

1. The Biblical Foundation for the Family

Today, we are beginning a new series of topics on the family. In this series of topics, we will focus on two kinds of families. All of us understand the concept of the physical family. We are all a part of a physical family. We came into that physical family by physical birth or we came into that family by adoption. The only people who came into a physical family any other way were Adam and Eve. We will look at how God formed the human family in this topic.

However, the Bible also talks about a spiritual family. John 1:12 says, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.” Nicodemus had these two kinds of birth explained to him in John 3:3-6 where it says, “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.’” Nicodemus had experienced physical birth but Christ said that he had to be born of the Holy Spirit in order to experience spiritual birth. In the following topics, we will see that we can make many comparisons between the physical family and the spiritual family.

In Genesis 2:20-24, we read, “So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And 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.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

In this passage, we learn several things about the way that God formed the first family on the earth. First, we see that the Lord had to show Adam that he was not complete by himself. As a result, God brought all of the animals to Adam so that he could name them. Adam saw that there were pairs of animals, there were pairs of birds and there were pairs of the various beasts of the field. However, Adam did not see any helper that was comparable to him. The first thing that Adam had to see was that he had a need for other human beings that could communicate with him because he could not communicate with any of the animals, birds or beasts that he had named.

Second, we see that God formed the partner for Adam by putting him to sleep and performing the first surgery. All of the animals had been formed by God just speaking and they came into existence. Genesis 1:24-25 says, “Then God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth the living creature according to its kind: cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth, each according to its kind’; and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth according to its kind, cattle according to its kind, and everything that creeps on the earth according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.” In these verses, we see that God spoke the words and the animals came into existence.

However, God did something quite different when He created Adam. Genesis 2:7 says, “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” Here, we see that God gave very personal attention to the creation of man. God took dirt from the earth, formed it into the shape of a man and breathed His own breath into the man that He had formed so that man became a living being because of the very breath of God. Here, we see that God gave special time to the creation of Adam.

Then, we see that God did the same thing when He created Eve. God took a rib from the side of Adam while Adam was asleep and from that rib formed a woman and brought her to the man. Eve was not taken from the head of man because God did not plan for woman to dominate the man. Eve was not taken from the foot of man because God did not plan for man to dominate or enslave the woman. Instead, God took a rib from close to the heart of man to show Adam that he was to love and care for the woman that God had given him to make him complete. Adam recognized that she was now bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. It was only after sin came that this perfect relationship between man and woman was harmed.

Third, we see that God brought the woman to the man. Here, we see that God performed the first marriage. God brought them together and made them a couple. Once man sinned, man began to have problems because mankind began to choose partners based on their own physical desires instead of asking God to lead them to a wife that would make them complete. We see this illustrated in Genesis 6:2 where we read, “That the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were beautiful; and they took wives for themselves of all whom they chose.” Here, we see that men began to choose their wives based on physical appearance instead of godly character. We restore the Biblical pattern when we pray that the Lord will lead us to a partner that has godly character.

Fourth, we see that God said that man was to leave his father and mother when he married a wife. This is rather unique in the case of Adam because he had no father and mother to leave. However, we see that God is giving a key principle for the establishment of a godly family. This is not talking about a new couple moving to a different area when they get married although that may happen. In many cultures, two or more generations live together. What it is talking about is the decision making. When a man marries a wife, he is to move the decision making from making decisions with his parents to making decisions with his wife. God wanted Adam and Eve to know that they were to make decisions together.

Fifth, we see that God said that a man was to cleave to his wife. The word that is translated “cleave” is also used to speak of “*welding two pieces of metal together*”. As the metals are heated, both pieces of metal become a soft liquid that makes it possible for them to flow together. As the two pieces of metal flow together they are no longer two separate pieces of metal. Instead, they have become one piece of metal. In fact, if the metal was properly welded, the metals flow together so that the one piece is stronger than the original two pieces were separately. Here, we see that God wanted couples to develop a very strong relationship with each other.

Sixth, God said that they were to become one flesh. One of the keys to a strong family is a strong marriage where couples learn to think “we and our” instead of “me and my”. In addition to physical oneness, this means that they learn to think and work together as a team. Many couples never learn to think and work together as a team and that is one of the key hindrances to developing a godly family. In order to develop a godly family, couples need real teamwork.

We see a couple that demonstrates the fact that they had learned to think and work together as a team both physically and spiritually. In Acts 18:2-3, we read, “And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.” These verses show us that this particular couple even worked together in their business.

However, we see that they also worked together as a spiritual team. We see this later in the same chapter. One day, a man named Apollos began speaking in the synagogue about the teaching of John the Baptist. Aquila and Priscilla listened to him speak and realized that he knew nothing about the death and resurrection of Christ. This gave them an opportunity for spiritual ministry as a team. Acts 18:26 says, “So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately.” Aquila and Priscilla chose to work as a spiritual team to help Apollos grow in his spiritual understanding.

We see the impact of this team ministry in the following two verses. Acts 18:27-28 says, “And when he desired to cross to Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him; and when he arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace; for he vigorously refuted the Jews publicly, showing from the Scriptures that Jesus is the Christ.” Because Aquila and Priscilla had learned to work as a team, they developed a disciple that had a great impact for the Lord. We see a second illustration of their team ministry in Romans 16:3-5 where we read, “Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ.” Here, we see that they had moved to Rome and had started a church in their home that was reaching out to others in Rome.

A godly couple that has learned to work together as a team provides a foundation for the development of additional godly families. This will be true in our own physical family. However, it will also be true in the development of many other spiritual families as we show others by our example how to serve the Lord together as a godly team. May the Lord richly bless your family as you are an example to others.