



The Family Friend

A collection of articles and quotes to aid your family in daily living.

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The Pressure Families Feel from Family

“It’s all about pressure.” that’s how Hall of Fame linebacker Mike Singletary described the philosophy behind the Chicago Bears’ famous “forty-six” defense. “We’re going to come at you, and hit your quarterback”—until he just can’t take it any more. I’m sure there are a lot of families out there who can relate to New York Giants quarterback Phil Simms looking across the scrimmage line at Singletary, set right behind “The Fridge” William Perry. Pressure from every corner.

Our extended families can be a great aid in helping one another get to the great family gathering in heaven. But when we all are not headed to the same end zone, it can be one of the biggest sources of pressure and a huge obstacle.

Family pressures originate from several sources. First, when we do not see eye-to-eye on moral, doctrinal, or ethical questions, it can create intense pressure and an uncomfortable family environment.

Second, social obligations

can create conflict within our extended families. From something as simple as the location of where a holiday meal will be shared, to how an elder family member will be cared for, can cause friction.

Family pressure comes from an incomplete surrender of roles as the family matures. Let me explain.

Matthew crawled up in my lap the other day. For a moment, I enjoyed his company but then was saddened by the fact that his legs dangle almost to the floor from my lap. I’m afraid Nicholas and I just might break a chair if he were to sit on my lap very long. As much as I wish to relive the days of holding my babies, I realize they are growing up and those opportunities are fast leaving.

But what would it do to them for me to constantly force them to sit in my lap during worship, or even at home throughout their adolescent years? It would be a ridiculous picture subjecting them to ridicule and embarrassment.

But many parents do no different as they cradle their children well into adulthood. Some constantly interfere with their adult children’s independent households, criticizing their deci-

sions, interjecting their opinion on everything from how baby is dressed to what daughter-in-law is cooking for dinner.

Parents must learn to let their children leave the nest. As much as we love our children and feel such great affection for our offspring, true love mandates releasing the parental apron strings. There is intense pressure within children to please their parents (even grandparents) through a plethora of human emotions. Loving parents recognize this and learn to restrain their involvement in their adult children’s affairs.

Brothers and sisters in the flesh (and to a lesser extent cousins, aunts and uncles) can be a great source of familial joy, but also a great strain. Siblings can create emotional and financial stress: a brother that is always feeding a drug habit with “borrowed” funds; a sister with yet another deadbeat, live-in boyfriend; a jealous, bossy, or rude in-law; an unfaithful relative, etc. With relatives like these, who needs enemies?

Your Immediate Family Comes First

When you and your spouse leave your respective families and form a new household, everything else becomes secondary to the health and spiritual well-

being of your new family. While the extended family is a vital support network, it is always secondary to your new home.

This means there must be a true separation that occurs and which must be maintained. As well-meaning as our loved ones are, any outside influence that undermines immediate family roles is destructive.

A close-knit family is a wonderful blessing. But destructive family influences must be isolated. If you have family members that have become a source of conflict, as much as you would very much like to help them, at some point you must decide if continued engagement is robbing your family of precious time and energy.

If so, you must learn to access their behavior divorced from the blood ties that may have prevented you from doing what you need to do. As much as we hate to access the truth of the situation, sometimes we must recognize that blood carries no weight when it becomes a source of destructive pressure within your home.

Your immediate family must come first. It's not an option.

Genesis 2:24; Romans 16:17-18

—Jared Jackson

Happy New Year!

More “Real” Men

Stan Mitchell

“And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them, and blessed them” (Mark 11:16).

Recently, I saw a bumper sticker that read: “**Real men love Jesus.**” The sentence impressed me because there is such confusion over the role of men in society today.

Jesus was a real man. He possessed a moral strength that shames every “wannabe” tough guy out there. So, what does a real man do?

- ◆ A real man is strong enough to protect his children, and gentle enough to hold them in his arms.
- ◆ A real man does honest work for honest pay.
- ◆ A real man will pray on his knees in the sight of his children.
- ◆ A real man will return good for evil at the work place, in the church, and at home
- ◆ A real man will teach his son to be gentle and his daughter to be strong.
- ◆ A real man respects the elderly.
- ◆ A real man doesn't cheat his boss, his friends, or his wife.
- ◆ A real man brings his family

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to worship and teaches his children God's way.

- ◆ A real man forgives.
- ◆ A real man builds, whether it's tables and walls, or the church. He knows that anyone can heap mockery and derision on another's efforts; he will lend a helping hand.
- ◆ A real man listens to children.
- ◆ A real man will admit when he is wrong and take responsibility.
- ◆ A real man learns humility; a weak man thinks he knows it all.
- ◆ A real man takes God at his word.
- ◆ And, most importantly, **a real man loves Jesus.**

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*‘Mid pleasures and palaces
Though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble,
There's no place like home.’*

—John Howard Payne