

# Practical Steps to Building a Successful Family

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The family is the most basic unit of society. When the family system is strong and healthy, the society stays strong; but when the family system collapses, society is at its lowest ebb. Therefore, it follows that one major indicator of the health of a nation is the state of the family system.

God's command for each member of the family is seen in **Ephesians 5: 22 – 6:4 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord...Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her... Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right... And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.**

This fact is also known to the enemy, Satan. As a result, we see the current wave of attacks to destroy families and in the process keep a stranglehold on society. That is why further on in **Ephesians 6:10-11**, God admonishes us: **Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**

To overcome the attacks of the enemy through the instrument of cultural change or revolution and the worship of self, here are some steps that can help you to build a successful family; one that will remain strong and close-knit in the Lord regardless of the storms of life.

## 1. Communication

When communication ceases in a family, a void is created that easily invokes mutual suspicions and conflicts. It gives room for the mind to run riot churning out thoughts that destroy relationships. This you can avoid (or minimize) by setting time aside for regular family fellowship and talk. It should be a time for frank talk when there is absolute "immunity", meaning everyone can speak freely without any fear of being reprimanded.

Let your child from the age he or she can talk, look you in the face and point out to you where you seem to be missing it; such as your actions that hurt, humiliate, or scare him/her. Children should speak freely but with respect and honour to their parents, which is a commandment of God (**Exodus 20:12**). Likewise, you and your spouse should devote times of heart to heart talk with each other.

These family sessions will provide you with the opportunity to shed light on certain actions or events that you took for granted and never realised that they caused pain and negative feelings in your home. When everyone can talk freely and have the chance to do so regularly, the family bond is strengthened.

## 2. Talk About Anything

Whatever it takes, be ready to talk about boy/girl relationships, evil of drugs, alcohol, pornography, or Internet crimes, etc. Discuss what is hot in the news that could be misunderstood or you can use to teach your family about life such as, when a popular/wealthy actor attempts suicide.

Children, remember that your parents are your best friends and they want what is best for you. They were once kids or teenagers and they desire to see that you do not repeat the same mistakes they made at your age.

Learn to obey your parents before complaining (**Ephesians 6:1-2**) because doing otherwise is rebellion which the Bible says is as a sin of witchcraft (**I Samuel 15:23**). The Word of God admonishes parents not to provoke children to anger (**Ephesians 6:4**) and one way is to have a one-on-one outing with them to let them talk.

Even when they tell you they have done the most despicable thing in the world, you must maintain your calm (ask for Holy Spirit help).

If you don't, you will shut that child down and that will be the last time he/she will tell you stuff. It is as important to retain their trust as it is to earn it.

### 3. Set Example

Parents should never ask children not to do anything like drinking or smoking that they see the parents do. Likewise, it is not wise to ask them to do things like Bible study or prayer when they do not see you do the same. It is called exemplary leadership.

Your children learn from you and your spouse about how a man should treat a woman and vice versa. They learn more from what they observe than what you say because a picture is worth more than a thousand words and we saw this happen between Abraham and Isaac (**Genesis 26:7-11**).

Children, set positive examples in your speech and actions for your parents and siblings to see. If you have younger ones, know that they look up to you like a big brother or sister and will imitate you. You are playing a significant role in moulding their lives.

### 4. Show Care

Let your family know that you care and value them inestimably. Show interest in the things that you know they are particular about. Attend their events; be it sports, dance, drama, etc. Make it a duty to be there whenever they are being honoured, no matter how insignificant the honour maybe. There could be ten thousand people at such events but your absence will make it worthless to your spouse, parents, kids or siblings.

Do not compare any family member to somebody else. Everyone is unique and special; therefore, treat each other with respect. Spouses should show open affection towards each other and towards their children. Children, express your love and affection for your parents openly, do not keep it inside and assume that they know. Sow love and affection into your family because what you sow you shall definitely reap in abundance.

### 5. Build a Home, Not a House

A home is a place of comfort, warmth, acceptance, love, rest, peace, and so on. In a home, family members are always in a hurry to return home whenever they have to be out; such as being at work or school. A house is where people just come to sleep and at every opportunity they get, they stay out.

When your children always want to go sleep over at their friends, you need to check if you are giving them a house instead of a home. If your spouse is always looking for reasons to

be outside, like working more overtime hours, looking for excuses to stop over somewhere after work on a regular basis, check yourself.

Everyone has a role to play in building a home filled with joy and happiness. Children from such homes do better in every aspect of life and are often found to be confident and faithful people.

#### 6. Parents Unite

Parents do not allow your kids to play you against each other. Even if there is a decision you do not agree with, take it up with each other privately. It helps to ask them, "what did your father/mother say about it?" or, "I will talk to your father/mother about it and we will let you know."

If you think you can play the good parent by making your spouse look like the bad one, know that in future the same child will turn around and call you weak or wicked. It will then be harvest time for what you had sown.

Children, do not attempt to divide and rule your parents because you will reap the seed you have sown. Do not turn one against the other. Learn to treat your parents exactly the way you will want your children to treat you when you become a parent because that is what will happen. **Galatians 6:7** says, **"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap."**

#### 7. Feed Together

There are two types of feeding; food for the physical body and the Word of God (including prayers and worship) for the spirit as we see in **Matthew 4:4**.

A family that eats together, studies the Word of God and prays together will stay together. Sharing food, physical or spiritual, is sharing your hearts and this creates a unity of purpose and oneness that is very difficult to break.

According to King Solomon in **Ecclesiastes 4:12**, **though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.** A stick can easily be broken but a bundle of sticks is very difficult if not impossible.

When we pray together, we are building a defence mechanism that causes one to chase a thousand and two to chase ten thousand (**Deuteronomy 32:30**).

*Unless otherwise stated, all scripture quotes are from the New King James Version (NKJV)*