

What The Church Can Do For The Home

Introduction. In Deuteronomy 22:8, God was concerned enough with His people, Israel, to provide injunctions concerning the building of their houses. The typical house of that day had a flat roof which served as a porch, where the family could go for quiet repose in the evening.

God had specifically directed them in the construction of "parapets" around the perimeter of the roof. A parapet was simply a wall, as much as three feet in height, to serve as a protection or a railing to prevent falling over the edge.

Every congregation and home needs a parapet or battlement; fortification against the foe. To me, nothing is more beautiful than seeing a congregation full of families who have been inspired and strengthened to love and worship God. It is not surprising that the children in those families grow up to be faithful Christians who in turn strengthen the Lord's church and are a blessing to the community.

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

A. Forces attacking 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. Sociologist and historian Carle Zimmerman, in his 1947 book, *Family And Civilization*, compared the disintegration of various cultures with the parallel decline of family life in those cultures. Eight specific patterns of domestic behavior typified the downward spiral of each culture Zimmerman studied.

1. Loss of sacredness in marriage, frequently resulting in divorce.
2. Loss of the traditional meaning of the marriage ceremony.
3. Feminist movements abound, changing the societal role of women.
4. Increased public disrespect for parents and authority in general.
5. Acceleration of juvenile delinquency, promiscuity, and rebellion.

6. Refusal of people with traditional marriages to accept family responsibilities.
 7. Growing desire for and acceptance of adultery.
 8. Increasing interest in and spread of sexual perversions and sex-related crimes.
- C. It sure is scary to see every one of these signs of a downward spiral in our culture. Although the family itself will provide the strongest inoculation against all of this, a good local congregation can also be of great assistance. The congregation is a supplement and a compliment; it can never be a substitute.

II. **What The Church Can Provide**

A. Good edification.

1. The fact that God blesses faithful families should be preached frequently. The Bible is unquestionably our best source on how to sustain a healthy family (Acts 20:27).
2. The congregation exists to edify (Acts 11:22-23; Colossians 2:18-19), and there are a number of ways in which edification is accomplished.
 - a) The church edifies through worship (Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Peter 2:5; James 5:16).
 - (1) True concentration and preparation for the task of worship is essential to coming away fulfilled (James 1:19-22).
 - (2) No one is encouraged by seeing someone attend just because they think they have to in order to go to heaven. We want real commitment (Psalm 122:1)!
 - b) The church edifies through faithful teaching (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9; 2:1).
 - (1) This teaching will incite family members to dwell on the word (Psalm 19:7-11).
 - (a) We need distinctive Bible preaching. It should be preached clearly, thoughtfully, directly, unceasingly, balanced, and without compromise. We sometimes hear more "biblical psychology" and "motivational speaking" (jokes, stories, *Chicken Soup For The Soul*, etc.) than book, chapter and verse preaching!
 - (b) There must be a vigorous promotion of truth and righteousness. Regrettably, more and more people have become concerned with "fitting in" rather than "standing out" (Isaiah 30:8-10; 1 John 3:10).
 - (2) This, in turn, will help them keep from sinning and subsequently draw near to God (Psalm 119:11; James 4:7).

- c) The church edifies through discipline (Matthew 18:15-17).
 - (1) Discipline promotes the "destruction of the flesh" (1 Corinthians 5:4-5).
 - (2) Discipline also stresses the need for purity.
 - (a) Moral purity (1 Corinthians 5:6-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15).
 - (b) Doctrinal purity (Romans 16:17-18; Titus 3:10).
- B. Good encouragement.
 - 1. God has always blessed those who encourage their family to fear Him. One can really see the regard that God had for Abraham when God spoke of Abraham's influence for his family (Genesis 18:19).
 - 2. The church can encourage its members by promoting good works.
 - a) We need to be liberal in our giving (2 Corinthians 9:6-8).
 - b) We need to be consistent in our benevolence (1 Timothy 6:17-19).
 - c) We need to be aggressive in serving Christ and saving souls (Acts 8:4; 17:6).
 - 3. Christians can also bear one another up in times of difficulty (Galatians 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:14). When a brother or sister is laboring under a load they cannot shoulder alone, I must help by listening and providing spiritual support (2 Timothy 4:16-18).
 - a) Bad finances, marital conflicts, depression, or any number of problems can undermine and even crush a Christian home.
 - b) When a congregation is filled with caring, sympathetic people, the families are strong and there will be closeness (1 Corinthians 12:25; Philippians 2:19-21).
 - c) William Arthur Ward said, "Flatter me, and I may not believe you. Criticize me, and I may not like you. Ignore me, and I may not forgive you. Encourage me, and I will not forget you."
- C. Good example.
 - 1. When a congregation is full of Christians who take their purity and morality seriously, it exhibits a wonderful example for the members of a family.
 - a) Parents and children should see members of the church who abhor what is evil and cling to what is good (Romans 12:9; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8).
 - (1) It is truly delightful to see Christians who are blameless and who hold forth the word of life (Philippians 2:14-16).
 - (2) They have refused to compromise with the world's entertainment, fashion, vocabulary, and attitudes (Romans 12:2).
 - (a) Charles Spurgeon said, "A man's life is always more forcible than his speech. When men take stock of him

they reckon his deeds as dollars and his words as pennies.”

- (b) Mickey Mantle, an almost mythical baseball star, died of cancer in 1995 at the age 63. About three weeks before his death, he said that he had squandered a gifted life and warned admirers he was no role model. “God gave me the ability to play baseball. God gave me everything,” he said. “For the kids out there, don’t be like me.”
 - b) They also need to see strong, faithful brethren who are at every service and who truly put God and His kingdom first (Luke 18:28-29; Hebrews 13:7).
 - (1) They need to see saints who use their talents even though they may not use them perfectly (Matthew 25:16-17).
 - (2) They need to see saints who are peaceable, pleasant, and mature, who quickly and quietly resolve their differences (Psalm 133:1; Romans 14:19).
 - c) Older Christians who have raised families which contain faithful Christians can be great examples for young families (Proverbs 16:31; Titus 2:3-5).
 - (1) They have achieved the successes and made the mistakes necessary to raise children in a faithful manner (Proverbs 22:6).
 - (2) They may have dealt with bankruptcies, miscarriages, or even adultery in their marriages. It is sad for them, but it gives us a good example to hold fast.
2. When we let our faithfulness and good works shine through, it will be a bright spot that will glorify God and help the church remain strong (Matthew 5:16; Ephesians 2:10). An old saying goes, “Lamps don’t talk, they shine.”

Conclusion. Zig Ziglar recounts that in studying American millionaires, a picture of the “typical” millionaire is an individual who has worked eight to ten hours a day for thirty years and is still married to his or her high school or college sweetheart. A New York executive search firm, in a study of 1,365 corporate vice presidents, discovered that 87% were still married to their one and only spouse and that 92% were raised in two-parent families.

If a solid family relationship can impact financial success, what do you suppose it can do for spiritual success? William Gladstone, the Prime Minister of England, once said, “Tell me what the men of England are doing on Sunday, and I will tell you what the future of England holds.” The future of the Lord’s body rests, in a large measure, in the future of our families. Likewise, the future of our families rests, in a large measure, in the future strength and faithfulness of the Lord’s body. The two are tied inexorably together by

precept and principle. To weaken one is to weaken the other. To strengthen one is to strengthen both. We must insure that we provide for one another in these noble goals.