

Finding Your Family's "Why"?



Discovering God's Word

Bible Study Series

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Learn the importance of your family's purpose and how to properly identify that purpose

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Study Number: DGW87

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My plea: It is my hope and prayer that you are searching for the truth that is contained in God's word, the Bible. My desire is to help you understand and obey these truths God has revealed in the pages of His word. It is to that end that I write this material. Please observe all of the Scripture references and evaluate whether the conclusions I have drawn are in harmony with God's word. If they are, I ask that you make honest application of those truths to your life and obey God's instructions.

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Finding Your Family's "Why?"

What is your family life about? What is the central purpose or idea that causes your family to make the decisions that are made and that motivates the actions that are taken? Can you think of one? Maybe you can think of several. Maybe you can't think of any.

Why does your family exist on this earth? Why does your family exist on this earth at this particular point in time? Can you define the reason for your family's existence? Are you still searching for the true purpose of your family? Or, perhaps you thought you had found your family's purpose – but, you still feel like it is not being used to fulfill its full potential.

"Why does it even matter how the central purpose for your family has been defined?," you might be asking yourself. Think of it this way. Organizations (i.e. businesses, charities, etc.) must define their specific missions in order to be most effective. Therefore, one of the first things that is done when an organization is created is to formulate a "mission statement." Everything that is decided upon in the future must be in harmony with this stated mission of that organization. Therefore, if a company's mission statement is focused on creating and selling automobiles, it will not be focused on creating and selling computers.

Likewise, it is essential for your family to define its purpose. Properly defining your family's

"Why?" will have an impact on every decision that your family makes. Everything that your family decides upon will need to be in agreement with that intentionally defined purpose for your family.

The purpose of this lesson is to search for answers relative to your family's "Why?" As we do this, we will be considering the very essence of your family's existence and examining some different options, testing them in order to see if they match up with your family's "Why?"

The Importance Of Finding Your Family's "Why?"

I want you to think about the importance of knowing your family's destination. If you prepare to go on a family vacation and don't know your destination, you will never know when you get there – and you will not be able to properly navigate your family so as to get there! However, if you know your family's destination, you'll be able to determine every turn and decision you need to make in order to get there. You'll be able to look at a roadmap, a GPS, or something similar to determine how to get from where you are to where you want to be.

Think of your family's "Why?" as a roadmap for everything related to your family's life. Your family will be making decisions relative to jobs, where to live, entertainment, education, who to associate with, what to do with "free time," whether to be religious, how to practice the religion that is chosen, how to spend money, etc., etc., etc. – depending upon how your family defines its "Why?"

So, take a few moments to consider three categories families will fit into relative to finding their true purposes in life. Your family will also fit into one of these three categories.

Undefined "Why?"

Some families exist and function without a true "roadmap." They are like a family that sets out on a trip and does not care where it winds up! This

family never checks a map to see how to get from where it is to a specific place.

There are many families living on this earth that have no idea why they are here or what they want to accomplish through their lives together. They just live from day to day and take whatever seems best to them at a particular moment – and what seems best to them may change from one day to another. They are just kind of along for the “ride of life” (often caught up in the “rat race”) and go wherever the ebbs and flows of life lead them.

Ultimately, these kinds of families tend to go nowhere *fast!* That is, as these families grow and children leave the home, they will have difficulty recognizing anything that would best summarize the ways they chose to live their lives – because no one thing did define their family lives! ***This is a wasted family life!***

Improperly defined “Why?”

Some families have defined where they want to go in their lives, it’s just not where they should take their lives. They are like a family who sets out to go on a trip and have selected a location (perhaps unknowingly) that will bring harm on the family. This family has carefully plotted a course to get to this place – it’s just not the place they should go!

There are many families living on this earth who have a purpose in life. They have priorities and goals. They may be focused on accumulating earthly wealth, providing enough money so that every member of the family can have everything that would make them “happy,” living in a large and luxurious house, experiencing as much “family fun” as possible, providing excellent secular educations for the children, catering to all of the interests and hobbies of the children (i.e. sports, music, art), etc. They have given their family’s purpose thought and made very intentional decisions according to this purpose.

However, having an improperly defined “Why?” for your family always has some false source of pleasure or purpose at its core. These are things that are simply not in harmony with the essential elements of your family’s existence. They are things that appear to be good and/or pleasurable

in a specific moment; but, they are not things which have any true meaning or significance. Ultimately, this is also a ***wasted family life!***

Properly defined “Why?”

Some families have carefully evaluated all of the facts about their existence – why each person of that family exists, why the family unit exists, the roles for each member of the family unit, and the temporary nature of that family unit. They are like a family who knows exactly where they need to go on a trip and diligently plots the best route to arrive at that destination! Every turn they make, therefore, is guided by this one well-thought-out and properly defined purpose.

These families, then, have sought after instruction concerning how to live in a way that is in complete agreement with the unmistakable facts about life and God’s purpose for the family. These families make their decisions and take their actions always with the end in mind (rather than getting caught up in particular moments). They are willing to sacrifice the temporary, short-sighted pleasures and treasures for much longer term joy.

Ultimately, these families can precisely define why they have lived in the ways in which they have lived. They know their true purpose in life and do not live in fear about their worldly lives or possessions. ***This is the successful family life!***

Where is your family?

As I mentioned, you will find your family in one of these three categories. I challenge you ***right now*** to identify the category your family life belongs in – and explain your reasoning. Unless you identify that your family has an undefined purpose, I want you to specifically identify one thing (or the few things) that defines your family. Then, I want you to keep referring back to this as we continue through this study.

Defining Some Essential Elements To Your Family's "Why?"

Our families do not exist in a vacuum. There are certain things we must understand in order to properly define their true purposes. Let's take some time to properly define each one of these essential elements, realizing that if we do not allow these foundational principles of truth to define our family lives we will certainly miss the main purpose for them!

Defining some key elements to each family member's "Why?"

A family is made up of individual members. Certainly, the family is not focused on just one member. Instead, the family should conduct itself in such a way so as to be a beneficial relationship for every member – helping every member fulfill his/her own individual purpose in life (his/her personal "Why?").

Since this is true (as we will observe in greater detail throughout this lesson), it is essential to consider some fundamental truths that help shape each family member's "Why?" Briefly consider each of the following.

(1) Each family member has been created in the image of God. Genesis 1:26-27 records the account of God creating mankind in His image. "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.' So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."

Since God is Spirit (John 4:24), this fact means that every member of your family has been created with a spiritual element to his/her existence (a soul). Therefore, every member of your family is a dual-natured being (both flesh and spirit). Particularly, it is important to realize that this

spiritual element of their existences means that they will all have a part of his/her existence survive physical death (demonstrated by James 2:26; Luke 23:43; Luke 16:22-23; 2 Corinthians 5:1-8; etc.). So, each member of your family (including you) will experience physical death; but, each one's soul will continue to live on.

(2) Each family member must live according to God's word. There is an objective standard of truth to live by – and each member of your family must come to recognize it as the standard of truth for their lives! Each member of the family must recognize that it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps (Jeremiah 10:23). So, the "truth" is not defined by the doctrines and commandments of men, the opinions of men, the traditions of men, the "wisdom" of men, an individual's feelings or conscience, the will of the majority, family, friends, etc.

Instead, every member of the family must recognize that God's word is complete truth (John 17:17). 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." This objective standard of authority will fully equip every member of the family to be pleasing to God in the ways they should live their earthly lives. Furthermore, not only is this true, but the truths revealed in the Bible will be the standard by which each member of the family will be judged (see John 12:48; Romans 2:16; Revelation 20:11-15).

(3) Each family member will experience physical death, be judged, and spend eternity either in Heaven or in Hell. A key component to defining the true purpose of your family is to understand that every member of your family only has life on this earth for a limited period of time. Hebrews 9:27 reveals the truth about your life and about each one of the lives of your family members. "And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment." Life on this earth (for yourself and for your family members) is only temporary – and it is quickly passing away from you all (see James 4:13-16).

After this point of physical death comes the Judgment. 2 Corinthians 5:10 says, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.” Each member of the family, therefore, will be judged for how he/she has lived his/her life on earth (compared to the standard of God’s word, see Revelation 20:11-15). Based on this Judgment, each member of the family will spend eternity in either Heaven or Hell (read Matthew 25:31-46). Those family members who were faithful and obedient to God will spend eternity in Heaven (the place where there will be no death, sorrow, crying, pain, or evil – as described in Revelation 21-22). However, those family members who were unfaithful and disobedient to God will spend eternity in Hell (a place of eternal punishment depicted by a lake that burns with fire and brimstone – as described in Revelation 21:8).

(4) Each family member has the opportunity to be saved. Sin separates every sinner from God. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Those who die in sin (while separated from God) are the ones who will be eternally separated from God in Hell (see 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 and Revelation 21:8). Therefore, sin is truly the greatest problem mankind has ever faced or will ever face. And, this is a problem that effects every family member who has reached the point of spiritual responsibility (i.e. infants and young children have not yet sinned).

Fortunately, God has given every member of your family (including you) the opportunity to be saved from his/her past sin and live with Him eternally in Heaven! The second part of Romans 6:23 demonstrates that this eternal life is the “gift of God” and that the gift has been made available through Jesus Christ (also see John 3:16). However, God also requires something from each person in your family (who has reached the age of personal accountability) in order to be saved. God’s plan of salvation requires that each one hear His word (Romans 10:17), believe (John 8:24), repent (Acts 17:30), confess Christ (Romans 10:9-10), be baptized (Acts 2:38), and live as a faithful Christian until death (Revelation 2:10).

God has given every member of your family this opportunity to be saved and be part of His one church!

Defining the origin of the home

Once again, these are fundamental truths that are applicable to every member of your family. And, these truths will impact every other thing we will be discussing throughout this lesson – as we specifically think about the true purpose of the family unit. Now, as we focus on the family unit, we must have the proper understanding of the origin of the home (family).

(1) God created the home. We have already seen that God has created mankind in His own image (Genesis 1:26-27). However, as we continue reading the early Genesis account, we discover that God saw that it was “not good that man should be alone” and He determined to make “a helper comparable to him” (Genesis 2:18). God knew that the man He had just created would be in need of a companion who would be of the same nature as He had created the man (both physical and spiritual). Therefore, God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, took one of his ribs, and made it into a woman. Then, God brought her to the man.

Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man” (Genesis 2:23). Then, verse 24 records, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” This is the first marriage – between the first man and the first woman. Later, we also see that God intended children to come from this relationship (see Genesis 3:16). The first children are recorded in Genesis 4 – Cain and Abel.

(2) God has created the home for some specific reasons. These few chapters in the book of Genesis tell us exactly how God has created the home. Therefore, the home was not the invention of man. Instead, it was an institution made by God! And, we have already discovered that God created this institution for some very specific purposes.

First, we have seen that He created the marriage relationship for the purpose of true

companionship. Of all the things God had created in Genesis chapter 1 that He declared to be either “good” or “very good,” man being alone was the first thing God declared to be “not good” (Genesis 2:18). Therefore, let’s focus on the statement that God would make Adam a “helper comparable to him.” As Adam saw all of the things God had created, he also recognized that there was no creature who was “comparable” (or, fit) for him. Nothing else was of the same nature as him. Therefore, God’s act to create the woman was more than just to create a companion who could carry on a conversation with him, it was an act that created man a *true* companion (a true helper to spend his life with and work together to fulfill their common purpose)!

Second, we have seen that God has intended for children to come from this relationship. In fact, the marriage relationship is the only God-approved means for men and women to procreate. Later, after God had destroyed all of mankind from the face of the earth (except Noah and Noah’s family), He instructed Noah and his sons to be “fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Genesis 9:1). In fact, the Scriptures teach that children are a blessing from God. Psalm 127:3-5 says, “Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one’s youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.”

(3) Only God can tell us how the home is properly run. Since God is the one who has created the home – and has created the home for some very specific reasons, God is the only one who is qualified to say how the home is properly run. Once again, God’s word is truth – and it is the only perfect standard of truth about the home and using the home to fulfill its intended purpose.

Recall (from 2 Timothy 3:16-17) that God’s inspired words (contained within the pages of the Bible) are able to fully equip us to live in the ways that please God. 2 Peter 1:3 also says that God has given us everything that pertains to life and godliness. Therefore, everything we need to know about how to use our families in the way that pleases God can be found within the pages of God’s word!

Unfortunately, mankind often thinks he has better ideas about the home than God has. So, rather than listening to God about the true purpose of the home, he perverts this institution and it results in families that do not please God. For instance, Proverbs 14:12 states this general truth. “There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.” Therefore, rather than trying to reinvent the home into what you want it to be, you need to simply submit yourself and your family to God’s teachings about what He wants the home to be!

Defining some fundamental principles of marriage

The foundation of the home is marriage. This is what God first created – before He intended for any children to be brought into the family. As the foundation of the home, any home that wants to fulfill its true purpose and be pleasing to God must be according to God’s design for marriage. Any marriage that violates any one of these foundational principles God has set into place hurts the entire family!

(1) God only approves of a marriage between a man and a woman. When God saw that it was “not good” for man to be alone, what did He choose to do? As the Almighty Creator, He could have chosen to do any number of things. He could have chosen to create an animal in such a way so as to create a suitable helper for the man. He could have chosen to create another man for him. But, God didn’t do any of these things. Instead, God designed marriage to be between a man and a woman – and does not approve of any other kind of relationship as marriage.

Not only can this be deduced from God’s design in Genesis 2, but it can also be directly observed in many places throughout the Scriptures. For instance, Genesis 19 records an example of God’s anger that was aroused against the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah for practicing homosexuality – so much that He destroyed those cities by raining fire and brimstone from Heaven. There are even New Testament passages that condemn the homosexual relationship. Romans 1:26-27 plainly identifies that sexual relationships between those of the same sex are contrary to nature, shameful, and deserving of

spiritual death (verse 32). Also, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 directly states homosexuality and sodomy as two sins that will keep people out of Heaven. In fact, the Scriptures forbid any kind of “fornication” (see 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:19-21; Revelation 21:8). “Fornication” is simply a term that condemns any kind of sexual relationship other than that which God approves. This includes homosexuality, adultery, and bestiality. The Scriptures are clear that He only approves of sexual relationships between men and women who are married in accordance with the teachings of Scripture.

(2) God only approves of a marriage between one man and one woman. Another possibility is that God could have created multiple women to be helpers fit for the man, thus giving Adam more than one wife. However, even though God apparently tolerated this practice throughout much of the Old Testament, this is not tolerable today – and it is directly contrary to God’s stated laws for marriage.

Romans 7:2-3 makes it clear that God will not approve of one who marries another while he/she is still bound to the original spouse. “For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.” A polygamous marriage would be an adulterous marriage – and, therefore, not a marriage that God approves.

(3) God intends for marriages to last a lifetime. Romans 7:2-3 demonstrates how long God intends for marriages to last. He has said that “the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives.” Whenever two people enter into a Scriptural marriage (a marriage that is according to the teachings of the Scriptures), God has said that they “are no longer two but one flesh.” He continued to say, “what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Matthew 19:6). Yet, man often attempts to end marriages that are approved of God – for various reasons. However, Jesus said that such

divorce was not according to the plan of God ever since He created marriage (Matthew 19:7-8).

God says that only death and divorce for fornication can loose the bond that God has created whenever two people have entered into a Scriptural marriage. Romans 7:2-3 makes it clear that a mate is released from this bond if his/her spouse dies. Then, Matthew 19:9 provides the only acceptable cause for divorce that is given in the New Testament. Jesus said, “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” Then, in this situation, only the one who puts away (divorces) his/her spouse for fornication is released from this bond and is free to remarry.

Defining the roles in the home

Since God has created the home, created it for some very specific reasons, and is the only one who can say how the home should be run properly, we need to look to the roles He has created to be fulfilled in the home. Each member of the family has been given a role to fulfill. Let’s briefly consider how God has defined each one of these roles (though certainly more could be said about each one).

(1) The role of the husband/father. The husband/father has specific God-given responsibilities to fulfill in the home. His role is a leadership role – as the husband is very clearly identified in Scripture as being the head of the household. Read Ephesians 5:25-33, Colossians 3:19, and 1 Peter 3:7 to see this as well as some of his God-assigned duties toward his wife (i.e. love, dwell with understanding, give honor). Then, read 1 Timothy 5:8, Ephesians 6:4, and Colossians 3:21 to see that God has given him the responsibility to provide for his family and to raise his children in a way which pleases the Lord.

(2) The role of the wife/mother. The wife/mother has specific God-given responsibilities to fulfill in the home. Her role is a submissive role – as the Scriptures clearly identify her as having the responsibility to submit to and respect her husband. Read Ephesians 5:22-24, 33, Colossians 3:18, and 1 Peter 3:1-6. Then, read Titus 2:4-5 and Proverbs

31:10-31 to see that God has given her the responsibility to be a home-maker (including specific responsibilities toward her husband and children) and to see a great picture of a woman (in Proverbs 31) who is a hard worker and devoted to looking out for the best interests of her family.

(3) The role of children. Children are gifts and blessings from God (Psalm 127:3-5) and also have specific God-given responsibilities. Read Ephesians 6:1-3 to see that children are expected to obey and honor their parents. The book of Proverbs frequently encourages those who are children to listen to their parents and allow the wisdom of their parents to guide them throughout their lives and help them avoid many of the difficulties of life (i.e. Proverbs 1:8-9). Then, read 1 Timothy 5:4 to see that children have the responsibility to give back to their parents and grandparents later in life.

Defining the temporary nature of the home

We have already seen that each individual member of the home only has a temporary existence upon this earth. Now, let's observe that the home and the family relationship is a relationship that is limited to this earth.

(1) Marriage only lasts a lifetime. We have already seen (from Romans 7:2-3) that the marriage bond ends when one spouse dies. Matthew 22:23-33 helps us to understand this point about the temporary nature of the marriage relationship even further. In this text, Jesus was confronted by some of the Sadducees (a sect of Jews who did not believe in the soul of man or in the resurrection). In order to put Jesus to the test, they asked him a question involving a complex scenario. The scenario dealt with a man and a woman who were married. Then, after the man died, she married the man's brother. When that brother died, she married another brother. The scenario finally had this woman widowed to all seven of these brothers – and having no children with any of them. Then, the question they wanted Jesus to answer was, “in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her” (verse 28).

However, Jesus' response was simple. “You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the

power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven” (verses 29-30). Therefore, as you consider the purpose of your marriage, you must recognize that it is *only* a relationship that exists while both you and your spouse live on this earth. It is *not* something that continues in the afterlife.

(2) Children will not always remain in the home. There are two points to consider regarding the temporary relationship between parents and their children. The first is that both parents and children only exist on this earth for a temporary period of time. We have already established this fact by observing that all people have appointments with death (Hebrews 9:27). Therefore, there is only a limited period of time to fulfill the purpose of the family.

The second point to consider regarding the temporary relationship between parents and their children is the fact that God intends for children to be raised to leave their father and mother's home. Now, this act does not end the relationship or the responsibilities fathers, mothers, and children have toward one another. However, it does change how the family functions. Again, this purpose can be seen from the beginning of the home, in Genesis 2:24. “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

Defining Your Family's “Why?”

Now that we have carefully defined all of these essential components and realities that make up your family, we need to make diligent application of these truths so as to help you properly define your family's “Why?”

Defining success

Given all that we have defined in the previous section of this study, what does it really mean for your family to be “successful” when it comes to living life on this earth? Is your marriage

“successful” whenever both a husband and wife work so much that you have purchased some expensive vehicles, an expensive house in the ideal neighborhood, a closet full of designer clothes and shoes, the latest and greatest technology, etc.? Is your family “successful” whenever your children are tops in their classes? Or, when you have been to so many ballgames and practices that now your child is the star of the team (and may even get a scholarship to play in college)? Or, when your child has his/her artwork put on display? Or, when your child takes part in high-level music recitals?

While you think about this question, let me state what should be obvious: There is only one opportunity for your family to be successful! That is, you only have one life to live (as do the rest of your family members) – so you had better make your life and your family a success! As I referenced earlier, James 4:13-16 teaches that your earthly life is like a vapor that appears for just a short time before it vanishes away. So, you need to make sure that you are making the best use of that brief time – since it has eternal implications for you and your family!

(1) The problem with all earthly measures of “success.” When you consider the list of things that are common ingredients of a life (and even a family) that is perceived as being “successful” (such as the things I listed previously), you need to consider that all of these things are temporary in nature, as they are all about life on this earth. It is this common thread which causes each one of these things to *fail* to result in a truly successful family life!

So many of the things that most families live their lives for are all about living on this earth! However, the Bible consistently warns us of the need to reflect on the temporary nature of earthly things and the eternal nature of heavenly things (i.e. Matthew 6:19-21). One man (in the book of Ecclesiastes) searched for the true meaning of life and how to be happy and successful. He tried earthly wealth and possessions, earthly relationships, earthly wisdom and knowledge, etc. However, Ecclesiastes 2:11 records: “Then I looked on all the works that my hands had done And on the labor in which I had toiled; And indeed all was vanity and grasping for the wind. There was no profit under the sun.”

This man recognized that every earthy thing ends in physical death. They are only temporary – at best. It is like trying to chase after something you’ll never catch. Therefore, Jesus said, “For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matthew 16:26). Therefore, Jesus helps you understand that even if your family members gain every earthly possession, enjoy every earthly pleasure, get the greatest education, climb high on the corporate ladder, and “live life to the fullest,” it will all be worthless if they lose their souls!

(2) Living eternally in Heaven together. We have already discussed the opportunity God has given your family members to be forgiven of sin and live eternally with Him in Heaven. Living in a way that will result in living eternally in Heaven is the measure of success for every member of your family. Therefore, a family that will live together in Heaven is the family that has been completely successful!

(3) Influencing others to live eternally in Heaven. Since living together in Heaven for all of eternity is the true measure of success for your family and for every individual, then it follows that this same thing is true for every person. Therefore, your family is not just successful if it lives eternally in Heaven; but, also if it will be put to use in God’s service to help other people and other families live eternally with God in Heaven! In fact, the family that is devoted to living in the way that pleases God will be working to influence others for the Lord!

Defining your family’s purpose

So, what is the actual purpose of your family? We have been studying a number of different subjects that, I keep saying, are important to your family’s purpose in life. But, how? Why?

Previously, we have been focused on laying the groundwork for understanding this point about the purpose of your family. Now, we want to use the information we have gathered to come to some conclusions about the ultimate purpose of your family on this earth.

(1) Help each family member fear God and keep God’s commandments. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

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identifies the true purpose in life for every person who has ever/will ever live on this earth. It is a two-fold spiritual purpose. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, For this is man's all. For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil."

Everything we have learned about the family through this lesson forces us to conclude that the purpose of your family is to help each member of the family accomplish her/his individual purpose of fearing God and keeping His commandments! Therefore, as we have seen, husbands and wives are to serve as companions to help one another live in ways that are pleasing to God. Fathers and mothers are to focus on raising their children in such a way that they will live in ways that please God even after they leave the home. For instance, Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it." And, children are to devote themselves to receiving this training and putting it to work in their lives.

(2) Glorify God through the family. Those who are focused on pleasing God want to glorify God in everything they do (see 1 Corinthians 6:19-20). 1 Corinthians 10:31 instructs us to "do all to the glory of God." Certainly, such a person will desire to glorify God even through his/her family.

There are many ways to use the Christian's family to the glory of God. One good example of this is Aquila and Priscilla. We are introduced to this Christian husband and wife team in Acts 18. Though we are not given a lot of information concerning their work, two passages give us a "snapshot" of how they sought to glorify God by working together. First, in Acts 18:24-28, these two Christians helped to correct the error of Apollos' preaching so that he would not mislead anyone else on the subject of baptism. Then, in Romans 16:3-5, these two individuals are seen as being workers for Jesus Christ, as having put their own lives in danger for the apostle Paul, and as having a church that assembled together in their house. Families today would do well to imitate their good example of seeking to glorify God by working together!

Finding your family's true purpose (its "Why?") is only part of the journey. The Scriptures plainly teach that a proper knowledge of what God wants only goes so far. In order to be pleasing to God, you must also be obedient to Him (James 1:22-25). Therefore, you need to consider how you can work to live according to this true purpose for your family.

Fulfill your role in the home

You must recognize that you can only work to accomplish what you can accomplish. You cannot control your entire family. However, you must devote your life to fulfilling your role in your family – and work to encourage others to do the same! Ultimately, God has given free will to each member of your family – and many of your family members may choose not to listen to God.

However, you *can* control your own actions – and you must simply choose to fulfill your personal role in the home (no more and no less). In doing so, the Scriptures demonstrate that you may win a family member to the Lord. For instance, Peter wrote concerning Christian wives whose husbands were unbelievers. He said that the Christian wife (through fulfilling her role and setting a godly example) could win her husband to Christ "without a word" (1 Peter 3:1-2).

Therefore, you must fulfill your God-given role as a Christian (as summarized earlier in this lesson) and you must be devoted to being faithful to God (Revelation 2:10). Actually, God teaches that you must even be more devoted to pleasing Him than you are to pleasing your family (see Luke 14:25-33)!

Help make God the centerpiece of your family

Everything that you do in your family should be done because it pleases God and works to glorify Him. Therefore, as much as you can control and

influence, you need to work to make God the centerpiece of your family!

Joshua is an excellent example of this. As Joshua (the leader of the Israelites at that time) presented the Israelites with the choice to either follow false gods or to follow the true God, He declared, “But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15)! Will you make the same decision as to how you will conduct yourself in your family – regardless of what everyone else chooses to do?

Conclusion

Are you conducting yourself in your family according to this grand purpose? Or, are you wasting your family life in pursuit of some other purpose? Please don’t waste the opportunities you have to glorify God in your family! Devote your focus and your efforts in your life and in your family entirely to God’s service, to His honor and glory!

Please consider and apply the words of Psalm 127:1 to help you devote yourself to God in this way (as they also have some application to working to glorify God in your family): “Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it....”

Study Questions

What is your family life about? What is the central purpose or idea that causes your family to make the decisions that are made and that motivates the actions that are taken?

1. The Importance Of Finding Your Family’s “Why?”

What does it look like for your family to have an undefined “Why?”

What does it look like for your family to have an improperly defined “Why?”

What does it look like for your family to have a properly defined “Why?”

Where is your family? Explain.

2. Defining Some Essential Elements To Your Family’s “Why?”

Define each of the following and explain any connections to your family’s “Why?”:

A. Some key elements to each family member’s “Why?” –

B. The origin of the home –

C. Some fundamental principles of marriage

D. The roles in the home –

E. The temporary nature of the home –

3. Defining Your Family’s “Why?”

What does it mean for your family to be successful? Explain.

What is your family's purpose? Define and explain.

4. Living According To Your Family's "Why?"

How will living according to your role in the home help your family accomplish its purpose?

How can you help make God the centerpiece of your family?

***Is your family living according to this grand purpose?**