

# A Biblical Family - a Tool in God's Hands (Part 1)

by Erlo Stegen

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*The sermon emphasizes the biblical understanding of family roles and responsibilities as essential tools in God's hands for spiritual leadership and guidance.*

**Duration:** 1:24:24

**Scripture:** Genesis 10:1, Exodus 20:2, Matthew 6:33, 1 Timothy 3:4, Hebrews 4:12, Revelation 1:14-15

**Topics:** "Biblical Family"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of parents sharing their personal stories of faith with their children. He encourages parents to start with their own testimonies of how they turned from sin and how God led them out of difficult situations. The preacher emphasizes the need for these stories to be shared regularly, whether during walks, at bedtime, or in the morning. He emphasizes that these stories form the foundation of children's beliefs in God and warns that without good stories to tell, parents may be lacking in their own faith. The sermon concludes with a prayer for God's grace and mercy to help parents stand for the truth in a wicked generation.

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## Transcript

Lord Jesus, we ask you to be with us. Thank you for having kept us these 15 years. And we pray that once again, you will be with us this evening.

In your grace and mercy, that we may be able to stand for the truth in the midst of this crooked and wicked generation. Amen. Amen.

Our theme, a biblical family, a tool in God's hands. Now, it's difficult to speak on such a topic in just one hour. It feels like what I'm going to speak about this evening is like a thin thread, just one single thread, of many, many threads in a huge rope which they use on ships.

It's a vast topic and has great depth. So what I'll be saying this evening is like a drop in the ocean, but I hope that it will be of some help to you. So that one day when we stand before the judgment throne of God, we will be able to stand before the Lord and say, here I am Lord, together with the family and the children you have given me.

Our text is in Genesis, chapter 1, verse 27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. Then God blessed them and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it.

The family, what is the family? It's a pity that we live in a time amongst a generation where many people don't know what a family means. The president of one of the leading nations in Europe recently asked, family, what is family, what is a family? Someone who is highly regarded and regarded as a clever politician, but he's confused about family. We're not even here speaking of the biblical family, we're just talking about the family.

And he said, well, what is a family? Is it a man with two or three wives? Or is it a woman with two or three husbands? What is a family? When he died at his funeral, there was not just one of his wives standing there at the graveside. And they say he had a number of children. What is a family? Much is said and different nations have different ideas.

Is there then a biblical standard which is relevant today? What then is this biblical standard, God's standard? We shouldn't be confused. In our text we read here that God's word says God created man in his own image. In God's image he created them, male and female.

He didn't say he created man and a harem of women, or that he created him to be like an animal, like a bull among all the cows. No, he created him in God's own image, male and female, a man and a woman. I'm speaking now of a biblical family.

In Matthew 5 the Lord Jesus spoke these words. Whoever looks at a woman and lusts after her, he has already committed adultery. So if you have a wife, if you look at another woman with an evil eye, then you have already committed adultery.

One day the Pharisees asked the Lord Jesus whether it's permitted that a man divorces his wife. That you find in Mark chapter 10 verse 2. They said, well Moses spoke and allowed the men to give the wife a letter of divorce. And the Lord said, yes, Moses did that, but that was only as a result of your hardened hearts.

But he said, remember in the beginning God created a man and a woman. So in the Old and in the New Testament it's clear that God created a man and a woman. And the Lord said, yes, Moses did refer to a letter of divorce, but that is not how it was meant in the beginning.

But then people say, but in the Old Testament the men of God, David and Abraham, they had more than one wife. Well as I said, nations see it in different ways. And you can be born into a nation where it's the done thing and then you accept it as being the norm.

And the family according to the Bible is a man and a woman and these two will become one flesh. I'm just going through this quickly, so I'm just touching on the fringe. Nowadays people are confused and they say, well there's also a possibility of a homosexual marriage.

Where people of the same sex can have a relationship. So many governments are being influenced to think in this way. And they pass laws that make it acceptable that a man can get married to a man and a woman to another woman.

And they have their rights. But God shows us clearly that such a thing is an abomination to him. In Romans 1 verse 18 it says that God's wrath comes down upon the people because of their wickedness.

Who stand in the way of the truth. They don't give honour to God and don't serve him as they should. And so in verse 24 and 25 we read, And therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness and the lusts of their hearts to dishonour their bodies among themselves who exchange the truth of God for a lie.

Likewise the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another. Men with men committing what is shameful. Doing things which are shameful.

That is the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah and people who commit this sin live the life of Sodom and Gomorrah in this time. And so even though God has given them up to uncleanness and the lusts of their hearts to dishonour their bodies among themselves who exchange the truth of God for a lie. And so even Christians and even ministers are falling into this and promoting it and standing up for this.

They claim that even in that reformed church 8 or 9% live this kind of life. But it's not just in the Dutch reformed church. In all the different churches this is breaking out all over like in Sodom and Gomorrah where eventually God sent down fire and brimstone from heaven to destroy them.

And that is a shameful thing. An abomination to God. Some people say no they were born that way.

No that's not the case. Yes we were all born in sin but people fall into that sin and end up like that burning in lust for each other because they have turned their backs on God and God has handed you over to your lusts. That is not family.

That is something shameful. Something from hell. That is chaff that will be burned with fire.

And so when we speak about the family you need to have discernment and know exactly what is meant by family. You need to discern between the grain and the chaff. The difference between sheep and goats.

Those who are cursed and those who are blessed. A biblical family is those two people that God brings together and they live together until God separates them. Now that was just the introduction.

Let us now look closer at the biblical family. In 1 Timothy 3. We read of a person who is a leader in the church where it says that how can he take care of the church if he cannot even take care of his own family. For if a man does not know how to rule his own house how will he take care of the church of God.

So the family is very important according to the Bible. The family is very important. Leadership needs to start at home in the family.

Especially spiritual leadership. Because God asks, he says how can you be put in charge of a church if you cannot take care of your family. That is something that goes very deep.

It is a serious matter. And that is something that should keep any preacher of the gospel busy and it should worry him as a preacher if his own house is not in order. How can I stand before the church if I cannot even take care of my own family.

How can you lead the church if you cannot even lead your own household because if your household is not in order your own family is not in order it breaks down the work that you are doing in the church. That is something that should keep any preacher of the gospel busy and it should worry him as a preacher if his own household is not in order. So you need to take the matter of the family very seriously look very closely at it and when you stand up to preach first have a look at your family and to see whether things are in order in your family.

So never forget that spiritual leadership starts right there in your own family. Never forget that. Do you see where you need to start working? Now let us now start looking closer at the family and the structures.

We have spoken and said that the family consists of a man and a woman. A woman and a man. Now if you look in Ephesians chapter 5, 22.

It refers here. So here in Ephesians chapter 5 from verse 22 it is like the Englishman always says ladies first. It first refers to the wives.

Well and we should remember and you women should remember that sin came into this world firstly through you. Now I don't want to be like a rat that bites and then immediately pours oil on the wound so to say. I could go on and on.

I could go on to say that you also were the one to bring the Saviour into the world without the help of a man but I don't want to give you that ointment now. I want to drive this point home that remember in the first place you are the one that brought sin into this world and so often when sin comes in it comes through the woman. The Zulus say a rat bites but then blows that it's not too sore.

I wish that you could be bitten and that it bites you to such an extent that you'll never be an evil woman again for the rest of your life and that you'll be cured of your sinning. And so it says here wives submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. Verse 24.

Verse 24 therefore just as the church is subject to Christ so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. So you women who have husbands, you who are married, you wives, your lives should be such that it is an example to everyone including myself that I will be able to see how I should submit to Christ. Verse 25.

But if you are a Sapphira and your husband is an Ananias, then never become one with your husband when it comes to the wrong thing. No woman, no wife has the right to sin and become one with her husband in the wrong thing and in sin. So if your husband says to you my wife let's go to the neighbor and steal his goat or go and steal something come along then don't become one with him in that wrong thing.

But when you look at a biblical family where things are according to the Bible then you should be subject to him in all things. That is part A. Now to B which is the husband. For us to have a biblical family things have to be in right standing between the wife and the husband and vice versa.

So you husband no matter who you are, however clever you are, even if you are a theologian, you have to be sure that your relationship with your wife is in order. So even if you can preach that the dust flies, preach like no one else, but if your relationship with your wife is not in order then you are wasting your time. Things are wrong and eventually the demons will get hold of you.

You will be ridden by them because your life is not in order. And the devil won't just ride you, he'll be right within you. That's why the Bible says give the devil no room.

And it says here of the husbands, husbands love your wives just as Christ also loved the church. If you have to take your love for your wife and put it in the balance on the one side and on the other side you take the love of Christ which he has for the church, does it balance or not? And then Christ even gave himself for the church in order to sanctify it. He gave himself for his wife to make her holy.

Is that what you are busy with? Washing her with the water of God's word. That he might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that he might present her to himself a glorious church. Without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish but that she should be holy and blameless.

That's the husband's job. That's his task. That his wife may be holy without blemish.

That's one of the greatest challenges a man has got to face in this world. And one of the greatest responsibilities. If your wife had to die today being in a car accident or as a result of a disease, would you have a clear conscience knowing that you've fulfilled your commission, the task that you were given? Perhaps you're leading others to Christ but just have a look to see what it's like with your own wife.

And if you don't, if things aren't right with your wife then you may even find that after a few years that even these other people who came to the Lord that you'll find that things in their lives are not right either. And don't comfort yourself and say oh no but there are people that I am leading to the Lord and just look at them they're coming to the Lord but you watch after a few years you'll find that they'll end up being the same as those in your own family. The same as your own children.

It's a tremendous responsibility, a huge challenge to have a wife. Bear with me and understand me if I put it this way, when I saw my wife just withering away before my eyes until the Lord took her, when He did take her it was as if a burden was lifted from my shoulders. I regard myself as a man who is privileged because I could see my wife going before my eyes.

And I said oh Lord I thank you that you've taken my wife in this way. And that's why I'm in no hurry to get married again. I know what it means.

I know what that responsibility is to sanctify your wife, to present her to Christ without blemish. I know what it means and don't even try to convince me to take another wife. You won't get it right.

Only God would be able to do that. Even if all mankind tries to drag me into it, by God's grace they won't succeed unless God himself undertakes. I know what it means to be married.

And I was even married to a teacher who is used to have little children in front of her and to teach them. I always say if you marry a teacher or a nurse then you must know that she'll think you're a patient, sick patient in bed. Or you're a child, a child sitting on a school desk.

By that I don't say that my wife was like that. Those are my home affairs. But I just want to tell you what it is all about.

It's no small thing to get married. When the Lord says to you, if you have a wife, I want you to bring her and present her to me without blemish. I saw her flesh being wasted away.

I saw her dying, not being able to breathe. And I felt sorry for every child that was present. That's too much for them.

But in it all she looked at us with a heavenly smile. And over and over again we saw the glory of the Lord appearing. And when she says the King is coming and he took her, I said thank you God.

If I ever have praised you, I praise you now. And I thank you now. And at that moment my tears were washed away.

I knew, I had a soul that God will demand from my hands. Husbands, have you fulfilled your commission? Has your job done? Have you sanctified your wife that you can present her as holy and blameless, without blemish before the Lord? And I want to tell you tonight, if your relationship with your wife isn't right, that's an open door for the demons to come into your ministry and into your life. So, I don't want to repeat again what I've already said, but you can go home and read the Bible.

And you can go home and read what the Lord says to the husbands regarding their wives. Maybe you men are in a hurry to get married, but it would be a pity if you rush into marriage and then you fail to conduct it properly. As I've said, I'm speaking just of one little thread, of many, many threads which make up this huge rope which can pull ships.

Not a family you also find children. Of course, there are also families where there are no children. But that should not trouble you, if you cannot have children, because God does not make a mistake.

He knows what He's doing. Because perhaps if you would have had children, they would have made you grey overnight. Perhaps they would have lived a loose life, bringing illegitimate children into your home, and then you would have had to live with these children.

And you'll end up with children that are not a tool in God's hands, but rather a tool in the devil's hands. So if God hasn't given you any children, you can thank Him for it. Accept it out of His hand.

For there are many parents who end up going off the road because they side with their ungodly children. But if God has not given you any children, you can thank Him for it. So before you go to bed, go on to your knees, thank God that He spared you from having children that live as though they have no brains, who don't choose God's way, but who follow the devil and the world.

He's got the wisdom of demons. So now we've spoken about the wife, the husband, now let's go to the children. It's also something great regarding children.

Here you can see this table here, with a Bible on it, and that lantern, and the bread. I don't know exactly what they meant by it, but for me, when I look at that, I see a situation of a family sitting around the table. And the greatest thing there is that there's this big Bible there.

That is something wonderful. I was so happy when I once went into someone's home, and there in the sitting room, there on the table, there was a Bible, and I was so happy to see that. I thank God for it.

Now as we've heard in the Bible, you cannot lead a church and a congregation if you fail to lead your own household and your family. I know of a father who had his rule that whenever they sat down to eat, before they did so, or they would sit, and then the father would say to the child, now you start by reading the Bible. And also expound on it, and then you pray.

So he enforced this rule, that whenever they sat down at table before anything, they would first read the Bible, have a time of devotion, and each child had to read a portion, speak about it, and pray. One child after the next. And eventually the children would try and run away, because they dreaded this thing from happening.

So you see it's not enough just to make a rule and tell your child, this is what you must do, this is what you mustn't do. There is such a time for that. But there is a better way than that.

There is another way of doing it, and one very good way of doing it is to tell your child stories. You know in the Old Testament where God spoke to Moses and sent him to Pharaoh to speak to him? That you will find in Genesis 10 from verse 1 onwards. He said go to Pharaoh, speak to him, but I will harden his heart.

And I will also harden the hearts of his servants. So Pharaoh wasn't the only one around there that had a hard heart, the people around him also had hard hearts. It does not pay to have the wrong friends around you.

They'll be a curse to you. There's no hope that you'll ever get right as long as you sit where the sinners sit. As in the beginning of the Psalms, God makes it so clearly to us.

Moses, you are known by your friends. The people you visit, the people you talk to, are a true picture of yourself. The English are right, birds of a feather flock together.

And God said to Moses, go to Pharaoh, but I will harden his heart. He says but I will glorify myself. I'll do these mighty works and great signs because of the hardness of his heart.

So that you've got a story to tell your children and your grandchildren. You know that Pharaoh's hardness was so that Moses could tell his sons and his grandsons what God had done. His mighty works.

He says I'll show them, the Egyptians, my sight and my divine power. So that you can tell your children and grandchildren what I did. What I did wasn't just that they should be saved, that the Egyptian forces should be overcome.

God had even the children in mind, Moses' sons and Moses' grandsons. And he could tell them the most fantastic stories ever told in this world. So to say, the greatest drama could be written, he could read that to them.

I will do, I will harden his heart so that you can recount to your children the great things I did. And how I dealt with them. So that you Moses may recognize and know that I am the Lord.

And then your sons and grandsons will get to that knowledge as well. Amazing thing, it's not a small thing to have children. If God has got to deal with Pharaoh in such a way, just that you know what to tell your children.

Tell your children and your grandchildren the incredible things I've done in Egypt. Tell them the things you have gone through. When I pondered over this, I said, oh God, if I could have my children all over again.

Oh God, maybe I'd tell them stories in more detail, in more depth, in greater power. But then I stopped and thought of the grandchildren that are rolling in. I said, oh my children, I needn't start from scratch, they are newcomers.

Children love to be told stories, tell them in an interesting way. God told Moses what he should tell his descendants. Tell them what God did in your life, in the days gone by, in the past.

When you were still in Egypt, or are you still there? Tell them about the turning point in your life. How God spoke to you. And what God is still saying and God is still doing in your life.

You know how to do it, or you just want to punish them and you're so sorry that you're not allowed to chastise your children anymore. The social workers will go against you, that's all you know. What a poor

parent you are.

One wonders whether God should have ever entrusted you with children. God hardened Pharaoh's heart with his servants' hearts. So that he, Moses, should have a wonderful story to tell his sons and grandsons.

Show us the importance and greatness of this topic. And how important your children are in God's eyes. And wake up before it's too late.

It shows us how seriously God takes children. Tell them stories. Not about jungle stories only, they're very good.

But start with your own story. How you turned from sin. How God led you out of Egypt.

Have you ever done that sat down? Don't tell them for hours, make it short and sweet. God says, if you go for a walk, tell them. If they go to bed, tell them.

The first thing in the morning, tell them. They go off to sleep, tell them. Sometimes they're disturbed at night.

They scream, they see evil visions. The devil is attacking them. But how sweet they could sleep.

If you have told them of God's signs and wonders he did in your life. How he drew you to himself. And from there you can carry on.

You don't need hours and weekends and weeks to stay with your children. They'll get sick and tired of you. If you've got five minutes, it's more than enough.

A good story. I would like to tell you now. That your stories will form the foundation of your children's belief in God.

And if they've got no foundation, it's because you didn't have good stories to tell them. If you haven't got good stories of what God did in your life, you must be a pauper. You must be a very, very, very poor Christian.

Who's got nothing to show. I'm repeating, you know the word. In Deuteronomy 6, 6 to 7. You must talk to your children when you are at home.

Or out for a walk. At bedtime. Or the first thing in the morning.

Make it interesting. Because it's a wonderful story. No.

No. No. No.

No. No. No.

You are shocked when your children are devoured by the evil one. The devil snatches them away. And you don't understand why.

Tell them a story about how you as a father was saved out of sin. How God saved your life. You can tell them how you were set free from worldly music and dancing and the things of this world.

There is all of that. Maybe you think, oh well your children know enough. But there are many things that they do not know.

And the Lord says you should share these things with your children. And children's children. Just a little thread.

That you could hold on and use. And then a consistent life makes the deepest impression. A consistent life.

A consistent, a steadfast life. Being the same. That is something that is indelibly written into the life of a child.

And don't say, well I've done my duty, I've sent my child to a Christian school. And there they've got Christian teachers. I don't remember ever just sitting back and saying, well my children are taught by Christian teachers so I've done my duty.

No, I always saw my responsibility before God regarding my own children. And then you try to escape your responsibilities, push it on to the teachers. I don't, I've thought, have I ever had that thought in my life? I praise God and thank God over and over, maybe 10,000 times already, for having godly teachers in a godly school.

But that should rob me of my responsibility. I see that I'm guilty before God if the child isn't right. Even if they've got a mother who's a believer.

It's not enough. I've got to do my duty as well. And no business and no activity and no much work can take that burden from my shoulders.

You, father, you've got your responsibility and duty. And you, mother, in the same way. When a Baba, time's flying so I'll have to leave that now.

I am drawing to a close. I haven't come to the end yet. I'm just drawing to a close.

I'm just on the way to the closing point. Christian parents can pass on their faith to their children. I suppose you know of the first boy who accepted the Christian faith in the New Testament.

How he did it? Because of his mother and grandmother. Because they passed it on. Timothy was the first second generation Christian mentioned in the New Testament.

So here was this grandmother who experienced something with the Lord. She passed it on to her daughter and the daughter in turn passed it on to her son. Timothy's mother, her name was Eunice.

And the grandmother Lois. They passed on the faith to the child. They became believers and passed it on to Timothy who became a man of God by the influence of the mother and the grandmother.

Although Timothy's father apparently was not a Christian, but through the faithfulness of the mother and the grandmother, he was influenced to become a man of God. They passed on their faith to him and their faithfulness. And their faith prevailed in his life.

So even if you have a husband, that's a good for nothing. But these two women were able to pass it on to the child. So even if your husband goes his own way, the wrong way, well maybe he'll end up dying of

AIDS.

But you, in spite of what he does, you be a good mother and grandmother. So there's a way that you can pass on that faith to a child. So I've given you a little thread which can help you through life.

Even when you, when a storm comes and the floods come, this little thread can save your life. God's commands to father and mother in a godly and biblical family apply to them both. So the family, biblical family, should be clearer to the world in and through you than the brightness of the sun, the sunshine.

That's how your family should shine. But what a tragedy if it's not like that. And you get men of God with godless children, children going the wrong way.

Well, that will keep them from ever becoming proud. It's a thorn in their flesh. And if they sin, let them sin.

But not in your home, not in your home, not in your house. Let them do it far away, but not where you are. So you realize how serious we must take this whole matter of the family.

It's very important. We have no time. And you noticed I didn't even have time to speak about it being a tool in God's hands.

It's just like a drop in the ocean. There's just not enough time. So how can you lead a congregation? How can you preach the gospel if you can't even lead your own family? It's terrible when God himself says that to you, straight to you.

May God help us who have families that we won't be ashamed when we stand before God. And if we can't stand firm and be steadfast, we won't have the strength to stand. A church, the church cannot prosper and a nation cannot prosper if it doesn't have healthy and godly and biblical families.

Let us bow our heads. Lord, may we find ourselves now before you, the eternal God, whose eyes are like flames of fire and whose words are sharper than any two-edged sword and your voice like the sound of many waters. Lord, raise up biblical families, families, and raise up husbands and wives and children.

That your name will be glorified and that your word will run throughout the world and people will recognize you and accept your words without any hindrance and it will reach the ends of the earth. Amen.

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