

Article 18 The Family

Pastor Scott Hill | Providence Church Murrieta

If y'all are wondering what I just told Dave, it was, don't play me off.

The family isn't simply a noble human tradition. It's a divine blueprint for human flourishing. Which means the family is a common grace that's woven into the very fabric of creation.

And that's why the doctrine of family extends beyond the walls of the church, beyond the Christian community.

We know this. We all know Genesis 2. *God said, it's not good that man be alone.*

Eve was the solution to that. And then it continues and says, *therefore, man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife and they shall become one flesh.*

Which means marriage isn't just an arbitrary institution. It's a foundation for human flourishing.

Allan Carlson beautifully describes this leaving and cleaving as something so much more than just a partnership. He says, it's a completed being. Which means together, man and woman form a natural family.

And that's the bedrock of society. The idea of family so permeates the culture. It's so significant, so profound that even those that are not believers have said some of the powerful statements about family.

One man said, "There is no doubt that it's around the family and the home that the greatest virtues, the most dominating virtues of human society are created and strengthened and maintained. The strength of the family, the strength of a nation derives its integrity from the home."

Even the universal declaration on human rights says that, “The family is a fundamental unit of society and that it's the duty of the state to protect the family.”

But I got to be honest with you, if that's the case, if that's the way the world talks about the family, why do I, and I'm sure many of you in here feel like the family has been under attack for a long time?

Well there's a reason, it's not complex. That's because outside the Christian faith, they have a liberty we don't have. They can just change the definition of the family with the ebbs and flows of culture and create a modern family.

But the scriptures, the Word of God establishes an ideal. That ideal is a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman, raising children who embody the values of biblical integrity and faith.

It's a family that strives to raise those children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. It's a family structure that's built on love. It's built on mutual respect, godly instruction, intending to reflect God's order, pointing us toward his redemptive purposes and modeling the gospel to the world.

And as a church, we are called to uphold God's design for the family. To champion the family. Not as an outdated tradition, but as a divine cornerstone for a flourishing society. And we're called to do this because God ordained it. And it's not just good for individuals, it's good for nations.

But look, I know I'm in a room of pastors. And this is not easy. We pastor in a broken world to broken people and some of our most difficult pastoral moments come because the fall of man shattered the ideal.

But the biblical standard stands immovable. It's a north star that guides us toward something greater even when we know in this life we can't reach it fully.

And that's because God designed the family to reflect something far greater and that's our relationship between Christ and the church.

But I don't think it's even a conspiracy theory to say that there are those who actively hate the concept of godly families.

Vladimir Lenin, that guy had a lot of bad ideas. But he did get one thing right with chilling accuracy. He said, "The family is the primary unit through which cultural values are passed. Destroy the family, you destroy the culture." And that wasn't a warning, it was a call to action.

This is not just an ideological threat. It's a reality that Christians, especially Baptists, have been grappling with for generations.

And it's one of the reasons that the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 committee felt an urgent need to add this article to the 2000 document when it wasn't in the 1963 document. Which is an important story in the life of Southern Baptists.

Now if I were good at impressions, I would try to do my best Paul Harvey impression and tell you the rest of the story. But you're just going to have to put up with my Southern accent.

You see this doctrine of family was so important that one of our own California pastors led the charge to have it included in the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

This was a man that lived with deep conviction that God's word was meant to be proclaimed boldly and clearly and without compromise. And he wasn't just called to simply preach sermons. He was called to

faithfully expose the truth of scripture to a world that desperately needed it.

And throughout his life he championed the core doctrines of Christian faith. He believed that God's design for life, especially in the areas of marriage and family, was not subject to cultural trends.

He wasn't concerned about being on the right side of history. He was concerned about being on the right side of scripture, which is where we all need to find ourselves.

And when society began shifting their views of marriage and the family conversation began to change, he took a stand. He knew that if the church didn't uphold this truth, this truth that the family, the ideal, that future generations would suffer the consequences.

And so he played a key role in reaffirming this biblical value and a key moment in helping craft the document that we've gone through the last two days to serve as a foundation for Southern Baptist churches.

And his commitment wasn't just intellectual, it was pastoral because this man was a pastor. He knew that the health of the church and society rested on this strength.

And in a recent Zoom call, we asked Dr. Al Mohler about this man's time serving on the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 committee. And Dr. Mohler had a lot of good things to say, but there was one thing that he said that really struck me. He said, this pastor was, "always a calming voice when things were heated and a correcting voice when it was essential. And he was a man that believed the timeless truths of scripture should be the foundation for all life."

And his legacy continues. It continues in families he strengthened, in churches that he served, in doctrinal clarity that he provided. His legacy still continues today.

And that man was Pastor Roger Spradlin. Now you know the rest of the story.

And we want to take a moment to honor a man who pastored Valley Baptist and faithfully for over 38 years, God took him home last November, but his legacy lives on in faithful servants.

Many of you in this room impacted by Pastor Roger. And we have a video we want to show that celebrates his legacy.

[Video]