

THE IMPORTANCE OF FAMILY

The Bible has a great deal to say about families. Early in the book of Genesis we are introduced to two different families. One of them was a bad family, and the other was good.

First, the family of Cain. Cain was the world's first murderer. God condemned him to be a vagabond, but he rebelled against that idea and built the world's first city. We are warned in Scripture not to be like Cain (1 John 3:11-12.) His family, or genealogy, is listed in Genesis 4:17-18.) The seventh descendent of Cain was Lamech. He was apparently the worst person in the world at that time. He was the first man to have more than one wife, and was also a murderer. He killed a man who hit him, and then composed a song to brag about it.

Abel, as you know, was killed by Cain. The Lord, however, gave Adam and Eve a son to take the place of Abel. His name was Seth. Seth's family was noted for calling on the name of the Lord (Genesis 4:25.) The family, or genealogy of Seth, is listed in Genesis 5:6-24.) The seventh descendent of Seth was Enoch. He was apparently the most righteous man in the world at that time. Enoch walked with God and was translated to heaven without having to die (Genesis 5:24, Hebrews 11:5.)

The corruption of the earth is explained in Genesis 6:2 by the fact that the "sons of God" married the "daughters of men." Many believe this means that the sons of Seth married the daughters of Cain. Bad families can have a profound influence on the world.

Jehoram was the fifth king of Judah. He began his reign by killing his brothers and also some of the princes of Israel. The character of his regime is described in 2 Chronicles 21:6 in association with his family: "**He walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for he married a daughter of Ahab. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord.**"

Sociologists have studied the families of two men from the state of New York. The first was the family of Max Jukes. He didn't believe in Christian training and married a woman who thought the same. From this union the researchers studied 1,026 descendants. 300 died prematurely, 100 were sent to the penitentiary with an average sentence of 13 years, 190 were public prostitutes, and 100 were drunkards. They also studied the family of Jonathan Edwards who believed in Christian training. Of the 729 descendants in his family tree there were 300 preachers, 65 college professors, 13 university presidents, 60 authors of good books, 3 United States Congressmen, and one vice president of the United States.

William J. Gribbin has said: "There is no engine of progress, security and social advancement as powerful as the family, particularly the bourgeois family whose customs and ethics defined western civilization during the two centuries before the Great Unravelling of recent decades. There is no instrument of economic growth, savings and investment, job creation and job training as effective as the middle-class family. There is no cultural institution as ennobling as family. There is no better way to rear the young, protect the weak or attend the elderly. None."

YOU CAN CHOOSE TO BE A PART OF GOD'S FAMILY

We cannot choose our family in a physical sense. We had no choice about when or where we would be born. We can, however, choose to follow God no matter what our earthly circumstances may be. Moses chose to suffer affliction with the family of God rather than be the son of Pharaoh's daughter. Rahab chose to renounce her Canaanite family and become a Hebrew. The followers of Jesus were encouraged to place their loyalty to the family of God above every earthly relationship. Jesus said it like this: "**For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.**" (Matt 12:50)

Joshua said it like this: "**Choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord**" (Josh. 24:15.)