

Strengthening the American Family

Introductory Lesson



WHY STUDY THE FAMILY?

Let me answer this question with another question, "Why not?"

Why not have a series of lessons and discussions devoted to strengthening the family? Families struggle financially, physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. As we come together, we will share insights and concepts along with Bible passages to help strengthen each family.

Our class is entitled, "Strengthening the American Family" because topics will be covered which deal with the American culture and the changes that affect our families.

This class discussion will concern:

- The Marriage relationship
- Single Parent Homes
- Hints on Raising Children
- Finding Time for Family
- Communicating as a Family
- Growing as a Family
- Grandparenting

THINGS I TAKE FOR GRANTED

In every class I teach or lesson I present, I always take certain aspects for granted. In this class, here is what I am taking for granted in this class:

- The family is based upon Divine creation. (Genesis 1:27,28; 2:24)
- God gave every person guidelines to live by. (2 Peter 1:3)
- Marriage is between a man and a woman. (Genesis 2:24)
- The family relationship is built on Christ and God. (1 Corinthians 11:3-9)
- God hates divorce. (Malachi 3:16)



- The only grounds given for divorce is sexually immorality. (Matthew 19:1-9)
- God has always wanted children taught by their parents and grandparents. (Deuteronomy 6:1-9)

QUOTE ON THE FAMILY

"In every conceivable manner, the family is the link to our past and the bridge to our future"

-Alex Haley

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY HAVE CHANGED

The following information is taken from The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families by Stephen Covey.

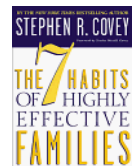
It is a comparison of the past and the present dealing with the family atmosphere:

40-50 years ago:

- Technology was limited (no TV or a little TV)
- Schools were different (different set of discipline problems)
 - Top discipline problems: gum, noise, dress code, littering, running in the halls.
- Violent crimes (16.1 incidents per 100,000)
- Religion was valued (70 % of people feel religion is increasing its influence on American life.)
- Family rituals
- Parents at work (40 hour work week; less than 20% of children need day care)

Today's culture

- Technology is increasing
 - (Each week children spend 1.8 hours reading, 5.6 hours doing homework and 21 hours watching TV; adults watch 15 hours of TV a week) *Remember to factor in internet use.*
- School problems are greatly different.
 - Assaults on teachers rose 700% since 1978.
 - Top discipline problems: drugs, alcohol, pregnancy, suicide, rape, robbery, assault.
- Violent Crimes (500% increase since 1950; 75.8 incidents per 100,000)
- Religion (60% feel religion is losing its influence; 90% feel the U.S. is slipping deeper into a moral decline)
- Family rituals
- Parents at work (Longer work week; more than 60% of children need day care)



“HONEY, WOULD YOU STILL LOVE ME?”

There was once a beautiful young woman who was married to a wealthy but elderly gentleman. One day he asked her, "Honey, if I lost all my money, would you still love me? I mean, if I lost my mountain chalet, my yacht, and even my French Villa, would you still love me?" "Of course I would," she cooed, "and I would miss you too."

Real commitment is a rare commodity these days. Couples promise to love each other for better or worse, for richer or poorer, but over 50 percent of those commitments fail. All of us long for someone whose commitment to us is unconditional and eternal.

That someone's name is God. The reason churches are crowded these days is that people want to meet this someone who never fails or forsakes us.

(Bill Bouknight, "Just a Thought")



The Preacher's Pen

"Creating Better Lives Today for a Better Day Tomorrow"

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