly parentage is a costly boon.** Its blessing not only rests upon the children of the first family, **but has often been traced in many successive generations.**" Andrew Murray

I often ask why some people shelter their children so much and if in the end they even protect them from church. We cannot say that we believe in God and not have fellowship with His church. Why are we surprised when our children no longer want to serve God and

be in His house each Sunday? We neglect one thing; children do not need information rather transformation, children learn by imitating the actions of their parents not by listening to their good theories.

If children do not see that their parents have time for personal godliness; if they do not see them worshipping God and serving in the church; if children do not see an example of godly living in the home, all the preaching in the world will not help them. What God expects of us is daily renewal in His presence and implementation of His principles in our decisions. If we do not apply His principles in our daily life, and not just on Sunday, our children will not put their hope and trust in Him; they will follow in our footsteps by wearing the mask of the good religious man who stops by the church now and then to greet his friends and drink a cup of coffee, yet with a heart far from the Lord. They will reflect our appearance of a generation of rebellious, unstable and spiritually unfaithful hearts.

It is interesting how Christians are surprised when their daughters become pregnant out of wedlock, when their children become caught in the trap of addictions, immorality, and materialism; yet their children often fall into these sins because of the example they have in their own homes. The Word clearly shows us that the mistake is on our part, not on God's. It commands us to daily declare His praise to our children, to convey what we have heard and apply His statutes and principles to our lives; we must pray for them, actively serve Him, and not forsake the gathering of the brethren. If we do this our children will not

become rebellious and defiant rather faithful.

When the children of Christians turn rebellious rather than repenting they often declare that the responsibility belongs to God. This lie from the devil is the most terrible lie that we could believe because this attitude makes God out to be a liar, and removes the responsibility from the shoulders of parents. This responsibility does not lie in the hands of the pastor, youth pastor, Sunday School teacher, Sunday sermons, or youth camp; these will not bring about change, only our example and a supernatural transformation from the Holy Spirit will change their lives. However, hypocrisy and a cold heart toward the Lord will go a long way in driving them away.

Revival meetings and "Signs and Wonders" conferences will not "fix" them, but the Word promises us that if we apply God's Word each and every day in our homes our children will be a faithful generation. We are a lazy and passive generation; we are always looking for the easy way out of our responsibilities, hoping that one prayer will fix it all without having to apply ourselves. However, if we want our children to be an obedient generation, we must practice obedience ourselves. If we want our children

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to attend church, we must be an example and attend church. We must not pass them off onto someone else. If we want our children to minister in church, become actively involved, read the Bible and pray we must be an example. If we want our children to love the Lord, place God at the center of their lives, respect authority and be separate from the world we must be an example. If we do not want our children to be rebellious and defiant we must simply be an example to them of godly behavior. Seminars, conferences and spiritual “quick fixes” cannot implant God’s righteousness or His biblical principals in their hearts in a simple hour, only the example of their parents. Example is the non-exchangeable ingredient!

If we want to build a strong and faithful generation we must be an example. Children do not want theories; they want an example of daily living. We will see with time how they imitate us; we will see ourselves in them. The question is will they see us as

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person whose trust has been placed in God and who does not forget the works He has done. It all depends on us; let’s accept the responsibility and refuse to hide behind the words “It’s God’s responsibility, not mine”. This statement is the greatest deception ever dreamed up as a way of reducing the guilt of unfaithful parents and placing it on God. Often we try to shift the blame onto someone else: our pastor, father, mother, neighbor, or someone from our past that rejected or abused us. The time has come for us to walk away from these emotionally manipulative, immature and endless cycles and remember that one day we will be answerable to Almighty God for the decisions we have made, the words we have spoken and the deeds we have done. We will not be able to manipulate or play games with Him using humanistic logic or tears claiming that it was impossible for us to do things differently.

► **3. SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS IN THE FAMILY DEPENDS UPON OBEDIENCE TO GOD AND HIS WORD.**

“Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go.” Joshua 1:7-8

“Some Parents, like Eli, bring up their children to bring down their house.” – George Swinnock  
Most families think that successes and happiness

in the home is dependent upon their financial capabilities, connections with influential people or strong perseverance. However, it is just the opposite, according to the Word. It is not wrong to have finances or influential connections with people. It's not bad to buy a new home, have a degree, or a good job. But these things do not bring success and happiness in the family according to God's standards.

God told Joshua to be strong and courageous so he could lead more than 2 million Israelites into the Promised Land. He gave Joshua a "recipe for success"; it was not education, although this is not wrong; it was not connections with influential people or financial blessing, rather it was obedience to God and His Word. God told him that success would only come if Joshua meditated and applied God's Word day and night; only if he faithfully did all that was written in it.

This also applies to righteous and godly families. A happy and successful family is a family that loves God with their whole heart; not necessarily a family that drives a brand new car, has a plasma TV, or a nice, new home. A happy and successful family is a family whose sons and daughters proclaim God's praise and deeds, not a family whose children have to wear the height of fashion. A happy and successful family is not a family whose children can speak five foreign languages, play three instruments and who are involved in a different sport each season; rather, a happy and successful family is a family whose heart is filled with love for God and His law and love for others around them. A happy and successful family is not a family who regularly enjoys grand vacations and uses vacation time

to "rest from the Lord"; rather they faithfully serve the Lord regardless of the cost. What is most important is for our children to love the Lord with all their heart, to serve him and have eternal life. This is what is of value to the Lord!

There is no half-way commitment or partial conversion with God; we cannot please the world and keep His commandments at the same time. We cannot be bearers of both light and darkness. It is time for us to lead our families according to biblical principles and turn away from that which we learned in our days in the world. God's values and goals are opposite from the world. It is time to start living with God's kingdom in view; it is time to start living like we believe that Jesus will return at any time!

Unfortunately, if we do not choose to base our values and lifestyle around God's principles; if we are not obedient to God's commands and do not live in the power of the Holy Spirit then we will not be blessed and our happiness, success, and salvation will be in question. We must choose not to be "A stubborn and rebellious generation, a

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generation *that* did not set its heart aright, and whose spirit was not faithful to God.” (Psalm 78:8)

Psalm 78 gives us the reason why God chose the tribe of Judah and Jerusalem to house His temple, and why He rejected the tribe of Ephraim. The generation that neglects God and His ways cannot claim for themselves or for their families God’s blessing and godly success. “The children of Ephraim, *being armed and carrying bows*, turned back in the day of battle. They did not keep the covenant of God; they refused to walk in His law, and forgot His works and His wonders that He had shown them. Then they remembered that God *was* their rock, and the Most High God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they flattered Him with their mouth, and they lied to Him with their tongue; for their heart was not steadfast with Him, nor were they faithful in His covenant. Yet they tested and provoked the Most High God, and did not keep His testimonies, but turned back and acted unfaithfully like their fathers; they were turned aside like a deceitful bow. Then the Lord awoke as *from* sleep, like a mighty man who shouts because of wine. And He beat back His enemies; He put them to a perpetual reproach. Moreover He rejected the tent of Joseph, and did not

choose the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion which He loved and He built His sanctuary like the heights, like the earth which He has established forever.” (Psalm 78:9-11; 35-37; 56-57; 65-69)

The greatest problem for the children of Israel was that they followed the Lord with their words but not with their hearts, which is why often their repentance was empty.

This sermon alone is not worth anything. God wants for us and our families to decide to live up to what we speak and to fulfill the promises we’ve made to Him. The happiness and success of our families is absolutely dependent upon our true obedience to Him and His Word because a godly family is the missing link in our churches today!

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