



Fundamentals of a Healthy Family

Adapted from “Home Improvement” series by Rod Loy

Charles Swindoll gives a good example of what a healthy family should look like. He provides thought provoking information in his article, “8 Characteristics of a Healthy Family” writing the following:

What is a family? I decided to do what you often do when you want to find the meaning of a word. I checked the dictionary and, admittedly, I was disappointed. Webster defines family as, "a group of individuals living under one roof and usually under one head; a group of persons of common ancestry." This definition was not much help. To be more thorough, I dusted off my giant, exhaustive Oxford English Dictionary, found the entry for family, pulled out my magnifying glass, and read, "The body of persons who live in one house or under one head, including parents, children, servants, etc." OK, that was not my childhood home! As I recall, I was the servant! Maybe that fits Oxford, but it does not describe most of us. Let's begin to unravel this little mystery. See what you think of my working definition.

The family is where you put down your first roots, where you form your most lasting impressions, where you put together the building blocks of your character, and where you determine whether you will view life through the eyes of prejudice or acceptance. Family is where you learn to laugh and where you are allowed to weep without losing respect. Family is where you learn how to share, how to relate, and how to treat other people. Family is where you learn how to interpret your surroundings correctly. It is where you discover how to draw the line between right and wrong, between good and evil. Dysfunctional families blur that line, and boundaries become unclear. Solid, secure families have a clear view of the difference so that its members have little ethical confusion. Moral dilemmas will challenge you, but if you come from a healthy family, you are seldom unclear about what is right or wrong.¹

¹ Charles R. Swindoll, “8 Characteristics of a Healthy Family,” LifeWay, <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/8-characteristics-of-healthy-families> (accessed July 6, 2017).

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COURAGE

C1: Look back at your family growing up. On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate how well your family prepared you to build a healthy family. List some of the reasons for the rating you gave.

C2. Look at your household now. What are some of your healthy and unhealthy characteristics you have brought with you from your upbringing? How have these characteristics made an impact on your family? Write out a plan to strengthen and make your family healthier.

STRENGTH

S1: Read and answer the following.

Proverbs 17:22 (ESV)

- From this verse, what should a healthy family have in it?
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very fun and 4 being not very fun, rate the fun that is in your family. Write out a weekly family fun night plan for the next four weeks.

S2: Read and answer the following.

Romans 12:10 (ESV)

- From this verse, what should a healthy family have in it?
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very high and 4 being not very high, rate yourself on how well you give your family attention. Write out a plan to improve in this area.

S3: Read and answer the following.

Deuteronomy 4:9 (ESV)

- From this verse, what should a healthy family have in it?
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very good memories and 4 being not very good memories, rate yourself on how well you capture memories with your family. Write out a plan to improve capturing memories.

ENDURANCE

E1: Read and answer the following.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 (ESV)

Matthew 12:35 (ESV)

- From these verses, what should a healthy family have in it?
- On a scale from 1-4, with 1 being very inspiring and 4 being not very inspiring, rate how well you impart inspiration to your family. Write out a plan to improve.

E2: Read and answer the following.

John 13:34 (ESV)

- From this verse, what should a healthy family have in it?
- Write out the difference between contractual love and covenant love.
- On a scale from 1-4, with 1 being very high and 4 being not very high, rate how well you show covenant love to your spouse and family. Write out a plan to improve.

E3: Read and answer the following.

Deuteronomy 6:5 (ESV)

- From this verse, what should a healthy family have in it?

- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very high and 4 being not very high, rate your level of how much you yield to God. Write out a plan to improve.

E4: Find three men in your sphere of influence with whom you could share these principles within the next sixty days. Describe the time together.