



Building a Strong Family Foundation

Adapted from "A Sure Foundation" series by Scott Erickson.

It just seems like yesterday and my children were young and carefree. Time has gone by quickly as two are now married, one has a child, and the baby is graduating high school. Not only has my own family dynamic changed, but the community in which we live has changed too.

Pew Research Center demonstrates these trends in our nation today:

Generational differences in voting and party affiliation are shaped by underlying values and attitudes that have been undergoing change in the past few decades. One of the clearest examples of generational change in social values is on views of homosexuality. Over the past 15 years, growing percentages in all generations favor gays and lesbians marrying legally.

However, Millennials and Xers remain more supportive of gay marriage than Boomers and Silents, whose early views on the issue were far more conservative than those of Millennials and Xers.

Nearly six-in-ten Millennials (59%) favor gay marriage compared with just 33% of Silents; this wide attitude gap persists even as Silents have become 13 points more likely to favor gay marriage over the past decade and a half.

Among middle-aged generations, more Gen Xers favor (50%) than oppose (42%) allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally. Boomers oppose gay marriage by a modest margin (48% to 42%); however, in 1996 Boomers opposed gay marriage by more than two-to-one (66% to 26%).

Attitudes about race also have changed, with younger generations leading the way. While large majorities of all generations now agree that it is all right for blacks and whites to date each other, the percent who completely agree with this statement is dramatically higher among Millennials and Xers than among Boomers and Silents. About three-quarters of Millennials

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(75%) and Xers (73%) completely agree with interracial dating, compared with far lower percentages of Boomers (57%) and Silents (37%). The greater acceptance of diversity among young people extends to views of immigrants and immigration. Overall, about half of the public (52%) says newcomers from other countries strengthen American society, while 39% say they threaten traditional American customs and values.

By a wide margin (69% to 27%), Millennials say newcomers strengthen American society, and most Xers (55%) share this view. Older generations are more divided: Boomers and Silents are about as likely to say newcomers threaten traditional American customs and values as to say they strengthen society.

Younger generations also are significantly less likely than older ones to affiliate with a religious tradition. This pattern began in the 1970s when 13% of Baby Boomers were unaffiliated with any particular religion, according to the General Social Survey. That compared with just 6% among the Silent generation and 3% among the Greatest generation.

In the most recent General Social Survey, 26% of Millennial generation respondents said they were unaffiliated, as did 21% of Gen Xers. Among Baby Boomers, 15% were unaffiliated – not significantly different from when they were first measured in the 1970s. And just 10% of the Silent Generation said that they were unaffiliated.¹

¹ “The Generation Gap and the 2012 Election: Angry Silents, Disengaged Millennials,” Pew Research Center, November 3, 2011, 19-20, <http://www.people-press.org/files/legacy-pdf/11-3-11%20Generations%20Release.pdf> (accessed July 17, 2017).

COURAGE

C1: When you think of the term “godly parents” what comes to your mind?

C2: Describe your childhood. Include the role of each parent and how discipline was administered in your home.

C3: Describe the culture in which you grew up. How has the culture changed? What dangers do children face today that were not faced when you were growing up? What three basic needs and desires have not changed through the years?

STRENGTH

S1: As in all things, God has given us a blueprint to build a strong foundation for family success. Read and answer the following.

Hebrews 12:4–11 (ESV)

- What can you glean from these verses about family success?

S2: Part of God’s instructions to build a solid foundation for family success is proper child development. Read and answer the following.

Hebrews 12:4 (ESV)

- From this verse, what is the reason for discipline?
- When you hear the word “discipline” what do you think about in your mind?

Hebrews 12:5 (ESV)

- From this verse, what should be the means of discipline?

Hebrews 12:6–8 (ESV)

- From these verses, what should the motive of discipline be?

Hebrews 12:9 (ESV)

- From this verse, what should the goal of discipline be in our home?

Hebrews 12:10–11 (ESV)

- From this verse, what should the result of discipline be in our home?

- On a scale of 1-4 with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate yourself on how well you have built these five pillars of discipline in your home. Write out a plan to improve.

S3: Sit down and develop a plan of discipline for your house built around these five pillars of discipline. Be sure to include various ages and personality types in your plan. If you have a spouse, sit down with her, discuss, and make adjustments to this plan.

ENDURANCE

E1: When you hear the phrase, “Godly Parent,” who are the people that come to your mind? Write down their names. What makes them godly parents in your mind?

E2: Your children matter to God. They have been entrusted to you as a sacred responsibility to raise godly offspring who will serve God. Read and answer the following.

Ephesians 6:4 (NLT)

- From this verse, what is the focus you should have?

1 Corinthians 4:14–16 (ESV)

- From this verse, what is the model we should display to our children?

1 Thessalonians 2:7–8 (ESV)

1 Thessalonians 2:11–12 (ESV)

- From these verses, what should parents be looking to build in their families?

1 John 1:9 (ESV)

- From this verse, what can we learn about process when we build our family?

E3: Look back over the responses in E2. From the four snapshots of a godly parent, rate yourself from 1-4 on how well you are doing. 1 is very well and 4 is not very well.

- Have a clear-cut objective 1 2 3 4
- You practice what you preach 1 2 3 4
- You have built a solid relationship bond 1 2 3 4
- You understand the need of constant repair 1 2 3 4

Pick one that you struggle with the most and write out a plan to improve.