

PARENTING IN THE REAL WORLD

Part 1 – Great Families Happen On Purpose
Ephesians 5:15, 16, 21

Pastor Mark Hartman
April 7, 2013

I. WHAT GOD INTENDS THE FAMILY TO BE.

A. A **shelter** from storms.

Ecclesiastes 4:12 "One standing alone can be attacked and defeated. But two can stand back to back and conquer."

The goal of most games is to get “home” because the idea of home is **safety**.

B. A **learning center** for life.

*Ephesians 6:4 “Bring up your children with the discipline and **instruction** approved by the Lord.”*

1. A family is a place where the parents’ job is to move their kids from **parent** control where you have to tell them everything they are to do, to eventually, **self**-control – where they know and do the right thing on their own; to ultimately, **God** control where they’re yielding themselves daily to God who made them.
2. In the family we learn how to have relationships, how to have character, what **values** make life the best, and what it means to have a personal relationship with God.

Isaiah 38:19 "One generation makes known God’s faithfulness to the next."

3. We are an indispensable link in a long heritage chain. So, depending upon how we parent and our children choose to respond, we are either beginning, continuing or ending a Godly **legacy** for our family.

C. A place to **enjoy** life.

1 Timothy 6:17 "...God who always richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment."

D. "Marriage in America: A Report to the Nation"

<http://center.americanvalues.org/?p=25>

The devaluation and fragmentation of the family in our society has produced these effects:

- * A 500% increase of juvenile violent crime.
- * Teenage suicide rate has tripled.
- * The poverty rate for children has increased from 15% to 22%
- * The first generation in America's history where the children are less well-off psychologically, socially, economically and morally than their parents were at the same age.

The study blames the shift away from values in the institution of marriage and family to the characteristics of individualism, an emphasis on "rights" in the place of responsibility, and selfishness. The end result is that families are being destroyed and as it is happening, it is destroying the foundation of our country.

II. STEP ONE - ESTABLISH GOD AT THE **CORE** OF OUR FAMILY. (Ephesians 5:15)

Ephesians 5:15 "Be very careful then how you live, not as unwise but as wise."

A. First and foremost, we need to make a decision to put a commitment to God at the **core** of our home.

Joshua 24:15 "...Choose today whom you will serve...But as for me and my family, we will serve the LORD."

B. One of the ways to develop a God-centered family is to be a **character based** family.

1. Character is doing what is right in the eyes of **God**, regardless of the personal cost.

2. What will impact your success in life more than what you can do, is what kind of **person** you are.

*Proverbs 2:7-8 “God stores up sound wisdom for the upright; He is a shield to those who walk in **integrity**,⁸ Guarding the paths of justice, and He preserves the way of His godly ones.”*

3. A person’s character is marked by:
 - a. What he **flees** from
 - b. What he follows after
 - c. What he **fights** for
 - d. What he is faithful to

C. What are some materials you can use to build character in your children?

Character First.com

(<http://store.characterfirst.com/collections/family-resources>)

Materials to teach you how to teach good character to your children or children you teach in school.

III. STEP TWO – MAKE THE MOST OF **TODAY**. (Ephesians 5:16)

Ephesians 5:16 “Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days.”

IV. STEP THREE – ESTABLISH A FAMILY CULTURE OF **MUTUAL RESPECT**. (EPHESIANS 5:21)

Ephesians 5:21 “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

- A. The submission this verse is talking about is **mutual** respect – one to another. It means that we choose to care about each other before ourselves.

B. How does mutual respect demonstrate itself in a family?

1. Each member of the family willingly **yields** to meet the needs of the others in the family.

Philippians 2:4 “Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

