

Will Your Family Float?

“And Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters was upon the earth. And Noah went in, and his sons, and his wife, and his sons’ wives with him, into the ark, because of the waters of the flood” (Genesis 7:6-7).

Noah, the great preacher of righteousness, provides an excellent example for the health of our families. Because of Noah’s outstanding commitment to God in a wicked generation, he “prepared an ark to the saving of his house” (Hebrews 11:7). Just as the Lord told us to be lights in the world, Noah was a stubborn little light before God (Genesis 7:1). The fact that Noah saved his household because of his walk with God should make us all reflect on how we can avail our families the opportunity to become more godly. When we ask the question, “Will your family float?” we really ask, “Will your family be acceptable to God?”

The family is the most fundamental institution in the world, but American society has run afoul of the Biblical principles which constitute a godly family. A godly family is one, according to the Bible, that has obedient faith in God, obedient parents, obedient children, and love. The worst mistake society has made was abandoning solid, Biblical principles regarding the family. Therefore, I will lay out some ideas that will make your family “float” — make it acceptable to God.

First, a family needs faith in God. You are probably familiar with the statement, “The family that prays together, stays together.” Although that proverb may be a bit worn, it still teaches a fundamental truth. The family which has all its members aligned to deep, spiritual truths has a far greater chance of being happy. It is so encouraging to see a family whose members have obeyed the gospel of Christ. Everyone knows how difficult it can be to have family members who have rejected God’s marvelous grace (Ephesians 3:14-15). We have been blessed far above anything else because we possess a lineage that descends from God Himself. If we then in turn guide our family to God, the blessings and rewards we will reap will far outshine our temporal difficulties. The children of Israel were all one big family when they were brought out of Egypt. This family was expected to follow God and when they did, the Lord blessed them. Is the situation any different today? Will we not still be richly blessed if our families have a strong faith in God and a determination to do right? The answer is a resounding “Yes!”

Second, a family needs obedient parents. Parents need to understand the value of being Christians and of making the best use of their time. When both parents are godly people, it has great power to help their children find purpose in their lives and save them from spiritual death. Parents must also recognize the value of time. At the very most, parents only have about 20 years to influence their children for good. At that point, they are going to make up their own minds. At age six, most children start school and begin making friends and social relationships which may have worldly and ungodly influences on them. Good parents will help their children in the following areas:

- Parents must teach their children to be Christians. Second Timothy 1:5 is a wonderful commendation to parents and grandparents who had worked hard to make sure their children were prepared for eternity. One of the saddest events any of us could ever witness is the funeral of a child who has been jerked into eternity unprepared. Raise your children to be Christians and show them how to serve God by teaching them to be elders, deacons, preachers, and Bible class teachers. Raise your children to be devoted to the Lord because they love the Lord. Parents save themselves when they save their children.
- Parents must teach their children to be pure. In this ungodly age, children need to know fornication and adultery are condemned by God (1 Corinthians 6:9). Children need to know God has always intended for one man to be united to one woman for the duration of their lives (1 Corinthians 7:2). Parents need to teach them that marriage is permanent and that God hates divorce except for the cause of fornication (Matthew 19:9). Our children's bodies are sacred and the best example and teaching they can receive is from their parents (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).
- Parents must teach their children to be good fathers and mothers. Children need to be taught that the best way to raise godly children is for them to be godly themselves (Ephesians 6:4; Titus 2:4). Sacrifice is of the utmost importance in giving them a good start in the world.
- Parents must teach their children to handle the world. Children need to be taught lessons on integrity, decency, honesty, and hard work. Parents need to teach their children about responsibility and money. Our children must learn they are to work hard to earn what they need and always keep in mind they must give back to the Lord who has so greatly blessed them (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). Parents must also teach their children about how to handle temptation (1 Corinthians 10:12-13; James 4:7). Reinforce to your children the necessity to run from the devil and temptation, and not love the world (1 John 2:15-17).
- Parents must teach their children to be good influences and reach others for Christ. This is one of the best ways in which our children can glorify and exalt God (Matthew 5:13-14). Children need to be taught to be good neighbors and follow the "Golden Rule" (Matthew 7:12). Children must also learn converting someone to Christ is the most worthy cause to which someone can devote themselves (Matthew 28:19-20). Teach your children that being a Christian not only means caring for what is in their own hearts, but also looking for the opportunity to help others.

Third, a family needs obedient children. Children are under a twofold responsibility of rendering obedience to Jesus Christ and their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3). Good children will watch their conduct in the following areas:

- Children must watch their dress. How you dress tells everyone exactly what you think of yourself and it tells everyone with whom you want to be identified. Would you want to be identified with those who are worldly and ungodly? You may say, "I am not like that!" but how is anyone going to know if all they have to judge by is your clothing?

Immodest and revealing clothing sends the message you really do not care if people respect you; all you desire is for people to lust after you. A Christian is under obligation to dress according to their King, whatever their age (1 Timothy 2:9; 1 Peter 3:3-4).

- Children must watch their language. Profanity and raw obscenity litter the airwaves of radio and television. The Lord said in Matthew 12:34-37 what comes out of the mouth represents what is in the heart (cp. Ephesians 5:3-4). If evil is in the heart, evil language will result, and we will be held accountable for those careless words in the judgment. Children must also realize lying is an abomination before the Lord (Proverbs 6:16-17; Revelation 21:8). A lying tongue will condemn just as efficiently as a profane tongue.
- Children must watch their recreation. Although recreation is a positive and necessary force needed to become well-adjusted in life, young people are very apt to take it too far. Godly children have no business dancing, drinking, or engaging in any other form of entertainment which will cause them to break God's commandments. Peer pressure is very strong on children all the way up into adulthood, but you must have the moral tenacity to say no to forms of recreation which even hint at being inappropriate and sinful (1 Thessalonians 5:22).
- Children must watch their relationships. Do you have relationships with people that are ungodly (1 Corinthians 15:33)? A lot of people over the years have fallen because they participated in relationships with people of the world. Friends who are ungodly place a tremendous spiritual drain on a young child of God trying to keep their faith. When young Christians date non-Christians, the problem is magnified 1,000 times over. Rarely do young Christians pull their worldly friends up to their level; instead, they are frequently reduced to the sinful practices of their ungodly acquaintances. Although it is not a sin for a Christian to marry someone of the world, it has to be one of the poorest decisions a young Christian can make. Avoid the problem altogether: make friends and date only those who will help you get to Heaven!
- Children must watch their religion. One of the benefits of being younger is having an open mind. However, children must take care lest this benefit become a terrible force that pulls them into the error and confusion of thousands of false doctrines in the world. Children are easily swayed into accepting something just because it appears new or novel. Because of this, many children of godly parents are swept away into erroneous teachings without prudent and thorough investigation of the doctrines contained therein. Any religion which did not start with Jesus Christ on the day of Pentecost is not the authorized New Testament church (Acts 2:1-36). Children will do well to heed the warning given to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:15).

Fourth, a family needs love. You can work iron or carve wood without love, but you cannot handle people without love. Our relationship to God depends heavily on love (John 15:12-13; Romans 5:8). Just as this relationship exists because of love, the relationship within a family depends on love. These verses, and many more in the New Testament, bear witness that a loving family is built on sacrifice. If sacrifice of

possessions is necessary for the spiritual well-being of the family, then take a look at your life and decide what is really important: financial gain or spiritual gain.

A family built on impatience, anger, bitterness, hatefulness, and spite will never function as God expects (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). It is obvious families fail because love was never present. Show a loving spirit in your family by your willingness to put away improper attitudes and sacrifice for the good of the family.

Will your family float? Will your family be acceptable to God? If we can consistently have parents and children who are obedient to the gospel, who then in turn pass that heritage along, the gospel would overtake the world in no time. Would that not be extraordinary? Taking the initiative and making hard choices to have godly families will pay off in rich blessings both here and in eternity. There is nothing happier and more fulfilling than being in a family who knows its purpose and is reaching for that eternal home.

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