
“Our Core Values, Pt. 2”

GENESIS 3:1-19

OCTOBER 1ST, 2023

PASTOR BRIAN SMITH

WILDWOOD CHURCH

EAST MOLINE, ILLINOIS

AT A GLANCE

Families have huge impact on our communities. Where there is a high regard for marriage and family, communities thrive. Where there is low regard for marriage and family, communities struggle. Join us as we examine God's plan for human thriving through the gift of marriage and family.

INTRODUCTION

Secular sociologists are discovering what the Bible has taught for thousands of years: healthy families create healthy cultures. Cultures that despise marriage are prone to crumble.

In the beginning, before the fall, there was a divine plan etched into the very fabric of creation. It's a plan vividly laid out in the pages of Genesis 1 and 2. *“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.’”* Genesis 1:27-28

God “blessed” them. Can you fathom the profound beauty of this blessed life? A life where two souls commit to one other for eternity, where they bring forth new life in abundance, and in their stewardship, they bring order and purpose to the world! All of this for the singular purpose of magnifying the glory of God through the offspring of His image-bearers.

THAT DIDN'T LAST LONG

But, as the age-old story in **Genesis 3** unfolds, we see the looming shadow of a serpent, ¹**...more crafty than any other beast**. This serpent, the embodiment of cunning and deceit, slithers into the pristine garden of Eden. It whispers beguiling words into the ears of Eve, causing her to doubt the very Word of God, to question its goodness and trustworthiness. ⁴**...You will not surely die**, it hissed. **For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil**. And, tragically, she succumbed to temptation, took of the forbidden fruit, and shared it with her husband, who **was with her, and he ate**.

As a result, both Adam and Eve realized their nakedness, sewed fig leaves to cover themselves, and hid from God's presence in shame. In an instant, the blissful innocence of Eden was shattered. When the Lord God called out to them, ⁹**Where are you?** they played that pathetic blame-shifting game. Adam pointed to Eve, and Eve pointed to the serpent. Consequences were declared, and curses were pronounced.

To the woman, God declared, ¹⁶**...I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.** ¹⁷**And to Adam he said, ‘Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, “You shall not eat of it,” cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life...**

ASSAULT ON THE FAMILY

In this tragic account, we find the first recorded encounter between Satan and humanity. Here, Satan sowed seeds of doubt, disrupted the sacred covenant of marriage, and twisted God's Word. The enemy's assault on the family unit had begun, setting a dark precedent for his ongoing war against families throughout history.

The family, the very first institution established by God in Genesis 2, is the cornerstone of society, given to the world by God's common grace. Where the family weakens, culture weakens. But strong families build strong cultures. This is why the enemy relentlessly seeks to dismantle and destroy the family and why family transformation is a core value at Wildwood.

Genesis 2 presents God's design for marriage and family, while Genesis 3 illustrates the frustration of that design due to the fall and the resulting curse. However, Ephesians 5 provides a vision of redemption: *"Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior... Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her..." Ephesians 5:22-25*

IT'S MUTUAL

A healthy and strong marriage & family requires mutual self-giving. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the Church and laid down His life for her; wives are to respect their husband and submit to him.

First Peter chapter three underscores that a wife's submission and respectful conduct can profoundly impact her husband's faith. *"Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct." 1 Peter 3:1-2*

If it remains an unrealized desire that your husband leads faithfully, trust the Lord and let your husband see your respectful and pure conduct.

Men, we can be so obtuse when it comes to understanding our wives. We no more understand our wives than we understand the word obtuse; which means *annoyingly insensitive, slow to understand*. This is a perfect description of fallen man. Annoyingly insensitive. Let me say it clearly, obtuseness with our wives is sinful. *"Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered." 1 Peter 3:7*

What does that mean? If you're not sensitive to your wife's needs, God won't be sensitive to yours. You are exercising delegated authority over your family, shepherding and leading as a man of God. And if you wield it abusively, or if you neglect to wield it for the benefit of your wife and children, the Lord is not going to respond with blessing.

OUR HOMES NEED GOD'S BLESSING

God's blessing is precisely what so many homes are missing, even Christian homes. We desperately need the Lord to bless our homes. The Bible tells us the sort of home the Lord blesses...

"Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways! You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD." Psalm 128:1-4

Proverbs 31 extols the virtues of an excellent wife, highlighting her trustworthiness, industriousness, and determination to do good to her husband. Husbands and wives committed to the fear of the Lord and sacrificial love will form homes blessed by the Lord.

Deuteronomy 6 emphasizes the importance of passing God's Word from generation to generation, teaching it diligently in daily life. This general principle in the Old Testament is given directly to us dads in the New. *"Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord."* Ephesians 6:4

IT'S YOUR JOB, DADS

Let me ask you, dads, have you imparted spiritual truths to your children this week? It's not enough to merely bring your kids to church; you bear the responsibility of discipling your children in God's Word. Our church supplements, not supplants your responsibility to disciple your children. Our ministries in no way relieve you of the responsibility of teaching them the Word of God.

This is where Family Worship comes in. It's a simple, yet profound practice of reading, praying, and singing together as a family. At home you simply read a passage of scripture and ask a few questions to help everyone understand what it means. Pray about what's going on in your family's life and in your church and community. Then close things out with a worship song. Or whatever order you choose.

Men, what is important for you to know is this is your job. Do it to the glory of God! Moms, if the father of your children isn't around or just won't do it, then it becomes your job. It's not how it's supposed to be, but that's the way it is in a fallen world. You do it and trust the Lord.

We worship with our families in the home, but what about at church? I am concerned to see families come to first service and send their teens to youth ministry such that their teens never get to worship with them.

Kids who come to the worship service are being trained that they are part of the congregation, not just the kids ministry or youth group. Parents of teens, I strongly encourage you to bring your teens with you to the worship service and if you're able, let them attend Youth Sunday School while you attend Adult Bible Fellowship or find a place to serve in first service.

SINGLE AND READY TO...SERVE

Now a word to singles. Praise the Lord for your singleness. Whether you are called to lifelong celibacy or are in a season of singleness, use this time to magnify God's glory through your maximal availability for His Kingdom. *"To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single, as I am."* 1 Corinthians 7:6

Why did Paul say it was good? Because of the increased ability to serve Jesus. Are you single? Make your life count for the glory of God by using your availability for His Kingdom. Go on mission. Serve more than anyone else. Use your singleness the same way the Lord expects married couples to use their marriage – sacrificing of yourself for His glory. Spend yourself in service to other people.

Let's move on to our fourth and final core value, which is directly related to family transformation. The church is a family of families, young and old, large and small, couples and singles, it's a family of families.

IMPACTING BEYOND OUR WALLS

Thus, it is our belief that when the family grows stronger, the church grows stronger. And when the church grows stronger, its impact on the community increases and expands. So, let's talk about our final core value, community impact.

Two weeks ago, I shared our vision, Every Member A Missionary – taking the Gospel across the street and around the world. We believe the Lord would have us raise up every member of our body with the purpose of sharing the gospel wherever they go.

We also believe we are to specifically raise up 50 of our own people who will sell everything and dedicate their lives to taking the Gospel to the nations. We also desire to support financially 150 more missionaries around the globe. That's an audacious goal. It's an audacious vision. But we are making great strides to that end!

Our mission's committee met with four potential new missionaries on Wednesday, three of them are going to the 10/40 window. The fourth is a couple who, along with their children, including an infant, are going to the last unreached people group in Uganda! Praise the Lord! Potentially four new missionaries, all going to unreached people groups.

It's not just international missions that we're concerned about. We have a heart to reach people right where we live. I'm told the Quad Cities is one of the least reached communities of our size in the nation. There is absolutely no shortage of people to reach across our streets, which is why we are equipping you to send you out. You gather here in order to grow in your faith, be encouraged toward obedience, repent of sin, and you go back out as those sent with the gospel. Many of you have already embraced this vision and mission and are living your life on purpose for the glory of God! Thank you for that!

Beyond that, we partner with local parachurch organizations and local missionaries who minister in very specific and targeted ways. Each of these organizations takes the gospel to people who may or may not otherwise walk in our doors or into our lives.

MORE HANDS ON THE ROPE

There is so much work to be done and we always need more hands on the rope. No one of us is strong enough to do what the Lord is asking of all of us. We're a body with a mission and each part has to function properly.

Whether it has to do with funding our budget, or going on short-term mission trips, serving in the community, staffing our own ministries with volunteers, or tangibly encouraging those who do, community impact doesn't happen unless we get more hands on the rope.

If you're not familiar with that phrase, think of a big burly man on one side of a tug-o-war rope and a five-year-old boy on the other. No matter how hard that boy pulls, he's no match. But when lots of people put their hands on the rope, it changes everything!

That's what we need of you. More hands on the rope. If your hand is on the rope, if you're giving and serving faithfully, keep it up. But if not, join us! We have a brand-new page on our website, www.wildwoodchurch.com/serve. It's a great place to get started as you consider where you can serve the Lord and make a difference in the world!

LET THEM SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS

Jesus said in Matthew 5, *"You are the light of the world...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."* Matthew 5:14-16 See your what? Intellect? Knowledge? Theological library? Nope, your good works! Let the unbelieving world see your good works.

Why? So that they will give glory to God in Heaven! The whole point, from creation to regeneration, from preaching the gospel to living it out for others to see, from family transformation to community impact, the whole point is the glory of God over all the earth!

Jesus told us in John 15 how the Father is glorified... *"I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing...By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples."* John 15:5, 8

The Father is glorified when we bear much fruit. And we bear much fruit when we abide in Christ.

In Genesis 3:15, amidst the pronouncement of curses, we find a promise—a promise of a Messiah who would rescue humanity. ¹⁵ **I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.**

This promise was fulfilled through Jesus Christ's ultimate sacrifice on the cross. When Jesus died on the cross, He cried out, *tetelestai*, “it is finished.” What God promised in Genesis 3:15 was finished in John 19:30.

STOP TRYING HARDER, START TRUSTING DEEPER

If you're struggling today with any of these things I've talked about, feeling like you fall short, the answer is not look within. It's look to Christ. The answer is not try harder. It's trust deeper. Apart from Christ, you and I can do nothing. We don't have it within ourselves to live for the glory of God. We fall short of the glory of God.

But Christ, who died for us, gives us what we need to live for Him and for the Father's glory. He produces it in us. So the answer is not try harder, but trust deeper. Put more trust in Christ. Lean more on Him. Trust fully in Him, lean fully on Him.

You and I have since been commissioned to go into all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to observe all that Jesus commanded us. And He is with us until the end of the age. From our dining table to the ends of the earth, the command of Christ is “go!”

As we approach communion, let us examine our hearts. Are you compelled by Christ's love? Does His sacrifice drive you to love your family sacrificially? Does it compel you to share the Gospel with your neighbors?

Communion unites a body under the banner of Christ and in so doing it unites us in His mission, to seek and to save the lost. It is our ambition that *“Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand.”* Romans 15:21