



“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” (Ephesians 5:31).

Foundation of Society

Central Truth: The home is the basic unit of human society.

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Topic: Family; Marriage; Home.

What is a family? We recognize the concept from a threefold viewpoint. (1) A family is a husband and wife joined together in the covenant of marriage, with the children God may give them. (2) A family is a group of people who are related by blood or by marriage. (3) A family is a single person—or a single parent—who maintains a place of residence.

Why is a definition of family important? A public school textbook defined a family as “a group of people who live together.” But that definition is incorrect and dangerous. In today's perverted society that definition opens the door to the same-sex unions which God calls abominable and detestable. We must take a positive stand for the traditional concept of family in order to protect our homes and our children.

Pause in your reading at this point. Think about how you would define “family.” Compare your definition with Bible standards and popular opinions.

Origin of the Home (Genesis 2:18-24)

The home originated by a personal act of God (verses 18, 24). The name “Lord God” appears four times in the biblical account of the institution of marriage and the home in human society. And the personal pronoun he, as used to refer to the Lord God, occurs three times. In eight verses of Scripture (Genesis 1:18-25), there are seven references to God. That is why we say the home originated by a personal act of God. The home is not a mere social

institution, therefore, but a divine arrangement instituted by God himself. Is that the way you look upon your marriage and your home? It should be.

The home originated because of human need (verse 18). God made humans with certain basic needs: food, water, productive labor, human fellowship, and divine fellowship. Four of those five things were provided when God placed Adam in the Garden of Eden. He had the fruit of the garden for food, four rivers for water, the plants of the garden to dress and keep for productive labor, and divine fellowship with God. But man lacked human fellowship; so God said, *“It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him”* (Genesis 2:18). The woman was created to complete the man.

The home originated because of the uniqueness of human nature (verses 19-23). God created all kinds of animals. Adam became intimately acquainted with each kind. He gave names to the cattle, fowl, and beast. But not one of them matched his nature and met his need for fellowship. So God did another act of creation. He took a rib from Adam's side and made a woman who bore his very nature. And the Lord brought them together. Adam said, “Wow! Now at last.” (The Hebrew phrase translated *“this is now”* is an exclamation of joy and amazement.) After looking at all the animals, Adam saw a creature which matched him. How good God is to give us our companions in marriage and the home.

The home originated as a permanent institution (verse 24). For a man, marriage involves a separation (“leave father and mother”) and a union (“cleave to his wife”). The custom of divorce was not a part of the original institution of marriage and the home. It was added much later (Deuteronomy 24:1-4) because of the hardness of people's hearts. God never intended marriage to end that way (Matthew 19:8). On the contrary, God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16). A man and a woman are bound by law to each other until death (Romans 7:2). God's purpose is that each husband would love his wife and live joyfully with her all the days of his life (Ecclesiastes 9:9). God permitted divorce for the protection of the innocent partner, not for the convenience of fickle human emotions.

Roles in the Home (Ephesians 5:22-6:4)

The husband is the head of the home. Since that principle is repeated so many times in the Bible, it is surprising that Christians do not accept it without comment. (Read Ephesians 5:22-24; I Timothy 2:12-14; 3:4, 5; I Peter 3:7.) The husband is not the head of the home because he chooses to be, or because he is physically stronger and can take control. He is the head

of the home because God decreed it. To reverse that role is not to break marriage custom. It is a direct rebellion against the decree of God.

Headship does not equate with dictatorship. The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church. He loves her as Christ loves the church. He is ready to die for her as Christ died for the church. No wise woman would hesitate to submit to the leadership of a man like that. And that is what every husband is obligated under God to be like.

The wife is the heart of the home. The rib of which Eve was made came from Adam's side. It was near his heart that he would love her and under his arm that he might protect her. The woman set the emotional tone of the household. Her respect for her husband and his love for her provide a haven where children can be reared to know, love, and serve God. The influence of the wife and mother is indicated by the Old Testament introducing a man with the statement, "his mother's name was . . ."

When a Sunday School teacher told her class that God made people good, a little child replied, "Yes, but mothers help a lot." And they do!

Children are the hope of the home. Psalm 127:3-5 says children are a gift from God and a reward that comes from Him. It calls the father with a house full of children a happy man, whose blessednesses (note the plural) are from God. Ephesians 6:1-4 discusses the duties of children toward their parents and parents toward their children.

(1) Children are to obey their parents. God says that is the right thing to do (Ephesians 6:1). Ask any school teacher (or Sunday School teacher) about the need for respectful submission to authority in young children. It is evident that parents need to do a better job in teaching children to obey.

(2) Children are to honor their parents. The child who submits to parental control with a respectful spirit is promised prosperity and long life (Ephesians 6:2, 3). No society can stand strong unless the younger generation is taught obedience and respect.

(3) Children are to receive instruction from their parents (Ephesians 6:4). That instruction is to be given wisely (not to overcorrect them) and to be given spiritually (rearing them in the discipline and instruction which is appropriate to the people of God).

Love in the Home (Ephesians 5:25-33)

This passage is so far from the customs of our society that we miss its real meaning. It is not written as a manual on the relationship of husband and wife. It deals with the relationship of Christ and the church, using the husband and wife as an illustration. It is as if God were saying, "Christ loves

the church intimately and cares for it personally, just as a husband loves and cares for his wife” (Ephesians 5:33). However, it is evident that God expects the husband to love his wife as Christ loves the church. So, how does Christ love the church?

Love is sacrificial. *“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it”* (Ephesians 5:25). It is devoted to the welfare of the beloved, whatever it may cost the lover. Such love is never 50/50 because it always gives 100 percent.

Love is uplifting. Christ loved the church in order *“that he might sanctify and cleanse it, . . . that he might present it to himself a glorious church, . . . that it should be holy and without blemish”* (Ephesians 5:26, 27). That does not mean a husband is to “straighten out” his wife to improve her. It rather means that he is to minister to her in love so she is increasingly precious.

Love is intimate. *“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies”* (Ephesians 5:28). (See also verses 29, 33.) He cares for her as consistently as he cares for himself. She and he are joined together as one flesh, with each dependent upon the other.

Love is sacred. It is based on the original intent of God when He established marriage and the home (Ephesians 5:31). A man honors God as he honors his wife and makes his marriage a reflection of the relationship of Christ and the church.

Contributions of the Home

A godly seed is developed in the home. That is why God established marriage. That is why the devil seeks to destroy it. That is the reason God hates divorce so fiercely (Malachi 2:14-16). A dysfunctional home is the devil's delight; a functional home is God's delight. What kind of home do you have?

A good heritage is passed on in the home. Timothy had such a heritage in the faith of his mother and his grandmother (II Timothy 1:5). You may read concerning some Old Testament characters this statement: *“He walked in the ways of his father. . . .”* Make a memory for your children with passages on a good heritage.

A religious testimony is given in the home. Deuteronomy 6:7 instructs parents to implant thoughts of God in the minds of their children by making Him the subject of conversation. Ephesians 6:4 instruct parents to bring up their children in the training and correction appropriate for the people of God. The home can be a lighthouse for Christ.

A stable society is preserved in the home. Note the cause and effect in Genesis 6:1-5. When the sons of God married the daughters of men (an unequal yoke of the righteous and the unrighteous), the wickedness of man became great in the earth and his thoughts were evil continually. The same is true today.

There are four basic institutions of society: home, state, school, and church. Of the four, the home is the basic unit. When homes are in disarray, the state, the school, and the church are all weakened. That is why this study of marriage and the home is entitled, “Foundation of Society.” Work to make your home, your marriage, and your family all that God designed it to be.

Questions for Discussion

1. How would you define *family*?
2. How is it more than “a group of people who live together”?
3. Why did God institute marriage and the home?
4. What Bible verses indicate that God intended marriage to be permanent?
5. In what sense is the husband the head of the home?
6. Who is the head of a single woman's home?
7. In what sense is the wife the heart of the home?
8. How would you describe the love God approves in the home?
9. How is a “godly seed” produced in a good home?
10. How can your home be one that God approves?