

Rock Us: The Incredible Family: The Importance of Family

Families are central to human life and have been the subject of movies (& TV shows) from early on. *Gone With The Wind* (1939) & *Little Women* (6 different film adaptation from 1918 to 1994) chronicled the struggles of families during the civil war. *The Diary of Anne Frank* (1959), *The Hiding Place* (1975) & *Life Is Beautiful* (1997) show the intense power of family love and resilience during the Nazi Holocaust in WWII. *Ordinary People* (1980) followed a typical American family through struggles of tragic loss of a child, guilt, depression, suicide attempts and family breakup. Last year's film, *Instant Family* (2018) showed the bare truth about the struggles of foster families and adoption. Families are featured in blockbuster films like *The Sound of Music* (1965), *Mary Poppins* (1964), *The Lion King* (1994) and *Finding Nemo* (2003) all feature families as a big part of their stories.

Perhaps my favorite movie about families is *The Incredibles* (2004) a creative and fun look at the family life of superheroes know as The Parr's. Despite their setbacks, struggles & challenges, the Incredible Parr family composed on one father (Bob Parr aka Mr. Incredible), one mother (Helen Parr aka Elastigirl), a daughter (Violet Parr) a son (Dash) and a baby (Jack-Jack). The family suffers from many of the typical challenges of life: Bob's deadend jobs, the family moving all the time, Dash's problems at school, Violet's Dash's taunting, Violet's desire to fit in and be normal. But when Bob's moonlighting as a superhero (instead of bowling) gets himself in deep trouble on Syndrome's island, the family has to come together & rally to save the world from Syndrome's evil plan. In the end, the Parr's bury their differences & squabbles and come together which saves & preserves their family.

Families have been important topics in the history of movies. And it goes without saying that families are very important in the real world as well. Families are also very important to God. God established the family at the creation when He called Adam & Eve to come together in marriage and have children (**Gen 1:27-28, 2:24; Mk 10:6-9**). God intends for us to be married once for lifetime. One man & one woman for one entire life. This is God's perfect plan for human families, and He knows what's best for us. Marriage under God is the godly foundation to bring children into this world & into our families. God knows the best possible circumstances to raise children is in the family that He created with one father & one mother.

The human family is a reflection of God & our relationship with Him: the father protects & provides for the children, the mother nurtures and comforts them. They grow in love and trust with each other. Both the mother & father teach the children, guide them and correct them when they go astray. Our relationship with God is the same.

So the human family is important to us too, or at least it should be. But the human family as established & defined by God the Father is under a major attack. Here are a few examples:

1.) "Free Love": God created sex as a gift exclusively for a married man and his wife with each other. But the "free-love" movement of the 1960s & 70s said, "it's your body, have all the sex you want even if you not married." But there's no such thing as "free love" with no attachments or results, because the sexual union causes something big to happen... babies! As a result of the "free love" movement, millions of children were born outside of God's intended family; & sadly over 55 million children were killed via abortion. You see, "free love" isn't free – someone always pays the price.

2.) Ease of Divorce: Prior to the 1970s, divorce was a very rare thing of social tragedy & sadness. But the ease of the "No Fault" divorce (a development of the 1970s) made divorce a quick & easy option. So instead of working through family issues, people could now just easily walk-away from a marriage with ease.

3.) The Federal Welfare System started in the 1960s, also undermined the God-intended family by providing money (in regular monthly checks) to mothers who had children born out of wedlock. No problem or a good thing you might say... But this freed men from having to take responsibility for their actions & taking care of the children *they fathered*.

4.) Mockery of fathers & family: Shows like *Married With Children*, *The Simpsons* & *Family Guy* made fathers seem stupid/worthless & godly families seem dorky. Society now reinforces these attitudes.

5.) Redefinition of marriage: Marriage, as established & defined by God and accepted by humanity as one man-one woman-one life for 1000s of years of human history, has all of a sudden been redefined by people & governments to be anything goes. But just as you can't have a truly square circle or a black shade of white, you can't truly have a marriage unless it's God's way: *one man-one woman-one life*.

(Two women can't mate and make a child; nor can two men, never...)

6.) Shacking Up: Prior to the 60s, adult men & women only lived together under the covenant of holy marriage. Nowadays, that stigma is gone & people shack up & un-shack up all the time, no strings, no commitment, no big deal, right?... It is a big deal because it affects others, not just the "adults".

So families are under attack and families of *one man-one woman-one life* are fading. As these kinds of families decrease, other things are on the increase: divorce, fatherlessness, children born out of wedlock are at all-time highs today. There's a very high price to pay for the breaking of God's intended *one man-one woman-one life* marriage & His plan of a stable, loving, committed family that loves Him & loves and cares for each other. The price is broken hearts, broken children, sadness, emptiness, depression, hopelessness, suicide, anger and murder. Prisons are filled and the CVS system is bursting at the seams. Do you like these aspects of today's society????

I'm not here tonight to judge you, your parents or your family, but I am here to ask you this: do you want something different for your life, for your marriage, for your family? Are you tired of what you're seeing in your family, town & world? Are you tired of the brokenness, fighting, abandonment, sorrow & messed-up families??? Well, if you're tired and want something wholesome, good & godly for your future, Jesus is the answer. Start by calling out to Jesus, "I need You, I need forgiveness, I need new life!" Trusting in Jesus brings you into the eternal family of God (**1John 1:12-13**) Trusting in Jesus also gives you a new heart & the power of God to break the cycle and remain steadfast & pure. You may say, "I've made mistakes, it's too late." Jesus can change you now and help you deal with the mistakes of the past & prevent you from repeating them again. In Jesus Christ, we have a totally new heart (**Ez 36:26**).

Take a stand for your family, your future family & for the future of your children to be. Walk with Jesus, let Him guide you in the right way to go. Resolve to be sexually pure for your future husband/wife. Refuse to give in to society's pressure for "free love", shacking up & waking away from God (**1Tim 4:12**). If you're walking in sin & away from God, stop now & come back now & help your future family. Also know that people aren't perfect and families aren't perfect. Just as the Parr's had their flaws and problems in *The Incredibles*, human families have their problems too: financial strain, misunderstandings, social pressure, temptations to be self-serving, fighting, illness, etc. We all have our family & personal struggles, but when we walk with God, He is there to keep our families together and moving on the path of His love and guidance. God helps you through the personal & family trials to have the best possible family now & in the future.

BIBLE VERSES

Gen 1:27-28a So God created human beings in His own image. In the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it.

Mk 10:6-9 [Jesus said] "God made them male and female" from the beginning of creation. 'This explains why a man leaves his father & mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' Since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together."

1Tim 4:12 Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity.

1Jn 1:12-13 But to all who believed Him [Jesus Christ] & accepted Him, He gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn, not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

Ez 36:26 "And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart & give you a tender, responsive heart"

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1a. We watched a part of *The Incredibles* tonight. Who's your favorite character from *The Incredibles* & why do you like them?

1b. Is your family more like the Parr's or like their alter-egos, the Incredibles? Explain your answer.

1c. What's one thing you like about your family & what's one thing you wish could change about it?

2. In the past, families were generally marked by strength, stability & cohesiveness. How do you see families functioning today?

What happened to the family? Are you happy with the state of the American family today?

3. Read Gen 1:27-28a & Mk 10:6-9. Describe what you'd like your future family to be like.

4. Read 1Tim 4:12. What steps are you taking right now to build the foundation for a solid, godly & healthy future family?

5. Read 1Jn 1:12-13 & Ez 36:26. We can also undermine our future & our future family by running from God & living outside His loving ways. If you want best possible future family, it is found alone in Jesus Christ and in joining God's eternal family.

So tonight we ask, do you want to change; do you want join Jesus' eternal family tonight & be with Him forever?

(Leaders: Please lead anyone into a prayer of salvation if they want to accept Jesus tonight.)

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, help us & our future families. Help us make wise choices & keep us pure. Lord, we also pray for our future spouses. Protect them & keep them pure. Use us to bring You glory & build our future families. Amen