

Do you remember when Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was?

Matthew 22:37–39 NKJV

Jesus said to him, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Here Jesus emphasized in a big way the importance of relationships

This is what life is about—loving God, loving yourself, and loving others

- It is never wrong to love
- It is never out of order to love
- You do not compromise when you love
- You never lower your standards when you love

God’s Love Never Fails!

1 Corinthians 13:4–8 (NKJV)

⁴ Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails.

A Foundation for Your Family That Lasts

- God is in the business of blessing families
- He has a purpose for them – **Malachi 2:15-16**
- He wants to use them

If all you remember growing up are the echoes of shouting and slamming doors this may be hard for you to see, still it is true

- Family brings trouble
- Family brings challenges
- Family brings crisis
- Family brings hurt

Yet, the family is still God's plan and His idea

The Hatfield's and McCoy's

The most notorious family feud in American history

- Beginning in the 19th century and continuing for decades
- They were at war with one another
- All over a stolen pig in 1878
- Fueled by an interfamily romance stoked the fire of these two Appalachian families
- Murders on both sides finally made it to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1888
- Finally announced a truce in 1891
- Didn't shake hands on it until 1976 – Family Feud Show

Ezekiel 25:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ ‘Thus says the Lord GOD: “Because the Philistines dealt vengefully and took vengeance with a spiteful heart, to destroy because of the old hatred,”

- Referring to a conflict between Israel and the Philistines
- Endured for generations
- Sometimes families hold on to offenses that happened so long ago they forget why they are still mad
 - *“My grandma hated them. My mama hated them. So, I hate them.”*
- We need to let go of old hatred

God is calling you to lead your family in love and by love

- You will not find greater fulfillment and love than within the heart of your family
- It is worth pursuing and fighting for
- Don’t give up on your family

Build on the right foundation

1 Corinthians 3:11 (NKJV)

¹¹ For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

- Go after your family with the same love, grace and mercy with which God pursues you

Matthew 7:24–27 (NKJV)

²⁴ “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. ²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

- Storms are going to come
- If you have not been through any, trust me one is coming
- The rain falls on the just and the unjust – **Matthew 5:45**

Jesus is the only foundation that can secure your life, your home, your marriage and your family against the inevitable tides of life

- The goal is to pass on a legacy of faith to your family
- When the doctor says the sickness is coming back on your child
- When you discover pornography on the computer
- When your teen runs away from home and say she hates you

When you think you cannot live with the husband who failed

- Or the mother who abused the child or stole your money
- The rock that you build your house on is stronger than sin, rebellion, iniquity or addiction

Building a secure foundation takes time and effort

- Turn of the distractions of the world
- The computer, the TV, the negative people, the negative thinking
- Tune in the right things
- Spend time in prayer
- Meditate on the word
- Allow the Holy Spirit to speak into and move your life
- Go to Church
- It's the only way to keep your family standing strong when the tides come in

Pass on the Garment of Faith

Exodus 29:5–9, 29 (NKJV)

⁵ Then you shall take the garments, put the tunic on Aaron, and the robe of the ephod, the ephod, and the breastplate, and gird him with the intricately woven band of the ephod. ⁶ You shall put the turban on his head, and put the holy crown on the turban. ⁷ And you shall take the anointing oil, pour *it* on his head, and anoint him. ⁸ Then you shall bring his sons and put tunics on them. ⁹ And you shall gird them with sashes, Aaron and his sons, and put the hats on them. The priesthood shall be theirs for a perpetual statute. So you shall consecrate Aaron and his sons.

²⁹ “And the holy garments of Aaron shall be his sons’ after him, to be anointed in them and to be consecrated in them.

God wanted Aaron's son to wear the same exact garment his father wore

- It's God's way of saying, I'm calling this family
- I'm placing a special anointing on this family
- They are unique
- I have a special purpose for them

We are a "royal priesthood"

1 Peter 2:9 (NKJV)

⁹ But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

- We are not like other families
- We are a priesthood family
- We are called
- We are anointed

What kind of garment are you passing on?

- A garment of peace or contention?
- A garment of bickering?
- A garment of needing to be right, or a garment of striving toward reconciliation
- A garment of forgiveness or a garment of bitterness?
- A garment of kindness or a garment of frustration?
- A garment of faith or a garment of worry?

We pass on to our children what we wear not what we profess

- In the good times as well as the bad times

Are you modeling the power of faith to your children by seeking God or do you fall to pieces during a trial and turn to any and every secular source of in search of peace?

- You might feel like giving up
- You might feel like a failure
- You think you've messed up to badly
- You think you've gone too far
- You think the wounds are to deep

If you want to pass on the “garment of faith” to your children than start wearing it, and wear it well

The garments of praise, holiness, purity and supernatural anointing

Dress for battle and fight for your family

Ephesians 6:13–17 (NKJV)

¹³ Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

¹⁴ Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵ and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶ above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Four Ways to Lead Your Family Well

Pray

Never stop praying for your children

- Our kids cannot soar in life without our prayers
- They cannot reach the high places without our prayers
- If your teen refuses to talk to you – pray
- If your son or daughter won't have anything to do with you – pray
- If your son is rebelling against you – pray
- If your relationship with an adult child is strained – pray

Stay Committed

John Robertson McQuilkin – President of Columbia Bible College and Seminary

- Resigned and gave up a successful career to take care of his wife, Muriel, full time who was stricken with Alzheimer's
- Years earlier when she was diagnosed he mentioned to the school board that he would eventually have to step down
- They understood but never made a move to find a replacement
- When Muriel's health deteriorated he started to wrestle with the decision
- He pondered the possibility of institutionalizing his wife

It made sense on paper, even trusted friends and colleagues told him it was the right decision

- The thought of his wife not being at home and being pumped full of drugs was enough for him to reconsider

When he resigned he was surprised at the lack of support for his decision from some of his board members

- One person tried to talk him out of it saying, *“She doesn’t even know who you are”*.
- McQuilkin’s response, *“But I do, and I know what I must do.”*

He said of his decision, *“When the time came, the decision was firm. It took no great calculation. It was a matter of integrity. Had I not promised, 42 years before, ‘in sickness and in health...till death do us part’?”*

- This man understood fully and committed to the vows he made when he married Muriel
- He was steadfast when it was hard
- When he had to make sacrifices, he acted selflessly

How many of us could say that about our level of commitment?

Matthew 5:37 (NKJV)

³⁷ But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

Be Aware of Your Greatest Temptation

There are times in life when someone hurts you, and the pain is so deep that you can justify doing the wrong thing

- Justified in not forgiving the spouse who cheated on you
- Walking away from the family member who deeply disappointed you

You are most vulnerable to temptation, when you can justify it the best

Jesus' Greatest Temptation

Matthew 26:39 (NKJV)

“O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You *will*.”

- After he prayed, Roman soldiers swarmed and arrested Him
- Peter tries to defend Him and cuts off the ear of a servant of the high priest

Matthew 26:52–54 (NKJV)

⁵² But Jesus said to him, “Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? ⁵⁴ How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?”

Jesus had the authority to end it all

- And frankly, who would have blamed him
- This was His greatest temptation

Your greatest temptation will come with your greatest justification

- We can justify, “*giving it to people as good as they gave it to you.*”
- They betrayed you and they deserve it

The greater the temptation and the greater the justification, the greater the manifestation of God in your life when you do not yield to that temptation

- When someone you love wrongs you or breaks your heart
- Resist the urge to get back at them
- I understand that sometimes you must set boundaries
- But you must forgive those who hurt you

Say, “I’m Sorry” and Mean It

If you want to reconcile a relationship, you must be willing to say,

- “I’m sorry I hurt your feelings.”
- “I’m sorry I said those things.”
- “I’m sorry I didn’t trust you.”
- “I’m sorry I got so angry.”

Never say, “*I’m sorry, but...*”, Apologize and mean it!

Fight for Your Family

Nehemiah 4:13–14 (NKJV)

¹³ Therefore I positioned *men* behind the lower parts of the wall, at the openings; and I set the people according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. ¹⁴ And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses.”

- If we want to win our families to God, we must do one thing: fight for them!
 - Fight for your sons
 - Fight for your daughters
 - Fight for your wives
 - Fight for your homes
 - Fight for your families

Nehemiah 4:15–18 (NKJV)

¹⁵ And it happened, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and *that* God had brought their plot to nothing, that all of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work. ¹⁶ So it was, from that time on, *that* half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and *wore* armor; and the leaders *were* behind all the house of Judah. ¹⁷ Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon.

¹⁸ Every one of the builders had his sword girded at his side as he built. And the one who sounded the trumpet *was* beside me.

- These men were building and battling at the same time
- They had a tool in one hand and a weapon in the other
- We must build up our family with one hand and fight for them with the other

When Nehemiah endeavored to build the walls, the enemy was immediately in opposition

- Is your family under attack?
- Decide today that you are not going to let the enemy have your family
- Determine to fight for them
- Get a sword in one hand and a tool in the other

Nehemiah 4:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Then I said to the nobles, the rulers, and the rest of the people, “The work *is* great and extensive, and we are separated far from one another on the wall. ²⁰ Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.”

- When you commit to fight for your family God will fight for you
- No weapon formed against you will prosper – **Isaiah 54:17**
- Be determined to keep your family together
- Reconcile relationships that are broken
- Love the way God loves you!