

The Family Friend



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

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A Strong Sense of Family

Trevor Match was being interviewed on ESPN radio, asked about why he thought that Clemson had built such a strong football program in the last few years. His quick response was, "They have built a strong sense of family." He talked about how Head Coach Dabo Sweeney and his staff wanted players to see their coaches not just as coaches but also as husbands and fathers. Consequently, the coaches' families spend a lot of time around the athletic facilities or hanging out with the players. They have intentionally built a strong family environment that doesn't compartmentalize but rather coalesces. Recruits talk about sensing it when they make a visit, but, more importantly, players on the roster speak just as strongly about it.

How many teams make such an emphasis isn't clear, but you don't seem to hear that said often enough. While I find such human interest stories heartwarming, it

makes me wonder, "Do people describe our congregation with similar terminology?" Are we creating, developing, and nurturing a strong sense of family?

The early church definitely majored in that priority. From the time the first church of our Savior was established, we find this emphasis (Acts 2:42-47). Often, New Testament writers spoke of the church with family terminology (Eph. 2:19; 3:15; 1 Tim. 3:15; 5:1-2; Ti. 2:1-8; etc.). The church exists as a sub-community within the broader community around them. People from that broader community are looking for greater intimacy and meaningful relationships. One place they often turn is to various churches. Whether through our efforts to evangelize or through their seeking that brings them within our walls, we have an opportunity to expose them to a "strong sense of family."

But, by being faithful to New Testament teaching, we offer this in the context of truth rather than error. We cannot settle for simply offering truth, as eternally vital as that is. Along with it, we must love, embrace, and work to incorporate them into our family. God has His church designed to follow His written will in the context of a tight-knit,

spiritual family. A true sense of family will draw them into a relationship with us. It will better open their hearts and minds to being drawn into a relationship with Christ. The net effect will be greater than a national championship. It will be many, many souls won to eternal life. We cannot afford to miss the opportunity to be spiritual family!

—Neal Pollard, via The Daily Bread

Growing Interest in Astrology



While more and more Americans are denying faith in God, belief in astrology, witchcraft, and sorcery is growing. Astrology academies and Internet users of natal charts have produced thousands of podcasts, Facebook pages, YouTube channels, mobile apps, newsletters, and streaming videos. Data crunchers tell us that there are more than two million websites on astrology.

Richard Smoot speaking for the International Society for Astrological Research said, "So much is going on in people's lives these days, so much pressure to act or react, and they simply want to sort things out." Astrologers claim that people in crisis are drawn to astrology because they want guidance in matters of love, finance, and career. The astrology site Co-Star says "This generation is wrapping itself in the blanket of the zodiac to try and make sense of a world that seems to be coming apart at the seams." There is a growing interest in astrology among millennials.

In today's world, when people reject the Bible and its teachings they are left with no help in making critical decisions. In that void, they seek out unhealthy and destructive substitutes. There may be a growing interest in astrology as a place for people to find answers in life, but it is as harmful and misleading as ever. Source: *Saturday Evening Post*, July/August 2018, page 16.—from **Does God Exist?** 4th Qtr, 2018

As My Kids Get Older . . .

They are now 13 and 11. Some days, the realization of time passing with them in my home just hits me harder than others. Maybe the holiday season makes me think of it more, but it's been on my mind a lot lately.

I only have a handful of years before these precious arrows are launched into the world. In reality, only then will it

be realized whether or not I have prepared them to face Satan's temptations and a world that is increasingly against virtually everything we stand for.

But I have so much I want to teach them. I have so much I want them to learn and discover while under my roof. I have so many things I want to give them. Yet, with time not-so-slowly passing by, what must take the priority?

I won't do all of these perfectly, but as I simply reflect and think out loud today, here are some things I want to do better as the years go by with my children at home.

Listen. My children's needs are getting deeper. What they are thinking about and seeing around them is only growing more complex. As such, the questions they are asking are getting more complicated and the things they want (and need) to talk about are harder for me to discern at times. Still, they need dad to listen, and I hope I do that.

Prioritize God's Word. We strive to do this, but it's always a struggle. Still, I want my kids, no matter their age, to know that the Bible is part of our daily lives. Whether it's reading a chapter or two together at breakfast, or a short devotional at night, or whatever it looks like, I want them to see Scripture open in our house often.

Love Their Mother. We grow ever busier, it seems, all the time. A great deal of that busyness is helping the kids, and with all the busyness also comes added stress at times. Still, I

want my kids to see that daddy loves mommy through all the hurry and all the stress we might face. She is tops in my book, and I want them to know that all the way through to the end of their time in my home.

Teach Responsibility. I will be honest, I have not been consistently good at this in their younger years. They are okay at it at certain times, but I want my kids to know the pride in a job they have done and done well, but also in a work or act of service that they simply took upon themselves to do.

Oh, the list is endless. That's part of the frustration of parenting. What you want your kids to know before they leave just grows. You always think of something else you would like to help with, and you nearly always feel as if you have failed in doing what you should have.

But I pray that I don't give up. These two kids can be frustrating at times, there's no doubt about that. But it is still an honor to be their dad, and I pray that I will do my best as the years go by to honor God in how I raise these treasures from Him.

—Adam Faughn, via ***A Legacy of Faith***

