

**THEME: CAN YOUR FAMILY BE UNIFIED
AGAIN? YES, IT CAN**

**THE TERM “FAMILY UNITY” REFERS
TO THE CONCEPT OF KEEPING A
FAMILY GROUP TOGETHER WITHOUT
ANY CHANGES OR SEPARATIONS.**

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT RESTORING BROKEN FAMILIES?

(ISAIAH 53:5) - UNDERLINES GOD'S PROVISION FOR THE BROKEN HEART, THE BROKEN SOUL, THE BROKEN HUMAN, AND YES, THE BROKEN FAMILY. BUT HE WAS WOUNDED FOR THE WRONG WE DID; HE WAS CRUSHED FOR THE EVIL WE DID. THE PUNISHMENT, WHICH MADE US WELL, WAS GIVEN TO HIM, AND WE ARE HEALED BECAUSE OF HIS WOUNDS.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT RESTORING BROKEN FAMILIES?

- **IT REQUIRES WORK, DEDICATION, AND UNDERSTANDING FROM ALL MEMBERS.**
- **KEY STRATEGIES INCLUDE FOSTERING OPEN COMMUNICATION, ACTIVELY LISTENING TO EACH OTHER'S PERSPECTIVES, SHOWING SUPPORT, PARTICIPATING IN SHARED ACTIVITIES LIKE FAMILY MEALS AND TRADITIONS, AND BEING PRESENT AND DEDICATED TO THE FAMILY'S WELL-BEING.**

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT RESTORING BROKEN FAMILIES?

- **(JOHN 15: 5-6) - “I AM THE VINE AND YOU ARE THE BRANCHES. HE WHO REMAINS IN ME AND I IN HIM, BEARS MUCH FRUIT. FOR WITHOUT ME, YOU CAN DO NOTHING”**

ONE OF THE MOST FREQUENT CAUSES OF FAMILY CONFLICT IS:

- POOR COMMUNICATION.
- MISUNDERSTANDINGS.
- ASSUMPTIONS.
- SIMPLY NOT DISCUSSING IMPORTANT ISSUES CAN
LEAD TO TENSION AND RESENTMENT OVER TIME.
(FAMILY, STRESS, NEAR BREAKING POINT)

HOW TO UNITE A BROKEN FAMILY

LISTEN TO THE OTHER PERSON'S SIDE WITH AN OPEN MIND AND CALMLY EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS. BE WILLING TO AGREE TO DISAGREE FOR THE SAKE OF FAMILY HARMONY. IF YOU AND YOUR FAMILY MEMBER CAN'T RESOLVE YOUR CONFLICT, DON'T GIVE UP. (BANDAGE THE WOUND FROM THE INSIDE)

HOW DO I REBUILD MY FAMILY?

BY ACKNOWLEDGING THE HURT, TAKING RESPONSIBILITY, PRACTICING FORGIVENESS, SETTING BOUNDARIES, REBUILDING COMMUNICATION, SEEKING PROFESSIONAL HELP, AND PRACTICING PATIENCE AND PERSISTENCE, FAMILIES CAN NAVIGATE THE PATH TO HEALING AND RECONCILIATION.

FORGIVENESS = LOVE
LISTENING SKILLS = DISCERNMENT

WHAT CAUSES WEAK FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS?

FAMILY DYSFUNCTION STEMS FROM RELATIONAL ISSUES INCLUDING PARENT-CHILD ISSUES, SIBLING RIVALRIES, AND MARITAL PROBLEMS. MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS SUCH AS ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE; AND EXTERNAL PROBLEMS LIKE UNEMPLOYMENT, POVERTY, AND LACK OF COMMUNITY RESOURCES.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT FAMILY UNITY?

(PSALM 133:1)- IN THIS FAMILY BIBLE VERSE, WE LEARN THAT GOD IS PLEASED WHEN A FAMILY UNIT WORKS TOGETHER, COLLECTIVELY AND COHESIVELY IN THEIR RESPECTIVE ROLES AS MOTHER, FATHER AND CHILDREN. FOLLOWING HIS INSTRUCTIONS FOR FAMILY LIFE LEADS US CLOSER TO CHRIST.

BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATIONS HOW TO HANDLE FAMILY CONFLICTS

WISE AS A VIPER / INNOCENT AS A DOVE

TO BE WISE AS A VIPER AND INNOCENT AS A DOVE
MEANS;

- TO HAVE THE SERPENT'S SHREWDNESS IN NAVIGATING A DANGEROUS WORLD
- WHILE MAINTAINING THE DOVE'S HARMLESSNESS, PURITY, AND GENTLENESS.

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THE SERPENT'S WISDOM

- **SHREWDNESS AND CRAFTINESS:** THE SERPENT SYMBOLIZES CUNNING, STRATEGIC THINKING, AND CLEVERNESS.
- **UNDERSTANDING THE ENVIRONMENT:** THIS ASPECT OF WISDOM ALLOWS ONE TO UNDERSTAND THE OFTEN-HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT OF A "GODLESS WORLD" AND AVOID TRAPS SET BY ADVERSARIES.

THE SERPENT'S WISDOM

- **KNOWING WHEN TO ACT:** THE WISDOM OF A SERPENT HELPS IN KNOWING WHEN TO MAKE A STAND AND WHEN TO REMAIN SILENT, AND HOW TO CHOOSE ONE'S BATTLES WISELY.

THE DOVE'S INNOCENCE

- **HARMLESSNESS AND PURITY:** THE DOVE SYMBOLIZES INNOCENCE, PURITY, AND GENTLENESS.
- **INTEGRITY:** THIS TRAIT ENSURES THAT THE “WISDOM” OF THE SERPENT IS NOT USED FOR DISHONEST OR ERHANDED MEANS BUT FOR PURE AND BLAMELESS SERVICE TO GOD.

THE DOVE'S INNOCENCE

- **AVOIDING HARM:** INNOCENCE MEANS ONE DOESN'T SEEK TO HARM OR BRING DOWN OTHERS BUT REMAINS FREE FROM MALICE AND DECEIT.

COMBINING BOTH FOR A CHRISTLIKE LIFE

- **NAVIGATING A HOSTILE WORLD:** THE INSTRUCTION TO BE “WISE AS SERPENTS AND INNOCENT AS DOVES” IS GIVEN IN THE CONTEXT OF BEING SENT OUT AS “SHEEP AMONG WOLVES,” HIGHLIGHTING THE NEED FOR BOTH TRAITS TO SURVIVE TO WITNESS AND SERVE IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS.

COMBINING BOTH FOR A CHRISTLIKE LIFE

- **ETHICAL APPLICATION:** THE WISDOM OF THE SERPENT IS MEANT TO BE APPLIED ETHICALLY, NOT TO BECOME CUNNING OR DECEITFUL, BUT TO USE SHREWDNESS FOR GOOD.
- **BALANCING PRUDENCE AND PURITY:** THIS COMBINATION IS ESSENTIAL FOR FOLLOWERS OF CHRIST TO BE EFFECTIVE IN THEIR MISSION/FAMILY WITHOUT COMPROMISING THEIR SPIRITUAL INTEGRITY.

PRINCIPLES FOR HANDLING CONFLICT

- **FORGIVENESS:** LIKE GOD FORGIVES US, WE ARE INSTRUCTED TO FORGIVE FAMILY MEMBERS WHO HAVE WRONGED US.
- **SUBMISSION AND MUTUAL LOVE:** THE BIBLE TEACHES SUBMISSION OUT OF REVERENCE FOR CHRIST, WHICH MEANS SUBMITTING TO ONE ANOTHER RATHER THAN ASSERTING ONE'S OWN WILL.

PRINCIPLES FOR HANDLING CONFLICT

- **RESPECT AND KINDNESS:** SHOW FAMILY MEMBERS THE SAME KINDNESS, RESPECT, AND COMPASSION YOU WOULD SHOW A CLOSE FRIEND OR FELLOW BELIEVER.
- **PRAYER:** CONTINUOUS PRAYER IS A KEY TO FINDING PEACE AND HEALING IN FAMILY CONFLICTS.

PRINCIPLES FOR HANDLING CONFLICT

- **CARE AND PROVISION:** SCRIPTURE COMMANDS PEOPLE TO PROVIDE FOR THEIR OWN FAMILIES AND NEGLECTING THIS RESPONSIBILITY IS A SERIOUS ISSUE.

(Genesis 1: 27 -28) “27. God created man in his own image; in the image of God created them: male and female. 28 God bless them and said to them, Be fruitful, multiply and replenish, the earth and have dominion over the fish.. the fowl of the air and every living creature.”

(Psalm 127: 1) “Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that built it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.

(Isaiah 59: 14) – Justice is driven back, righteousness stands at a distance; truth stumble in the streets, honesty cannot enter.'

(1 Corinthians 3: 11-12) For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 if any build on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw their work will be shown for what it is, because the day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire and the fire will test the quality of each person's work.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH

1. God is still the same and have not change: Hebrew 13:8
2. Our God is an all-Knowing God – Omniscient God
3. He is in control of all things in the now and future as well: Psalm 139: 1-4
4. God is here with us today – Where 2 or 3 gather in His name, he is there: Matthew 18: 20
5. When God's presence is with us – great and amazing things is available: Psalm 91

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF FAMILY

Build a Family

1. The family unit is the ONLY social unit ordained by God for procreation – Genesis 1: 26 – 28

28. God bless them and said to them, be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion:

- Be fruitful & Multiply
- Replenish

Have Dominion over Creation

2. Psalm 8: 6 - 'You have made man to have dominion over the works of thy hand.'
 - Have dominion
3. The word 'dominion' is derived from the Hebrew word 'radar' and it refers God's delegated authority to the initial family unit to rule over the earth. The nature of the dominion is responsible stewardship and guardianship i.e. Godly rule.

Have Dominion over Creation

4. Family is expected by God to undertake all the responsibility we have reference above. Yet we have frustrated these clear responsibilities given to us by God from the beginning and to replace it with new social and political purposes in our society.
5. We have not been able to exercise dominion over anything and instead we are dominated. Instead of being respected by our children, we are despised, we are considered useless and to be placed in Old People Home.

Father is the Leader

6 Man [FATHER] to lead in the Home – Ephesians 5: 23 “The husband is the head of his wife.”

This is consistent with the order at creation: God created man first and then the woman. It is also the basis from which the man's responsibility was first ordained by God – He is the leader of the family.

7 Lead you family – The father must make that decisions: Joshua 24: 25.

This call to decision was made by Joshua because there were new influences affecting their covenant undertaking to God. Other Gods [God's of Amelikite] were attracting many in God's people.

It is also what we are experiencing today. I as a father must lead my family away from these new influences to a life in God Jehovah our creator, as set out in the Bible.

What does that decisions mean?

- Call for separation from people who do not serve the Lord;
- This means set out the guidelines of behavior, conduct, social exchanges.
- There is a purpose in your separation - to serve the Lord. Without separation you will always live a compromised life.
- **Train up** a child in **the ways He should go**, when he is old, he will not depart from it:
Proverbs 22: 16

8. Other components of the family

Children – a gift from God- Psalm 127: 3

“Children obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right, 2. Honor you father and mother that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.’ Ephesians 6: 1-2

Leaders Responsibilities

1. Lead in Worship

- Word of God in the family provides the sure foundation – it will not be moved by the trial and changing terrain we will face. Matthew 7: 24.

Mark 13: 31 says 'Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words will not pass away.'

2. Examples in Holy Living

Holiness/Righteousness: Matthew 6: 32

The most powerful example of this life changing requirement is the father/mother in the home. How we live our life is the best way to bring Godly influence in the life of our children.

- There needs to be a hunger for God's righteousness in the home.
- Prayer and Reading the Word of God is a priority;
- No tolerance for lies, deception, jealousy, gossip etc.

Deuteronomy 6: 18 "You shall do what is right in the sight of God: that it may be well with thee and thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the Lord promised to thy father.

3. Truth Maintained – Moral Integrity

- Truth – God is spirit and his worshippers must worship in Spirit and in truth: John 4: 24

1 My father will send you the Holy Spirit who will teach you everything and also reveals things not yet known to you: John 14: 25-16

2 He will also teach you on how to pray as God wants: the spirit intercedes for us in prayer for we do not know how to ask God about the things we need.

1 Corinthians 2: 13 dictates that we need the Spirit of truth to teach us the deeper truths of God.

4 Protect Against ungodly influences

Ephesians 6: 4 'Father do not frustrate your children; instead bring them up in training and instruction of the Lord.'

1. This is the challenge in most Christian family face today. How are we preparing our children to face the challenges they face, will face."
2. Discuss the example of the Prodigal son: Luke 15: 11-32
 - A father with provision for family
 - Two sons with family allocations
 - 1 son decides to take his portion and departs to follow his heart's desire
 - Spent all his allocation on riotous living
 - Insanity of sin
3. God will not allow anything temptation by the devil to come into your child's life except that which he can reject: 1 Corinthians 10:13. If you are teaching your child's life and training them to live for Christ, he will not be influenced by what the world seeks to attract them with.
4. As a father, partner with God to prepare our children overcome negative influences: **2 Timothy 3:16**

5. Maintain Discipline in the Home

Family Discipline: 1 Timothy 3: 3-4

1 A father must rule his household, having his children in subjection with all gravity.

- Children to obey your parents in ALL THINGS: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord: Colossians 3: 20'
- Honor your parents that thy day may be long in the land the Lord give you: Exodus 20:12
- If you dishonor your father – you will be prodigal in your existence: Matthew 18: 15-35

2 Do not outsource the training of your children. You do it yourself (parents).

- It is not the responsibility of the Vanua/church/social group etc. to train your children in the ways of the Lord.
- Do not allow iPhones/computer etc. to keep the company of your children. Parents must engage regularly with our children. Carefully and prayerfully monitor this new technology to not negatively influence the lives of your children.

6. Family Altar:

It is not a physical structure.

A family altar is a regular time allocated for family to sit together for devotions and discuss issues concerning family members and for the children in particular.

All the issues that your family may face should be discussed openly and with love. Drugs Abuse, HIV, civic duties etc.

It is where family standards must be set according to God's word, understood and maintained.

Child education must start from home. It is not the responsibility of the Christian school you are sending your children to teach your child in the ways of God. It is yours as father/mother.

7. Teach your Children in Commandments of God

Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it:

Proverbs 22: 6

- The word 'train ' refers to disciple, effort, time allocated and clear goals to be achieved. In this context the trainer is the father, as leaders of the family unit.
- As the father/leader you first must know the way you are going to train the child: Psalm 119:9-12.
- Train means a conditioned life which is constant teaching the Word and living as an example in life.
- Train to maintain and achieve the goal of serving God.
- Success is not in education/rich in wealth/long life etc. but in fulfilling God's purpose

8. Lead as a teacher

- How to Lead as a father: Deuteronomy 6: 4-9 '6. And these words which I have commanded thee this day, shall be thine heart. 7. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children; shall talk with them when thou sittest in thine house, when thou walkest in the way and when thou liest down, and when thou rise up.'

Deuteronomy 11: 19 Says "Teach these Words to your children, talking about them when you sit down, when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."

1. **Teach – In this classroom of the family the curriculum is the Word of God and how it has the answers to all our children's problem.**
 - The word will purify the life of your children: Ephesians 5:26; John 16: 3 We are purified by the Word spoken to us [Taught in the Home] Teach your children to keep the Word in their heart;
 - It will act as divine restraint – stop them from straying into sinful living: Psalm 119: 9-11

2. Talk about them – discuss application – when you sit down (at home etc.).

- We need home-space to discuss issue of concerns your children.
- You the father must initiate and encourage members of your family to be open in the context of your family altar about challenges faced in the community outside the home.

3. Issues for home seminar are:

- Prayers
- Daily reading of the Bible
- Holy Spirit
- Faith/Trusting God in everything
- Righteous living according to the Word.

3. Walk along the road – refers to where the Word of God and discussion with you child must extend cover issue outside the home. The road is where our children intersect with the outside world. As a father you must be there with your children, may not be physically but through the teaching shares during the family altar discussion.

- The training of your children will have “on the road” dimension. You must walk with you child on the road of life and provide guidance.
- Your children must know and experience that your love for them is unconditional.

4. Lie down and when you sit up – what is this is saying?

Our family must be protected in this time zone in life. When lie down to sleep and when you get up. Demonic influences are very active during this period.

- The Word of God is powerful and relevant to protect your family in all aspect of family life and all the time.
- Trust in God and his omnipotent; omnipresent and omniscience be there to guard your family in that hour of rest.

Concluding Remarks

1. Our God is the same yesterday and forevermore: Hebrews 13:8
2. God knows the challenges your family is facing now – He is an all knowing God (Omniscience).
3. Teach the Word of God to all members of your family.
4. Use your Family Altar as training venue for your children in the fear of the Lord.
5. Prayer support for our children. Children to pray.
6. Never loose faith, no matter how large the issue you are facing and threatens you - your God is able and willing to help you in ways unimaginable: Ephesians 3: 20