

## **DESTINY #6: BUILDING STRONG AND HEALTHY FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS**

(June 2010 – Beausejour Church – Pastor Chris Jordan)

### HAPPY FATHER’S DAY!

#### OPENING TEXT:

“Of Solomon. Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain. It is vain for you to rise up early, To sit up late, To eat the bread of sorrows; For so He gives His beloved sleep. Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, The fruit of the womb is a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; They shall not be ashamed, But shall speak with their enemies in the gate.” (Psalm 127).

- If we want to have a strong and healthy family, the Lord must build our home!
- “*Family relationships will either be dynamic and maturing, or stagnant and dying.*” (Balswick). Where is yours at today?
- When Liza and I got married, we had both come from dysfunctional families. My parents were divorced before I was five years old. Liza’s parents are separated. What hope do we have of having a strong and healthy family? God’s Word!

THE BIG IDEA: Part of our destiny as Christians involves our family life. God’s Word gives us several keys to having strong and healthy family relationships. We will consider five of them today – covenant, grace, empowering, intimacy and divine order.

REVIEW: Our Destiny Series in Ephesians.

- Chapters 1-3 (Destined to **BE**). Chapters 4-6 (Destined to **DO**).
- REVIEW SECTION TWO: “**I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.**” (Ephesians 4:1).
- 4:1-6 = UNITY; 4:7-16 = MATURITY; 4:17-5:20 = PURITY. Now = FAMILY.

### **I. COVENANT – NOT CONTRACT:** *To love and be loved.*

QUOTE: “The logical beginning point of any family relationship is a covenant commitment, which has unconditional love at its core. Out of the security provided by this covenant love develops grace. In this atmosphere of grace, family members have the freedom to empower each other. Empowering leads to the possibility of intimacy.” (Balswick).

#### WHAT IS A COVENANT?

A Covenant is “*an unconditional commitment which is demonstrated supremely by God in the role of parent.*” (Balswick).

- The first two mentions of *covenant* in the Bible are found in Genesis 6:18 (with Noah) and Genesis 7:1-7 (with Abraham).

“**And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.**” (Genesis 7:7).

- A strong and healthy family must be based on COVENANT, not a contract.
- A **contract** says, “IF you do this, then I will do that.” and can be broken.

- A **covenant** is unconditional and unbreakable.
- **ISSUE:** One of the questions people wrestle with is: “What if I married the wrong person?” Answer: You didn’t. Once you marry someone, they *are* the right person!
- **EXAMPLE:** In my marriage with Liza, it hasn’t always been easy or fun, but we have made a promise to one another, and divorce is not an option.
- Notice also that the covenant isn’t just between the husband and the wife – but children, too! As parents, we must make a commitment to unconditionally love our children.
- **EXAMPLE:** Both my mom and sister Jodi are foster parents, and I have heard so many horrible stories of children whose parents have not loved and cared for them.

## **II. GRACE – NOT LAW: *To forgive and be forgiven.***

“Family relationships as designed by God are meant to be lived out in an atmosphere of grace and not law.” (Balswick).

- We saw this principle earlier in our study of Ephesians: “**And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you.**” (4:32).
- In a family relationship based on law, perfection will be demanded of each other.
- Rules and regulations will be rigidly set up to govern relationships.
- This pressure adds guilt to the failure that is inevitable in such a situation.
- GRACE doesn’t mean that you don’t have to have rules in your family, but rather that you give your spouse and your children the freedom to fail, and walk in forgiveness!
- **EXAMPLE:** In our family, Liza and my kids have messed up LOTS... but so have I! If it wasn’t for grace, we would have all been very miserable!

## **III. EMPOWERING – NOT POSSESSIVE POWER: *To serve and be served.***

“**Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.**” (Proverbs 22:6).

As parents, part of our job is empowering our children. “*Empowering is the active, intentional process of enabling another person to acquire power.*” (Balswick).

- “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.” (Deut. 6:6-7).
- As parents, we are to teach our children about the Lord!
- **EXAMPLE:** Some of the ways we do this is by taking our children to church; doing daily devotions; encouraging them to read their Bibles; and praying with them daily.
- This isn’t just about discipleship, but also helping them grow and mature and become independent. Given them more and more freedom as they get older.

## **IV. INTIMACY – NOT DISTANCE: *To know and be known.***

“**And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.**” (Genesis 2:25).

- God wants us to know and be known by one another in our families intimately.
- “Adam and Eve stood completely open and transparent before God. It was only after their disobedience that they tried to hide from God out of a feeling of nakedness and shame...

The intimacy which Adam and Eve felt was an ability to be themselves without any pretense.” (Balswick).

- This will only happen in a family where covenant, grace and empowering are realities.
- How do we experience that intimacy? Through communication. (teach on this more later)
- EXAMPLE: Liza and I make a commitment o in our relationship to go on dates – like our weekly breakfasts, or time together after the kids go to bed.

### **PRACTICAL APPLICATION: DIVINE ORDER:**

#### ***Building our families according to God's plan:***

“**21** submit to one another in the fear of God. **22** Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. **23** For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. **24** Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. **25** Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, **26** that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, **27** that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. **28** So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. **29** For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church. **30** For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. **31** "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." **32** This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church. **33** Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.” (Ephesians 5:21-33).

- **Wives** are to submit to and respect their husbands
- **Husbands** are to unconditionally love their wives as Christ loved the church.
- Our marriage home group recently went through the book Love and Respect by Emerson Eggerichs, which explains in details this empowering cycle in marriages.

“**1** Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2** "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: **3** "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth." **4** And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:1-4).

- **Children** are to obey and honour their parents.
- **Fathers** need to make sure they don't provoke their children to wrath.

CLOSING: Prayer of blessing for families.

Bibliography: Family: A Christian Perspective on the Contemporary Home by Jack and Judith Balswick.

Beausejour Community Church Website: [www.beausejourchurch.ca](http://www.beausejourchurch.ca)  
Pastor Chris Jordan's Blog: <http://thelandofpromise.blogspot.com/>