

A Gospel Worldview  
Lesson 4: The Gospel and the Family  
Harbor Presbyterian Church – Carmel Valley

**Issues facing the family:**

LifeWay's survey of 2000 Christian families pointed out the following issues facing today's Christian family:

- |                           |                               |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Anti-Christian culture | 6. Financial pressures        |
| 2. Divorce                | 7. Lack of communication      |
| 3. Busyness               | 8. Negative media influences  |
| 4. Absent father figure   | 9. Balance of work and family |
| 5. Lack of discipline     | 10. Materialism               |

**What is the real issue?**

A lack of a foundation on the Biblical teaching of marriage and family. The family is ground zero for the application of the gospel to work itself out.

**What does the Bible teach about the family?**

1. The family is the first unit (or institution, or relationship) created by God prior to the Fall and was pronounced "very good." (Genesis 1:26-31).
2. A family consists of one man and one woman who are united together in marriage, together with their children (Genesis 1:27-28a).
  - a. This does not undermine singleness (1 Corinthians 7).
  - b. This does not undermine single – parent families. Single-parent families are a result of sin, but the death of a spouse or a Biblical divorce shouldn't marginalize single-parent families.
  - c. This does not undermine childless families. Some couples are unable to have children. But it is unbiblical to intentionally avoid having any children (Genesis 1:28). Children are to be seen as a "blessing from the Lord" (Psalm 127:3).
  - d. This excludes unmarried couples living together. In the Bible, there are only two kinds of sex: married sex and adultery. Unmarried sex is a perversion of the sexual union that God created to exist between a married man and woman.
  - e. This excludes homosexual relationships. Whether or not the civil government allows homosexual marriage, homosexual relationships are a perversion of the created order and of sex. Paul says that "for although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened...For this reason God have them up to dishonorable passions" where by gay and lesbian relationships form (Romans 1:21, 26-27).

**What is the family to be and do?**

1. The man and woman are equals (Genesis 2:23; Galatians 3:28). They are created equally in the image of God and before Christ, they have equal value. Therefore, in marriage, the husband and wife are equally valuable.
2. The roles are complementary. The husband/father is the "head" and the wife/mother is the "helper."
  - a. The Basis: Genesis 2:18-25. Complementarianism is part of the created, pre-Fall order. Paul roots all his arguments for complementary roles in the family and the Church on the basis of creation. It is never a cultural argument.
  - b. Complementarian applications for husbands/fathers (Ephesians 5:25-33; 1 Peter 3:7):
  - c. Complementarian applications for wives/mothers (Ephesians 5:22-24; 1 Peter 3:1-6):
3. Children are to honor their parents (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16; Ephesians 6:2-3; Colossians 3:20):
  - a. Why?

- i. It's right (Ephesians 6:1).
    - ii. It's commanded (Ephesians 6:2).
    - iii. It's rewarded (Ephesians 6:3).
  - d. How?
    - i. Negatively:
    - ii. Positively:
- 4. Parents are to "parent" their children (Proverbs 22:3; Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:21).
  - a. How do you discipline diligently while not provoking them to anger (from Wayne A. Mack, Strengthening Your Marriage)?
    - i. Do not expect more of them than they are capable of doing. Do not expect less either (Genesis 33:12-14).
    - ii. Be careful about the way you reprimand or correct your child. Scripture indicates that we should be respectful in the way we deal with children just as in our relationships with adults (Proverbs 15:1; Ephesians 4:31, etc).
    - iii. Practice what you preach and avoid double standards (Philippians 4:9; 1 Corinthians 11:1; Matthew 23:1-4, etc). Ligon Duncan says children have "built-in bunk detectors." They know when you're insincere and hypocritical.
    - iv. Admit your mistakes (Proverbs 16:2; 21:2; Matthew 5:23-24; James 5:16).
    - v. Cultivate good times with them (Psalm 128; Proverbs 5:15-18; Ecclesiastes 3:4, etc). This will give them a good attitude toward you and give you leverage when you must discipline them.
    - vi. Communicate love and appreciation in explicit and implicit ways (John 13:34-35; 1 Corinthians 13:1-8; 16:14, etc). Show and tell them how much you love them.
    - vii. Let your children know that your love for them is not based upon their performance (Ephesians 4:1-2; Colossians 3:12-14; 1 Peter 4:8, etc). Our Father knows that we are frail. As parents, we must remember our children's frailties too. Make home a safe place for them.
    - viii. Make expectations and requirements clear and reasonable. Just as God makes his expectations clear to us and does not require us to do that which we cannot do with the Holy Spirit's help, so we should make expectations of our children clear and reasonable too.
    - ix. Make it easy and desirable for them to approach you. Listen to them and be available for them. This is the way our Father treats us.
  - b. How do you raise them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord?
    - i. Dedicate your children to God. It's our privilege, our joy, our duty, our delight to nurture them in the truth of the Lord.
    - ii. Rely upon God's grace. Even our best efforts depend upon the grace of God in our young people, because we're being called to do something that's beyond our ability to do. Give yourself the grace that God gives you.
    - iii. Set before them a godly example. Show them what the Christian life looks like.
    - iv. Pray with and for them. Ask God to work in and through them. And praying for them shows mutual dependence upon God and your love for your kids.
    - v. Teach them the doctrines of our faith. Fathers, especially, are to lead their families in worship. Husbands are to "wash their wives with the word." They are to raise their children in the nurture and instruction of the Lord. Spend time, daily, singing, reading, and praying with your family.

- vi. Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. That encompasses all of the above – prayer, example, and instruction.

## **Conclusion**

- a. For the Apostle Paul the home is ground zero for beginning to live out the gospel in one's life.
- b. The family is the Church in miniature. There are built-in roles and a community group ministry, just as in the Church. The family is to do what the Church is to do; it is to worship.