

**Resolving Conflicts Through
Discipleship Counseling**

Growing a Family Identity

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Characteristics of...

...A Weak Family Identity

- Everybody does his or her own thing, going in different directions.
- Children are annoyed at having to be with family.
- They prefer friends or outside activities—anywhere but home.
- They are embarrassed to be seen in public with their parents.
- They dread being seen caring for younger siblings.
- They can't wait to move out some day.
- They demonstrate contempt for parental authority.
- Peer dependant.
- Teens become increasingly alienated, as they grow older.
- Constant sibling rivalry—cutting down one another.

...A Strong Family Identity

(Ephesians 5:1,2; Philipians 2:1-4)

- Atmosphere of love and acceptance—1 Peter 3:8
- Purpose and Direction—Ephesians 5:17
- A vision—Proverbs 29:18
- Centered on Biblical conviction—2 Timothy 3:16
- They enjoy family times together—Philippians 1:3
- They work on and through conflicts—1 Peter 3: 9-12
- Older children have a sense of responsibility—1 Corinthians 13:11
- Character training is ongoing—Philippians 1:6
- Respect for authority—Hebrews 13:17; Ephesians 6:1,2

What a Strong Family Identity Is Not

- Focused on rules but is focused on the relationship—Galatians 5:13-15
- Independent from each other or other authority—Hebrews 3:13
- A temporal focused family but, eternally focused—John 4:36
- Reacting to the world, but taking action for God—Romans 12:1-2
- A perfect family, there is none.

The Path to a Strong Identity

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”

(Colossians 2:8, 9)

Marriage and families without Christ or without Christ at the center can promote a false pursuit of self-worth by focusing only on the following:

- **Appearance**—finding approval based on how I look to others.
- **Performance**—finding approval from others based on what I do.
- **Status**—finding approval by titles, positions of significance, and achievements.

The following are personal needs that only Christ can righteously meet:

- **Life**—abundant life found in Christ—John 10:10
- **Identity**—based on who I am in Christ—Ephesians 1:18-20
- **Acceptance**—we are accepted in Christ—Ephesians 1:5; Colossians 2:10
- **Security**—we are secure in Christ—Romans 8:35-39
- **Significance**—we are significant in Christ—Philippians 4:13; John 15:16

Home as a Safe Place (1 John 1: 3-4; 1 John 4:7)

Adapted from The Life Model (Pasadena, CA: Shepherds House Inc., 2004)

1. A place of “glad to be together”
2. A place of unconditional love.
3. A place of needs being met
4. A place where we learn to understand our hearts.
5. A place where we can express our emotional upsets and be comforted.
6. A place where can share our needs and desires.
7. A place where we evaluate the consequences of our choices
8. A place where our interests and talents are developed

9. A place where we are encouraged to do the tough things in life

10. A place where I learn to live from my heart

Motivation Systems

Adapted from The Life Model (Pasadena, CA: Shepherds House Inc., 2004)

“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.”

(1 John 4:16-18)

1. Fear-based—shame, condemnation, fear of rejection, fear of failure, anger

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7)

- Out of duty trying to avoid negative feelings and shame
- Breeds insecurity
- Hide true feelings or facts for fear of upsetting them
- Win/lose or lose/lose situations
- Deceit and pretending
- Live according to the flesh

2. Love based—conviction of the Holy Spirit, conscience, desire driven, faith, hope and love

“Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.” (1 Timothy 1:5)

- Brings life to the relationship
- We get to know each other better
- We can share both the positive and the negative
- We can act like our true selves
- Truth and authentic giving
- Living out of our new Heart in Christ

Encourage Godly Family Dynamics in Counseling

- Mom and Dad need to focus on their own unresolved issues
- Formally establish family vision and purpose.
- Clearly define goals and boundaries.

Success is accepting God’s goal for our lives and by His grace becoming what He has called us to be.

- Train children up in who they are in Christ—Colossians 2:6-7.
- Establish their trust with each other—Matthew 5:37.

- Children must see themselves as important to the family. Fulfillment is discovering our own uniqueness in Christ and using our gifts to edify others and glorify the Lord.
- Children need to be an active part of family.
- Live for the family agenda.
- Plan daily times to be together (family worship, meal times, activities, etc.)
- Focus on the greatest commandments—Mark 12:29-31.
- You together have a common enemy—Satan.

Key to conflict—address problems as spiritual in nature (Ephesians 6:12).

- Grow in grace—Galatians 2:20-21.
- Establish restrictions early in life—Deuteronomy 11: 18-19.
- Do family activities and have fun, work, and minister as a family.
- Minimize outside activity.
- Cultivate individual relationships, gifting, interests, talents, and passions.
- Demonstrate heart forgiveness.
- Show affection- voice tone, touch, and smile.
- Be happy.

Key concept—wanting what we have: *Happiness is being thankful for what we do have, rather than focusing on what we don't have, because happy are the people that want what they have—Philippians 4:12.*

Practical Help for Weak Families—Deuteronomy 6:5-7

- Work on death to self—demonstrates humility.
- Look for signs of independence.
- Eliminate clutter—“walk through.”
- Have a wise schedule—1 Corinthians 14:40.
- Get in control of your home early in the morning “Wake up early.”
- Learn to have fun together – uninhibited spontaneity is key.
- Commit to praying together.
- Teach your children to fear God and respect the Word of God.
- Teach character continuously.
- Mom must have stress relief and Dad needs time with God.
- A regular time for evaluation of goals and planning.
- Pray for your children to understand the power of God.
- Return to joy together at the end of each day.
- Call a family meeting and confess sin for lack of interest, direction, etc.. Explain new vision and goals.

