

## **Convictions for Home and Family**

We are continuing this morning with our Summer Sermon Series on biblical convictions. The first institution God created was the family. God has revealed very specific and clear guidelines for family living, and Christians ought to have strongly held beliefs—convictions—based on those guidelines.

Sadly, our world is filled with moral and spiritual chaos regarding home and family life.

For example, in April of this year, Colorado passed a law that expands legal protections for transgender individuals in areas of family law, education, and public accommodations. It prohibits discrimination based on gender identity and expression, including misgendering and deadnaming. The bill also makes it easier to change names and gender designations on official documents. The new law requires schools to be inclusive of all reasons a student might choose a different name and prohibits gender-based dress code rules. The law reinforces Colorado as a safe haven for gender-affirming care and expands protections for transgender individuals, particularly within family law and other aspects of public life.

The Colorado law is an example of the moral chaos that has descended upon our nation. Many families today are deeply affected by this moral confusion. Did you know that today, 25% of high school students in the US identify as LGBT? That was only 11% ten years ago. Christians should not be led astray by the moral madness so common in our world today. We should have strong biblical convictions about such things, especially as they affect our families.

Everyone is well-aware that the biblical model of family life is under attack these days. People are abandoning the biblical model and replacing it with all manner of illegitimate and sinful behaviors. We must maintain and strengthen our commitment to the divine pattern for the family. We should hold these principles very strongly and not compromise on them.

After our convictions regarding fundamental doctrines of the faith, our convictions regarding the home and the family ought to be some of our most strongly-held beliefs. All of us have family relationships, and it's incredibly important that we try to conform those relationships to biblical standards. At the very least, we can make sure that our own families follow the basic biblical guidelines for families.

Sadly, many people today are compromising on these issues. Even Christians today are embracing and endorsing unbiblical, dysfunctional, destructive lifestyle choices.

We must admit that many of the examples of family life we find in the Bible do *not* provide a good example for us to follow (e.g., Jacob, David, Solomon). We find many dysfunctional families in the Bible. Yet we know how God originally designed the family unit, and we know what the NT teaches about how families should operate. So our convictions must be based on the clear teaching of the NT, not on dysfunctional OT family examples.

I'm sure that we are aware of the biblical principles regarding family life. But it's good that we review them, and my concern is that we make these things a personal conviction; we should hold these principles very strongly and not compromise on them. Our culture is pressuring us to compromise on these issues. Personal circumstances may tempt us to compromise, but we must not.

Let's consider several biblical convictions regarding home and family life.

I. God intended marriage to be a lifelong, monogamous relationship.

Genesis 2:24 *Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

Matthew 19:5 [*Jesus*] said, '*For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh*'

- A. Marriage is the *normal* pattern for family life. A man finds a suitable woman—or vice versa (e.g., Ruth)—and gets married. Most people follow this pattern.
- B. Marriage is a *covenant* between a man and a woman. A covenant is an agreement or a contract. The essential feature of marriage is the covenant between the man and the woman. The couple agrees to “leave and cleave” and establish a new family unit.

Other issues such as children, money, career, location, and relatives are all important, but they are not the center of the marriage. The husband-wife relationship is primary. Your mate is your highest priority after your relationship with God.

C. Marriage is *monogamous*.

1. One man marries one woman—that's monogamy.
2. We know that many biblical characters were *not* monogamous; they practiced polygamy. E.g., Jacob, David, Solomon
  - a) And we might ask how polygamy usually worked out in practical terms. In most cases that we find in the Bible, polygamy did not work out very well. It created all kinds of problems.
  - b) God tolerated polygamy, but it was not the original plan.
3. God's original design for marriage is monogamy. One man marries one woman.
  - a) Marriage must be exclusive; no one else is allowed in. "Thou shalt not commit adultery."
  - b) The Bible warns about the "strange woman" (Prov 6:24, 7:4-5).

D. Marriage is *heterosexual*.

1. Marriage exists only between a man and a woman. Jesus clearly affirmed the biblical pattern for marriage—it exists only between people of opposite sexes.

People today claim that Jesus said nothing about homosexuality, but that's wrong. Jesus affirmed God's original design for marriage—one man and one woman.

2. The Bible strictly forbids any kind of same-sex intimacy (Lev 18:22; Rom 1:27). No same-sex relationship can be considered marriage. It does not matter what the Supreme Court or any federal or state laws say; marriage exists only between a man and a woman. We must not recognize any other kind of relationship as marriage.

I am hopeful that the SCOTUS would overturn the ruling that made same-sex marriage legal.

3. Marriage is the only contexts for the one-flesh relationship that the Bible talks about (cf. 1 Cor 7). And that one-flesh relationship can exist only between a man and a woman.

**App:** We should be very strong in our commitment to heterosexual marriage. Although homosexual “marriage” is now legal in the US, we should never validate it or show any respect for it. That kind of relationship is simply not marriage.

Question: Would you attend a same-sex wedding ceremony? I hope not.

- E. Marriage unites the couple until *death* separates them.

Romans 7:2 ... *the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband.*

1. The normal pattern should be that a marriage lasts “till death us do part.” That’s the biblical expectation; marriage is permanent. The wedding vows often include a statement affirming that the couple will remain married until death.
2. Divorce should not be an option for Christians. God hates divorce (Mal 2:16). Christians should not contemplate divorce as an option “just in case things don’t work out.” You don’t enter marriage thinking that you could get out of it through divorce. You enter marriage with the conviction that it’s permanent.

3. The couple should employ all means possible to repair a strained or broken marriage relationship. Even better, the couple should take steps necessary to strengthen their relationship to prevent the kinds of problems that lead to divorce.
4. Only in very specific cases can divorce be considered tolerable. In many cases, divorce is a very bad option, perhaps the worst option, the last option. The results of divorce are almost always bad.
5. However, the Bible does allow divorce in two specific cases:
  - a) Unrepentant adultery

*Matthew 5:32 [Jesus said] whoever divorces his wife for any reason except fornication causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.*

The word “fornication” (KJV) describes any kind of illicit intimate contact; it’s a general term covering a variety of immoral behaviors—unchastity, marital unfaithfulness. If that kind of thing happens, and the guilty person is unrepentant, it may trigger a legitimate divorce.
  - b) Abandonment by an unbeliever (1 Cor 7:15); if an unbeliever refuses to live with a believer, Paul’s command is to let the unbeliever depart.

In certain other cases (e.g., physical abuse), temporary separation may be necessary so the spouses can resolve their problems. In some cases, if a spouse is acting like an unbeliever, we should assume that he is, even if he claims to be a Christian.

If the guilty spouse is genuinely repentant and changes his behavior, the couple should pursue reconciliation. The victim must be willing to forgive if the perpetrator is genuinely repentant and if the immoral behavior stops. Christians must pursue all means of preserving their marriage. Christians must be willing to forgive.

6. Further, if a divorce occurs under biblical guidelines, remarriage is permissible.
7. If a divorce is unbiblical—lacking biblical sanction—then the divorce is not legitimate, the marriage is still in effect in God's eyes, and pursuing marriage with anyone else would be adultery (Mt 5:32).

**Trans.:** Christians ought to have strong, biblical convictions about marriage and associated issues. Our society is very confused about marriage today and is tolerating all kinds of morally bankrupt behavior. And, sadly, many Christians today are deeply compromised on these issues. We should not be confused about marriage. We know what God says about it, and we must maintain strong convictions about it.

II. Children are blessings from God.

- A. Our culture today is very confused about children, but we should not be confused. We know what the Bible says about children, and we should stand strongly on biblical principles regarding children.
- B. The biblical expectation is that married people have children. Some don't, but most do. Even those couples that cannot have children in the normal way can still arrange to have children through other means.
- C. Christians should see children as positive blessings, not a burden or a mistake.

*Psalm 127:3–5 Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, The fruit of the womb is a reward. 4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, So are the children of one's youth. 5 Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; ...*

This attitude stands in stark contrast to how many in our culture view children, especially those that were unplanned and unwanted. We should have a very positive view of children no matter what other circumstances pertain. Children are inherently valuable; all of them reflect the image of God. The circumstances under which children are conceived do not affect the value of children. Children are a blessing.

- D. The Bible strictly forbids abortion. Human life begins at conception and is valuable in spite of any other circumstances. Humans have value no matter what their location, abilities, maturity, or prospects. Christians should be very strong in their stand against abortion.
- E. The Bible obviously forbids the abuse of children.  
Parents must occasionally use physical discipline with their children. Abuse is never proper, but corporal punishment is sometimes both necessary and appropriate.
- F. Parents, and particularly fathers, are responsible to bring up children “in the nurture and admonition (i.e., training and discipline) of the Lord” (Eph 6:4). Children should enjoy a warm, caring, nurturing family environment. But it should also be a well-disciplined environment in which the parents expect obedience from the children.

**Trans:** Many in our culture today lack an appreciation for children. Christians must not follow that trend. We must see children as valuable and worthy of protection and care no matter what other circumstances pertain.

III. Families must recognize gender and authority distinctions.

All of these biblical principles are under attack today. Many in the culture are loudly claiming that the Bible is wrong on these issues or that they don’t care what the Bible says about these things. Christians must reaffirm our commitment to managing our households according to biblical principles.

- A. The father is the head of the household. He is the protector and provider of the family. The family structure is a hierarchy with the father/husband recognized as the head of the family.  
  
Our modern culture totally rejects hierarchy and structure for the modern family. Feminists, in particular, totally reject any notions of family hierarchy. Our culture is wrong in this regard. Against everything our culture is saying, we maintain that the father is the head of the home.

- B. The mother is the husband's helper/partner. She typically administrates the household and is the primary care-giver for children (if present). One of the biblical responsibilities for wives is that they submit to the godly, sensitive, loving leadership of their husbands.
- C. Children are responsible to honor and obey their parents. Children are important, but they should not be the center of the family. The center of the family should be the husband and wife.
- D. The husband/father must maintain order within the family. Fathers in particular are responsible to instruct and to discipline their children. If the children constantly misbehave, it's at least partially the fault of the parents. Bratty kids are the result of poor parenting. They have failed to discipline their children properly. Good discipline is necessary within a Christian family.

Many parents these days are afraid to correct their children. They don't discipline them, and they go along with their crazy ideas. E.g., when a little boy says that he feels like a little girl, and the parents go along with that foolishness.

One main job of parents is to correct their children. Teach them the truth. Insist that they behave properly. Restrain them. Discipline them when they need it. Tell them the truth about themselves.

- E. Distinction in roles and lines of authority do not imply superiority of one family member over another. Everyone is equal before God. Gender distinctions and lines of authority do not contradict spiritual equality among all members of a family. Everyone is equal, but they have different roles.
- F. And, although we should not have to say it, we affirm that there are only two sexes—male and female. Our world is so confused about these issues, but we should not be. Christian parents should teach their children very clearly that boys are boys and girls are girls. God made you who you are, and children must adopt the role in life that God gave them when he created them.



Children are not “assigned” a sex at birth; God assigns the sex; genetics assign the sex; physical anatomy assigns the sex of the child. These are immutable characteristics that we recognize; they cannot be changed.

**Trans:** Christians recognize both gender and authority roles in the family. Our culture often denies both, but we maintain the biblical viewpoint on these things.

IV. Families must extend care and provision to family members in need.

A. Families should be able to provide for themselves. Normally, for many families, the husband/father provides for the family.

*1Ti 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

The family is responsible to care for destitute family members.

B. Only in cases of true poverty should a church step in to provide regular support for the destitute.

*1 Timothy 5:16 If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.*

The church does have a responsibility to help church members who have no family to help them. We should be especially sensitive to the needs of orphans and widows.

Joshua said, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” That’s that kind of commitment and conviction we must maintain.

Our culture has, in many cases, abandoned these traditional family structures. Many voices today tell us that family is whatever you want it to be. Many are working to upset and reverse the traditional understanding of family. There is a great deal of confusion and moral chaos on these issues in our culture today. But we need not be confused about these things. Family is what God originally designed it to be, and our responsibility is to conform our families to God’s expectations.

I mentioned that Colorado law that promotes and encourages transgenderism. At the same time, the SCOTUS recently let stand a Tennessee law preventing transgender procedures for minors in the state. Over 20 states now have similar laws preventing transgender procedures on minors. Of course, states like Colorado have the exact opposite laws. But we have some reason to be optimistic that maybe some common sense decency is coming back into the culture.

All of us are familiar with the biblical expectations for Christian family life. We must not compromise on these principles. We must have and maintain strong biblical convictions regarding home and family life.

