



SERMON NOTES

From In Touch With Dr. Charles Stanley

A STRONG FAMILY

KEY PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 6:1-12 | SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE: Psalm 32:8

► SUMMARY

Since He's the Creator of the family, God desires that it be strong and healthy.

However, throughout history, families have experienced conflict and brokenness. Adam and Eve's first son, Cain, killed his brother; Abraham and Sarah made a drastic mistake when Hagar became the third person in their marriage; and David's family experienced adultery, deception, rape, and murder. Sadly, conditions have not improved with the passage of time. But no matter how dismal the situation seems, there's hope because the Lord has given us guidelines for strengthening our families.

Deuteronomy 6:3-9 is God's prescription for a strong family. First of all, we are to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and might. And secondly, we are commanded to teach His Word to our children. These two requirements are the foundation for a strong family that expresses love and devotion for one another. It sounds simple, but it takes hard work.

► SERMON POINTS

Even if your children are grown, or your family is broken, it's never too late to start being a strong influence for good.

After all, that's why God has placed you in your particular family. When your relationship with the Lord is your top priority, you'll be able to not only affect your children but also future generations. God wants us to have strong, loving families. You can always improve on the situation if you're willing to work at it.

Characteristics of a strong family

The following is a list of qualities that make a family strong:

- **Godly parents:** The most powerful elements in the family are a godly mother and father who love the Lord and are devoted to Him.
- **Consistent parents:** Since children are influenced more by what their parents do than what they say, your actions must always match your words.
- **Good listeners:** Children want to be heard, but when parents are uninterested or too busy to listen, kids feel unimportant.
- **Discipline without rejection:** Parents should never discipline their children in anger. First, let God settle your emotions, then explain the consequence for the misbehavior, and finally, discipline in a way which doesn't send a message of rejection to the child.
- **Parents loving one another:** When children see appropriate affection and kind words between their mom and dad, they feel secure in many ways.
- **Not playing favorites:** If a parent shows a preference for one child over another, the less-favored child feels unloved.
- **Admitting failure:** No one is a perfect parent, but even times of failure can be used to train your children. If you admit making a mistake, your child is more likely to be honest with you when he fails in some way.
- **Praying together:** Some matters are private, but many issues can be occasions for family prayer. This doesn't have to be a nightly routine, but at least once a week, gather as a family to pray about your concerns.
- **Reading the Bible together:** Nothing is more important than getting God's Word into the family, and the

Lord has given that responsibility to parents, not the preacher. Begin when your children are young by reading an easily understood version and explaining it as you go.

- **Attending church together:** It's important for parents to set an example by attending church with their children early in life. When they're old enough, take them with you to the adult service so they'll learn to appreciate worshipping God and learning His Word.
- **Encouraging children to have private devotions:** Children need to develop the habit of reading God's Word for themselves. If they have trouble understanding a passage, instruct them to ask you for help so they aren't left with unresolved questions.
- **Teaching children how to handle money:** Start by instructing them to save some, give some, and spend some. The biblical example of a tithe of 10% is a good place to begin training them to give to the Lord.
- **Discouraging criticism in the family:** Arguments and disagreement should never become occasions for hurtful words. Instead of allowing bickering and name-calling, sit down together with God's Word to seek His perspective on how we are to treat each other.
- **Sharing your heartaches, disappointments, trials, and tough times:** When your children reach an appropriate age, begin telling them about some of your struggles so they can see how God works. As a result, they'll be more willing to share their burdens with you.
- **Allowing difficult questions:** When your child comes to you with a challenging question, take the time to help him find an answer. In their teen years, advise them to develop a relationship with a trusted adult with whom they can confide and receive godly counsel.
- **Building biblical convictions into their lives as a guide:** Children need to know what they believe. However, convictions are learned by watching your behavior.
- **Spending time with your children:** Since kids love being with their parents, plan some fun family activities. When they're older, they'll still have fond memories of those times.

- **Being willing to ask for forgiveness:** Invite your children to tell you about any unresolved hurts. Then seek their forgiveness.
- **Supporting children equally:** Sibling squabbles are inevitable, but they must be dealt with fairly. Siding with one child makes the other one feel you're against him.
- **Being honest with your children:** Deception teaches a child to become distrustful of the parent and of other people.
- **Being a refuge for one another:** When a family member is hurting, reach out personally to offer comfort and help as you walk alongside him through the difficulty.

Children's role in a strong family

When someone's conflict and pain is the result of a child's actions, he has a responsibility to ask forgiveness, make amends, and seek to honor his mother and father in all ways.

Grandparents' role in a strong family

Grandparents can have tremendous influence in the lives of their grandchildren if they make themselves available and are willing to listen and spend time with them.

► RESPONSE

- What things are you doing to be the spiritual champion in your family?
- Is there one thing you can improve on this week to keep your family focused on God's plans for their lives?

To purchase this message on CD or DVD, please visit store.intouch.org or call 1-800-789-1473.
To download these Sermon Notes, visit intouch.org/sermonnotes.

