

The Family

A Training Ground

The family is an institution that God created for the procreation of man: for the growing and educating of man's offspring; for the practising of inter-personal relationship skills. We are all born into a family: a family of origin. This is the family that is supposed to raise us, train and correct us, teach us to live with others outside of the family unit, and prepare us to do the same thing. When we take what we have learned from our family of origin and have a family of our own, this becomes our family of procreation. Then it becomes our job to raise our children, train and correct them, teach them to live with others outside of their family unit, and prepare them to do the same thing.

Pictures God

The family unit pictures God, in that the father in the family represents God the Father, the mother represents the Holy Spirit, and the children represent Jesus Christ. The Trinity is a perfect example of how all relationships ought to operate. Let us look at the relationships in the family.

God the Father initiated the creation of man, in that He said, Let us go down and make man. God also initiated the dispersing of His creatures when He said, Let us go down and confound their language. We call God the Father 'the God Head'. He is the Leader in the Trinity, as the father in the home is to be the leader. The father is to be the planner and the provider for the carrying out of that plan in the home. He is also the lawgiver and heavy hand of discipline that enforces the laws in the home.

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter. He deals with the comforting and healing of broken and discouraged hearts, and the mending of scarred emotions. In comparison, the mother

sets the mood, or the emotional atmosphere, in the home. She comforts, and heals the family hurts, and is the tender side of the firm hand of her husband.

Jesus Christ is the obedient, dutiful son who lay aside His own will for that of His Father. So too, the children in the family are to learn obedience. They are to lay aside their own wishes to do the wishes of their parents.

God's Plan

When all members of the family do that which they were designed to do, the family lives in the harmony that God intended for them. But things go wrong in our families. We do not have perfect relationships built on perfect interactions. Therefore, we become distorted parents who produce distorted offspring, and teach them, by our warped methods, to raise their own distorted offspring in distorted ways. God' s plan for us is to "Be fruitful and multiply". Not that we simply have children, but that we live as a family, in unity of spirit and in harmony as He is in harmony.

The Devil's Plan

Strong families build strong churches, which is the second institution that God created for the procreation of His creatures. Churches are for the duplicating and training of His followers. God' s plan for us is much bigger than simply physical reproduction. His plan for spreading the Gospel over the world involves spiritual reproduction.

The Devil, from the very beginning, has had a plan of his own. He aims to become "like the most High". The Devil wants what God has: our loyalty, devotion, trust, fellowship; our very lives. One way that the Devil has found to disrupt God' s plan is to distort the institutions that God designed to carry out His plan: families and churches. The Devil knows that dysfunctional families will perpetuate dysfunctional families. He has many tools which he uses to throw our families out of whack: adultery, divorce, abortion,

genocide, suicide, homosexuality, the Women' s Liberation Movement, humanism, and the list goes on. Whatever tools of the Devil we let into our homes, we allow to corrupt our families and the families of our children and our children' s children.

Healing

I was raised by my father after my parents divorced, and now I am a divorced mother to two. I am not an expert on single parent families, but experience has taught me much. What I know now of functional families I have learned over the last ten years from listening and following the Spirit-filled preaching of my Pastor, and from studying the wonderful examples of strong families around me. This book is a compilation of articles I have published in the single parents' column of my church' s newsletter. I have written this book in the hope that the Holy Spirit will use the words to encourage hearts, heal scars, enrich lives, and bless homes. Most of all, I wish to assure you readers that there is help for the single parent home. There is healing for the single mother. There is forgiveness in God' s arms, acceptance in God' s love, healing in God' s Spirit, strength in God' s grace, and happiness in God' s will.

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