

Will Your Family Float?

Introduction. Noah, the great preacher of righteousness, provides for us an excellent example for the health of our families (Genesis 7:6-7). Just as the Lord told us to be "lights in the world," Noah was a light before God (Genesis 7:1). The fact Noah saved his household because of his godly conduct should make us all reflect upon how we can avail our families the opportunity to become more godly. When we ask the question, "Will your family float?" we really ask, "Will your family be acceptable to God?"

The family is the most fundamental institution in all the world. It dates back all the way back to Adam and Eve. But American society has run afoul of the traditional biblical principles which constitute a godly family. Unfortunately, society tells us virtually anyone can compose a family, whether it be two individuals living together without marriage, two homosexuals living together, or single parents. A recent court case even ruled a carload of college students taking a trip constituted a family!

How have we deviated so much from the biblical pattern and put the traditional family in jeopardy? The worst thing society has done for the family is to abandon biblical principles. For the next several minutes, I would like to suggest some things which will make your family float; which will make your family acceptable in the sight of God just as Noah was able to do.

I. ***A Family That Floats Needs Abundant Faith***

- A. You are probably familiar with the statement, "The family that prays together, stays together." The family which has all its members aligned to deep, spiritual truths has a far greater chance of being happy here and beyond (Acts 8:39; Philippians 4:4). It encourages me to see a family whose members have obeyed the gospel of Christ. From experience I can relate to how difficult it can be to have family members who have rejected God's marvelous grace. We have been blessed far above anything else because our lineage descends from God Himself (Ephesians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 1:14).
- B. The children of Israel were all one big family when they were brought out of the land of Egypt (Amos 3:1-3). This family was expected to follow God and when they did, the Lord richly blessed them (Leviticus 26:3-13). Is the situation any different today? Will we not still be richly blessed if our families have a strong faith in God and a determination to do right (Matthew 6:33)? I believe the answer is a resounding "Yes!"

II. ***A Family That Floats Needs Obedient Parents***

- A. Parents need to understand the value of being Christians and of making the best use of their time. When both parents are godly, righteous people who are justified by God, it has great power to help their children find purpose in their lives and save their souls.
- B. Parents must also recognize the value of time (Ecclesiastes 8:5; Ephesians 5:17). At the very most, parents only have about twenty years to influence their children. At that point, they are going to make up their own minds.
- C. Good parents will help their children in the following areas:
 - 1. Parents must teach their children to be Christians.
 - a) Lois and Eunice are wonderful examples of parents and grandparents who had worked hard to make sure their children were prepared for eternity (2 Timothy 1:5). One of the saddest things any of us could ever witness is the funeral of child who has been jerked into eternity unprepared.
 - b) Let's raise our children to be Christians and let's show them how to serve God by teaching them to be elders, deacons, preachers, and Bible class teachers. Let's raise our children to be devoted to the Lord because they love the Lord. Parents save themselves when they save their children.
 - 2. Parents must teach their children to be pure.
 - a) In this ungodly age, children need to know fornication and adultery are soundly condemned by God (1 Corinthians 6:9). Children need to know God has always intended for one man to be united to one woman for the entire duration of their lives (1 Corinthians 7:2).
 - b) Parents need to teach them marriage is permanent and divorce and remarriage is an abomination in the sight of God save for the exception of fornication (Matthew 19:9). Our children's bodies are sacred and the best example and teaching they can receive is from their parents (1 Corinthians 6:18-20).
 - 3. Parents must teach their children to be good fathers and mothers.
 - a) Children need to be taught the best way to raise godly children is for them to be godly themselves.
 - b) Sacrifice is of the utmost importance in giving them a good start in the world (Titus 2:4; Ephesians 6:4). If sacrifice of material things is necessary for the spiritual well-being of the family, then I strongly encourage parents and children to take a look at their lives together and decide what is really important: financial gain or spiritual gain?

4. Parents must teach their children to handle the world.
 - a) Children need to be taught lessons on integrity, decency, honesty, and hard work. Parents need to teach their children about responsibility and money. Our children must learn they are to work hard to earn the things they need and always keep in mind they must give back to the Lord who has so greatly blessed them (2 Corinthians 9:6-7).
 - b) Parents must also teach their children about how to handle temptation. James 4:7 says that if we resist the devil, he will flee from us. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 10:12-13, tells us there is no temptation that cannot be overcome. Let's reinforce to our children the necessity to run from the devil and temptation. Our children must not love the world (1 John 2:15-17).
5. Parents must teach their children to be good influences and reach others for Christ.
 - a) This is one of the best ways in which our children can glorify and exalt God (Matthew 5:13-14). Children need to be taught to be good neighbors and follow the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12).
 - b) Children must also learn converting someone to Christ is the most worthy cause to which someone can devote themselves (Matthew 28:19-20). Let's teach our children that being a Christian not only means caring for the things of our own hearts, but also looking for the opportunity to help others.

III. ***A Family That Floats Needs Obedient Children***

- A. Children are under a twofold responsibility of rendering obedience not only to Jesus Christ but also to their parents (Ephesians 6:1-3).
- B. Good children will watch their conduct in the following areas:
 1. Children must watch their dress.
 - a) How you dress tells everyone exactly what you think of yourself and it tells everyone who you want to be identified with. Would you want to be identified with those who are worldly and ungodly? You may say, "I am not like that!" but how is anyone going to know if all they have to judge by is your clothing?
 - b) Immodest and revealing clothing sends the message you really do not care if people respect you; all you desire is for people to lust after you. A Christian is under obligation to dress according to their King, whatever their age (1 Timothy 2:9; 1 Peter 3:3-4).
 2. Children must watch their language.
 - a) Profanity and raw obscenity litter the airwaves of radio and television (Ephesians 5:3-4). The Lord said in Matthew 12:34-37 what comes out of the mouth represents what is in the

heart. If evil is in the heart, evil language will result, and we will be held accountable for those careless words in the judgment.

- b) Children must also realize lying is an abomination before the Lord (Proverbs 6:16-17; Revelation 21:8). A lying tongue will condemn us just as efficiently as a profane tongue.
3. Children must watch their recreation.
 - a) Although recreation is a positive and necessary force needed to become well-adjusted in life, young people are very apt to take things too far. Godly children have no business dancing, drinking or engaging in any other form of entertainment which will cause them to break God's commandments.
 - b) Peer pressure is very strong on children all the way up into adulthood, but you must have the moral tenacity to say no to forms of recreation which even hint at being inappropriate and sinful (1 Thessalonians 5:22).
4. Children must watch their relationships.
 - a) Do you have relationships with people that are ungodly (1 Corinthians 15:33)? I do not know how many people I have known over the years who have fallen because they participated in relationships with people of the world. Friends who are ungodly place a tremendous spiritual drain on a young child of God trying to keep their faith.
 - b) When young Christians date non-Christians, the problem is magnified a thousand times over. Rarely do young Christians pull their worldly friends up to their level; instead, they are frequently reduced to the sinful practices of their ungodly acquaintances.
 - c) Although it is not a sin for a Christian to marry someone of the world, it has to be one of the poorest decisions a young Christian can make. Avoid the problem altogether: make friends and date only those who will help you get to heaven!
5. Children must watch their religion.
 - a) One of the benefits of being younger is having an open mind. However, children must take care lest this benefit become a terrible force which pulls them into the error and confusion of thousands of false doctrines in the world. Children are easily swayed into accepting something just because it appears new or novel.
 - b) Because of this, many children of godly parents are swept away into erroneous teachings without prudent and thorough investigation of the doctrines contained therein. Any religion which did not start with Jesus Christ on the day of Pentecost is not the authorized New Testament church (Acts 2:1-36).

Children will do well to heed the warning given to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:15).

IV. A Family That Floats Needs Abundant Love

- A. You can work iron or carve wood without love, but you cannot handle people without love. Our relationship to God depends upon love (John 15:12-13; Romans 5:8). Just as this relationship exists because of love, the relationship within a family must also depend upon love.
- B. A family built upon impatience, anger, bitterness, hatefulness and spite will never flourish and function as God expects (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). Many families fail because love was never present. Let us show a loving spirit in our families by our willingness to put away improper dispositions and sacrifice for the common good of the family.

Conclusion. Will your family float? Will your family be acceptable to God? I have heard it said if we can consistently have parents and children who are obedient to the gospel who then in turn pass that heritage along, the gospel would overtake the world in no time. Would that not be extraordinary? Taking the initiative and making hard choices to have godly families will pay off in rich blessings both here and in eternity. There is nothing happier and more fulfilling than being in a family who knows its purpose and is reaching for that eternal home.