

Now What? 5 Strong Families

I've often wondered if some of the holidays that we celebrate here in America weren't created just so merchants can pedal their wares or just another excuse for us to take a day off work or school and party. **But** Mother's Day is not one of those holidays. Mother's day is a significantly appropriate holiday related to one of honorable, significant, life-impacting professions or life duties since Cain was born to Adam and Eve. Moses, Elijah, Samuel, David, Daniel, and even Jesus had a mother, so did Stalin, Hitler, Hussein, and bin Laden. Moms have had, and continue to have, massively powerful influence on their children and the nations they grow up in to occupy, work, live and lead. We must take the time to recognize, thank, encourage, and pray for our moms and all of our moms for their task is absolutely one of the most significant of all earthly endeavors. **PRAY**

One thing among many that I have greatly admired about Rick Santorum throughout and way beyond his bid for the Republican Presidential nomination is his consistent, unwavering, biblically faithful, conservative stand for the preservation and protection of the American family. He, even at the risk of alienating some voters, has stood strong and unwavering for his and our biblical views of the family and morality.

The family is being undermined in America in unprecedented ways from a vast array of liberal, ungodly, immoral systems like Hollywood, educational systems, some state governments, and even our own federal government. Santorum frequently pointed out during his campaign that the only way America could get and stay strong was to have strong families. I agree. I voted for him. We need more people like him

standing up for and defending the biblical principles and purposes that will help strengthen families in America.

My question for today is: How strong of a role did families have in the health and strength of the church in her infant days? We know the other **factors of health and growth** were-

Convinced of the resurrection

Filled with the Spirit

Christian culture- love, integrity, and generosity

Pastors and deacons were appointed

Mission minded

Let's continue to examine the health and strength of the church as it relates to the family.... Paul, Silas, Timothy, and the undisclosed rest of his team, arrived in Philippi. Paul cast the demon out of a girl who had been bringing much profit to some local "businessmen." They became very angry. They rallied a mob and dragged them before the city officials. They were beaten with rods (caning) and thrown in the inner prison and their feet placed in stocks with an order for tight security.

25 About midnight **Paul and Silas** were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. **26**

Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the jail were shaken, and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains came loose. **27** When the jailer woke up and saw the doors of the prison open, he drew his sword and was going to kill himself, since he thought the prisoners had escaped. **28**

But Paul called out in a loud voice, “Don’t harm yourself, because all of us are here!” ²⁹ Then the jailer called for lights, rushed in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ Then he escorted them out and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹ So they said, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.” ³² Then they spoke the message of the Lord to him along with everyone in his house. ³³ He took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds. Right away he and all his family were baptized. ³⁴ He brought them up into his house, set a meal before them, and rejoiced because he had believed God with his entire household. Acts 16:25-34 (HCSB)

We have looked at this passage before from different points of interest and instruction. The fact that Paul and Silas should have been moaning and complaining but instead were leading all the prisoners in a Christian version of “jailhouse rock for Jesus” is astounding. They were worshipping God in the most inconvenient, uncomfortable situation and at the strangest of hours.

But there is something about this jailer that is significant that I want to bring to light. It seems that even before the jailer

actually heard the gospel and was converted himself, he brought Paul and Silas into his home to present the gospel to his family and household. That is significant. If a lost man has enough sense and love for his family to make sure that they hear the life changing good news, what does that tell us?

This was a similar case as that with Cornelius who had sent for Peter to come preach the gospel (last Sunday). Cornelius had not even been saved yet himself but had invited all his family and friends to his house to hear Peter preach the gospel of Jesus.

Was love and concern for family more important then that it is now? Where is the sense of responsibility and urgency for the spiritual well-being of our family and friends today?

Lesson: If there is any chance that you have truly found the way to life eternal, salvation, peace and hope, you should be calling all your lost family and friends together, invite a pastor into your home, and have an evangelistic service. Is that such a foreign, strange, inconceivable concept? You might say, “that was 2,000 years ago. That won’t work today. Baloney! (**Venezuela**)

It can and will work today. You may need to be a little creative, but it will work. If you love Jesus and you love your family and friends, do something. Have a party, show a movie, send out an e-mail, post on Facebook, host a bible study in your living room,

Now let's talk about Timothy a little bit....

¹ Then he went on to Derbe and Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman, but his father was a Greek. ² The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him. ³ Paul wanted Timothy to go with him, so he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, since they all knew that his father was a Greek. ⁴ As they traveled through the towns, they delivered to them the decisions reached by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem. ⁵ So the churches were strengthened in the faith and were increased in number daily. Acts 16:1-5 (HCSB)

³ I thank God, whom I serve with a clear conscience as my forefathers did, when I constantly remember you in my prayers night and day. ⁴ Remembering your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy, ⁵ clearly recalling your sincere faith that first lived in your grandmother Lois, then in your mother Eunice, and that I am convinced is in

you also. ⁶ Therefore, I remind you to keep ablaze the gift of God that is in you through the laying on of my hands. ⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fearfulness, but one of power, love, and sound judgment. **2** Tim 1:3-7 (HCSB)

Timothy, one of the most spoken of, used of God, second generation believer/pastors was spoken of twice in regard to the faith of his mother. How significant to you suppose grandma Lois' and mom Eunice's faith was in the spiritual foundations and receptivity to God's call on Timothy for salvation and to the ministry? According to Luke's and Paul's account in the bible, it seems to have been quite significant. It is included in the holy, inerrant, perfect word of God.

Though certainly a young person can come to Christ and even experience the call to ministry in spite of unloving, uncaring, unsaved parents, how much better, how much greater the opportunity, how much more clear the call, for a young man or young lady to meet God and hear His voice than through a godly parent who speaks often and consistently, in and out of the home, of Christ and His Word?

As Rick Santorum repeatedly said, as the family goes, so goes the nation, the same is true for our church and all churches. As the family goes, so goes the church. The health and strength of the church is largely a composite reflection of the health and strength of its individual families. What have we learned today

that might make our families stronger and thus our church stronger?

Healthy families, healthy church:

Concerned about lost family Pass on the faith! Obedience to the great commandment and great commission begins at home. Love your children, siblings, parents and lead them to salvation in Christ.

It would seem rather hypocritical to bother to travel to remote corners of the world to present the gospel if you've neglected to share Christ with your own family? We must make and teach disciples in our own homes and neighborhoods.

8 Now if anyone does not provide for his own relatives, and especially for his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. **1** Tim 5:8 (HCSB)

This, in context, is talking about financial support. If the condemnation for not supporting our families financially is this severe, how much more severe if we fail to meet the spiritual needs?

You and I who are saved have no excuse for not passing on our faith to our children and grandchildren. We should not rely on the church to teach our kids and grandkids about Jesus and lead them to Christ. It is first and foremost our responsibility at

home. The church at best serves to enhance and reinforce what is already going on in the home.

The Philippian jailer and Cornelius had an excuse for bringing someone in to present the gospel. They were ignorant unbelievers themselves.

Christ centered Speak often of Christ. If your home became a reality show, what evidence would there be that your home is a Christian home? How often, how consistently do we pray, study the bible, discuss doctrine, morals, and other biblical themes, speak the name of Jesus (honorably), demonstrate Christ-like character, etc.?

6 Your speech should always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person. **Col 4:6** (HCSB)

Especially at home! But often it is at home that we let our guard down, get spiritually lazy, and neglect to live in a way that honors Christ, invokes His presence, and inspires our children.

After Joshua led the Israelites across the dry river bed of the Jordan River....

4 So Joshua summoned the 12 men selected from the Israelites, one man for each tribe, **5** and said to them, “Go

across to the ark of the LORD your God in the middle of the Jordan. Each of you lift a stone onto his shoulder, one for each of the Israelite tribes, ⁶ so that this will be a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, ‘What do these stones mean to you?’ ⁷ you should tell them, ‘The waters of the Jordan were cut off in front of the ark of the LORD’s covenant. When it crossed the Jordan, the Jordan’s waters were cut off.’ Therefore these stones will always be a memorial for the Israelites.” Josh 4:4-7 (HCSB) Joshua was creating a teachable moment for parents with the stones so God’s blessings would be discussed in the homes. What about you? How will you make Christ known?

Biblical marriage- one man, one woman for life. Our president may have changed his mind but God hasn’t changed His.

⁴ “Haven’t you read,” He replied, “that He who created them in the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and He also said: For this reason a man will leave his father

and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh? ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, man must not separate.” Matt 19:4-6 (HCSB) (quoting Gen 2:24)