

ALL IN THE FAMILY (OF GOD)
#7: A Family of Families
February 24-26, 2007

¹These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, ²so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. ³Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you. ⁴Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. ⁶These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. ⁷Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. ⁸Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. ⁹Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 TNIV

Introduction: After our extensive study of God's Word, the Bible, over the past six weeks, there can be little doubt in our minds that the Church is the family of God, that Jesus is the key to understanding it, and that we become the children of God through the cross. We have also learned some practical ways that we live as children of God. What we have not yet mentioned is that the nuclear family is part of God's plan for humanity, that God intends to use our families for His purposes, and that the church is really a "family of families."

I. A Family of Families

A. The very first "institution" God established was marriage, and the first social unit God created for His purposes was the family.

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. . . God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. . ."

Genesis 2:24, 1:27-28

- B. When God chose a people to begin his redemptive work, he chose a family, Abraham's family.
- C. In sending Jesus, God expanded His family to include everyone who accepts the gift of salvation offered in the cross, as we have learned.
- D. However, God did not change his plan to utilize the nuclear family as a basic building block of His Kingdom, and the Church has always been a "family of families."

I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

2 Timothy 1:3-5

- E. Columbia, for example, as a part of the Body of Christ, comprises hundreds of families.
 - F. Even if a person participates in ministry actively and attends both worship and a small group, he or she will spend less than 3% of his or her waking time actively participating in "church activities," so we must equip families of all types to be the presence of Christ!
- II. A Faith Lived in Families
- A. Faith is a great heritage. (vv.1-2)
 - B. Loving God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength is a daily practice. (vv.3-5)
 - C. Love for God must be written on the heart! (v.6)
 - D. Love for God must be "impressed" on our families. (v.7)
 - E. Love for God must be "written" on our homes. (vv.8-9)
- III. The Family of Families
- A. If the church does not equip families for daily love of God, then the church is little more than a business or bureaucracy; this is NOT God's plan.
 - B. The local church is only as strong as its families, as it will reflect the spiritual strength of its members.
 - Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity. Give proper recognition to those widows who are really in need. *1 Timothy 5:1-3*

Conclusion: A church is a family of families, so we equip families to love God. Any local church is only as strong as its families!