

QUALITY
OF
LIFE
BIBLE
STUDY



Family®

COMPILED BY
S.MCRAE

FAMILY “Quality of Life Series”

LEADER: U.S. News & World Report - December 26, 1994

<http://www.bible.org/illus/f/f-13.htm#TopOfPage>

Half the nations' children are now growing up in households quite different from the “Leave It to Beaver” model, according to several 1994 reports from the Census Bureau. While 51 percent of kids still live with both biological parents, the other 32 million are being raised with single parents, stepparents, half siblings, or grandparents seated across the dinner table. That's a big shift from the '40s, '50s and '60, when nearly 70 percent of kids had traditional families. More kids than ever—27 percent—are being raised by a lone parent, twice as many as in 1970. And for the first time in history, those children are almost as likely to be living with a never-married parent as with a divorced one. Fifty-four percent of all kids under 6 now live in families in which the sole parent or both parents work.

READER: “Child/Parent Relationship” - Mark DeVries, Family-Based Youth Ministry

<http://www.bible.org/illus/f/f-13.htm#TopOfPage>

Cornell University's Urie Bronfenbrenner cites nine specific changes that have taken place during the past generation which have increasingly separated children and youth from the world of adults, especially the adults in their own families:

1. Fathers' vocational choices which remove them from the home for lengthy periods of time
2. An increase in the number of working mothers
3. A critical escalation in the divorce rate
4. A rapid increase in single-parent families
5. A steady decline in the extended family
6. The evolution of the physical environment of the home (family rooms, playrooms and master bedrooms)
7. The replacement of adults by the peer group
8. The isolation of children from the work world
9. The insulation of schools from the rest of society

This last factor has caused Bronfenbrenner to describe the current U.S. educational system as “one of the most potent breeding grounds for alienation in American society.” When he wrote these words in 1974, this trend toward isolation was in full swing, and it has not been significantly checked since that time.

LEADER: So what did your home life look like...was it “Leave it to Beaver”... “The Adams Family”...or maybe “The Three Stooges”?

READER: “Statistics and Commentary” - Zig Ziglar in *Homemade*

<http://www.christianglobe.com/Illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=f&whichFile=family>

The evidence is convincing that the better our relationships are at home, the more effective we are in our careers. If we're having difficulty with a loved one, that difficulty will be translated into reduced performance on the job. In studying the millionaires in America (U.S. News and World Report), a picture of the “typical” millionaire is an individual who has worked eight to ten hours a day for thirty years and is still married to his or her high school or college sweetheart. A New York executive search firm, in a study of 1365 corporate vice presidents, discovered that 87% were still married to their one and only spouse and that 92% were raised in two-parent families. The evidence is overwhelming that the family is the strength and foundation of society. Strengthen your family ties and you'll enhance your opportunity to succeed.

READER: “Successful Families” - Focus on the Family Bulletin

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According to a study of more than 500 family counselors, the following are the top traits of successful families:

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- Affirming and supporting family members
- Respecting one another
- Developing a sense of trust
- Sharing time and responsibility
- Knowing right from wrong

- Having rituals and traditions
- Sharing a religious core
- Respecting privacy.

READER: “If a Child” - The Tale Of The Tardy Oxcart, Charles R. Swindoll
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If a child lives with criticism, He learns to condemn.
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READER: “Susannah Wesley”

http://www.sermoncentral.com/illustration_topic_results.asp?TopicName=Family&category_name=Stories&to

Susannah Wesley, mother of John Wesley spent one hour each day praying for her 17 children. In addition, she took each child aside for a full hour every week to discuss spiritual matters. No wonder two of her sons, Charles and John, were used of God to bring blessing to all of England and much of America.

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READER: “Human Development” Human Development and Family Department at the University of Nebraska- Lincoln.

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From a national survey of strong families conducted by the Human Development and Family Department at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, a profile of a strong family.

Appreciation

“Family members gave one another compliments and sincere demonstrations of approval. They tried to make the others feel appreciated and good about themselves.”

Ability to Deal with Crises in a Positive Manner

“They were willing to take a bad situation, see something positive in it and focus on that.”

Time Together

“In all areas of their lives—meals, work, recreation—they structured their schedules to spend time together.”

High Degree of Commitment

“Families promoted each person's happiness and welfare, invested time and energy in each other and made family their number one priority.”

Good Communication Patterns

“These families spent time talking with each other. They also listened well, which shows respect.”

High Degree of Religious Orientation

“Not all belonged to an organized church, but they considered themselves highly religious.” (1983)

LEADER: Is this starting to sound like the relationship you might have with your extended family? Who is your extended family?

READER: QUOTE # 1 - Fingertip Facts.

<http://www.christianglobe.com/illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=f&whichFile=family>

Rudyard Kipling once wrote about families, “all of us are we--and everyone else is they.” A family shares things like dreams, hopes, possessions, memories, smiles, frowns, and gladness...A family is a clan held together with the glue of love and the cement of mutual respect. A family is shelter from the storm, a friendly port when the waves of life become too wild. No person is ever alone who is a member of a family.

READER: “Learning to Live as Family” by Rubel Shelly

http://www.heartlight.org/articles/200008/20000831_liveasfamily.html

General Colin Powell used to tell a story on the speech circuit. A reporter from an American television network was interviewing a young African-American soldier in a tank platoon on the eve of battle in Operation Desert Storm. “How do you think the battle will go?” the newsman asked. “Are you afraid?”

“We’ll do okay. We’re well trained. And I’m not afraid,” answered the GI. Then he gestured in the direction of his buddies in uniform who were standing nearby. “I’m not afraid because I’m with my family.”

“Tell him again,” the soldiers shouted. “He didn’t hear you.” So the young man repeated, “This is my family, and we’ll take care of each other.”

Powell says there is something about that story that touches him. He says it always resonated with audiences whenever he told it. In his book “My American Journey,” he writes about the story and says: “It is a metaphor for what we have to do as a nation. We have to start thinking of America as a family. We have to stop screeching at each other, stop hurting each other, and instead start caring for, sacrificing for, and sharing with each other. . . . We cannot move forward if cynics and critics swoop down and pick apart anything that goes wrong to a point where we lose sight of what is right, decent, and uniquely good about America.”

In its narrowest sense, family refers to those people with whom you share DNA. Telltale signs of your closest biological ties might be such things as large ears, dimples, or hairline. But most of us speak of family at the more abstract level the soldier had in mind as well — an athletic team, a club, a company, a political party, the citizens of a city, state, or country, the members of our church.

It isn’t biology alone that defines the circle of those we love or the people with whom we share daily routines. We define ourselves positively by choosing to protect the welfare and interests of others. We diminish ourselves when we stoop to what Gen. Powell called “screeching at” and “hurting” one another.

Take a minute to look around you now. See kin and country, team and club, company and church. Then determine anew to honor your place in “the family.”

READER: QUOTE #2

<http://www.quotationspage.com/subjects/family/>

“Family isn’t about whose blood you have. It’s about who you care about.” - Trey Parker and Matt Stone, Authors - South Park

READER: “Family” by Tom Norvell (Excerpt)

http://www.heartlight.org/articles/200308/20030821_family.html

Families face a tremendous challenge today. With all the pressures, distractions, and obstacles in our path, how are we to remain close and keep the family alive, but healthy? Do we have what it takes for a family to remain together when schedules attempt to pull them apart?

It takes determination for a family to continue to stay in touch when jobs, school, recreation, and relationships try to pull them apart. It takes a real commitment for a family to remain close when everything around tries to tear it apart. It takes a dependence on God for a family to survive the attacks being launched by the enemy of the family. It will not just happen.

Let me assure you that our family is no different than any other. There are times we seem to be miles apart when we are all in the same room. There are times we act as though we have never heard the word “communicate” much less want to do it. There are times when it seems that to express our feelings is the most difficult thing in the world. There are times when it seems that no one wants us to express our feelings. Then, there are times when it seems that we all want to express our feelings at the same time and that “my” feelings are all that matters.

That is family. We love each other. We encourage each other. We hurt each other. We long for each other. We misunderstand each other. We want what’s best for each other. We try to understand each other. We would die for each other.

Here are four suggestions on keeping your family healthy.

1. Love each other. Really love each other. Love each other with the words and love each other with action.
2. Enjoy each other. Seize every opportunity to be together and enjoy every moment. Don’t waste any opportunity.
3. Share each other. As hard as it may be, if God is at the center of your family, you have something to share that the world desperately needs. Share the blessing of your family.
4. Celebrate each other. Don’t just celebrate birthdays and anniversaries. Celebrate the fact that you are a family. Celebrate the fact that God has given you to each other. Celebrate who you are, your history, your present, your future.

READER: QUOTE #3

http://www.cybernation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_family.html

“A man ought to live so that everybody knows he is a Christian... and most of all, his family ought to know.” - Dwight L. Moody 1837 - 1899. American evangelist

LEADER: Here are a few more tips to preserve your relationships:

READER: “101 Tips” #1 (Excerpt) - Tim Kimmel, Little House on the Freeway

<http://www.christianglobe.com/illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=f&whichFile=family>

FOR YOUR FAMILY:

1. Eat dinner together as a family for seven days in a row.
2. Take your wife on a dialogue date (no movie, guys).
3. Give each family member a hug for twenty-one days in a row (that’s how long the experts say it takes to develop a habit).
4. Pray for your spouse and children every day.
5. Tell your kids how you and your spouse met.
6. Tell your kids about your first date.
7. Take an afternoon off from work; surprise your child by excusing him from school and taking him to a ball game (or a surprise outing with your wife.)
8. Write each member of your family a letter sharing why you value them.
9. Take each family member out to breakfast (individually) at least once a month for a year.
10. Write that letter to the network that broadcast the show you felt was inappropriate for prime-time viewing
11. Put together a picture puzzle. (One thousand pieces or more.)
12. Ask your children/wife each day what they did that day (what they learned, who they ate lunch with, etc.).
13. Call you wife or husband from work just to see how they’re doing.
14. Take a weekend once a year for you and your spouse to get away and renew your friendship.
15. Praise your spouse and children -- in their presence -- to someone else.
16. Make every effort to not let the sun go down on your anger.
17. Place with your will a letter to each family member telling why you were glad you got to share life with him or her.

READER: “101 Tips” #2 (Excerpt) - Tim Kimmel, Little House on the Freeway

<http://www.christianglobe.com/illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=f&whichFile=family>

FOR FAMILY SECURITY:

1. Get a complete physical.
2. Exercise a little every day for a month.
3. Make sure you have adequate life insurance on both you and your spouse.
4. Write out information about finances, wills, and important business information that your spouse can use to keep things under control in the event of your death.
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6. Replace the batteries in your smoke alarm.
7. Write that letter to the network that broadcast the show you felt was inappropriate for prime-time viewing
8. Go through your old records and tapes and discard any of them that might be a bad testimony to your children.

READER: "101 Tips" #3 (Excerpt) - Tim Kimmel, Little House on the Freeway
<http://www.christianglobe.com/illustrations/theDetails.asp?whichOne=f&whichFile=family>

FOR YOURSELF:

1. Make a list of people who have hurt your feelings over the past year...then check your list to see if you've forgiven them.
2. Make a decision to honor your parents, even if they made a career out of dishonoring you.
3. Sit down and write your parents a letter thanking them for a specific thing they did for you. (Don't forget to send it!)
4. Finish fixing something around the house.
5. Call an old friend from your past, just to see how he or she is getting along.
6. Get a good friend to hold you accountable for a specific important need (Bible reading, prayer, spending time with your family, losing a few pounds, etc.).
7. Keep a prayer journal for a month. Keep track of the specific ways that God answers your needs.

READER: "Ten Commandments of Home Rule" - The Fight, J. White
<http://www.bible.org/illus/ff-13.htm#TopOfPage>

1. If you sleep on it - make it up.
2. If you wear it - hang it up.
3. If you drop it - pick it up.
4. If you eat out of it - put it in the sink.
5. If you step on it - wipe it off.
6. If you open it - close it.
7. If you empty it - fill it up.
8. If it rings - answer it.
9. If it howls - feed it.
10. If it cries - love it.

LEADER: Is there a relationship in your life that needs your attention, your forgiveness, your love, your action?

READER: "TWO BROTHERS" By Wade Hughes, Sr
http://www.sermoncentral.com/illustration_topic_results.asp?TopicName=Family&category_name=Stories&topic_id=103

There were two brothers. They had not spoken for many years.

The Father had given them adjoining land, they had built houses and farmed their land and raised their families together.

BUT! There had been hurt and pain and disappointment and misunderstanding between the two brothers. They had not spoken to each other in many years. When they were out on the front porch they could look across the creek bed and see each other, but they would not look toward the other one. One day the one brother won the lottery. It was not the big lottery, but enough for the brother to take his wife to Hawaii and then he had a plan for the rest of the money. He talked to the local carpenter and told him to build a big fence between his property and his brother's. The brothers had not talked since their mother died. The local

carpenter was also the pastor at the little country church down the road. The pastor carpenter knew the old man and the old woman and knew they would want them to be friends and family.

The angry brother ordered the wood and then flew off to Hawaii for a vacation. For many days the pastor, carpenter built. He started building a bridge across the creek. Slowly, each board went together and soon the bridge was finished. The angry brother pulled in his drive way from their vacation in Hawaii, and his other brother walked across the bridge and greeted him on his return. They hugged and cried. They talked and remembered their old gray haired Momma and Daddy. The brother started back across the bridge and said, COME on over, eat with us tonight.

The brothers lived several more years, brothers, yes, FRIENDS --- yes! If the old pastor had built a wall, they would still not be talking to each other. By this shall men know --- LOVE!

LEADER: Got any bridges that need building or repaired?

READER: QUOTE #4

http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_family.html

“American families have always shown remarkable resiliency, or flexible adjustment to natural, economic, and social challenges. Their strengths resemble the elasticity of a spider web, a gull’s skillful flow with the wind, the regenerating power of perennial grasses, the cooperation of an ant colony, and the persistence of a stream carving canyon rocks. These are not the strengths of fixed monuments but living organisms. This resilience is not measured by wealth, muscle or efficiency but by creativity, unity, and hope. Cultivating these family strengths is critical to a thriving human community.” - Ben Silliman, Author of Dreamcatcher

READER: QUOTE #5

<http://www.entwagon.com/cgi-bin/quotes/quotes.pl?cat=Family>

“As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live.” - John Paul II 1920, Polish-Born Italian Pope

READER: QUOTE #6

http://www.cybernation.com/victory/quotations/subjects/quotes_family.htm

“The family you come from isn’t as important as the family you’re going to have.” - Ring Lardner 1885-1933 the most distinguished writer of baseball fiction from the first half of the 20th century

LEADER: “Family” (Excerpt)

<http://www.cfdevotionals.org/devpg99/de990409.htm>

When we think of family we naturally think most often of those living in our own household or our extended family who may be miles away. Some of us have loving families; some of our family lives are filled with tension. Some of us think we have no family because we live alone. But for Christians, there is a family of millions. We have brothers and sisters in our local churches, in churches of other denominations in our country, and in other countries.

READER: Matthew 12:50

“For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

LEADER: “Our Christian Family” (Excerpt) The Christian’s Toolbox, Part 3

<http://www.cfdevotionals.org/devpg01/de011207.htm>

Sometimes we need a place to go when we have a prayer request that’s dear to our hearts, who won’t consider our requests or worries “silly.” It helps just to know someone cares, understands and is lifting up our prayer requests. That’s why God gave us our Christian family.

READER: James 5:16

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

LEADER: “Our Christian Family” (Excerpt) The Christian’s Toolbox, Part 3 (Continued)
<http://www.cfdevotionals.org/devpg01/de011207.htm>

Sometimes we need a safe place for us to go when we feel weak, and need accountability and strong Christians to lean on as we struggle.

READER: 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing.

LEADER: “Our Christian Family” (Excerpt) The Christian’s Toolbox, Part 3 (Continued)
<http://www.cfdevotionals.org/devpg01/de011207.htm>

Sometimes we need people who truly care about our deep pain, and who care about what’s going on in our lives. People who really want to hear an honest answer, when they ask “how are you?”

READER: Romans 12:15

Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep.

LEADER: “Our Christian Family” (Excerpt) The Christian’s Toolbox, Part 3 (Continued)
<http://www.cfdevotionals.org/devpg01/de011207.htm>

Regularly, we need to study the Bible with other believers, so we can learn from each other and get fresh perspectives that we would miss on our own. That’s why God gave us our Christian family.

READER: Colossians 3:16

Let the words of Christ, in all their richness, live in your hearts and make you wise. Use his words to teach and counsel each other. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

LEADER: Did you know we’re adopted?

LEADER: “Adoption” By Wil Pounds (Excerpt)
<http://www.abideinchrist.com/cgi-bin/MasterPFP.cgi?doc=>

The word “adoption” (huiothesias) is the placement of a son.

READER: Galatians 4:5

so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

LEADER: In Chuck Swindoll’s The Tale of The Tardy Oxcart

A story is told that reminds us of one that’s over 2000 years old.

READER: “Billy Graham’s Cliff” - Charles R. Swindoll’s The Tale Of The Tardy Oxcart
<http://biblecenter.com/illustrations/family.htm>

Cliff Barrows, song leader of the Billy Graham Crusade ministry, tells a story about his children when they were younger. They had done something he had forbidden them to do. They were told if they did the same thing again they would have to be disciplined. When he returned from work and found that they hadn’t minded, his heart went out to them. “I just couldn’t discipline them,” he said.

Any loving father can understand Cliff’s dilemma. Most of us have been in the same position. He said, “Bobby and Bettie Ruth were very small. I called them into my room, took off my belt and then my shirt, with a bare back I knelt down at the bed. I made them both strap me with the belt ten times each. You should have heard the crying. From them, I mean. The crying was from them. They didn’t want to do it. But I told them the penalty had to be paid and so through their sobs and tears they did what I told them.”

“I smile when I remember the incident,” he said. “I must admit I wasn’t much of a hero. It hurt. I haven’t offered to do that again. It was a once-for-all sacrifice, I guess we could say, but I never had to spank those two children again, because they got the point. We kissed each other. And when it was over we prayed together.”

LEADER: Who does this remind us of? (Christ who suffered and died in our place.)

READER: Romans 8:15

For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"

LEADER: "Adoption" By Wil Pounds (Excerpt Continued)

<http://www.abideinchrist.com/cgi-bin/MasterPFP.cgi?doc=>

The adopted sons enjoyed the same privileges as natural born sons. According to the Roman law the adopted person lost all rights in his old family and gained all the rights of a legitimate son in his new family. He got a new father and he became the heir of his new father's estate. He was inalienably co-heir with the other sons in the family. In law, the old life was completely wiped out. All debts were cancelled, and he was absolutely the son of his new father. It was carried out in the presence of seven witnesses to make it official. As children of the heavenly Father we have been given full legal status and inheritance rights.

When we put our faith in Christ we received a "spirit of adoption" that set us free from a servile fear of God. We do not have to shrink in fear from God, but now have "access" into His holy presence.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is the means through which believers become conscious of their sonship. There is a close relation between our adoption and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

READER: Ephesians 1:4-5

just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will

READER: John 1:12-13

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

LEADER: "The Adoption of Believers" By Wil Pounds

<http://www.abideinchrist.com/messages/rom8v15.html>

What does adoption teach us? God, in His mercy, has brought us into His absolute possession. The old life has no more rights over us; God has an absolute right to us. The past is canceled and its debts are wiped out; we began a new life with God and become heirs of all His riches. Since that is true, we become joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, God's unique Son. That which Christ inherits, we also inherit. Since Christ was raised to life and glory, we also inherit that life and glory.

We are no longer members of Adam's family. We have a new father. We have a new head of the family. God the Father loves us and wants us to become members of His family. All of our inheritance from Adam with its sin and death has been cancelled out and we are now members of another family. God is now our Father and Jesus is our big brother! What a privilege and honor to be members of His family.

AMEN? AMEN!

COMMENTS IF TIME:

**ALLOW TEN MINUTES BEFORE CLOSING FOR:
PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES:**

COPY AND DISTRIBUTE THE FOLLOWING PAGES TO YOUR READERS:

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- Respecting one another
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- Sharing time and responsibility
- Knowing right from wrong
- Having rituals and traditions
- Sharing a religious core
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“Susannah Wesley”

Susannah Wesley, mother of John Wesley spent one hour each day praying for her 17 children. In addition, she took each child aside for a full hour every week to discuss spiritual matters. No wonder two of her sons, Charles and John, were used of God to bring blessing to all of England and much of America.

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Ability to Deal with Crises in a Positive Manner

“They were willing to take a bad situation, see something positive in it and focus on that.”

Time Together

“In all areas of their lives—meals, work, recreation—they structured their schedules to spend time together.”

High Degree of Commitment

“Families promoted each person's happiness and welfare, invested time and energy in each other and made family their number one priority.”

Good Communication Patterns

“These families spent time talking with each other. They also listened well, which shows respect.”

High Degree of Religious Orientation

“Not all belonged to an organized church, but they considered themselves highly religious.” (1983)

QUOTE #1

Rudyard Kipling once wrote about families, “all of us are we--and everyone else is they.” A family shares things like dreams, hopes, possessions, memories, smiles, frowns, and gladness...A family is a clan held together with the glue of love and the cement of mutual respect. A family is shelter from the storm, a friendly port when the waves of life become too wild. No person is ever alone who is a member of a family.

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“Learning to Live as Family” by Rubel Shelly

General Colin Powell used to tell a story on the speech circuit. A reporter from an American television network was interviewing a young African-American soldier in a tank platoon on the eve of battle in Operation Desert Storm. “How do you think the battle will go?” the newsman asked. “Are you afraid?”

“We’ll do okay. We’re well trained. And I’m not afraid,” answered the GI. Then he gestured in the direction of his buddies in uniform who were standing nearby. “I’m not afraid because I’m with my family.”

“Tell him again,” the soldiers shouted. “He didn’t hear you.” So the young man repeated, “This is my family, and we’ll take care of each other.”

Powell says there is something about that story that touches him. He says it always resonated with audiences whenever he told it. In his book “My American Journey,” he writes about the story and says: “It is a metaphor for what we have to do as a nation. We have to start thinking of America as a family. We have to stop screeching at each other, stop hurting each other, and instead start caring for, sacrificing for, and sharing with each other. . . . We cannot move forward if cynics and critics swoop down and pick apart anything that goes wrong to a point where we lose sight of what is right, decent, and uniquely good about America.”

In its narrowest sense, family refers to those people with whom you share DNA. Telltale signs of your closest biological ties might be such things as large ears, dimples, or hairline. But most of us speak of family at the more abstract level the soldier had in mind as well — an athletic team, a club, a company, a political party, the citizens of a city, state, or country, the members of our church.

It isn’t biology alone that defines the circle of those we love or the people with whom we share daily routines. We define ourselves positively by choosing to protect the welfare and interests of others. We diminish ourselves when we stoop to what Gen. Powell called “screeching at” and “hurting” one another.

Take a minute to look around you now. See kin and country, team and club, company and church. Then determine anew to honor your place in “the family.”

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QUOTE #2

“Family isn’t about whose blood you have. It’s about who you care about.” - Trey Parker and Matt Stone, Authors - South Park 1998

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“Family” by Tom Norvell

Families face a tremendous challenge today. With all the pressures, distractions, and obstacles in our path, how are we to remain close and keep the family alive, but healthy? Do we have what it takes for a family to remain together when schedules attempt to pull them apart?

It takes determination for a family to continue to stay in touch when jobs, school, recreation, and relationships try to pull them apart. It takes a real commitment for a family to remain close when everything around tries to tear it apart. It takes a dependence on God for a family to survive the attacks being launched by the enemy of the family. It will not just happen.

Let me assure you that our family is no different than any other. There are times we seem to be miles apart when we are all in the same room. There are times we act as though we have never heard the word “communicate” much less want to do it. There are times when it seems that to express our feelings is the most difficult thing in the world. There are times when it seems that no one wants us to express our feelings. Then, there are times when it seems that we all want to express our feelings at the same time and that “my” feelings are all that matters.

That is family. We love each other. We encourage each other. We hurt each other. We long for each other. We misunderstand each other. We want what’s best for each other. We try to understand each other. We would die for each other.

Here are four suggestions on keeping your family healthy.

Love each other. Really love each other. Love each other with the words and love each other with action.

Enjoy each other. Seize every opportunity to be together and enjoy every moment. Don’t waste any opportunity.

Share each other. As hard as it may be, if God is at the center of your family, you have something to share that the world desperately needs. Share the blessing of your family.

Celebrate each other. Don’t just celebrate birthdays and anniversaries. Celebrate the fact that you are a family. Celebrate the fact that God has given you to each other. Celebrate who you are, your history, your present, your future.

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QUOTE #3

“A man ought to live so that everybody knows he is a Christian... and most of all, his family ought to know.” - Dwight L. Moody 1837 - 1899. American evangelist

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“101 Tips” #1

FOR YOUR FAMILY:

1. Eat dinner together as a family for seven days in a row.
2. Take your wife on a dialogue date (no movie, guys).
3. Give each family member a hug for twenty-one days in a row (that’s how long the experts say it takes to develop a habit).
4. Pray for your spouse and children every day.
5. Tell your kids how you and your spouse met.
6. Tell your kids about your first date.
7. Take an afternoon off from work; surprise your child by excusing him from school and taking him to a ball game (or a surprise outing with your wife.)
8. Write each member of your family a letter sharing why you value them.
9. Take each family member out to breakfast (individually) at least once a month for a year.
10. Write that letter to the network that broadcast the show you felt was inappropriate for prime-time viewing
11. Put together a picture puzzle. (One thousand pieces or more.)
12. Ask your children/wife each day what they did that day (what they learned, who they ate lunch with, etc.).
13. Call you wife or husband from work just to see how they’re doing.
14. Take a weekend once a year for you and your spouse to get away and renew your friendship.
15. Praise your spouse and children -- in their presence -- to someone else.
16. Make every effort to not let the sun go down on your anger.
17. Place with your will a letter to each family member telling why you were glad you got to share life with him or her.



“101 Tips” #2

FOR FAMILY SECURITY:

1. Get a complete physical.
2. Exercise a little every day for a month.
3. Make sure you have adequate life insurance on both you and your spouse.
4. Write out information about finances, wills, and important business information that your spouse can use to keep things under control in the event of your death.
5. Write out information about finances, wills, and important business information that your spouse can use to keep things under control in the event of your death.
6. Replace the batteries in your smoke alarm.
7. Write that letter to the network that broadcast the show you felt was inappropriate for prime-time viewing
8. Go through your old records and tapes and discard any of them that might be a bad testimony to your children.



“101 Tips” #3

FOR YOURSELF:

1. Make a list of people who have hurt your feelings over the past year...then check your list to see if you’ve forgiven them.
2. Make a decision to honor your parents, even if they made a career out of dishonoring you.
3. Sit down and write your parents a letter thanking them for a specific thing they did for you. (Don’t forget to send it!)
4. Finish fixing something around the house.
5. Call an old friend from your past, just to see how he or she is getting along.
6. Get a good friend to hold you accountable for a specific important need (Bible reading, prayer, spending ime with your family, losing a few pounds, etc.).
7. Keep a prayer journal for a month. Keep track of the specific ways that God answers your needs.



“Ten Commandments of Home Rule

1. If you sleep on it - make it up.
2. If you wear it - hang it up.
3. If you drop it - pick it up.
4. If you eat out of it - put it in the sink.
5. If you step on it - wipe it off.
6. If you open it - close it.
7. If you empty it - fill it up.
8. If it rings - answer it.
9. If it howls - feed it.
10. If it cries - love it.

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“TWO BROTHERS”

There were two brothers. They had not spoken for many years.

The Father had given them adjoining land, they had built houses and farmed their land and raised their families together.

BUT! There had been hurt and pain and disappointment and misunderstanding between the two brothers. They had not spoken to each other in many years. When they were out on the front porch they could look across the creek bed and see each other, but they would

not look toward the other one. One day the one brother won the lottery. It was not the big lottery, but enough for the brother to take his wife to

Hawaii and then he had a plan for the rest of the money. He talked to the local carpenter and told him to build a big fence between his property and his brother's. The brothers had not talked since their mother died.

The local carpenter was also the pastor at the little country church down the road. The pastor carpenter knew the old man and the old woman and knew they would want them to be friends and family.

The angry brother ordered the wood and then flew off to Hawaii for a vacation. For many days the pastor, carpenter built. He started building a bridge across the creek. Slowly, each board went together and soon the bridge was finished. The angry brother pulled in his drive way from their vacation in Hawaii, and his other brother walked across the bridge

and greeted him on his return. They hugged and cried. They talked and remembered their old gray haired Momma and Daddy. The brother started back across the bridge and said, COME on over, eat with us tonight.

The brothers lived several more years, brothers, yes, FRIENDS --- yes!

If the old pastor had built a wall, they would still not be talking to each other.

By this shall men know --- LOVE!

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QUOTE #4

“American families have always shown remarkable resiliency, or flexible adjustment to natural, economic, and social challenges. Their strengths resemble the elasticity of a spider web, a gull's skillful flow with the wind, the regenerating power of perennial grasses, the cooperation of an ant colony, and the persistence of a stream carving canyon rocks. These are not the strengths of fixed monuments but living organisms. This resilience is not measured by wealth, muscle or efficiency but by creativity, unity, and hope. Cultivating these family strengths is critical to a thriving human community.” - Ben Silliman, Author of Dreamcatcher

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QUOTE #5

“As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live.” - John Paul II 1920, Polish-Born Italian Pope

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QUOTE #6

“The family you come from isn’t as important as the family you’re going to have.” - Ring Lardner 1885-1933 the most distinguished writer of baseball fiction from the first half of the 20th century

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“Family”

When we think of family we naturally think most often of those living in our own household or our extended family who may be miles away. Some of us have loving families; some of our family lives are filled with tension. Some of us think we have no family because we live alone. But for Christians, there is a family of millions. We have brothers and sisters in our local churches, in churches of other denominations in our country, and in other countries

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Matthew 12:50

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James 5:16

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1 Thessalonians 5:11

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Romans 12:15

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Colossians 3:16

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Galatians 4:5

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“Billy Graham’s Cliff”

Cliff Barrows, song leader of the Billy Graham Crusade ministry, tells a story about his children when they were younger. They had done something he had forbidden them to do. They were told if they did the same thing again they would have to be disciplined. When he returned from work and found that they hadn’t minded, his heart went out to them. “I just couldn’t discipline them,” he said.

Any loving father can understand Cliff’s dilemma. Most of us have been in the same position. He said, “Bobby and Bettie Ruth were very small. I called them into my room, took off my belt and then my shirt, with a bare back I knelt down at the bed. I made them both strap me with the belt ten times each. You should have heard the crying. From them, I mean. The crying was from them. They didn’t want to do it. But I told them the penalty had to be paid and so through their sobs and tears they did what I told them.”

“I smile when I remember the incident,” he said. “I must admit I wasn’t much of a hero. It hurt. I haven’t offered to do that again. It was a once-for-all sacrifice, I guess we could say, but I never had to spank those two children again, because they got the point. We kissed each other. And when it was over we prayed together.”

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Romans 8:15

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Ephesians 1:4-5

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John 1:12-13