

Intentionally Building the Family

Textual Idea: Success in the family can only be achieved with planning and intentionality.

Homiletical Idea: To experience success in the family relationship, family members must be committed to follow God's Word and to make each other happy.

Intro: God designed family to be a blessing to the human family. However, we must develop the skills required to achieve a successful family. Today we are going to talk about practical elements that will help us to develop these skills.

“The family tie is the closest, the most tender and sacred, of any on earth. It was designed to be a blessing to mankind. And it is a blessing wherever the marriage covenant is **entered into intelligently**, in **the fear of God**, and with due consideration for its **responsibilities**.” *Ministry of Healing*, pp. 356, 357

“Getting married is easy. Staying married is more difficult. Staying happily married for a lifetime would be considered among the fine arts.” **Unknown Author**

1. When we marry, we must be committed to make the relationship successful.

- a. 1 Corinthians 7:33 – “But **he** who is married cares about the things of the world—**how he may please his wife**.”
- b. 1 Corinthians 7:34 – “But **she** who is married cares about the things of the world—**how she may please her husband**.”
- c. Ephesians 5:33 – “Nevertheless **let each one of you** in particular so **love his own wife** as himself, and **let the wife see that she respects her husband**.”
- d. Ephesians 6:1, 4 – “Children, **obey your parents in the Lord**, for this is right... Fathers, **do not provoke your children to anger**.”

“A family that is connected in a healthy way—spouses, parents, and children—are **intentional about managing conflict in a timely manner** and are **committed to being patient, kind, understanding, and forgiving**. While **this kind of commitment is not easy**, it is worthwhile and will contribute to the happiness, health, and quality of life of every family who puts it into practice.” Willie & Elaine Oliver, *Hope for Today's Families*, p. 15.

2. What are some intentional things that we can implement in our relationships in order to nurture it?

- a. We can divide the following quote in three sections:

“We choose to **schedule fun times** together and to **find reasons to celebrate often** to keep our marriage and family a **desirable** place to be... Our children are grown and no longer live at home. However, every time we get a chance to be together, we spend time visiting and enjoying our family. Whether **planning a game, sharing a favorite meal, visiting a museum, or going to church together, we are reminded that we belong to each other** and are grateful to God for His goodness to us. When we are apart, we **stay connected by keeping in touch on a regular basis**. Of course,

we can make this happen only by **thinking and planning for it.**” Willie & Elaine Oliver, *Hope for Today’s Families*, pp. 20, 21.

- i. Schedule fun times
 - Playing together
 - Sharing a favorite meal
 - Going out and Traveling together
 - Worshiping together
- ii. Find reasons to celebrate often
 - Special family dates, like birthdays and anniversaries
 - National holidays
 - Victories in life, like learning a new skill, a graduation, the first job.
- iii. Stay connected by keeping in touch on a regular basis
 - Phone calls, audio messages, texting, emails, sending pictures, and visiting.

3. In a different note, good communication is another effective way to intentionally build the family.

- a. Family specialists often say that the quality of a family depends on the quality of their communication.
- b. Good communication skills are actually learned. Therefore, make the commitment to communicate well.
- c. Stephen Covey shares in his book “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Families”, the concept “be proactive” as a skill to be used for effective communication.

“In essence the idea indicates that between a stimulus and the response—what someone says to you, and how you respond—**there is a space.** And in that space each family member has the freedom and power to **choose their response**—what they say, and how they say it. And that response is truly at the foundation of their growth and happiness as a family.” Willie & Elaine Oliver, *Hope for Today’s Families*, p. 16.

- d. Three things must happen in the space between what a family member says to you and how you respond:
 - i. Pause – Instead of responding immediately, allow yourself to calm down.
 - ii. Think – Think about what you should or should not say.
 - iii. Choose – Choose the correct response; what will bring peace, rather than war.
- e. James 1:19 – The pause, think, and choose strategy is actually biblical.
 - i. We must first be willing to understand each other by listening.
 - ii. If we are slow to speak, that means that we are taking time to think how to respond.

- iii. If we are slow to become angry, it means that we are making the right choice.

“Everyone should be [1] **quick to listen**, [2] **slow to speak** and [3] **slow to become angry**.” James 1:19, NIV

- f. Colossians 4:6 – Our words must be seasoned with grace. Grace is something that we do not deserve; yet we receive it in form of forgiveness, kindness, and humility.
 - i. To communicate with grace means to speak with someone in a way they do not deserve.
 - ii. When we make mistakes, and we apologize we are also speaking with grace.

“Let your **speech always be with grace**, seasoned with salt, that you may **know how you ought to answer** each one.” Colossians 4:16

- i. Sometimes we speak with grace by being firm, yet not filled with anger.

“The truth is **you cannot control** your spouse, your children, your siblings, your parents, or your relatives. You truly can **control only yourself**. So when someone says something to you that is not very nice, rather than using your energy trying to change them, it is much more profitable to use that time developing your **response of peace and grace**.” Willie & Elaine Oliver, *Hope for Today's Families*, p. 57.

- ii. If we stop to think after a conflict, we can identify better methods to have handled the situation.

“A soft answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger.” Proverbs 15:1

4. The reality is that every relationship is like a bank account—deposits should be made before you can withdraw.

- a. There are 5 ways we can make deposits in our relationships:
 - i. Stop labeling your marriage as dysfunctional – Be willing to find the good in your marriage and spouse.
 - ii. Pray with all your heart for your marriage and your spouse – Keep God in the center of your marriage. Ask Him to heal your marriage.
 - iii. Forgive often – Extend compassion and kindness
 - iv. Learn and practice effective communication skills
 - v. Find out what your spouse likes and do it, and keep doing it
 - vi. Find out what your spouse doesn't like and quit doing it – Apply the golden rule:

“Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them...” Matthew 7:12