

Fingerprint — Family

November 10, 2013

If you are new, I would like to welcome you to Faith Church. We are in a series called, “Fingerprint: What makes Faith Church unique?” In this series, we are covering seven core values that we are reinforcing on the Spirit Lake campus and replicating on the new Spencer campus.

Each of our core values is a word followed by a phrase describing that value. This morning, we are looking at our sixth core value.

Family — We believe in the importance of a healthy biblical family and supporting parents in their responsibility for the spiritual health of their children.

When it comes to family, we focus on two things. First is fostering healthy biblical marriages. Second is helping parents spiritually train their children in Christ. This morning, we are talking about two topics. We have a lot to cover; let’s jump in.

What is a healthy God-honoring marriage?

A healthy God-honoring marriage involves a man and a woman, not two men or two women.

I know this sounds rudimentary but in our culture, especially for younger adults, there is constant pressure to accept homosexuality as a viable alternative. States are legalizing gay marriage, the latest of which was Illinois, just this past week.

If you don’t endorse homosexual relationships and homosexual marriage, you are considered a homophobe and it is not uncommon find yourself sued. The focus of current gay rights legislation is to make it that if you choose to rent a

room in your own house, you stand on better legal ground to refuse rental to potential occupants based on their smoking habits, personal hygiene and the condition of their cars than you do their sexual practices.

The church must prepare itself. We are at a cultural crossroads. I would not be surprised if within 10 years, in some states, pastors, such as myself, no longer perform marriages. In some states, everyone will get married at the courthouse, then some will go to the church for a wedding after they are married. There is a ton of pressure to accept homosexuality as a lifestyle and homosexual marriage as an institution.

What does the Bible say about homosexuality?

...because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen. For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. Romans 1:25–27 (ESV)

I did my doctoral thesis on the book of Romans. I know the book well. In Roman society, homosexuality was rampant. In the first few chapters of Romans, Paul's objective was to let everyone in the church of Rome know he was on the same page as they were when it came to the frustration they had with Roman society, especially the militant homosexual agenda the church was having shoved down its throat, much like we see today.

Paul said someone is a homosexual not because of the way they were born. Homosexuality is a consequence of sin. The sin is rejecting God and worshipping things other than God. When someone chooses to consistently

rebel against his or her God-given conscience, God lets the light of his or her conscience slowly dim. People living in consistent rebellion against God in an area of their lives eventually lose their sense of true north. One of the consequences of losing true north is losing sexual true north. Men become attracted to other men and women become attracted to other women. They become homosexuals as a consequence of sin, and as a punishment for their sin, God lets them live as slaves of their promiscuous homosexual passions.

Homosexuality is not a gentle loving relationship. That is what the media wants you to think. The vast majority of homosexuals are older men trying to sodomize boys and twist their sexual orientation. One study I read revealed the extreme level of promiscuity in the homosexual lifestyle. It is not uncommon for a homosexual man to have 300 different sexual partners, some as many as 300 a year.

That life is slavery to lust when older homosexual preys on young men. It is not a valid alliterative lifestyle. Don't listen to the media. Read the books. Look at valid statistics.

Do we love someone who is struggling with the sin of homosexuality? Yes, like we do any other sinner, just like we love someone who is struggling with the heterosexual sin of fornication. We let the Bible call it sin but we love them as a sinner.

A healthy God-honoring marriage involves a marriage, not just living together.

In society, it is common to live together before you get married. The thinking is that if you were going to buy a car, you would take it for a test drive, why not do the same with a potential spouse so you don't make a bad choice?

This one just torques me off. Christian kids have completely bought into this lie. It is a lie. The Bible gives us an order for how a relationship between a man and woman is supposed to work.

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. Genesis 2:24 (ESV)

First, a man is to achieve independence. Guys, get a job and get to the point that you don't have to live in your parents' basement and still have your mother do your laundry. Be an independent man who can provide for himself.

Second, hold fast to your wife. That means make a commitment to a woman who is going to be your wife, to hold on to her and never let her go until death does you part. What is that called? Marriage. This is literally saying a man takes a wife and makes a public statement that she is his and he will never let her go.

Third, they shall become one flesh. That is a euphemism for sex but it is not just a linguistic play on words. The Bible says that when a man and a woman are intimate, they bond physically and psychologically. Sex is not just a biological release, when you are intimate with someone, a biological, psychological and spiritual bond is created. This is why sex is to be saved for marriage. It is relational superglue.

When you are sexually active with someone before marriage, then break up, it like taking duct tape across your arm and ripping it off. It hurts because the bond is torn.

When you live together before marriage with no commitment, that is also not the way God wanted it for you. God says the only way a man should be allowed to touch a woman is if he marries her. A man needs to commit to protect and provide for his wife forever before he has her. If guys don't have to marry to have a woman to have her, they typically won't. Why buy a cow when you can get the milk for free? Ladies, the best thing you can do for the guy you love is to not be intimate with him but tell him you are saving it for your wedding night. Then tell him to trust you, it will be worth the wait.

Apart from the bonds of marriage, you cannot have a healthy family.

While we like to think marriage is a social fossil leftover from an out-of-touch society, Genesis 2:24 tells us a marriage commitment is part of the creation order. It helps men grow up and be men. It protects women from men that just want to use them.

A healthy marriage involves a husband and wife that understand their God-given roles.

A husband and wife are of equal importance and value before God.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. Genesis 1:27 (ESV)

It takes men and women to represent God's image. There is no such thing as men being the superior gender. That is satanic. When you find in India or Africa that women are viewed like property, that is just evil.

A husband and wife play different roles in marriage.

This is very important. Most people do not get this. They wonder why marriage is such a burden. The reason marriage becomes burdensome is when a husband and wife adopt the unwritten rules of our society that say in marriage a husband and wife do NOT have God-given roles. Society says that in marriage, you divide everything 50/50. She makes half the money; he makes the other half. He watches the kids on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. She watches them Monday, Wednesday and Friday. That is a recipe for disaster. Look what the Bible says.

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. Ephesians 5:31–32 (ESV)

In this section of Ephesians, Paul was talking about marriage, but he said there is a mystery that is now being revealed about marriage. God designed marriage to be a living, breathing picture of the relationship between Christ and the church. Just as Christ is the head of the church, the husband is head over his wife. Just as the church submits to the leadership of Christ, a wife is to submit to her husband's leadership. Just as Christ loved the church to the point of laying his life down his life to die for the church, the husband is to love his wife and sacrificially lay his life down for her. The secret of a successful marriage is a husband and wife taking their cues on how to love each other from Christ and the church.

God-given marital roles are not arbitrary or reversible.

Just as you could not have the church dying for Christ, you cannot have a wife leading a marriage. This is important.

One of the huge problems in many marriages is men do not see their job is to be the leader of their homes by laying their lives down to be the protector and provider in the marriage. Women do not see their role as the helpmate he needs. A role-less marriage or a reversed role marriage is unbiblical and will lead to disaster.

Sin twisted marital roles.

If you go to the Old Testament, you find a very weird consequence of sin.

Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you. Genesis 3:16 (ESV)

I always found these verses funny. They happen right after Adam and Eve sin. It looks like a result of their sin is Eve was finally attracted to Adam and as a consequence of sin, Adam was finally in charge.

You read the Hebrew and the words are much more precise. As a consequence of the fall, it is not that a woman will desire her husband. It is she will desire her husband's position of leadership in the relationship. Sin, expressing itself in marriage, is a natural sinful desire for a woman to not support her husband's position of leadership in the home in fact, she will challenge it and undermine it. She will try to take it from him.

Most men do not like when their wives try to become head of the house. Men respond in an equally sinful way. When it says *he shall rule over you*, the word for rule is the word you would use of a hammer striking a nail. Instead of

treating a wife with gentleness and kindness, he treats her with harshness and contempt. He treats her like a hammer striking a nail into a block of wood.

Sin, manifesting itself in the distortion of marital roles, is why there are so many divorces on the pages of history.

The Bible says that when we come to Jesus, he causes us to see our sin in these areas. He convicts us of our sin and we cry to him, repenting of our sin. The spirit of Christ causes us to desire to return to our God-given marital roles.

The only way a marriage works is:

A wife's marital role is to submit and support her husband, just as the church submits to Christ.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Ephesians 5:22–24 (ESV)

The Bible tells us in Genesis that it was not good for man to be alone so God created a helpmate, that is a teammate suitable for him. The core part of a wife's role is to be her husband's best helpmate and teammate. There is a unique synergy that can only take place between a husband and wife in marriage. You do so much more together than either of you could do alone.

A husband's marital role is to love and sacrifice his life for his wife, like Christ loved the church.

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. Ephesians 5:25–30 (ESV)

What cracks me up is women get bent out of shape saying the Bible is sexist, out of touch and oppressive because it says wives are to be submissive to their husbands. That is such bologna. Ladies, did you read the husband's job description? Husbands are not to come home, put their feet on the coffee table, turn on the game, snap their fingers and tell their wives to bring them hot wings.

Husbands are to sacrifice their lives every day from sun up to sun down for their wives and children, not just at work, but it continues when they come home. Guys, *we live to give* to our wives and families. When you think it is too hard, just look at what Jesus did for you and you will have a whole new level of understanding what it means to sacrifice for someone you love.

Too many young men think marriage is about a woman to make their meals, do their laundry and now they get to have sex whenever they want. Young guys, that is not your role in marriage. Get off the couch, take out the trash and wash the dishes. *Your job is you live to give to your wife and family*, just like Christ gave himself for you.

Not only do you live to give to her but you live to make her all she can be. Just as Jesus didn't just save us and then forget us but after he saved us, he moved on to change us, freeing us from sin and changing us from sinful vile creatures to godly men and women, so a man's job is to continually invest in his wife to bring out of her the best, making her all she can be.

Husbands, the more you invest in loving your wife with words, encouragement and help, the better your marriage will be as your wife blossoms under your love, care and protection.

Faith Church supports healthy biblical marriages.

Since healthy marriages are so important, we focus on this at Faith Church. We haven't focused on it as much in the last year but earlier we did a special study on sex and marriage where we studied the Song of Solomon. The series was called Solomon on Sex. It was quite controversial at the time but I think it went over well. Even if you didn't like it, I am happy to say that the ebook, which is still for sale on Nook, Kindle and the iBookstore has sold 14,656 copies in the last year and a half. It is even used in a small Bible school in Africa. It is nice to know that God is using this little church on the corner of 28th and Erie to help people learn how to honor Christ in their sex lives.

How can parents foster the spiritual life of their children?

The first thing we believe is that it is not the church's job to train children in Christ. It is the parent's job to train their own children. The church's job is to help the parents, not replace parents. It is important that parents understand they have a God-given responsibility to share the gospel with their kids and to help them grow spiritually.

As a parent, if you think about this, it should freak you out. When I took my children home from the hospital, God was entrusting them into my hands to raise them to know, love and live for Jesus.

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. Deuteronomy 6:6–7 (ESV)

Rather than get too technical, I want to be very personal. As many of you know, my oldest son is a senior in high school and will soon be out of the house.

I find myself reflecting on what we did right and what we did wrong when raising him in Christ. Young parents, here are some of the lessons I learned.

Get a plan.

My kids are filled with energy. If I don't have a plan, they will make one for me. Early in their lives we set up routines. Just as Wednesday night is church night, when the kids were younger, bedtime was Bible time. When David and Daniel were in bunk beds in the same bedroom, I would go in the room and read the Bible to them before bed. That was the routine we established. Everyone looked forward to it. We closed the night by praying with them. Mom and Dad, if you don't create a plan, your kids will create one for you.

When we moved to Spirit Lake, our new plan was reading the Bible after dinner. We would just read around the dinner table after a meal, a paragraph at a time, with Mom and Dad adding application and insight from life. My kids loved that because they learned more about Mom and Dad and they learned to think biblically.

Another plan we did not successfully complete was Bible memory during breakfast cereal. As the week wore on, it became harder and harder to get everyone out of bed in the morning. My family looks like the zombie apocalypse in the morning.

Right now, the plan is my boys read the Bible on their own before bed. That is something I consistently talk about with them.

Find one big idea when teaching your kids a Bible story.

One of the best ways to teach kids the Bible is to come up with a memorable funny application that encapsulates a Bible story. Mom and Dad, this is hard work. I read through the story of Achan who stolen the garments and gold and as a result the city of Ai defeated the Israelites, some of them losing their lives. You know how I taught that story to my kids? “When Achan stole the bacon, other people paid.” Other people suffer when I sin. I still remember it to this day.

Model repentance and humility

Mom and Dad, you will mess up in your relationship with your kids and in your relationship with one another. I almost never see parents saying to their children or one spouse, “I was wrong. Will you please forgive me?” Watching a parent repent and handle his or her sin is one of the most powerful moments for a child. Listen to me. Your kids won’t look down on you for your sin as much as they will look down on you for failing to face and repent of your sin.

When my boys were younger, David and Daniel slept in the same bedroom. Daniel is the one usually making strange random sounds. It is his personality. Look at his Vine videos and you will see what I mean. One day, from the living room, I kept warning him to stop making strange sounds. Finally, I went in to the room and, in an out of control parental moment, spanked him so he would learn to listen. When the crying was over, I learned I spanked the wrong child. It was David, his brother, making the sounds the whole time. I had to tell them Dad was wrong and ask their forgiveness. I have needed to do that on

occasions that I haven't treated Cindy like I should treat her. Kids learn from you how to repent.

Pray with them, for them and over them

Pray with them. If you want your kids to be praying kids, pray with them. Every opportunity you have, pray with your kids. When you are facing a problem, pray with them. That is not just you praying, but you pray and then they pray. Have your kids lead in meal prayers. Have your children pray for one another as you pray for them. Have a virtual prayer meeting in your house where you pray a bit and your kids pray a bit. They will learn to pray by praying with you.

Pray for them. Text them during the day letting your kids know you prayed for them. Take time as a mom and dad to pray for your sons and daughters by name when you are alone in bed. When you are commuting, turn off the radio and pray out loud for your kids and your spouse and church in the car.

Pray over them. This is what I call benediction prayer or bedtime prayer. This is putting your hand on your son or daughter's shoulder as they lay in bed and praying a blessing over their lives, praying for their futures., praying for their spouses, praying for their purity until their wedding nights. If you have dreams for your children, pray those dreams on your children.

Conclusion

Family — We believe in the importance of a healthy biblical family and supporting parents in their responsibility for the spiritual health of their children.



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