



## God's Design for the Family

### Lesson 6: Unity in the Family

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#### Key Verse: Proverbs 19:11

“Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense.”

#### Overview

Ken Connor, writer for the Christian Post, says, “Traditional marriage (specifically, Christian marriage) has through the centuries served as a critical civilizing force in society. It has been, quite literally, the glue that holds communities and peoples together.”<sup>1</sup> The structure of a society is a direct reflection and result of the families of that society; and when families are broken, this will have a devastating impact on society. When marriage is broken, the family is broken. When the family is broken, the glue that holds a society together begins to crack and the results are disastrous.

Traditional marriage is the backbone of a flourishing society. However, over the last two decades, the cohabitation rate has been on the rise.<sup>2</sup> This means that in homes where people are cohabitating, there is no marriage in that home. Another type of home where there is no marriage is in single-parent homes. The vast majority of single-parent households today are due to divorce and separation. According to The Annie E. Casey Foundation, “more than 20 percent of children born to married couples will experience a divorce by age nine.”<sup>3</sup> According to Worldmetrics, “In 2023, 24 percent of all U.S. households were single-parent homes, up from 12 percent in 1970.”<sup>4</sup>

While God commands fathers to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, Solomon tells his son in Proverbs 1:8, “Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and forsake not your mother's teaching.” God's design for children is that they would be instructed and taught by both a father and a mother in the home. However, for parents to bring up their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, it begins with the parents having a strong marriage. A husband and wife must keep their marriage strong so that the family remains united. As the parent's marriage continues to be strengthened and unified, that will flow down to the children. The result will be a strong, united family.

How does a family grow in strength and unity? There are two key virtues that will help a family remain grounded. These are love and forgiveness. Even though a Christian couple has been redeemed by Christ, there is still a battle with the fallen, sinful flesh. This means Christian couples will sin against each other and fail each other at some point in their marriage. This means Christian parents will sin against their children and children will sin against their parents. This means disappointment and conflict will arise in

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.christianpost.com/news/marriage-matters.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2019/11/06/marriage-and-cohabitation-in-the-u-s/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://hellodivorce.com/already-divorced/what-are-the-four-types-of-single-parents#divorced>

<sup>4</sup> <https://worldmetrics.org/single-parent-home-statistics/>

the family. However, the key to overcoming the conflict in the family is love and forgiveness. In this lesson we will look at how a family can stay strong and united.

### **A Loving Family**

1. Mark 12:30–31. What are the two greatest commandments? \_\_\_\_\_
2. John 13:34–35. What does Jesus command us to do? \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. What are we showing by our love? \_\_\_\_\_
3. 2 Timothy 3:1–2. What will people be “in the last days”? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Colossians 3:19. What is the duty of the husband? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Titus 2:3–4. What are older women to teach the younger women? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Philippians 2:2–4. How can one maintain love and unity of spirit? \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. 1 Peter 4:8. What are believers to do “above all”? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Colossians 3:14. What does love produce? \_\_\_\_\_

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**“Training yourself to love involves doing loving things for the other person, whether or not you feel like doing them. It involves putting their interests and welfare above your own. It involves sacrificial giving of yourself to others for their sakes, not for the sake of appreciation or returned love or favor.”**

**—John MacArthur**

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### **A Forgiving Family**

1. 1 Peter 4:8. What does love cover? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Proverbs 19:11. What is man’s glory? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Ephesians 4:32. What is to be our grounds and motivation to forgive? \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. Ephesians 5:1. What are we doing when we forgive? \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. Colossians 3:12–13. What are we demonstrating when we forgive? \_\_\_\_\_  
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**“No act is more like God than forgiveness. Never are you more like Him than when you forgive someone who has offended you.”**

**—John MacArthur**

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### **A Church Family**

1. Hebrews 10:23–25. What must we not forsake? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What happens when we gather? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. 1 Corinthians 14:26. What is the purpose of gathering as a church? \_\_\_\_\_

### **How can you be a church family?<sup>5</sup>**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

### **Application**

1. What are ways you can grow in love for your spouse and children?
2. What sins are you holding on to that you need to forgive?
3. How important is the church in your family’s life?

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<sup>5</sup> Paul Shirley, “The Christian Home” (Wilmington, DE: Grace Community Church, 2019), 98-104.