

## Family – God’s Primary Shield

Healing takes place in community. I have seen confidence come to people working in sales based on positive reinforcement. Families are that primary community God has given us to produce whole people. We are called to reinforce all the good things God wants to say to our loved ones. A husband will effectively lead his wife to the degree to which he reflects Christ. So what can families do to create a shield from the enemy by produces whole kids?

When any of these 10 elements are missing the result is usually a relationally and emotionally immature adult. In a healthy family the various roles are flexible. As a counsellor, you may counsel a person who does not recognise how they have become their false self and it is your job as a counsellor to show that person that the enemy has caused this. Once you have done so, you need to help that person rediscover who they really are in Christ. The human race has the amazing ability to transform and change; and once God is found a new person is seen. Its important to learn good relational habits now before you are married or have children. Don’t think you will suddenly change when you have a family. You can bring your child to church to have them grow spiritually but if there is tension at home between you and your husband the child will still grow up insecure.

### 1. Maintenance

#### **Romans 8:32**

**Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won’t he also give us everything else?**

Basic maintenance consists of food, shelter and healthcare. In some families, if the parent isn’t physically well, this can become the focus of their life and the child’s health becomes less of a priority. There are many parents in this situation. They are not aware when their kids have not eaten or are sick. By placing too much focus on their own needs, the sick child may become critically ill. What are we feeding our children? We are we giving them a taste for? At a sleepover party, upon arrival, one of my kids friends greeted me by saying, “I don’t eat vegetables.” Malnutrition is not maintenance of kids. Freedom includes physical health. Tastes are acquired. Don’t make them fixed. His love for red meat may result in gout. I know kids who just drink water not juice. They actually like water. In all cases there is a parent with a strong value system in that area. I remember counselling someone recently and they said their parents showed their love by getting her lots of junk food even though they were not always present. Your kids should not have to eat toothpaste to curb their hunger. I have never seen the children of the righteous beg for bread.

#### **Psalm 37:25**

**I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.**

When children don’t get good nutrition, they are removed from their homes and taken to social services. How are we looking after our kids? Our families must be secure in God’s provision. They must know Jehovah Jireh.

#### **Phil 4:12**

**I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want.**

**Verse 13 goes on to say**

**I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.**

Go wants us to be healthy so we can do His will. The food laws in the Old Testament were very practical and not just spiritual or religious. I had a dream recently where God was showing me something about what I drink and the amount of sugar.

### 2. Nurture

This is the sense of emotional warmth and the feeling of being home. There are a lot of emotions associated with home. Think about your own feelings towards your home, these feelings will stem from your childhood. Fathers can also be gentle. This is where learning really happens.

#### **Ephesians 6:4**

**Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.**

#### **Mt 11:28-29**

**28Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls....**

By implication children will learn from their parents if there is an environment of humility. This is the Jesus environment. When you associate home with weariness and burdens then you want to escape.

### **3. Inclusion**

A sense of belonging, knowing that you will be missed when you are not present. You feel needed. You are known by name and are unconditionally accepted. You don't have to pay your membership fees to be there. Many people grow up in families where they feel they have to perform to be accepted. For example, if they do not excel in their schoolwork, they do not feel as if they belong; or if they fail to score a try in their rugby game they think their father will be ashamed of them. It is essential to communicate to children that their efforts are recognised and that having fun is also important. By positively stroking children when they perform and ignoring them when they do not, a performance mentality can be encouraged which leads to the feeling that "I am only accepted when I perform". Healthy families have a strong sense of inclusion. It's not a case of "children must be seen not heard!"

#### **Lamentations 3:22–23**

**The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; They are new every morning; Great is your faithfulness.**

As parents we are called to reinforce this type of love and acceptance. Be careful of keeping grudges and continuously reminding your family members of what they did wrong. Let them learn forgiveness from you so that they never become bitter people themselves.

### **4. Differentiation**

#### **Matthew 10:29-31**

**What is the price of two sparrows—one copper coin? But not a single sparrow can fall to the ground without your Father knowing it. And the very hairs on your head are all numbered. So don't be afraid; you are more valuable to God than a whole flock of sparrows.**

#### **Jeremiah 1:4-5**

**The LORD gave me this message: "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations."**

Your uniqueness is celebrated. In many families the lines are blurred- the mother doesn't recognise where she ends and the father begins, or where she ends and the first born child begins. Because everyone is so entangled in each other's every move, family enmeshment occurs.

Everyone should be recognised as an individual. Acknowledging your unique characteristics allows you to get to know your likes, dislikes, strengths and weaknesses. Parents should strive to provide guidance and never try to live their dreams through their children. Exercise boundaries and celebrate and respect appropriate privacy. Imposing different preferences on children can prevent them from making decisions on their own, or thinking for themselves. A good parent identifies the power we have to shape our kids. Respect boundaries such as setting limits or space boundaries.

When Tracy grew up and they were on holiday there was a strict regime of what they needed to do.

#### **Romans 12:3-5**

**For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but think of yourself with sober judgment, according to the measure of faith God has given you. 4Just as each of us has one body with many members, and not all members have the same function, 5so in Christ we who are many are one body, and each member belongs to one another....**

Even in families there is a lot of comparison and people gravitate to whatever is celebrated even if it's not their calling.

Allow people to express their different styles of spirituality. Some connect better with God outside in creation singing. Let them do so.