

# The Fit Family

Long Beach Alliance Church • September 6, 2015 • Pastor Chris Lankford

***If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.***

***~Luke 14:26 (ESV)***

## **1) A Culture Of Tolerance Gone Mad**

- A) The world says you are the captain of your soul. However, your personal independence is measured against your loyalty to a world-view which holds tolerance as the highest of values for all things except the religiously intolerant, of which the world, ironically, is rather intolerant. Confusing? Wait, there's more!
- B) Now dependent on embracing this elitist-derived view of tolerance, the world presses the populace with new definitions of love and relationships, of truth and transparency, and of living under the influence of a democratically derived wisdom. The results of this world-view are increasingly more evident.
- C) The world's tolerance bears its own moral fruit, bringing an unanchored madness to the lives of the children of this world. The very best this world has to offer results in the destruction of personal identity, the redefinition of family to the point of insignificance, and the marginalization of God as a barely tolerated cultural annoyance, a primitive historical myth solved by the wisdom of the truly intelligent minded.
- D) But Christ established something better, something I don't want you to miss. Knowing that the methods of this world result in failure, Jesus RADICALLY redefined access to God. He established something new, something foreshadowed in the Old Testament, but brought into clearer focus in the New Testament.

## **2) The Priority Of A Family World View**

- A) At one time you belonged to God because of the nationality of your blood family (Israel). You related and were loyal to God through relationship and loyalty to your blood family; likewise manifested in relationship and loyalty to the nation/clan of Israel. Sometimes the modern church reflects this idea, wrongly asserting that our relationships and loyalties are to God (then) Family (then) Church (and sometimes) Country.
- B) But Jesus said that in order to have a relationship to God through Him, you had to hate your blood family (Luke 14:26). Jesus said that his blood family no longer mattered, and that his actual family were those who were faithful to God (Matthew 12:46-50). Jesus said it was better to leave your blood family behind in order to live for Him (Matthew 19:29). The Apostle Paul wished that more people were gifted to be single, saying it was better to remain single than to marry (1 Corinthians 7:25-40, 7:7-8, also Jesus' words in Matthew 19:10-12). So, why do family and marriage get such a bum rap?
- C) Because when you become a Christian, you are part of a new family. This new family is of the highest priority in the Kingdom of God. It is your citizenship (Heaven), your blood (in Christ), and you are not just a citizen (Ephesians 2:18-22), you are actually an adopted son/daughter, an heir of God the King (Romans 8:14-17).
- D) The worldly church says family is more significant than Christ's church-family, and lives in the fruit of that life. The worldly church is dying, it means less and less in a world demanding conformity to tolerance. But the family of Christ, His true churches, are not dying. Our priorities are in check, God, Church, Family. Each is nested within the provision and protection of the one before.
- E) When we read the Scriptures, we are faced with two different world views. The first is our "native" world view. It's from the world in which we grow up. By definition, it is from this world and of this world. The other is from God. It's the world into which we are adopted through Christ. By definition, it's not from this world or of this world. God is changing our world view from this world to His. Which family will be your eternal home?

# Growth Group Guide Week 1: Ephesians 5:22-6:9

## Bible Study

In *unChristian*, David Kinnaman reports that people in our culture “have a strong need to belong, usually to a tribe of other loyal people who know them well and appreciate them.” Who comes to mind when you think about your “tribe” of loyal people who know and appreciate you?

### Read through the passage, Ephesians 5:22-6:4

1. Wives are to \_\_\_\_\_ to their husbands as to \_\_\_\_\_. (5:22)
2. Husbands are to \_\_\_\_\_ their own wives, as \_\_\_\_\_ loved \_\_\_\_\_. (5:25)
3. Children are to \_\_\_\_\_ their parents. (6:1)
4. Fathers aren't to provoke their children to \_\_\_\_\_. (6:4)

### Read through Jesus' words in Matthew 10:34-42

1. Jesus has come to set a man \_\_\_\_\_ his father, and a daughter \_\_\_\_\_ her mother, and a daughter-in-law \_\_\_\_\_ her mother-in-law. (10:35)
2. Who will a person's enemies be? (10:36)
3. Whoever loves \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ more than Jesus is \_\_\_\_\_ of Him. (10:37)
4. Whom does a person “receive” if they receive you? (10:40)
5. Based on whose blood do you think loyalty is rewarded? (10:42)

## Discussion

1. Jesus brings division between His followers and parents, spouses, children, and even their own lives. He demands radical loyalty, both to Himself and to His followers. How do you understand Paul's statements about the family in Ephesians in light of what Jesus says in Matthew 10:34-42 and Luke 14:26? What, then, is the “Christian” view of family?
2. It can feel like the traditional definition of the family is under attack in our culture. How do you feel about these changes? Based on Jesus' words in Matthew 10:34-42 and Luke 14:26 (also see Matthew 16:18), how do you think God's Church will be affected by these changes?
3. Whose teaching on the family is harder for you to accept, Paul's teaching on love, submission, and obedience, or Jesus' words on division? Which is more difficult for you and why?
4. We live in a culture with broken concepts of family, distorting views of God. How can we live the truth about family as Christians? How can we live in such a manner that shows grace to an unbelieving world?