

The Ministry of the Family: The Church and the World

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FAMILY

Scripture teaches that a primary purpose of the family is nothing less presenting the whole world with a series of three portraits—of God’s triune nature, the gospel, and the church.

THE FAMILY MINISTERS TO THE LOCAL CHURCH

1. **A well-ordered family is a powerful, God-ordained, universal witness to the church of what it ought to be.**

“I write these things to you, hoping to come to you soon. 15 But if I should be delayed, I have written so that you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:14–15).

“[An overseer] must manage his own household competently and have his children under control with all dignity. 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of God’s church?) (1 Tim. 3:4–5).

2. **A beautiful symbiosis: the family blesses the church, and the church blesses the family.**

“Because of the close relation between family and church, godly family life stimulates appreciation of God as our heavenly Father, and appreciation of God stimulates godly family life. Both are enhanced by the example of mature, fatherly [and motherly] leaders within the church . . . [the] disintegration of household order within the church adversely affects both our consciousness of being in God’s family and the quality of love within Christian families” (Vern Poythress, “The Church as Family,” *Recovering Biblical Manhood & Womanhood*, 245).

Parenthood

Lesson 3

THE FAMILY MINISTERS TO THE WORLD

1. Preparation for the gospel

“When the time came to completion, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. 6 And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba, Father!” 7 So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then God has made you an heir” (Gal. 4:4–7).

2. Satan’s attack

- a. It seems he wants to disintegrate and distort the family beyond recognition so that the gospel is as inaccessible to people as possible.
- b. Example: gender interchangeability

3. Our view

We should view building strong families as a form of ministry and opening our homes to non-Christians as an increasingly valuable evangelistic opportunity.

- a. The significance of the home—and homemakers—in Scripture

“She watches over the activities of her household and is never idle. 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also praises her: 29 “Many women have done noble deeds, but you surpass them all!” (Prov. 31:27–29).

“In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3 If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come again and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also. 4 You know the way to where I am going” (John 14:2–4).

“In the same way, older women are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not slaves to excessive drinking. They are to teach what is good, 4 so that they may encourage the young women to love their husbands and to love their children, 5 to be self-controlled, pure, workers at home, kind, and in submission to their husbands, so that God’s word will not be slandered” (Titus 2:3–5).

Parenthood

Lesson 3

b. The significance of the home in evangelism

“Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits” (1 Pet. 2:12).

“But I (not the Lord) say to the rest: If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. 13 Also, if any woman has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce her husband. 14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy by the husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy. 15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. A brother or a sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you to live in peace. 16 Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife” (1 Cor. 7:12–16).

c. The ministry of having children

“Sons are indeed a heritage from the Lord, offspring, a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the sons born in one’s youth. 5 Happy is the man who has filled his quiver with them. They will never be put to shame when they speak with their enemies at the city gate” (Ps. 127:3–5).

“But from eternity to eternity the Lord’s faithful love is toward those who fear him, and his righteousness toward the grandchildren 18 of those who keep his covenant, who remember to observe his precepts” (Ps. 103:17–18).

“I recall your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and now, I am convinced, is in you also” (2 Tim. 1:5).

PREPARATION FOR NEXT LESSON:

- Read “Your Child’s Greatest Need” by John MacArthur at gty.org/library/articles/A359/your-childrens-greatest-need