

MARRIAGE & FAMILY, PART 1

Marriage. Family. These words conjure up happy and memorable feelings for some, but for others, they represent pain and disappointment. For most people, there is likely a combination of both positive and negative experiences as they reflect on marriage and family. As human beings, we long to surround ourselves with healthy and strong relationships where we can share our lives with each other in a spirit of love and fellowship.

It is fascinating to realize that among all of the physical and spiritual creation, marriage and family relationships are uniquely reserved for the Father, Jesus Christ and mankind. Not even the angels are able to experience these special institutions (Hebrews 1:5-14). So central were the marriage and family relationships that God ordained and described them at the beginning of the book of Genesis.

The first four chapters of Genesis help us to understand just how important the relationships of family are to God. In the first two chapters of Genesis, God shows how fundamental marriage and the family are to the accomplishment of His plans for mankind. In the next two chapters of Genesis, God shows how the serpent, Satan the devil (Revelation 12:9), set out to damage and destroy these most fundamental relationships. It is within these chapters that we gain insight into why men and women have struggled so mightily in having successful marriages and successful families.

This Bible study sets out not only to show the reasons for marriage and the family and its history, but also to reveal what God says about how to be a godly member of the family, whether we are a husband, wife, brother, sister, father, mother, son or daughter. As Creator of the family, God will teach us how we can make our marital and family relationships prosper.

To the unmarried and/or childless among God's people, it may seem that this study is not for you. On the contrary, the Bible teaches us that marriage and family concepts apply to all of God's people. For example, when the Apostle Paul was addressing the church at Ephesus on the topic of marriage, he summed up his discussion by saying that it was "a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:32). Further, in the same Book of Ephesians, Paul says that the "whole family in heaven and earth" is named by the Father (Ephesians 3:15). These two verses (and many others) demonstrate that God is using marriage and family to teach us about Him and Jesus Christ.

The following study will explore the major concepts and teachings of marriage, family and child rearing as found in God's Word. Part 1 provides an introduction to marriage and family, using the first few chapters of Genesis as a framework. Parts 2 and beyond will explore the more specific instructions to husbands, wives, parents, children and the church. As you go through the Bible Study, we encourage you to read each of the verses from your own Bible and even write them down, if you like.

Foundation of Marriage & Family (Read Genesis 1:26-2:25 to answer questions 1-11)

1. Who made man and woman?
2. In whose image were they made?
3. Who created the marriage relationship between a man and a woman?
4. What was God's first command to the man and woman?
5. What was God's desire for the family to do?
6. Why did God decide to create the woman?
7. From what did God create the woman? Why is this significant?
8. What did God say a man should do to be joined to his wife?
9. What was the mindset of the man and woman toward one another after God had made them?
10. When a man and woman are joined together, how does God view the two of them?

Point to Ponder: The word “one” in the Hebrew is *echad*, the same word used in Deuteronomy 6:4, “Hear O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!” (See also John 17:20-21, “...that they may be one in Us...”, Ephesians 5:30-31) The family unit begins at marriage.

11. What does the Bible reveal about the family of God? (Genesis 1:26-27, 5:1-3, John 10:34, Ephesians 3:14-15, Hebrews 2:10, 1 John 3:1-2, Revelation 19:6-8)

Point to Ponder: Throughout the Scriptures, God inspired familial terms like father, son, children, husband, bridegroom, and bride to describe Himself, Jesus Christ and the Church. How inspiring!

Corruption of Marriage and Family (Read Genesis 3:1-24 to answer questions 12-17)

12. What happened to cause Adam and Eve’s view of each other to change?
13. How did their view of God change as a result of their actions?
14. What effect do you think Adam and Eve’s responses to God’s questions had on their relationship and their relationship with God?
15. What were the consequences that God imposed on Adam and Eve as a result of their sin? What would be the consequences for all mankind as a result?

16. How has the reality of sin perverted and destroyed family relationships?

Point to Ponder: Death is the ultimate destroyer of families. Where are our ancestors? It is never obedience that destroys the family – it's always sin!

17. In addition to the curses God pronounced, what was the final result of Adam and Eve giving in to Satan's direction rather than following God?

Restoration of Marriage & Family

18. What prophecy was given to ultimately heal/repair the damaged relationships? (Genesis 3:15)

19. What is the difference between God's seed and Satan's seed? (Genesis 4:1-12, John 8:39-47, 1 John 3:4-15)

20. What will God ultimately do with Satan and his seed? (Malachi 4:1-3, John 5:28-29, Romans 16:20, Revelation 20:10)

21. Because of sin, the family has been attacked and damaged. What is God's plan to defeat the works of Satan and restore mankind back to a right relationship with Him? (1 John 3:5-9)

22. What is Jesus' desire for us who have been redeemed by Him? (John 17:6-11)

23. How does the institution of marriage relate to God's end time plan for us? (Ephesians 5:22-33, Revelation 19:6-8)

Guiding Principles of Marriage and Family

24. What are some of the guiding principles in having Godly marriage and family relationships? Describe how the following verses apply to marriage and family relationships.

1 John 3:16

1 John 4:20-21

1 Peter 4:8

James 5:16

Acts 20:35

Philippians 2:3-4

Matthew 7:12

Matthew 18:21-22

1 Timothy 5:8

Luke 6:36

Proverbs 11:14, 12:15