

Family Unity

Psalm 133:1 and 3 *"...How good and pleasant it is when brothers (fellow workers) live together in unity!"*
"...For there the Lord commands His blessing, even life forevermore." Ephesians 4:3 *"...Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."*

Notice, unity is a state that commands God's blessings to manifest. Also, unity is both a natural and a spiritual state. And it's most effective when functioning in the family. Family is a God idea – the word originated in God. It's rooted in God. God is *the* Father, and the word *father* expresses the way that God relates to all of us.

When a couple come together in marriage. God 'the Father' extends to them a name that in essence belongs to Him - the name of family. So when a man and woman are married, they are joined together by God Himself, and the unity (bond) established through the act of marriage should never be broken.

Matthew 19:3-6 *"...Some Pharisees came to Jesus to test Him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" "Haven't you read," He replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."*

Note, Jesus did not say, *"What God has joined together no man can separate."* Rather, *"What God has joined together, let man not separate!"* Implying that separation can occur through man's own actions. Every family has the power to keep the unity and stay together – or live in disharmony and grow apart. Off-cause it starts with the parents, but every family member has a responsibility to keep the unity through the bond of peace.

Have you noticed that it's usually the small and insignificant things that become the *big* things in family relationships? In order to take control of what happens inside your house you must learn to take control of the *little things*. So, here's what you must do...

Stop doing things like

- * Not really listening
- * Interrupting someone when they're talking
- * Taking people for granted
- * Being critical
- * Breaking promises

And do things like

- * Listening
- * Respecting each other's opinion
- * Saying 'thank you'
- * Giving praises
- * Honouring your word

This may be simple but it's not simplistic. In family relationships, the little things you do show caring and commitment. They say, *"I care more about you than I care about my own habits or convenience."* And, *"These things are important to me because you are important to me."* In reality, it's not so much the little

things themselves that matter, but the attitude and character you show in choosing to give priority to those things. And remember, none of these things are really too hard or impossible to do! It's down to you choosing to do them, and then sustaining them.

Your family should be your top priority. But what makes a happy, healthy, strong and unified family? Extensive research shows that families are generally happy and successful to the degree that family members:

- Love each other
- Trust each
- Believe in each other
- Help each other
- Comfort each other
- Forgive each other
- Celebrate together – play together; work together and worship together

Concerning family, the bottom line is – there's simply no better, no stronger, more deeply satisfying, richly rewarding, productive and effective way of life and living.

But at the same time, we must accept that there is no such thing as a perfect family. Family is an ever moving, ever evolving institution.

Yours may be a growing family, a learning family, a becoming family or even a pioneering family. But whatever family you are sure to impact on future generations. There is no greater legacy you could pass on than to prepare your children to fulfil their own family roles with excellence and joy.

While it's true that the greatest joy and satisfaction in life comes from family, it's also true that this incomparable fulfilment only comes when we fully give ourselves to God and to our family also. Thereafter, work for it and sacrifice for it. And the best place to start is to have a vision for your family. By creating and maintaining a clear vision of the kind of family you want, you will be able to work through all of life's challenges. Not on your own – but together – with God's Spirit guiding you! Having a clear vision of what kind of family you want will also keep the unity and help establish a bond of peace.

I believe that one way to capture and retain this vision is by incorporating it as part of a "*personal mission statement*." Here is a simple but beautifully effective mission statement you can use:

Our Family Mission

- To love each other...
- To help each other...
- To believe in each other...
- To forgive each other...
- To pray together...

- To play together...
- To worship together...
- FOREVER.