

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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Strong Families

By Tom Sutherland

Many people are concerned about family life today. From listening to the news on TV and the radio and from reading magazine and newspaper articles, there should be little doubt in our minds that many families need help and guidance. Strong families don't just happen. They're made up of people who are committed not only to one another, but to God as well. A strong family can be a haven in a difficult world. It's well worth the effort, and is pleasing to God. There are five areas that need to be considered regarding building stronger families.

1. Appreciation. Strong families have developed ways to express appreciation for each other. It's not taken for granted that the others always know when they are appreciated. It's amazing how much the two words "thank you" can accomplish.

2. Time together. Strong families go out of their way to organize their lives so that they can have time to spend together because they understand that strangers have no interest in one another.

3. Communication. Strong families are able to talk together in an open and straightforward way. Even when they disagree, they try to identify the problem and to find a solution, rather than getting angry and blaming the problem on someone else, or worse yet, simply ignoring it.

4. Commitment. Strong families are better able to deal with problems because of the strengths just mentioned, and because of their commitment to one another.

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5. Spirituality. Strong families have an active spiritual life in which the teaching of God's holy word is brought forth and lived in the context of their relationships with one another. A strong family prays, studies God's word, and attends worship services together regularly.

These things will certainly build stronger families. They provide a foundation that imparts strength and stability to all.

"Lay Not Treasure Upon Earth"

From Lafayette Heights Bulletin

Jesus forbids the selfish accumulation of possessions to the overshadowing or exclusion of spiritual goals. He shows the foolishness of tethering our heart's devotion to things of this earth. When one thinks that his life and importance consist of the things of this world, he has missed the purpose of human existence (Luke 12:15). Judas, Demas, Achan and others made this mistake, we need to learn from them and strive to avoid their mistake.

Earthly treasures are transitory and corruptible. To the Oriental mind clothing and precious metals were among the most sought after possessions. Jesus reveals the elusiveness of these by showing their susceptibility to moths and rust. If neither moths nor rust get them, it is always possible for thieves to steal them. How foolish it is to make these the main object of life. We may protect our treasures with insecticide, rustproof paint, and burglar alarms, but still they disintegrate through inflation, devaluation, or our death.

Earthly treasures never fully satisfy. They may for a moment provide a feeling of fullness, but isn't it the case with most of us that as soon as we get a new car we start planning for a bigger one? We soon tire of our things, lose interest in them, and look for something more meaningful and satisfying.

Earthly treasures will inevitably perish. A beautiful flower begins to die as soon as it is picked, bread begins to go stale when it comes out of the oven, and so it is with all our material

possessions. All are destined to be left behind or melt with intense heat (2 Peter 3:10).

In regards to my earthly treasures, I am but a caretaker, a custodian so why cling to them? Someday I'll leave them all behind. Why then should they be the center of my life and existence? Why live for them or be absorbed by them?

Jesus calls upon us to live detached from them. If we choose earthly treasures, at death we lose it forever; if our earthly struggle has been for heavenly wealth, death only frees us to go to the eternal and real source of our joy and longing!

THE MOTHER'S WATCH

She never closed her eyes in sleep till we were all in bed;
 On party nights till we came home she often sat and read.
 We little thought about it then, when we were young and gay,
 How much the mother worried when we children were away.
 We only knew she never slept when we were out at night,
 And that she waited just to know that we'd come home all right.

Why, sometimes when we'd stayed away till one or two or three,
 It seemed to us that mother heard the turning of the key;
 For always when we stepped inside she'd call and we'd reply,
 But we were all too young back then to understand just why.
 Until the last one had returned she always kept a light,
 For mother couldn't sleep until she'd kissed us all good night.

She had to know that we were safe before she went to rest;
 She seemed to fear the world might harm the ones she loved the
 best.

And once she said: "When you are grown to women and to men,
 Perhaps I'll sleep the whole night through; I may be different then."
 And so it seemed that night and day we knew a mother's care –
 That always when we got back home we'd find her waiting there.

Then came the night that we were called to gather round her bed:
 "The children all are with you now," the kindly doctor said.
 And in her eyes there gleamed again the old-time tender light

That too she had been waiting just to know we were all right.
 She smiled the old-familiar smile, and prayed to God to keep
 Us safe from harm throughout the years, and then she went to
 sleep.

--Edgar A. Guest