
God's Best Way is through Inner-Circle Biblical Relationships

Raising a Family

Helping Kids in the Family Turn Out Right

© 2013 by Dick Wulf, Director
The Lamb's Bride Project
P.O. Box 8240, Colorado Springs, CO 80933

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1. **In the family, everyone should meet each person's need** to be loved and cherished. Strong personal bonds help a person want to follow biblical courses of action. People usually do not want to disappoint those to whom they are emotionally close. Also, strong bonds of love are the "safety net" if and when a family member goes astray. (See *Meet One Another's Needs* at ChristiansTogether.org)
2. **Have respected Christians visit your home** so they can interact with your children. Mix close family friends who come over regularly with one-timers. These visitors can be good influences on your children by their examples, their affections and their belief in your children's character. The family should discuss and then help each member of the family do a good job of welcoming, serving and entertaining visitors. Since people like to live up to their best behavior, if a child goes down the wrong path, he or she will be able to remember that "better self" in past family social settings to which he or she can return. (See *Be Hospitable with One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)
3. **Allow everyone in the family to speak the truth** in helpful ways for another family member who is struggling with a situation. Talk calmly with logic rather than a loud attack. Shaming rarely works, but a loving relationship does. Dialogue

is a good way to begin and allows a better chance to understand what is going on. (See article *Successful Family Dialogue*.) (See *Speak to One Another Truthfully and Helpfully* at ChristiansTogether.org)

4. **Hold small family celebrations** to honor anyone's personal improvement or other achievement, especially if it involves stopping doing something wrong. Reward for changing dysfunctional behavior and overcoming sin should be more important than winning an athletic championship. Recognized change for the better helps a person resist going back to the poor behavior later. (See *Honor One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

5. **Listen to God in Bible study together** as a family and do not relegate Christian education to Sunday school or other church programs. Your children can be held accountable for their behavior by the whole family if the biblical principles violated were learned in the family. As adult children, they will also be more accountable, and because of that accountability will avoid doing some things that will be unpopular with or shame the family. And families should speak to God in prayer together about important things. Remember that obedience is body language that expresses love to God. (See *Communicate with God Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

6. **Serve God as a family with every member willingly involved.** If possible, start this when kids are young so that it fortifies faith and biblical standards for behavior and seems natural all their lives. When someone does not want to participate, everyone else should proceed. Then, in the atmosphere of really enjoying living for and serving God, the family should continue to extend invitations to those holding back. Joyful service to God will be a strong motivator, but serving God out of duty will not. (See *Serve God Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

7. **When family members sin or make mistakes,** all in the family should bear it without judgment. Putting up with the behavior means not being too critical or self-righteous. But you should still address the sin. Do not dwell on misbehavior as sin, but reach beyond to understand the reason — often an unmet critical need, something that needs to be learned, or a misunderstanding about truth and reality. Lovingly help the person change. (See *Bear with One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

8. **Give the one who has acted sinfully** or unwisely automatic forgiveness and

move on to solving the problem underlying the behavior. It is easier to learn from someone who has already forgiven you. Being unforgiving will cloud your thinking from lovingly teaching the offender why and how to change. On the other hand, forgiveness is not trust, so forgiving is not giving the person permission to do again what was objectionable. In fact, trust should be withheld, along with all the privileges that go with the trust, until the behavior has changed and the person can be trusted. (See *Forgive One Another Without Being Asked* at ChristiansTogether.org)

9. **Place courage into each and every family member** to take on tough personal change. An atmosphere where everyone is trying to improve is powerful in helping all become moral persons. Regular family meetings to encourage everyone in this way should be placed as high as Bible study in priority because it is Bible obedience. (See *Encourage One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

10. **Commend family members for their good behavior** to reinforce those behaviors and create a positive self-image. Discuss as a whole family the strong qualities of each family member, remembering character strengths such as honesty as well as talents. Do not overdo the “who is best at,” which can create comparisons that lead to lack of self-worth and confidence. Identity is very important. A person who sees himself or herself and is seen by others as moral will act good. (See *Commend One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

11. **The family, working as a whole, should place priority** on seeing that every family member is doing good things for others out of love. Started as early in a child’s life as possible, this enabling will help develop a strong sense that living morally and serving others is basic to life. It will stimulate both love and responsibility. (See *Spur One Another on to Love and Good Deeds* at ChristiansTogether.org)

12. **Everyone in the family, especially parents,** should regularly confess significant sins and ask for prayer. Should any child struggle with sin, he or she is unlikely to take any correction or advice from a parent who cannot admit his or her own sins. Such a child needs to see in the family many times when sin was confessed, prayer offered and healing obtained. Remember that since Christ paid for the sins already, it should be easy to admit them. (See *Confess Sins to One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

13. **As a family, help pay the consequences of one another’s sins** and mistakes

when needed. For example, if a child carelessly breaks something and has to pay for it, others can contribute some of their own money to the fund. This behavior is as close as we can get to Jesus dying for our sins. It is tremendous praise to God to act so like Jesus. Sometimes a child or parent who has acted badly will hesitate to do it again if the family stepped in to clean up the last mess. When a child or parent takes advantage of such help and repeats objectionable behavior, such aid can be withdrawn if the family determines it is being unrighteously used. Love should be reciprocated. Therefore, a lesson must be taught. (See *Carry One Another's Burdens* at ChristiansTogether.org)

14. **The family as a whole should strive for perfection** and aspire to set itself apart for God first and for survival and fun second. The family can discuss at regular family meetings what needs to improve in the family and effect plans to make those changes happen. Children who need to become better will have more success if they come from a family that improves continuously. (See *Pursue Holiness and Perfection Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

15. **Become a family where everyone gives godly advice** to all members regarding important events and situations. Bible study and discussions about application of Scripture are important preparations for giving advice. The beauty of giving counsel as a whole family is that there will be different viewpoints. In most cases you want different perspectives. Kids and parents struggling with dysfunctional behavior can use loving advice given by those most committed to them. (See *Counsel One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

16. **The moral and ethical behavior of family members** should be openly recognized and the person asked to tell why he or she made the right choices. Then, the family should encourage all family members to follow with similar desirable conduct. This is discipleship. Busy families have to make time to function as a family if they want the biblical benefits. Using planned and spontaneous meetings is absolutely critical. One way to do this is with the Excellent Family Member Award. (See *Disciple One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

17. **When God's discipline strikes to correct selfish behavior**, the family should be available. Many of the other Togethers apply here as ways to stick with a family member going through a tough time. For example, a child may have to stay back a grade in school, thus losing a year of his or her life in some ways. The family can help the child make the best of the situation, do better in school and

avoid self-condemnation. (See *Face Discipline and Judgment Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

18. **As a family, take a stand against the evil deceptions of Satan.** Together test questionable ideas within your family against sound doctrine. Make sure everyone lives as though the basic doctrines of the faith are really true. Stand up for the faith by helping every family member come to a voluntary understanding and adoption of the Christian faith and life. Emphasize God, not rules. (See *Contend for the Faith Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

19. **Take up spiritual weapons** and put on the armor of God together as a family. These are offensive and defensive tools to march against evil and not become victims of it. Help each other understand the armor and fully believe in its protection and power. (See *Arm Yourselves* at ChristiansTogether.org)

20. **Watch each other for the evil one's attacks**, especially from the blind side. Warn family members of danger, even from themselves. Admonish one another to resist immorality. Remind each other that no one individual is strong enough alone to resist evil and that everyone needs the others to spot approaching evil and ward it off. (See *Warn and Admonish One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

21. **As a family, stand against and fight off temptations** before they become sins. Don't judge or make fun of — just help. As a family, help everyone invite every other family member into his or her battle with temptations, recognizing that everyone is tempted to do something wrong or not good for others or themselves. Brainstorm powerful actions that can help family members resist temptation. (See *Battle Temptation Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

22. **Go against the enemy Satan as a whole family attack squad.** Submit to God and his ways. Then stand up to the devil in the name and power of God and watch him flee. The family needs to keep in mind that at some point or other, the evil one will try to attack each family member. Remember that the family member who has acted badly is not the enemy. (See *Stand Up to the Devil at One Another's Side* at ChristiansTogether.org)

23. **Together, as a family, test doctrines, revelations, spirits and ideologies.** Ferret out those thoughts and emotions that come from the dark angelic world. Know God intimately and be familiar with His ways. Contrast Satan's ways of thinking and acting with God's ways. Tenderly explore whether any of you too

easily goes along with people and help that family member become strong enough to resist evil. (See *Test the Spirits Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

24. **As a family, hate evil things, not people.** Search for and destroy wickedness. Pursue battle at the gates of hell, not merely at the drawbridge of your own castle. Seek holy scars with honor. It is easy to resist evil that you hate. As a family, play the discipleship game *DragonRaid*, invented by this author in the 1980s. (See *Together Hate Evil and Defeat It* at ChristiansTogether.org)

25. **Lay down your life for others in your family.** Risk reputation, financial security and anything necessary to help another family member in deep trouble. Let God watch out for your good, freeing you to risk for Him and watch out for the needs of family members. (See *Die for One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

26. **When a family member drops back** from living a strong Christian life and battling evil, the family needs to step in for a rescue and restore mission. Get together and create a plan of action, with or without the family member present. Make it a rescue of love as the primary, if not the only, force. (See *Rescue and Restore One Another* at ChristiansTogether.org)

27. **Develop an consensus in the family** that all members will stick with one another all the way to death, helping one another grow in faith and love of God. Do all you can to ensure that everyone finishes as a victor in Christ. Like the Marines, have a commitment to “leave no one behind” on your way to heaven. (See *Run the Full Race Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

28. **Practice truth together as a family.** Keep trying out new truth discovered in Bible study, stepping farther out than ever before to discover applied and proven truth. A long, steadfast relationship with the truth sets us free from so many burdensome things and temptations. (See *Hold to the Truth Together* at ChristiansTogether.org)

29. **Expose and deal a deathblow to the love of money** when you find it in your family. It is a root of all kinds of evil. 1 Timothy 6:10 explains that “eagerness for money” causes some to “wander from the faith” and others to “pierce themselves with many griefs.” Brainstorm as a family all the problems that the pursuit of more and more money could cause for your family. Work together to develop godly values that puts money in its place. (See *Keep One Another from the Love of Money* at ChristiansTogether.org)

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