

# **FAMILY RELATIONS ACCORDING TO 1ST & 2ND TIMOTHY AND TITUS**

When Israel entered the promised land, they failed to destroy the Canaanite people as God directed. As a result, they found themselves trying to establish their own culture within an already firmly entrenched culture. Mostly, they failed, eventually giving in to the pressure of the surrounding sinful environment. We find ourselves in that same situation today in America! Jesse Ventura (former governor of Minn,) said, "Organized religion is a sham and a crutch for weak minded people who need strength in numbers. It tells people to go out and stick their noses in other people's business" (U.S. Catholic, Dec. 1999, p. 10). Einstein said, "Religion should give up a God who concerns Himself with fates and actions of human beings" (Christian Century, Oct. 27, 1999, p. 1027). Petty Kamuf, feminist professor at the Univ. of So. Calif. said, "Reading aloud to your children is an act of violence that represses the young because it forces them into the jail of patriarchy and cultural structures. Children are unaware of this abuse because the psychic pain involved is so great that their memory is repressed" (U.S. New & World Report, Dec. 4, 2000, p. 24).

However, the main negative forces of our culture are much more invasive. They include T.V., movies, the internet, fashion, literature, music, exposure in many forms to the life-styles of the rich and the famous, etc. For instance, I read recently that before one of our children reaches the legal age to drink beer, he or she will have been exposed to 740,000 incentives to do so. The sexual provocation on T.V. is terrible. It was reported in the Pastor's Weekly Briefing (Apr 14, 2000, p. 1) that in 1999 as compared to 1989, there were 3 times more sexual references, 5.5 times more foul language, that genitalia were mentioned 7 times more often, and homosexuality 24 times more often.

The article just quoted stated that during that 10 year period, the level of violence on T.V. stayed about the same. However, our children are often hurt by the growing incidence of violence to which they are personally exposed. A study, reported in Lutheran (Oct 2002, p. 8), found in a one month period, two-thirds of young people in grades 5 through 12 experienced emotional violence, one-third were bullied, and 8% were attacked by a weapon at least once.

At the same time, organized religion appears to be at a low point having lost much of its influence on our culture. According to Barna Research Group (Sep 17, 2002, p. 1), the top influencers on American culture today are movies, television, the internet, books, music, public policy and law, and family. Churches are not listed in the top 12.

Most of the time, the Jews were unable to resist the crunch of the alien culture, and began conforming to it. How are concerned parents in the U.S. doing today in their efforts to shield their children from the enticements of a culture increasingly contrary to Biblical norms? Apparently, not very well! Various sources inform us that churches of Christ are losing at least 50% of their children to the world. It may be much more! The Southern Baptist Council on Family Life recently reported that 88% of children raised in Evangelical homes will leave their church by the age of 18 and never return (Paster's Weekly Briefing, Aug 10, 2002, p. 1).

Long ago, David asked, "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psl 11:2). Solomon warned, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Psl 127:1). The Bible is filled with information about how the foundations for the home are to be laid. It tells us how to achieve homes that will be indeed "built by the Lord!" We are told what constitutes a family from God's perspective, how family members are to relate to each other; about the place and importance of discipline, about the individual roles of husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, and children; and about the place of Biblical teaching and worship within the home. The Bible gives us illustrations of families that were successful, and of families that were failures.

However, beyond those portions of Scripture which deal specifically with the family, there is a great deal of Biblical content which pertains to the home because God has chosen to use terms and relationships of the family to explain His relationship to us, and our relationship to fellow believers. The Christian name for God is Father. Christians are His children, born into His family by the new birth of water and of the Spirit. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. He is our elder brother. This means that many general Biblical teachings which deal with the Church are also applicable to the physical family. The following are teachings that apply to the family that come from the above books:

#### **FROM 1ST TIMOTHY:**

**1:1-5** - Paul calls Timothy his "true child in the faith." As his spiritual mentor, Paul outlines the goal parents should have as they instruct their child. The goal is "love from a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith."

**2:8-15** - Paul shows specific roles that distinguish male and female in their personal family and in God's family. To the male is given the charge to be self-controlled and peaceful as he leads God's family (and his own) in corporate worship. The women is charged to display her godliness through modesty and good works. In addition, Paul speaks of

the very special privilege given women of bringing new lives into this world.

**3:4-5, 12** - It is the male who is to be the leader (the Greek term for "rule" or "manage" in these verses means to "stand before," or to "lead") in maintaining a disciplined and orderly household (the parallel teaching in Titus 1:6 indicates that this includes bringing children up in such a manner that they become disciples of Christ).

**5:3-4, 8, 16** - When children are grown and their parents are old and in need of care, children are instructed to provide this care. In fact, family members who fail to fulfill their duty to provide for family members that are dependent upon them, are worse in God's eyes, than one who does not believe in God.

**5:14-15** - Paul again emphasizes the importance of the woman's role of bearing children, and giving special consideration to the fulfillment of her domestic duties.

**6:17-19** - Families that are well-to-do are to be encouraged to not trust in their wealth, but rather are to use it generously in good works, and thereby prepare for their real life which lies in the future with God.

#### **FROM II TIMOTHY:**

**1:5** - Parents are to be diligent in transmitting their faith to their children. In Timothy's case, he is a third generation recipient of that faith in Jesus Christ who makes us whole.

**2:22** - Paul tells his spiritual son Timothy that the way to flee from "youthful lusts" is by pursuing righteousness, faith, love, and peace, which flow from a pure heart.

**2:24-25** - Paul tells his spiritual son Timothy not to be quarrelsome, but to be kind to all, able to teach, and patient when wronged. He also said that when it is necessary to correct another person, it should be done with gentleness.

**3:1-4** - Timothy is warned to avoid persons who love themselves, love money, who are boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, and who display an external piety, but deny God's power.

**3:14-17** - Once children are grown and leave parents who have faithfully taught them the truths of salvation through Jesus Christ, they are exhorted to continue in those teachings. All such teachings are to flow from the inspired word of God which is our road map which will successfully guide us through all aspects of life, both physical and spiritual.

**FROM TITUS:**

**1:6** - Men qualified to lead the church must have brought up their children in such a manner that they will have become believers, and their children must not be persons guilty of loose living, or rebellious to those in authority.

**1:10-11** - Families are warned to be on the look out for men who are rebellious, empty talkers and deceivers motivated by personal gain whose goal is to spiritually damage families.

**2:3-5** - Older women are encouraged to not be gossips or slaves of wine, but rather to be teachers of younger women. Older women are to teach younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, and subject to their husbands. In this manner, they will not dishonor the word of God.

**2:2,6-8** - Older men are to be temperate, dignified, sensible, sound in faith, in love, and in perseverance. Younger men are urged to be sensible and in everything to be an example in good deeds, purity of doctrine, and sound in speech so that they are above reproach. In this manner, opponents will be put to shame because they can find nothing negative about which to such accuse godly men. Carl Mitchell, Harding University, Searcy, Ark. (6/25/03).

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