

# Modern Family Challenges

**Introduction.** The family in our day must meet many serious modern challenges. The more evil the environment in which the Christian must live, the more necessary it is to be careful and strong in the Lord (Ephesians 5:15-16). Christians in America know what Paul meant when he said, "the days are evil." From nearly every direction, our culture threatens our faith.

The person who takes seriously his or her relationship to Christ cannot help being concerned about what the future holds in our society. For many of us, the spiritual survival of our families heads the list of our concerns.

## I. ***Forces Attacking The Family***

A. Modern challenges to the family are as deadly as they are real.

Consider just a few examples:

1. Atheism is the philosophy that there is no God.
2. Relativism is a popular point of view which states that absolute truth does not exist.
3. Modernism, also known as theological liberalism, rejects the concept of authority in religion and states that religious beliefs must pass the test of reason and experience.
4. Postmodernism accepts all religions as true, provided that no one of them claims to be exclusively true.
5. Hedonism is a philosophy which holds that man's chief and highest goal is pleasure.
6. Universalism denies the reality of eternal punishment and postulates the eventual salvation of all.
7. Materialism is an obsessive preoccupation with worldly possessions.

B. All in all, it is a frightening web of alien forces that confront the family in our nation. What can we do to meet these challenges?

C. We can serve God faithfully in our families. It is simple, but true. Serving God is the best way to be strong spiritually and survive the attacks of a hostile culture!

1. Daniel's three friends are a great example because Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were strong enough to risk their lives rather than worship Nebuchadnezzar's image. Threatened with death, they manifested great faith (Daniel 3:16-17).
2. There is more than a coincidental link between these men's strength in God and their previous service to God. They had the spiritual strength necessary to meet their test because they had been serving God before the test arrived.

## II. ***What Is Meant By "Serving God"***

- A. The kind of service to the Lord that makes a family spiritually strong goes beyond what we call faith "in name only" (Joshua 24:15; John 12:26).
- B. We will find that we have what it takes as families to overcome difficulty if:
  - 1. We have truly given ourselves to the Lord (2 Corinthians 8:5).
  - 2. We genuinely love the Lord and our fellow man (Matthew 22:37-39).
  - 3. We serve the Lord with reverence and godly fear (Hebrews 12:28).
- C. There is no shortcut to ward off spiritual problems. Without the resources that are built up in this way, there is nothing that can protect a family from ungodly influences.

## III. ***How Serving God Helps A Family Meet Modern Challenges***

- A. Serving God builds faith.
  - 1. Most of the modern threats to the family have grown out of a humanistic philosophy that denies the existence of God.
  - 2. Faith in the reality of God, real trust in Him personally, is what is necessary to meet these challenges (1 John 5:4-5; Ephesians 6:10-11; Hebrews 11:33-34).
  - 3. Faith is gained in the daily process of serving God to the best of our ability. If we are going to face down the devil, we must prepare to do so (cf. 2 Timothy 1:5).
- B. Serving God builds genuine character.
  - 1. The worst dangers our families face today are those that strike at our innermost being, our very nature as beings created in God's image.
    - a) The strength required to deal with such dangers is the strength of deep, godly character (2 Peter 1:5-11).
    - b) Paul prayed for his brethren to be strengthened (Ephesians 3:14-16). In spiritual warfare, we need the spiritual resources of good character.
  - 2. Character is not built relaxing in an easy chair; it is developed in the active work of serving God (1 Corinthians 15:58).
  - 3. Families today that hope to survive what is happening are going to need more than the superficial strength of those who merely talk about the Lord.
- C. Serving God builds rich relationships.
  - 1. These relationships are not left up to chance -- they develop and deepen over time as we serve the Lord.
  - 2. What is true of the local congregation is no less true of our physical families: strength comes from effective working together

(Ephesians 2:19-21; 4:16).

a) The best strength in the world is the strength of those who have grown strong together serving the Lord.

b) Edification makes for real strength in churches and families (Romans 1:12).

3. The strongest, happiest families I have ever seen are Christians who follow God's commands (Colossians 3:18-21).

D. Serving God builds courage.

1. The devil would like to defeat us with fear and despair; without courage, we are lost (1 Corinthians 16:13; Ephesians 6:13; 2 Timothy 1:7).

2. David, in his fight with Goliath, showed the kind of courage that can come from serving God (1 Samuel 17:31-37).

3. We must make up our minds which side we are on -- we cannot conquer sin while compromising with it (Ephesians 5:11).

**Conclusion.** We must do more than attend the services of the church -- we must "taste" that the Lord is gracious (1 Peter 2:3; cf. Hebrews 6:4-5). When we do, our families will have the kind of power from which the devil flees (James 4:7). It takes real effort to have a good marriage and godly children. John Bowring said, "A happy family is but an earlier heaven."