

THE FAMILY

Psalm 128:3-4

I. INTRODUCTION: I

1. **2** Several weeks ago we began a series of lessons with the general theme of “*grow[ing] in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.*” (2 Pet. 3:18)

A. These lessons are designed to help Christians grow and be strong in the Lord (1 Pet. 2:2).

B. We cannot remain “*babes*” in Christ (1 Cor. 14:20); and even if we’ve been Christians for many years, we need to be reminded of these first principles (2 Pet. 3:1)

(1) **Lesson #1: ALL** Christians must put “first things first” (Matt. 6:33).

(2) **Lesson #2: ALL** Christians must diligently strive for spiritual maturity (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

(3) **Lesson #3: ALL** Christians must turn away from “worldliness” and “*keep oneself unspotted from the world*” (Jas. 1:27).

(4) **Lesson #4: ALL** Christians must remain faithful after baptism (Rev. 2:10; e.g., worshiping, moral purity, and bearing fruit).

(5) **Lesson #5: ALL** Christians must be diligent students of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15).

(6) **Lesson #6: ALL** Christians must strive to meet their responsibilities (God, others, self; Rom. 14:12).

2. **3** In today’s society the family has been referred to as “an endangered species”!

A. In the past the family & home were the rule; today the family & home are in great decline.

B. ****** Consider some alarming statistics:

- ☛ 2017: 2.24 million marriages in the U.S., but 1.1 million divorces (U.S. Census Bureau).
- ☛ U.S. divorce rates have been declining since 2008, but the number of men and woman cohabiting w/out the benefit of marriage is climbing (nearly 20% of men and women).
- ☛ Younger people in the U.S. who are marrying for the first time face roughly a 40-50% chance of divorcing in their lifetime under current trends (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1992, p. 5).
- ☛ Adults and children are at increased risk for mental and physical problems due to marital distress (e.g., Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1994; Coie et al. 1993; Coyne, Kahn, & Gotlib, 1987; Cowan & Cowan, 1992; Fincham, Grych, & Osborne, 1993).
- ☛ Many more couples live together prior to marriage than in the past--recent estimates are in the range of 60+% (Stanley & Markman, 1997; Bumpass & Sweet, 1991). These couples are less likely to stay married, probably due mostly to the fact they are less conservative about marriage and divorce in the first place.
- ☛ The “triple threat” of marital conflict, divorce, and out-of-wedlock births has led to a generation of U.S. children at great risk for poverty, health problems, alienation, and antisocial behavior.
- ☛ Illegitimacy rate have skyrocketed! 40.7% overall (non-Hispanic blacks, 72.3%; American Indians/Alaska Natives, 66.2%; Hispanics, 53.3%; non-Hispanic whites, 29.1%; U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, 2012).

C. **4** In 2016 there were >74 million children under the age of 18 in the U. S. (~23% of U.S. population) Of those children:

- ☛ 27% lived with only one parent,
- ☛ Of those, over three-quarters lived w/mother, less than a fifth lived w/father,
- ☛ About 5% lived with neither parent,
- ☛ Thus, nearly one-third of children in the U. S. lived in less than ideal homes.

D. Effects:

- ☛ Among long-term prison inmates, 70 percent grew up without fathers, as did 60 percent of rapists and 75 percent of adolescents charged with murder.
- ☛ Fatherless children are three times more likely to fail school, require psychiatric treatment and commit suicide as adolescents.
- ☛ They are also up to 40 times more likely to experience child abuse compared with children growing up in two-parent families. (Source: Wade Horn and Andrew Bush, "Fathers, Marriage, and Welfare Reform,")

And,

- ☛ "Children who grow up in single-parent homes are less likely to marry, more likely to divorce, and more likely to have children outside of wedlock." (Daniel T. Lichter et al., "Race and the Retreat from Marriage: A Shortage of Marriageable Men?" American Sociological Review 57 (December 1992): 781-799. Cited on page 27 of [The Abolition of Marriage, by Maggie Gallagher](#))
- ☛ One study on the effects of unmarried mothers' raising children found that daughters were more likely to become sexually active in their teen years and were more likely to become involved with men that will abuse them. ([The Abolition of Marriage, by Maggie Gallagher p. 167](#), citing Stephanie Schamess, "The Search for Love: Unmarried Adolescent Mothers' Views of, and Relationships with, Men," Adolescence 28, No. 110 (1993): 425ff.)
- ☛ In surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center, researchers found that white female children of divorce were 60 percent more likely to undergo divorce or separation in adulthood than a similar population from intact families. The divorce/separation rate for white male children of divorce was 35 percent higher than for white male children from intact families. ([Brian Willats, Breaking Up is Easy To Do, available from Michigan Family Forum](#), citing N. D. Glenn and K. B. Kramer, "The marriages and divorces of the children of divorce," Journal of Marriage and the Family, 49, pp. 811-825. Cited in Judith Wallerstein, Ph.D., "The Long-Term Effects of Divorce on Children: A Review," Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, May 1991, p. 357.)
- ☛ Teens from single-parent homes are twice as likely to drop out of high school, become teen parents, and one-and-one-half times more likely to stay at home as young adults. (McLanahan and Sandefur, Growing Up. Cited on page 34 of [The Abolition of Marriage, by Maggie Gallagher](#))
- ☛ "14% of white women who married in the 1940s eventually divorced. A single generation later, almost 50 percent of those that married in the late sixties and early seventies have already divorced" ... Between 1970 and 1992, the proportion of babies born outside of marriage leaped from 11% to 30%." (It is now, 2018, ~40%!) (Amara Bachu, Fertility of American Women: June 1994 (Washington D.C.: Bureau of the Census, September 1995), xix, Table K. Cited on page 5 of [The Abolition of Marriage, by Maggie Gallagher](#))
- ☛ The illegitimacy rate has increased 66% since 1980 and is still growing. (See Larry L. Bumpass, "What's Happening to the Family: Interaction Between Demographic and Institutional Change," Demography 27 (1990): 483-498. Cited on page 11 of [The Abolition of Marriage, by Maggie Gallagher](#))
- ☛ "According to Washington-based National Center for Policy Alternatives, 40 percent of girls in school today will be the head of households." (Janice Mall in the Los Angeles Times, 12 April, 1987. Cited in Amneus, The Garbage Generation)

- ☛ According to one study “...women...raised in female-headed families are 53 percent likelier to have teenage marriages, 111 percent likelier to have teenage births, 164 percent likelier to have premarital births, 93 percent likelier to experience marital disruptions.” (“Intergenerational Consequences of Family Disruption, “American Journal of Sociology 4 (July, 1988), 130-52; cited in *The Family in America: New Research*, October, 1988. Cited in Amneus, *The Garbage Generation*, page 113)

3. Much more could be said. Much, much more!!!

A. “Same-sex marriage” is now the law of the land; plus, various individuals and groups are clamoring for the legalization of polygamy and polyamory (group marriage).

B. The LGBTQ crowd has forced society (in general) to normalize their perversions.

(1) They are permitted to adopt children.

(2) As result, many religion-related adoption agencies are closing.

4. The prime reason our society finds itself in this quagmire is that most have totally thrown out the Bible’s principles regarding marriage and the family (**2 Tim. 3:13**: “*But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*”).

5. **5** Our objective in this lesson is to consider some of the things the Bible teaches on this important subject so that we do not fall into the same cesspool.

Psa. 128:3-4: “*Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine in the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants all around your table. 4 Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD.*”

II. DISCUSSION:

I. **6** Relationship between family & nation:

A. Consider this quote:

“As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live.”

—Pope John Paul II

B. I’m not fond of quoting a pope, but when a man gets it right, he gets it right!

Psa. 33:12: “*Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance.*”

Prov. 14:34: “*Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.*”

C. The wisdom of man does not establish truth, but it certainly can corroborate it. Note what some wise people of the world say concerning the home and family:

“Home—that blessed word, which opens to the human heart the most perfect glimpse of Heaven, and helps to carry it thither, as on an angel’s wings.” (Lydia M. Child, 1802–1880, U. S. abolitionist, writer, editor)

“Home is a name, a word, it is a strong one; stronger than magician ever spoke, or spirit ever answered to, in the strongest conjuration.” (Charles Dickens)

“Home is where one starts from.” (T. S. Eliot, 1888–1965)

“The family is both the fundamental unit of society as well as the root of culture. It represents a child’s initial source of unconditional love and acceptance and provides lifelong connectedness with others. The family is the first setting in which socialization takes place and where children learn to live with mutual respect for one another. A family is where a child learns to display affection, control his temper, and pick up his toys. Finally, a family is a perpetual source of encouragement, advocacy, assurance, and emotional refueling that empowers a child to venture with confidence into the greater world and to become all that he can be.” (Marianne E. Neifert (20th century), U. S. pediatrician, professor and author)

******“The strength of a nation is derived from the integrity of its homes.” (Confucius)

“The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.” (Unknown)

D. All we need to do is recall some of the miserable statistics from our introduction to know that a good, solid family life is essential to our well-being.

(1) Why is substance abuse so rampant in today’s society?

(2) Why are mass shooting so common today? (Recall last Wednesday’s invitation)

2. **7** Family ordained by God:

A. Marriage and the home are ordained and regulated by God.

(1) Soon after the first man was created: **Gen. 2:18**: “*The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.’*” (NIV)

Adam Clarke: “‘a help, a counterpart of himself,’ one formed from him, and a perfect resemblance of his person. If the word be rendered scrupulously literally, it signifies one like, or as himself, standing opposite to or before him. And this implies that the woman was to be a perfect resemblance of the man possessing neither inferiority nor superiority but being in all things like and equal to himself.”

(2) ****** God put Adam to sleep with divine anesthetic and performed the first surgery, by taking one of his ribs, and made a woman for the man (******Gen. 2:21-25).

(3) The woman became the wife of Adam and they were one flesh (Gen. 2:24).

B. ****** Note the words of the wise man Solomon (**Prov. 18:22**: “*He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the LORD.*”).

C. God informs us that sexual relations are only legitimate in marriage (**Heb. 13:4**: “*Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*”).

3. **8** The purpose of marriage:

A. It may seem silly to examine the purpose of marriage; but many really don’t understand it! Especially from a biblical perspective.

B. Not all people marry for the right reasons. Some marry:

(1) Just to get away from home.

(4) Money.

(2) To spite their parents, for pity, or for adventure.

(5) To escape loneliness.

(3) Because of physical attraction.

(6) For social prestige.

C. ****** Marriages for the wrong reasons usually end up in disaster! (Recall: ~50% of marriages end in divorce, so many are obviously marrying for the wrong reasons. Matt. 19:9; 1 Jn. 5:3)

D. ****** The divine purpose of marriage: at least 3...

(1) ****** Meet man’s needs: To meet the needs of “man” (i.e., man as in ‘mankind’).

(a) Marriage & the family provide atmosphere where man and woman can be completely fulfilled (**1 Cor. 11:11-12**: “*But remember that in God’s plan men and women need each other. 12 For although the first woman came out of man, all men have been born from women ever since, and both men and women come from God their Creator.*” TLB).

(b) Happily married people tend to be “happy” people in general!

(2) ****** Propagate & nurture the human family: **Gen. 1:28**: “*Then God blessed them, and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply...’*”; Eph. 6:1-4.

- (a) Note the Genesis command was given to both the man and the woman. Therefore, it automatically eliminates:
 - ☛ Adam & Steve
 - ☛ Alice & Eve
- (b) The wickedness of man is demonstrated in our country in that...
 - (i) Since the infamous 1973 *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision, over 60 million babies have been murdered while still in their mother's womb (almost twice the population of Canada!).
 - (ii) In our nation's capital there are 3 abortions for every live birth (~16 each day!).
 - (iii) Every day in the world there are ~125,000 abortions (U.S. ~2,700).
 - (iv) The perversion and debauchery of homosexuality (Rom. 1:24-27) has been granted the honor or holy matrimony by the state!
- (c) Many of our social problems are directly traceable back to the disintegration of the family unit (e.g., crime, child abuse, substance abuse, alienation, mass shootings, etc.).
- (3) **** Moral purity of the human family:** To keep the human race morally pure (**1 Cor. 7:2**: "Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband."; **Heb. 13:4**: "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.").

4. **9** Marriage is for life:

- A. With soaring divorce rates, we must learn the Bible teaches marriage is for life! (**Rom. 7:1-4**) We must learn this lesson and teach it to our children!
- B. ****** There are only two scriptural reasons which will allow one to be married more than once:
 - (1) The death of one's spouse (Rom. 7:1-4; 1 Cor. 7:39-40).
 - (2) When one divorces their spouse because their spouse has committed adultery (fornication)(Matt. 19:9).
- C. ****** God allows "separation" from a spouse, but they must remain unmarried (1 Cor. 7:10-11)
- D. ****** God's rule for marriage: "One man for one woman for life with only one exception."
- E. Who one marries is the second most important life decision!

5. **10** Responsibilities in marriage:

- A. Marriage is not a one-sided arrangement: both husbands and wives share God-given responsibility each must mutually accept and faithfully discharge for marital success.
- B. ****** Mutual responsibilities:
 - (1) **** Love one another:** **Eph. 5:33**: "Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband." (cf. **Titus 2:4**: "admonish the young women to love their husbands")
 - (2) **** Companionship:** (**Gen. 2:18**: "And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.'"). Companionship is sadly missing in many marriages with the husband going one way and the wife the other.
 - (3) **** Satisfaction of physical desires:**

- (a) Marriage is the only God-approved relationship for satisfying the sexual desires God has given “man”:

Heb. 13:4: “Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”

1 Cor. 7:1-5: “Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”

- (b) Many marriages end in divorce because one party does not respect the rights of the other in this area.
- (c) Sexual infidelity is probably the most hurtful thing one could do to their spouse.
- (4) **** Faithfulness:** sexual fidelity (**1 Cor. 6:18:** “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.”).
- (a) Sexual infidelity is such a grievous sin it is the only scriptural reason allowing the innocent party the right to remarry (Gal. 5:19-20; Matt. 19:9).
- (b) This applies not only to wives, but also to husbands.
- (c) Recent studies suggest that somewhere between 50-70% of married people commit adultery by the time they reach age 40.

C. 11 Some responsibilities of wives and mothers:

- (1) **** Submission to husband:** The place of the wife is not that of noisy prominence or display (**1 Pet. 3:1-6;** Eph. 5:22-24; **Col. 3:18:** “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”; (Michael Jordan vs. Phil Jackson); **1 Tim. 2:12:** “And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence.”).
- (2) **** Loving mother:** Simply being a female parent does not qualify one as a “mother” in the eyes of the Lord (1 Tim. 2:15; 2 Tim. 1:5→2 Tim. 3:15).
- (3) **** Homemakers:** (**Titus 2:4-5:** “that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; 3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things — 4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children,”; Prov. 31:10-31; note: does not preclude “working”).

D. 12 Some responsibilities of husbands and fathers: Husbands must be faithful to discharge their duties in every realm of life.

- (a) **** Head of family:**
- (i) God made the man to be the head of the family (Eph. 5:23-25).
- (ii) The man has the position of leadership (remember Phil Jackson!)(**1 Cor. 11:3:** “But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.”).
- (b) **** Love wife:**

- (i) God requires the husband to love and honor his wife with the ultimate in love (Eph. 5:25; **1 Pet. 3:7**: “Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”). Why would a Christian woman even consider marrying a non-Christian for whom Ephesians 5:25 was meaningless?!
- (ii) The greatest gift a man can give his children (esp. boys) is to love his wife and show it.
- (c) **** Responsible father:** God made man to be the father of the family. When a man becomes a father, he takes on many added responsibilities.
 - (i) Guide direct, and train children (Eph. 6:4; Prov. 22:6).
 - (ii) Discipline is essential in the family (Prov. 13:24; 19:18; 29:15-17).
- E. Good marriages don’t simply “happen”; they are the result of the dedication of both husband and wife to God, hard work, determination and selflessness.

6. **13** The children in the family:

- A. Children have responsibility in the family as well as their parents.
- B. Here are a few things the Bible says about children’s responsibilities in the family:

(1) **** Obey parents:**

Eph. 6:1-3: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 ‘Honor your father and mother,’ which is the first commandment with promise: 3 ‘that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.’”

Lk. 2:51-53: “Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.”; Rom. 1:29-32 (**v. 30:** “disobedient to parents”)

Prov. 15:20: “A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish man despises his mother.”

Prov. 17:25: “A foolish son is a grief to his father, and bitterness to her who bore him.”; Deut. 21:18-21; Prov. 30:17

Deut. 27:16: “Cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt.’ ‘And all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’”

- (2) Learn to work: (**Lam. 3:27:** “It is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth.”; **Eph. 4:28:** “Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.”; **1 Tim. 5:4:** “But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.”).
- (3) Learn to love God and His word: (**Eph. 6:4:** “And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”; **Prov. 22:6:** “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.”; 2 Tim. 3:15).

III. CONCLUSION: **14**

- 1. Must follow God’s word concerning our marriage and family relationships for a fulfilling life.
- 2. Each family member must learn, accept, and faithfully discharge their God-given responsibilities.
- 3. Obeying God in these areas of life are just as important as obeying Him in any other (e.g., doctrinally correct). Are you obeying God in these areas of your life?