



## FOLLOW JESUS - Family Matters

### CONNECT

- Share a favorite memory of your family.
- How do you show the members of your family that you value them?
- What role do you play in your family? Peacemaker? Provider? Listener? Trouble-maker?

### THOUGHT

In the animal kingdom, no other animal comes close to the number of years that human children stay with their parents. This indicates both the large impact that family has on who we are as well as the responsibility we have towards our family. Jesus, while he was hanging on the cross, in horrendous suffering, took the time to make sure his mother was cared for, demonstrating the high priority we are to give to our families. Your family is God's gift to you, just as you are God's gift to them. Whether or not that gift is positive or negative depends on how you and your family choose to interact with and respond to each other. In this discussion we will look at three essential ingredients to the kind of family relationships God intended.

## WORD

*"Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching." Proverbs 1:8 (NIV)*

*"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." Proverbs 22:6 (NIV)*

### 1. Honor

*<sup>1</sup>Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup>"Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—<sup>3</sup>"so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." <sup>4</sup>Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." Ephesians 6:1-4 (NIV)*

The scriptures instruct children to obey their parents, but even as adults, we are still commanded to honor our parents. What does it mean to honor our parents? Why is honor fundamental to healthy human relationships? Why do you think the command to honor our parents comes with a promise of blessings and long life?

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### 2. Love

*"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins."*

**1 Peter 4:8 (NIV)**

Love is the foundation of the kind of family God intends for us to have. Love is often longsuffering, bearing with the other person's flaws but it also corrects. What is one situation where you had to be patient with a member of your family? When did you have to show tough love? Paul

writes in Romans 12:9 “Love must be sincere, hate what is evil, cling to what is good.” What are some ways we can be more sincere in how we love our families?

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### 3. Unity

*<sup>9</sup>Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: <sup>10</sup>If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. <sup>11</sup>Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? <sup>12</sup>Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.” **Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 (NIV)***

The benefits of working together are numerous and powerful. Jesus said a divided house couldn’t help but fail (Matthew 12:25). This is true of both natural and spiritual family. How would you describe the current state of the unity of your natural family? The bible teaches that when we become Christians, we become part of God’s spiritual family, the church. What are some ways to build the unity of your spiritual family?

At Every Nation New York City we strive to build unity in everything we do. There may be differences in how to accomplish something but we keep one goal in mind. The UNITE Conference is a great opportunity to see the vision that ties our church together into one synchronized body working for the glory of God.

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### PERSONAL APPLICATION

- How can you love and honor your family this week? Share some practical things you can do to show your appreciation, concern, and respect.
- Is there anyone in your family with whom you need to rebuild your relationship? Do you need to forgive them or ask their forgiveness or just reach out? What can you do this week to restore that relationship?

- What can you do this week to contribute to the unity of ENNYC? If you haven't committed to attend the UNITE Conference, sign up today!

## PRAYER

- Thank God for your family. Surrender any concerns or problems you are currently facing. Be in faith for God to come through for you in unique and mighty ways.
- Ask God to help you love and honor your family. Pray for an extra measure of grace, patience, and wisdom in your relationships.
- Pray for the salvation of your family members who are not serving the Lord yet. Believe God for opportunities to demonstrate his love to them and to share the gospel with them.

## NOTES

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