



Building a Successful Family

Adapted from "Taking Your Family to the Next Level" series by Scott Erickson

The home is where we receive our concepts and ideas of what a home should be. For many, the home is nothing more than a 'bed and breakfast' with no interaction taking place. Fathers are just as essential to healthy child development as mothers.

Psychology Today explained, "Fatherhood turns out to be a complex and unique phenomenon with huge consequences for the emotional and intellectual growth of children." Erik Erikson, a pioneer in the world of child psychology, asserts that a father's love and a mother's love are qualitatively different. Fathers "love more dangerously" because their love is more "expectant, more instrumental" than a mother's love. A father brings unique contributions to the job of parenting a child that no one else can replicate. Following are some of the most compelling ways that a father's involvement makes a positive difference in a child's life.

Men and women are different. They eat differently. They dress differently. They cope with life differently. Girls and boys who grow up with a father are more familiar and secure with the curious world of men.

Girls with involved, married fathers are more likely to have healthier relationships with the opposite sex because they learn from their fathers how proper men act toward women. They know which behaviors are inappropriate. They also have a healthy familiarity with the world of men — they don't wonder how a man's facial stubble feels or what it's like to be hugged by strong arms. This knowledge builds emotional security and safety from the exploitation of predatory males.

Boys who grow up with dads are less likely to be violent. They have their masculinity affirmed and learn from their fathers how to channel their masculinity and strength in positive ways. Fathers help sons understand proper male sexuality, hygiene and behavior in age-appropriate ways. As noted sociologist David Popenoe explains, "Fathers are far more than just 'second adults' in the



home. Involved fathers — especially biological fathers — bring positive benefits to their children that no other person is as likely to bring."¹

¹ Glenn Stanton, "The Involved Father," Focus on the Family, 2004, <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting/parenting-roles/the-involved-father/fathers-matter> (accessed July 6, 2017).

COURAGE

C1: What does family success look like to you?

C2: How did your dad and mom express love as you were growing up? Did you feel your dad loved you? How did you know?

C3: Mother Teresa was asked upon receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, “What can we do to promote world happiness?” She replied, “If you want to bring happiness to the whole world, go home and love your family.”²

- What do you think “love your family” means?
- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate yourself on how well you love your family. Write a plan to improve.

² Jeannie Ewing, “10 Most Beautiful Mother Teresa Quotes on the Family,” The Mystical Humanity of Christ Publishing, <https://www.coraevans.com/blog/article/10-most-beautiful-mother-teresa-quotes-on-the-family> (accessed August 2, 2017)

STRENGTH

S1: Our goal should be to raise and teach our children what the Lord says family success really is. Read and answer the following.

Matthew 7:24–27 (ESV)

- From these verses, what do you learn about creating stability in your family's life during tough times?

S2: You can safeguard your home and lives by understanding and following God's Word. Read and answer the following.

Colossians 1:12–14 (ESV)

James 1:7–9 (ESV)

- From these verses, what are the two things you collect about God's power in your life and your family?

S3: Our lives should not be based on what others think of us, but what is pleasing to God. Read and answer the following.

Proverbs 29:25 (ESV)

Matthew 7:24 (ESV)

Matthew 7:26 (ESV)

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (ESV)

- From these verses, what three things do you garner about bringing stability in your life and in your family?



- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very stable and 4 being not very stable, rate how stable your home is. Write out a plan to improve.

ENDURANCE

E1: Richard Dobbins from Emerge Ministries said, “Christian married love is the persistent effort on the part of two people to create for each other the circumstances in which each can become the person God intended him or her to be, a better person than he or she could become alone.”³ Read and answer the following.

1 John 4:7–8 (ESV)

Ephesians 5:25 (ESV)

- If you are married, based on Dobbins definition and these verses, rate yourself on a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, on how well your wife knows she is loved. How well do your children know they are loved by you? Write out a plan to improve their knowledge of your love for them.

E2: Rules without relationship leads to rebellion. Read and answer the following.

Ephesians 4:29–32 (ESV)

- From these verses, what are five things you must get rid of in your home to create an environment of success in your family?

- What are three things needed in order to create an environment of success?

³ Richard Dobbins, “Bonds And Boundaries For Your Family,” <http://www.drdoobbins.com/guidelines-for-great-living/articles/bonds-and-boundaries-for-your-family/> (accessed August 2, 2017).



E3: Men, you are prophets of your children's future by what you feed their minds today. Read and answer the following.

1 John 4:18 (ESV)

Amos 3:3 (ESV)

- From these verses, what do you identify is needed in order to create a successful environment in your home?

- For one month, write down or place on your phone everything you do with your family and everything you say (both positive and negative) to your family. Look over everything you said and did. What are your conclusions?