

### Family in the New Testament

Parents  
Children  
Siblings  
Marriage

God chose:

- The physical family as an illustration of the spiritual family.
- The spiritual family as an illustration of the physical family

### Family in the New Testament

When cultural norms are assumed to be part of the illustration, both physical and spiritual families are damaged.

- Ephesians 5:23 The husband is the head of the wife
- 2 Corinthians 11:2 I have betrothed you to one husband...Christ.
- Ephesians 6:2 Honor your father and mother
- Titus 2:4 – 5 Admonish the young women to be ...keepers at home...

### Family in the New Testament

How do we avoid merging culture into the Word?

- Restrict the comparisons to the points God makes.
- Read all the passages, looking for apparent contradictions. These expose our cultural assumptions

### Family in the New Testament

God uses physical family relationships to illustrate a bigger picture:

- 1 Timothy 5:2 Treat elderly church women as mothers, younger church women as sisters.
- Ephesians 5:23 – 33 Marriage between two Christians is to be an illustration of the relationship between Christ and His church.
- 2 Corinthians 12:14 “Parents lay up for their children” illustrates the care of teachers for disciples.

### Family in the New Testament

- Matthew 12:46 – 50 ...”Who is My mother and who are My brothers?...Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.” (Mark 3:31 – 35, Luke 8:19 – 21)
- Matthew 19:29 “Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or fathers or mothers or children or lands, for My Name’s sake, shall receive 100-fold, and inherit eternal life.” (Mark 10:29 – 30, Luke 18:29 – 30)
- Luke 14:26 “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”

### Faith will cause family problems

- Luke 21:16 “You will be betrayed by even parents and brothers, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death.”
- Luke 12:53 “Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” (Matthew 10:35 – 36)
- Mark 13:12 “Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.” (Matthew 10:21)

### **Having physical family will cause a conflict of priorities (1 Corinthians 7)**

- (5) Fasting and prayer versus marital relations
- (12 – 16) Staying with an unbelieving spouse for the goal of conversion as long as the spouse consents
- (32 – 35) Marriage implies a division of effort
- (28, 36 – 38) But choosing marriage is not a sin

### **The faithful still take care of physical family**

- Colossians 3:20 Obey parents (Romans 1:30, 2 Timothy 3:2)
- 1 Timothy 5:3 – 16 Faithful people take care of their physical families; the church as a group takes care of the faithful without physical families.
- John 19:25 – 27 Jesus took care of His mother
- Matthew 15:3 – 6 “But you say, ‘Whoever says to his father and mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God,” then he need not honor his father.’ Thus you have made the commandment of God to no effect by your tradition.” (Mark 7:10 – 13)

Physical and spiritual family  
are not in competition.  
If we prioritize, we can enjoy neither.

- Unspiritual physical family will force conflicts in order to gain dominance, like self-centered children.
- We do not choose either physical or spiritual above the other; they are equal.

### **Cultural Intrusions**

- Christians must have as many children as possible.
- Male dominance rather than male leadership.
- Authority rather than hegemony.
- Rights rather than service.
- Entitlements.
- A woman’s place is in the home.
- Woman’s work.

### **Mixing Biblical Metaphors**

- The figure of speech, God the Father, emphasizes some of God’s characteristics.
- The highlighted characteristics do not overshadow the others (*e.g.*, King).
- Rather, each figure prevents us from taking one image too far.
- Example: Galatians 3:29 – 4:7 Under guardians

### **How to Find the Information: Concordance**

- Father, fathers
- Mother, mothers, nurse
- Sister, sisters
- Brother, brethren
- Husband
- Wife
- Marriage, marry
- Child, children
- Son, sons
- Daughter, daughters
- Betroth, betrothed

### Benefits of a Study of Family

- Seeing spiritual and physical family as one
- Understanding spiritual relationships
- Overcoming culture
- Allowing the character of Jesus in us to make the right relationship choices
- Jesus wept over Jerusalem, but did not bend to it.

### Characteristics of a Father

1 Thessalonians 2:8 – 12 Spiritual fathers draw on the image of good earthly fathers

- Dedicate life
- Dear
- Laboring night and day (not a burden)
- Devout
- Just
- Blameless
- Exhort
- Comfort
- Charge to walk worthy

### Characteristics of a Father

- Ephesians 6:4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.
- Colossians 3:21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.
- Hebrews 12:5 – 11 Whom the Lord loves He chastens.
- 1 John 2:13 – 14 I have written to you, fathers, because you have known Him who is from the beginning.

### Characteristics of a Father

- 1 Corinthians 4:14 – 17 Paul considered himself the father of those he taught.
- Romans 4:16 Abraham, father of us all
- What are the characteristics of a spiritual father?
- How does one become a Biblical father, physical or spiritual?
- How should the image of God the Father influence spiritual and physical fathers?

### Characteristics of a Mother

- Proverbs 31:1 The utterance which his mother taught him.
- 1 Thessalonians 2:7 We were gentle among you as a nursing mother cherishes her own children
- Isaiah 66:13 As one whom his mother comforts, so I will comfort you.
- 2 Timothy 1:5 Paul attributes Timothy's faith to his mother and grandmother.

### Characteristics of a Mother

- God attributes to Himself the attributes of a mother.
- Paul attributes to himself the attributes of a mother.
- How do we act as spiritual mothers?
- How does one qualify as a Biblical mother, physical or spiritual?

### Characteristics of a Child

- Ephesians 6:2 Honor father and mother (Colossians 3:20, Romans 1:30, 2 Timothy 3:2)
- 1 Timothy 5:1 – 2 Treat older Christians as parents
- Galatians 4:6, Romans 8:15 Abba, Father
- Ephesians 5:31 Leave father and mother and cling to wife
- 2 John 4, 13 Children reflect on the parents

### Characteristics of a Child

- What does it mean to honor parents?
- What does it mean to obey parents?
- Who are our spiritual parents?
- What does it mean to have spiritual parents?
- Do we need to have the same answers for physical and spiritual parents? Does one or the other take precedence?

### Characteristics of a Sibling

- 1 John 3:16 Lay down our lives for the brethren
- James 2:15 – 16 Faith requires that we meet the needs of believers
- Romans 8:29 Believers are conformed to the image of Jesus in order to be His siblings.
- Romans 14:10 – 13 Do not judge or show contempt for siblings
- 1 Corinthians 8:11 – 13 Allow for weak siblings

### Characteristics of a Sibling

- 1 Thessalonians 3:15 Do not count him as an enemy but admonish him as a brother
- 1 Timothy 6:2 Slaves are to consider believing masters as brothers
- Hebrews 2:11 – 12, 17 He is not ashamed to call them brethren
- James 4:11 Do not speak evil of a brother
- 1 Peter 1:22 Obey the truth in sincere love of the brethren
- 1 John 2:9 – 11 He who hates his brother is in darkness. (4:20 – 21, 5:16)

### Characteristics of a Sibling

- 1 Corinthians 6:5 – 6 Do not sue a brother
- 1 Peter 3:8 Love as brothers
- 1 John 4:20 – 21 Anyone who hates his brother cannot love God
- 1 John 5:16 Christians pray concerning the sins of their brethren
- How do these admonitions affect both physical and spiritual family relationships?

### Marriage was designed as a teaching tool

#### Ephesians 5:22 – 33

#### Husband's role

Leader  
Savior  
Sacrifice  
Sanctifier

**Marriage was designed as a teaching tool**

**Ephesians 5:22 – 33**

**Husband's tasks**

Love  
Teach  
Provide opportunities  
(accomplished through faith)

**Marriage was designed as a teaching tool**

**Ephesians 5:22 – 33**

**Wife's role**

Volunteer  
Subject, not subjugated  
Respect

**Marriage was designed as a teaching tool**

**Ephesians 1:22 - 23**

A body, not an organization  
The fullness

**Ephesians 2:19 – 22**

The household

**Marriage was designed as a teaching tool**

**Ephesians 4:11 - 16**

Joined and knit together  
By what every joint supplies  
Every part does its share  
Growth of the body

**God's Illustration of Family Interaction**

God as our Father  
As Children of God  
Spiritual families on earth  
Family members with different ideas  
Marriage  
Physical families

**God as our Father**

Characteristics: Dedicates His life, laboring night and day (not a burden), devout, just, blameless, exhorting, comforting, charging to walk worthy, training, disciplining, not discouraging.

These are the characteristics that a physical or spiritual father should have.

God wants to be understood as this kind of Father.

**God as our Mother**

Characteristics: Nurturing, comforting, teaching.

These are the characteristics that a physical or spiritual mother should have.

God wants to be seen in this role.

**Jesus as a Husband**

Characteristics: Giving Himself up for her, loving, teaching, providing opportunities for growth, dedicating wife to godly purposes.

These are the characteristics a husband should have.

These are the ways Jesus relates to us.

**Characteristic of a Wife**

Characteristics: Letting someone else lead, showing respect, responsible for the running of the household

These are the characteristics of the Bride of Christ.

**Believers as Adult Children**

Reflecting on their parents

Honoring parents

Earthly, spiritual, and divine

**Believers as Adult Siblings**

Jesus is the oldest brother, the example of being a brother

Meet the needs of siblings; lay down our lives

Allow for weak siblings; do not condemn but build up; not ashamed; not speaking evil

**When the other half won't**

As much as it depends on you, Romans 12:18

Won without a word, 1 Peter 3:1

Give them what they need, not what they want.

Patience, gentleness, kindness

Who are my brothers, sisters...?

**Summary**

What is the nature of the relationship God desires with us?

How does this relationship mesh with the Kingdom image?

How does the family image relate to behavior?