

Three Destroyers of Family Unity

Taylor Tsantles

There are a great many blessings and also many difficulties with growing up in a family. Many things in our society and age of autonomy can bring a wonderful family to ruin. We're living in a day where our society is rejecting the Godly principles upon which a happy family is established. It is a very critical time for Christian families to live in unity.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Psalm 133:1

The purpose of this article is to encourage families toward unity by uncovering and elaborating on scriptural solutions for three key destroyers of family unity: pride, rebellion and strife. Before we go any further let's look at the first two scriptural examples of how pride, rebellion and strife separated and divided a family.

Pride, Rebellion and Strife in the Garden of Eden

The Garden of Eden brought about the first recorded division of family. Pride conceived when Adam and Eve desired to have the knowledge of good and evil which only the Lord held. Next, they committed the act of rebellion against God's Word by partaking of the forbidden fruit. Finally, strife appears when God asked who ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam blamed Eve and Eve blamed the serpent. The Bible records the consequence of their sin. As you read further in Genesis you will continue to see a consistent pattern of pride, rebellion and strife. The second example is the story of Cain and Abel, the sons of Adam and Eve. The root of a prideful heart in Cain was exposed after God accepted Abel's offering and not his. Because the Lord did not accept his offering he became hardened and prideful. When the Lord confronted him about his internal pride, he acted out in rebellion by not accepting the wisdom of the Lord. Finally, Cain acted out in hatred and strife by murdering his brother. The consequences were devastating. Cain was sent away from his family and made an outcast and wanderer in a far away land.

1. Pride

Now that we have uncovered the first two scriptural examples of pride, rebellion and strife let's drill down on them individually. Not only do we see pride throughout scripture but our world has also hardened their hearts to the instruction of God's Word as a result of pride. As a young man, pride is my biggest downfall. Daily I have to repent before the Lord for pride issues. The Lord considers a prideful man a fool whose end will lead to destruction.

"Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Proverbs 16:18

"A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit." Proverbs 29:23

"The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." Proverbs 8:13

Pride is one of Satan's most powerful tools to separate the unity between God and man and the unity of the family. The root of pride is easily summed up one simple word, "me". Once we get past ourselves, we will be able to break the bond of pride in our lives. This, however, is only accomplished by daily repentance and surrendering ourselves to the authority of God and to the authorities he has placed over us.

Now, I will list a few ways that pride expresses itself in the setting of a family so that we can cut them off before pride takes root:

- 1 Rolling of the eyes
- 2 Haughty look
- 3 Excuse making
- 4 Arrogant tone of voice

Now, let's carefully read through several verses in Proverbs chapter two regarding the biblical solution to pride. Let's read through this passage in Proverbs and reveal the treasures that the Lord has in store for those who accept instruction and choose not to despise it:

“My son, “if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God. For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding. He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly. He keepeth the paths of judgment, and preserveth the way of his saints. Then shalt thou understand righteousness, and judgment, and equity; yea, every good path. When wisdom entereth into thine heart and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul.” Proverbs 2:1-15

These next several verses will help provide you with a deeper understanding of what Godly humility is:

“When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom.” Proverbs 16:19

“Better it is to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.” Proverbs 11:2

“But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.” Luke 22:26

“For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Romans 12:3

These wonderful verses will help you understand how much the Lord cherishes humility. He wants to bless those who possess humility in their hearts. I will leave you with these last verses from 1 Peter in conclusion to this first section on pride:

“Likewise ye younger submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” 1 Peter 5:5-7

2.Rebellion

Now that we've gone through specific scripture references and solutions to pride, let's begin to delve into the stronghold of rebellion and extract scriptural principles to overcome its deadly grips in our hearts. Rebellion will devour every bit of joy and zeal you have for the Lord. It is very subtle and dangerous in the way that it takes over a heart. In fact, we can have rebellion in our hearts and not even notice it. Its path leads to destruction. It drains life, energy and passion right out of you. We must constantly have our guards up against rebellion. It is a very subtle sin and it seeps slowly into a family one heart at a time. In fact, one heart of rebellion will destroy the relationships in a family and cause disunity. This is one of many things that the Bible says of rebellion:

“For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry,” 1 Samuel 15:23

Here are a few other references:

“An evil man seeketh only rebellion: therefore a cruel messenger shall be sent against him.” Proverbs 17:11

“And I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD.” Ezekiel 20:38

“Woe to the rebellious children, saith the LORD, that take counsel, but not of me; and that cover with a covering, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin.” Isaiah 30:1

The Hebrew definition of rebellion is: “maw– raw’; a prim. root; to be (cause. make) bitter (or unpleasant); (fig.) to rebel (or resist; cause. to provoke):— bitter, change, be disobedient, disobey, grievously, provocation, provoke (-ing), (be) rebel (against, -lious).”

God does not take rebellion lightly. Sadly, we live in a day and age where even many Christian young men and women are rebelling. This is often due to a lack of vision and service for the Lord. If a family loses vision, rebellion

and discontentment toward the narrow path will soon follow.

“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.” Proverbs 29:18

In reference to rebellion, here are a couple ways you will see the seed of it in a heart:

- 1 No response to verbal commands
- 2 Silence
- 3 Fighting against discipline
- 4 Lack of respect

Here are a few practical ways guard against rebellion in your home: First, we need to shun thoughts of rebellion. We need to filter them out immediately so that they don't take root. We as children also must surrender our hearts to our parents. We need to accept and embrace correction and instruction. Proverbs 3:11 says, “My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction.” This should challenge us greatly as God's children to evaluate if we are hardened against our parents correction and therefore in rebellion to our God-given authorities. God is the only rock upon which we can rely upon to overcome these destroyers.

3.Strife

Finally, I want to describe strife, it's affects on a family and how to conquer it scripturally. Strife and unity are always at war in my heart when it comes to my siblings. I have noticed the strain that sibling strife brings to a family and have experienced it first hand. Strife builds up a wall between the members of a family. Strife is the exact opposite of unity that a family should be seeking through Christ. Let me list a couple ways that you will see strife appear in your family:

- 1 Backbiting
- 2 Rough play with sisters
- 3 Harsh speaking and arguments
- 4 Coarse jokes
- 5 Tale baring

I have always cherished the council of my mom when she has said this, “Friends will come and go but siblings will last forever.” We need to realize that God has not only placed brothers and sisters in our lives to be our best friends but also to be our sharpeners and refiners through the midst of our shortcomings; constantly blessing us with gifts of forgiveness and forbearance which is not deserved. We do not realize how powerful families of God could stand without the hindrance of strife. Proverbs speaks many times about strife, and I will list many verses on it. Take plenty of time to think and meditate on these verses:

“A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife.” Proverbs 15:18

“A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends.” Proverbs 16:28

“Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.” Proverbs 17:1

“The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water: therefore leave off contention, before it be meddled with.” Proverbs 17:14

“He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat.” Proverbs 28:25

The Lord desires for strife to be an unwelcome enemy in all of our hearts. Pursue family unity through Christ and his principles alone and you will see daily success against strife.

You can see through this article and the listed verses that pride rebellion and strife are seeking to destroy family unity. Take time to examine your heart and weed out any of these roots that may be growing before it destroys the

unity and purity of your family. Remember that Satan will try to take hold of the Godly families of this world one by one. May the the Lord bring your family unity and strength in the midst of this dark world. In conclusion I want give you this encouraging verse from Romans 15:5:

“Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus.”