

***Biblical
Resources
for
Couples
and
Families***

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Biblical Resources for Couples and Families

A Biblical Resource

In a world that questions marriage, in a time that challenges the covenant of holy matrimony, and in an age that is determined to tear away the foundation of husbands and wives building a life and family together, this handbook presents biblical answers for couples and families. The material in this handbook is based upon passages from the Bible that deal with contemporary issues, presenting them in a format that mobilizes truth in the life of the reader and participant.

Use this Resource as a Study Guide

Seven precepts are presented in this handbook. All seven precepts are listed on page 3. On the right hand pages, seven principles are provided for each precept. Each principle is numbered. Scripture passages and scripture commentary highlight each principle. As you read the precepts and supporting principles, building blocks for your marriage and family are formed. A renewed understanding of God's scriptural precepts and principles becomes the mortar that holds together what God is building in your marriage through His Word.

Use this Resource as a Devotional Guide

Application is the key to integrating precepts and principles. Use this handbook as a devotional guide. The following guidelines will help you to daily build your marriage around Scripture:

1. Review one new precept each week
2. Review one new principle of a precept each day
3. Write comments each day for each new precept
4. Share what you have learned each day with your spouse and/or family

Use this Resource as a Couple

Meet regularly with your spouse and use the handbook as a topic of discussion. Learning together, especially on a regular basis can be transforming in a marriage. The handbook can be a prayer guide when you have devotions. The handbook is also a guide for shared Bible reading.

Use this Resource as a Family

Gather your family together with your Bible and the handbook as a resource for Bible study and/or devotions. Scriptural principles are applicable for young and old.

Use this Resource in the Local Church

As a Bible study tool, small group handbook or resource for counseling, this handbook is a well of information for laity and clergy couples and families.

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Biblical Resources

The Precept

Being Spiritual and Being Married

In **Ephesians 5:1-6:4** spirituality is wedded with marital and family issues. After your personal spirituality, the most spiritual process you can become a part of is to build-up and maintain the spiritual life of your marriage and home.

Seven Principles

1

Walk in Love (Eph. 5:1-2)

Following God is not an option but a commandment. Just as you follow God as a disciple, you follow God as a spouse and family member. We follow God as “dear children” (v. 1). He is our Father. Our sense of family, our priority placed upon family and our responsibility toward family reflects our love-walk with God.

2

Walk in Wisdom (Eph. 5:15-17)

The time to be the spouse or family member that God wants you to be is always shorter than you think. In fact, the time is now. We must maximize our time for family. Since there is so much evil, our time commitment to each other as family has the power of wisdom and grace. We give, not just spend, time.

3

Spirit Control (Eph. 5:18)

What controls your life? What do you get up in the morning for? What do you look forward to more than anything else? Drunkenness is an indication of a loss of control. The family spiritual goal is to be controlled by the leading and sensitivity of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was given to us so that we might be in relationship with God and each other.

4

Submit Mutually (Eph. 5:19-21)

What does it mean to be controlled by the Spirit? Worship (vs. 19-20) is a vital part of life in the Spirit. We sing, pray and do so many things individually and together, reflecting the power of the Holy Spirit in us. We also mutually submit to each other. Not one person submitting and the other person dominating. Rather, both partners loving God and each other.

5

Submit/Honor (Eph. 5:22-4; 33)

Husbands need the affirmation of a job well done, the reminder of appreciation and the gentle word that says, “I support you.” “Submission” does not mean being a “doormat.” “Submit” in verse 22 is defined by “honor” in verse 33. Honor is the grateful recognition of accomplishment.

6

Love/Giving Self (Eph. 5:25, 33)

Wives need the full attention and love of their husbands. “Gave himself” (v. 25) is a complete process of the total self. The process continues throughout the life of a marriage relationship. The responsibility is freely fulfilled. Christ’s giving is the power where we receive the power to give self as well. What a glorious resource!

7

Nurture Children (Eph. 6:4)

Children become very emotionally attached to parents, caring very deeply about a parent’s opinion. A parent holds the heart of a son or daughter in his/her hand. Treat it with care. The emotions of a child can be bruised. Nurture, not provoke, your child. Lead them, don’t drive them. Bring them, don’t badger them.

Written Comments

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Being in Christ and Being Married

Colossians 3 brings us to the heart of God's Word. The power of the "word of Christ" (v. 16) changes lives, marriages and families. The Word is the fuel of a Godly marriage. Feed your marriage with the Word of God and growth will occur.

Seven Principles

1

Affections for life (Col. 3:1-4)

What do you care about? What do you get emotional about? Emotions are like a motor that drives a ship. Feelings keep turning and turning within us, driving us either closer or further apart. New life in Christ depends on where we place our emotions.

2

Obedience as a child (Col. 3:6)

The believer follows God as a child follows a Father. God is part of the family system shared by couples and families. The Heavenly Father relates to husbands, wives and families as a Father. Love and care flows from His heart as a Father. We respond as a child in love, the opposite is to be children of disobedience.

3

The Father's Renewal (Col. 3:10)

As our Heavenly Father, God gives the power to be family. No matter what we have gone through, even failure, God gives renewal, new ability to be the couple in Christ that you desire to be. The Father's renewing power transforms a marriage into what He desires it to be. Marriage becomes a source of life.

4

Christ in Your Family (Col. 3:16)

Another member of your family is Christ. He is present through His Word and Spirit. Christ must dwell richly in a marriage and home. Something will dominate every home. Sometimes evil dominates a home. Sometimes depression dominates. Let Christ's Word dominate your home. Place His Word as a reminder in your home. Carry His Word in your heart.

5

The Power of Thanks (Col. 3:17)

Gratitude toward one another and toward God is the fragrance that invigorates a marriage and home. In whatever spouses do, thanks is always appropriate. As colors accent clothing, so thankfulness changes the appearance of what we do and say. Gratitude is a reflection of thanksgiving toward God.

6

Submission to God (Col. 3:18)

The target of our submission is set as we focus on God. Submission to God first is required for accurate submission to your spouse. After submitting to God, relating to your spouse becomes an act of grace. Grace empowered submission is lasting. No matter what your spouse's response, you have been faithful to God.

7

Love vs. Bitterness (Col. 3:19)

The lack of love is not a void, empty space that merely represents the absence of love. No, the refusal to love is the choice to be bitter. The bitterness may be small at first. But, as a weed thrives in a barren land, so does bitterness grow in the absence of love. On the other hand, the presence of love smoothes over the briars of bitterness.

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Raising Up Your Marriage/Family

The **Book of Ruth** is the story of a family's survival and resurrection, "raising up," from tragedy. Ruth 1 tells the story of the near death of a family. Only a mother-in-law and daughter-in-law were left, but God raises the family once again.

Seven Principles

1

Tragedy Strikes Home (Ruth 1:1-5)

No home is immune from tragedy. You cannot hide it, deny it or walk away from it, families experience profound trouble. You are not alone in your marital problems and family crises. Others have and are experiencing very similar trials. The Book of Ruth tells us of God's care for a family that almost completely died.

2

Commit in a Crisis (Ruth 1:16-18)

When the going became tough, Ruth did not leave. In fact, her commitment was as strong or stronger. She would not let Naomi release her. Ruth wanted to be with Naomi, her mother-in-law, serving God with her, living life as a family, committed to each other. Tragedy can bring couples and families closer together, not farther apart.

3

Crying Out (Ruth 1:19-22)

Naomi cried out to God and not just within herself. Our inner cry, if not released, can cave in on us. Naomi did not deny what she had been through. She addressed her relationship to God, remaining faithful to Him, but still crying out. In Naomi's cry was her agony. Spouses and families may bring pain to us, pain the Father desires to hear about.

4

God's Provision (Ruth 2:16)

Naomi and Ruth came home empty. However, God provided for them. They did not know how their needs would be supplied. Even after their needs were supplied, they did not know the source. We worry about what we are going to do. We fail to focus on God's provision. Yes, do all you can, but ultimately realize that God is the provider for your marriage and home.

5

Power of Kindness (Ruth 3:10-11)

Ruth's beauty, the beauty that attracted Boaz to her, was based in her kindness. Her kindness was to all persons. All knew of her kindness. Her kindness only increased, not diminished, when circumstances became more severe. Kindness is more than a virtue, it is a victory. Let it reign in your marriage.

6

Raising the Family (Ruth 4:10)

Out of the ashes of crisis, God raised the family of Ruth and Naomi. The purpose of the Book of Ruth is not to tell us of the prosperity of a person, Ruth, but the perpetuation of a family. God provided Boaz so that the name and family of Naomi and Ruth would not die and be cut off. God will not let your family die as you love God and one another.

7

Destiny in the Home (Ruth 4:13)

Jesus would eventually be borne out of the family of Ruth (Mt. 1:5). God had a divine destiny for Ruth's family. Every marriage and family has a destiny in God to fulfill. God desires that your family experience meaningful existence, knowing that God has something for you to do as a couple and family that no one else has been called to do.

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Building Faith and Your Marriage

Hebrews 11 is the great chapter of family faith. Several stories of faith are listed, but 75% of the stories are about families. When God builds your faith, He works through a parent, a sibling, a spouse, a child, grandparent or grandchild.

Seven Principles

1

Two Brothers and God (11:4)

Trouble rarely gets as bad as it can get between siblings. Growing up together places two people face to face with each other. You cannot run from the fact that you have a life-long relationship that you did not ask for. In the crucible of the family, two brothers were driven apart. Yet, one remained faithful to God.

2

Saving Your Home (11:7)

Noah did not build the Ark to save himself but to save his family. Noah obeyed God, prepared the materials, followed through on his plans and endured the ridicule of others around him so he could make provisions to save his family. His family could have refused the Ark. But Noah's work was to God for his family. Obey God to save your family.

3

Family Promise (11:11)

Sara's trial of faith was to believe the promise of God. What promises has God made you concerning your family? A promise is an investment. The strength of the promise is based on the one making the promise. The Heavenly Father's promises for your family are at the core of your faith. Build your faith and family on His promises.

4

Faith and Your Children (11:17)

Abraham was offering his child to God. The offering was the greatest act of faith he would make in his entire life. Not just faith, but faith to God regarding his family. The "sacrifice" of Abraham was worship in which he presented his son to God and the purposes of God. Abraham was committing his son to God. One's greatest faith is for family, not vocation or possessions

5

Grandparent Faith (11:21)

"Family" issues apply to grandparents and grandchildren as well. Jacob was not satisfied until he bestowed a blessing of faith upon his grandsons. Parenting faith includes grandparent faith. The role of grandparents is irreplaceable. There is great depth to the faith of a grandparent for a grandchild.

6

Faith and Safety (11:23)

The entire country was under the threat of Pharaoh. Children were being murdered. But the faith of two parents spared their child. The safety of one's children is one of the strongest parental urges. In the same manner, great faith is built as a parent trusts God for the safety of one's children.

7

Choosing Family Faith (11:24)

Faith for family is not an accident. It is an intentional act in which you identify with God and your family. More specifically, you identify with the faith of your family. Moses recognized his identity was not wrapped in riches or position. He realized that faith in God and his family was a part of who he was. God honored Moses' commitment.

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The Heritage of Children

Psalm 127 lays out the Bible's theology of parents and children. The "house" made up of parents and children presents challenges and blessings unlike any other setting in the world. Children are a blessing not a curse.

Seven Principles

1

Building and Laboring (v. 1a)

Who's building your house? Who holds the final authority and responsibility to make sure that your family is protected, fed, nourished and cared for? If you are, you labor in vain. Parents have a role to play in the life of a child unlike any other person on earth. However, the greatest resource for a family possible is not the parent but the Lord.

2

Keeping and Watching (v. 1b)

With so many dangers around us, so many questions about the future, so many unknown factors encountered everyday, no wonder parents become despaired at the task of caring and loving their children for the rest of their lives. The Lord is the ultimate watchman, watching out for us and our families.

3

Know Your Limits (v. 2a)

Why do we have so much overtime in the marketplace today? Much of it is because we are driven to provide for our families. While the reason is good, the compulsion is not. Work becomes labor when we lose the confidence that after we have done all we can do, God does whatever it takes. We are limited but He is limitless in his care for our family.

4

Rest for Your Family (v. 2b)

Every body needs rest. In our drive and passion to love and care for our families, we can become fretful. Desire becomes drivenness. Love becomes labor. And, parenting becomes pain. Rest in the faith that God will supply not only your personal needs but your marital and family needs as well. He is your Father who loves you and is part of your family.

5

Inheriting Children (v. 3a)

Children come from God. They do not come from a factory. People are part of the process, but children ultimately are the result of God's creation. In a sense, children are on loan from God. Parental participation with God recognizes that we are stewards of what God has given us in children.

6

Rewarded by Children (v. 3b)

Even though children may present special and even enduring challenges to parents, children are still a blessing. The challenges are opportunities for faith. The burdens we bear for our children renew the work of Christ within us. Children do provide joy. Family memories create the most meaningful fabrics of life, even though torn at times.

7

Use Your Parenthood (vs. 4-5)

Instead of running from parenthood, embrace the work that God is doing in you through your children. Like arrows in a quiver, children benefit parents. It may be hard to see but part of the development of our faith is through God's work in our children. When children are seen by a parent as a curse, the greatest loser is the parent.

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The Power of Love in Marriage

I Corinthians 13 teaches us that love in a marriage is not just a feeling but a force. Love is the preeminent factor in marital success. Love can overcome any obstacle. Other ingredients are necessary, but the most important is love.

Seven Principles

1

Preeminent Over Self (vs. 1-3)

Selfishness is a great temptation in marriage. When we are hurt, we decide to protect and hide ourselves. We do things for ourselves, by ourselves, with no one else, not even our spouse. We specialize in self and not our spouse. Love is the one quality that draws us to one another, creating within us meaningful existence.

2

Preeminent Over Failure (vs. 4-6)

Even when we fail, whether through pride or corruption, the force of love perseveres and corrects our faults. The key is to love one another. The message of love is about what we do toward others, especially our spouse and family. Love will bring you and the other person in your life through, not under, the failure.

3

Preeminent Over Context (v. 7)

No matter what happens, love can bring you through. Whether you need the ability to bear up under the load, increase your faith in God, continue to hope in God's promises or make it all the way through a trial, love is the power that will get you through. What a resource for couples and families, the enduring power of love.

4

Love Will Last (vs. 8-10)

Our relationship with God and others is maintained by many things, but the most enduring of these is love. Love was the reason that God gave His only begotten Son for us. Other aspects of our life in God will one day be fulfilled, but our life in God will continue because love is the most complete aspect of our relationship with God, our spouse and our family.

5

Love is Maturity (vs. 11-12)

Maturity in self and relationships is measured by our capacity to love. We can continually grow in love. As our love grows, so does our personal, marital, parental and family maturity. Love has the ability to transform us from a childlike immaturity about life to a mature, godly life that changes others.

6

Love's Companions (v. 13a)

Faith and hope are the companions of love. Faith begins the journey of love. We believe God enough that we are willing to take the risk to love our spouse and children. As the journey of love unfolds, hope builds what is possible because of love. We have a hope that continually draws us to journey on further with those we love.

7

The Foundation of Love (v. 13b)

Though love has companions, the pathway is primarily made possible because of love. Love is the link that makes it possible to journey through life with others, particularly our spouse and family. We do not travel alone because of our faith or hope. We are not alone because the power of love has brought others to us.

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Resources for Relating

Ephesians 4:25-32 provides a list of resources for relationships. Living a good, moral life does not occur in a vacuum. Morality is a relationship word. Marriage is a relationship word. Making your marriage work requires resources for relating.

Seven Principles

1

Truth is Relational (v. 25)

Truth is more than getting the facts straight. Truth is more than accurately accounting for everything. Truth is being in relationship with someone else in a way that edifies Christ and the other person. When you are truthful with your spouse, you are building up your marriage. Love empowers truth.

2

Control Emotions (vs. 26-7)

If you love someone, you will not have just any emotion, regardless of how that emotion affects your spouse. Godliness causes a spouse to monitor his/her emotions for the benefit of the other spouse. Emotions can hurt, excite or damage another person. We have to carefully distribute our emotions in order to build up our spouse.

3

Be Responsible (v. 28)

Responsibility for others is the motivation that draws us to respect our spouse, not stealing or taking away from him or her. Respect for our mate means that we care for rather than corrupt what he/she may have. I value and not covet their accomplishments. I desire not damage what God is doing in my spouse's life.

4

Speak to Build Up (v. 29)

I desire that even my words will be a blessing to my spouse and family. I not only speak from my perspective, but I am mindful and sensitive to the needs of my life partner and family. My communication can corrupt and destroy other members of my family. Be committed to communication that carries with it the power of life. Pray that after you speak people will be better off because of it.

5

Spirit-Sensitive Relating (v. 30)

When you relate to your spouse and family, you are relating to the Holy Spirit as well. In fact, the Holy Spirit has made available to you the ability to genuinely and correctly relate to your marriage partner and children. When we commit a violation in relationships, we have not only offended the other person but we have grieved the Holy Spirit.

6

Stop the "Stuff" (v. 31)

In order to get to the positive side of relationship resources, you have to realize what you must give up. The "stuff" that keeps us from effectively relating to our spouse has to be dealt with. It will not go away on its own, we have to deal with it. Removing the hinderances to a relationship is a must.

7

Begin by Forgiving (v. 32)

Forgiving your spouse is the starting point of a meaningful relationship, both with God and your spouse. Forgiveness is the match that ignites the flame of real, reconciling relationship between husband and wife. Without forgiveness, the relationship becomes void and lacks the affirmation that makes marriage and being family truly effective.