



The Country Preacher's Newsletter

"...speaking the truth in love" Ephesians 4:15

What Is A Family?

By Randall F. Matheny

The most unique and precious of all human relationships, second only to Christianity (Mk. 3:33-34) is that of a family. There is no other relationship on a human level which can provide the love, companionship, friendship, comfort, support, security and edification that can be enjoyed within a family. It is comforting to know that in an age where the definition of "family" has come under incessant attack that God has been clear in His definition of family as well as in His plan for the same.

In the beginning God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, so after Adam named all the animals from among which there was found no helper comparable to him, God created woman, brought her to the man and she became his wife (Gen. 2:18-25). Adam and Eve were brought together, married, by God into a relationship in which they were no longer "two," but in which they became "one flesh" (Gen. 2:24; Mat. 19:5-6). God could have brought another man to Adam, or created some special animal, but He did not do so. Instead, God saw that only

woman could properly fulfill man's need for intimate companionship. Adam was joined to his wife in such a spiritual, physical, psychological and social way that is utterly impossible to achieve, or even approach, in any other human relationship. No other human relationship, whether it is on the lawful and noble level of the friendship between Jonathan and David (1 Sam. 18:1, 3), or whether unlawful such as

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between homosexual males or females (Lev. 18:22-23; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9), can be held as equal to the marriage relationship between one man and one woman: the basic unit that characterizes the true family. The potential for procreation (Gen. 1:27-28, 24) and raising godly offspring (Mal. 2:15-16) are also indelible and unchanging characteristics of the true family. This does not mean that a married man and woman who cannot conceive a child due to medical problems cannot adopt children, because adoption is biblical and they have not violated God's pattern for marriage. It does mean that homosexual couples, who are entirely incapable of and unsuit-

able for natural procreation, do not fall within the biblical definitions of marriage or family and cannot raise godly offspring. The homosexual arrangement fails every test. It also means that godly offspring cannot be properly raised by single parents, for this is one of the main reasons that "the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce" (Mal. 2:15-16) and certainly one of the reasons that young widows are instructed to marry again (1 Tim. 5:3-14). Fathers and mothers both make unique, irreplaceable contributions to the proper upbringing of children: neither can be replaced and neither can be dispensed with without having a detrimental effect upon the development of children. There may be human relationships which mimic marriage and family, but there are none which are comparable or equal to the true family, or which can meet the needs of intimate companionship better, raise better children, or make a more positive contribution to society and the world at large, than that of the marriage and the family as God would have them to be.

Societies may attempt to redefine honorable, godly estates such as marriage and family in order to accommodate and perhaps placate those who live in relationships which deviate from

God's norm, but the will and word of God remain the unchanged (1 Pet. 1:25; Jas. 1:17). Such deviations can never be more than deficient imitations of true families, regardless of the sincerity and affection with which they are entered into. Those who reject God's plan and His right to rule among men and women will be judged by what they have rejected (Jn. 12:48) but, no one need be deprived of family's divine blessing. Every sinner, if properly motivated (2 Cor. 7:10), can change, be forgiven (1 Cor. 6:11) and rejoice in the abundant life of Christianity (Jn. 10:10). God's arrangement for marriage and family remains the best. His church is here to help.

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Three Little Words

By Randall F. Matheny

"God so loved..." (Jn. 3:16a). Three little words which span millennia and reach out to every human being who has ever lived, or ever will live. Three little words, which if properly understood in an "honest and good heart" (Lk. 8:15), will cause a reaction which is literally transforming in its proportion. They speak of a God who, in all of His marvelous creation, has special affection for, and has given special attention to, those who were created in His image (Gen. 1:26-27). They speak of a God who will never give up on His children by creation, whose hatred of sin can only be understood in contrast to His great love for man, who has consistently purged out evil for their protection, and who has spared nothing,

even heaven's greatest gift, for their nurture and eternal well being. These words reveal a God who not only has the capacity for the greatest love, but who is characterized as love in the totality of His being (1 Jn. 4:8). And these words speak of the greatest love that has ever been, or ever will be expressed, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (Jn. 3:16).

How we react to the "Golden Text" of the Bible is more telling of the condition of our hearts than perhaps any other thing. If we truly comprehend the importance of God's gift, and accept it, we cannot help but be filled with the greatest gratitude, which will be expressed in worship, praise and thanksgiving. We cannot help but be filled with the greatest sense of commitment to the cause of Christ and to spreading His Good News far and wide. We cannot help but be awed by the inestimable value that is placed upon our souls, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Pet. 1:18-20). We cannot help but be inspired by the promise and the hope of eternal life. And like Paul, we cannot help but be willing and eager to do whatever Jesus calls for us to

do (Acts 9:6). Have you reflected on God's love for you lately?

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Edited by
Randall F. Matheny
PO Box 911
Warren, PA 16365-0911

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