

Social and ethical series

# FAMILIES



Christian Values in Education

Age Range 6 – 13  
[6-9 years with adult]

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## **CHRISTIAN VALUES IN EDUCATION**

An organisation set up to challenge the atheistic and amoral attitudes found in our education system today

# Families

## Introduction

Most children are brought up by their parents until they are grown up and leave home. Today, however, we are seeing more and more children who are not living with both their parents.

When you go to school you meet boys and girls who only live with their mother at home, and maybe some only with their father.

Some live with their mother or father and another person who is not their parent.

Some boys and girls speak of two homes, one with their mother and another one with their father. Others may live with their mother and father but say they are not married.

Teaching at school today may even mention children living with what appears to be two fathers or two mothers.

This can be very confusing and lead to many questions in your mind; like the little girl who came home from school and asked her mummy "will you and daddy be divorced one day?"

This booklet, based on God's Word, tells of the way how families should live together.

# What the Bible teaches on family homes

The Bible is the word of God, and God has laid down a pattern for our family life. We are told very clearly in the Bible that:

- **A man and a woman should be married before they live together and have children.**

At the beginning of the Bible, in the book of *Genesis*, before any children had been born, we read how a man and his wife would be so close together that they would be as one person. That is how the Bible describes marriage. It says, "*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*" (*Genesis* 2. 24.) Adam and Eve became like that before they had any children.

All through the Bible we see how a marriage between a man and a woman is for having children. It is not right in the sight of God to have children outside of marriage.

- **Parents should provide all that is needed for their children.**

The Bible tells us it is wicked not to give to those of our own house what they have need of (*1 Timothy* 5. 8). Therefore parents should supply the needs of their children and also try to hold a reserve to help them in later life. (*2 Corinthians* 12. 14) We know that some parents are poor or ill and have difficulty in providing. The Bible does not speak against these who do all they can, but against those who *wilfully neglect* their families.

- **A father and mother are to teach their children what is right and wrong.**

The Bible emphasises this in both the Old and New Testaments. It says:

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

- Children are to be brought up "*in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6. 4)

This means a child should be taught what the Bible teaches for their behaviour and in the hope that they will be saved from God's wrath.

- **Parents are to correct their children when they do wrong.**

The Bible tells us that parents who do not correct their children do not love them (Proverbs 13. 24). God corrects His people for their good when they sin against Him, (Hebrews 12. 6,11), so fathers, and mothers, should correct their children because it is for their good (Proverbs 29. 17).

- **Children are to obey and honour their parents**

This is one of God's Ten Commandments (Exodus 20. 12), and repeated in the letters to the churches (Ephesians 6. 1,2).

- **Parents and children should love one another**

The picture of the family in the Bible is so beautifully described in Paul's letter to the people who lived in Colosse, (Colossians 3. 18-21) where the wife, the husband and the children are to be bound together in love and duty to each other.

If the words of the Bible are obeyed then the family is a happy one as described in **Psalm 128**.

Do read it.

# Promises that are made to this end

If you have been to a wedding in a church or chapel you may have noticed that the things which the Bible tells us so clearly are said in the marriage service.

The man and woman, who are being married, promise to love each other and to stay with each other as long as they both live.

This is a very special promise and is said in front of lots of people - but most important it is heard by *God*.

This is not only for their own good but for the benefit of children who they may have and for happiness in the family.

These special promises spoken at a wedding are called vows because they are so important. Vows must never be broken.

Only when the man or woman dies are they to be parted from each other.

# What do we see about us?

It seems that fewer people today wish to get married and live in the way that the Bible lays down. Yet it is so clear, as we look around us, that when the Bible pattern of family life is broken then trouble comes, especially upon the children.

We all have a sinful heart and a sinful nature within us which causes us to misbehave. When trouble comes upon us or things seem to go against us then our sinful nature often causes us to behave very badly indeed. Teachers have noticed how trouble from a broken home can affect the way children behave, especially at school.

Have you wondered why some children in your class always seem to be naughty and try to spoil things for everyone? It may be they are the ones who do not have a happy home and truly loving parents. They seem to want to make the teacher cross so that they always receive attention. They want to be noticed and cared about enough even to be told off. It does not mean they have fewer toys or less pocket money than you do, but what they can often be missing at home is a complete love from both parents.

A true story is told of one little boy, we will call him Ian, who one day at school suddenly became dreadful in his behaviour. After a lot of talking, the teacher discovers that the man whom the little boy has always called "Daddy" has told Ian that he is not his father and does not really love him. Ian does not know who his real father is or where he is. He becomes very disruptive and unruly making it very hard for the teacher to care for him and for the other children to mix with him.

The same sort of behaviour can sometimes be seen in children whose parents have separated, and they live with only one of their parents at home. Even where there is love, it is bound to be more

difficult for one parent to give all the loving attention a child needs, and it is distressing for the child to know that the other parent lives somewhere else and is not present or willing to help.

We may know some children who have lost a mother or father by death. Although everyone in the family is very sad the children do not feel the same as those who believe a parent no longer loves them.

Occasionally married people find they cannot give birth to children. It is possible for such people to adopt children who cannot be cared for by their own parents. They bring up the children as if they were their own and the children can enjoy true family life through the combined love of a mother and father.

Sadly today we may hear of some children living not with a mother and father but with seemingly two fathers or two mothers. It is a great sin for two such people to choose to live together as if they are married. The children they care for are not really their own offspring and they cannot give the combined love of a mother and father.

# How should we behave?

## Thankfully

If you have loving parents who love each other you should ever be thankful for the happy home they provide for you. You should be even more thankful to God where your mother and father try to bring you up in the way the Bible teaches, and obey them in love to them.

## Tenderly

Such children should also have pity on other children who do not enjoy such complete love at home. You should try not to become angry with them neither be unkind to them.

Ian had been very badly treated and he behaved so badly that nobody wanted to be his friend. The teacher decided to try to help Ian. One day, when Ian was not there, the teacher asked all the class to help him to behave better. The plan they agreed to was to praise Ian for the nice things he did and try not to notice the naughty things. Every time Ian deserved praise the teacher coloured in a square on a special chart. When so many squares were filled in Ian was allowed to choose something to do which involved other boys and girls in his class. Gradually, Ian found it was much nicer to behave better and have friends again.

It would be easy for you to think that this special attention was unfair. But you should not, because it is far better to have your *special* attention at home, which Ian did not receive.

## Prayerfully

We should pray for those less favoured than ourselves that God will have mercy upon them. We should be especially kind to those who have lost a mother or father through death and pray that God will help them and provide for them.

Pray that God will guide and help us as we grow to obey His Word.

# Conclusion

It is sad to see so many broken homes today and children not enjoying full family life with a mother and father.

Ian had parents who had either never made wedding vows or had broken them. As a result of this Ian suffered sadness and distress.

It is a sin to break promises and not live in accordance with God's Holy Word. Sin always brings trouble and sadness, and no more so than in the family and amongst the children. Happiness is found in obedience to the Word of God, that is, the Bible.

When you grow up it is hoped you will live in the pattern of life laid down in the Bible. If you are a boy and one day marry a girl, or if you are a girl and one day marry a boy (having prayed much about it beforehand), try your utmost to keep your marriage promises. Then you will not depart into ways which break up your own family and affect your children. It will not be easy because sin within us will cause many upsets. But if we seek help of God and pray that we keep to the promises we have made then:

*"happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee"*  
(Psalm 128.2).

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