

Stable Foundations

There's a terrifying place in Florida called "sinkhole alley" — a three-county-wide swath of land known to swallow houses whole! Imagine enjoying a Saturday morning off, watching cartoons with your family, when suddenly the foundation beneath you erodes, leaving you fighting for your lives in your pajamas. We like to think of our home as a safe place, but what makes it safe? What's the bedrock on which a stable family is built?

The Big Idea: A stable family starts before the kids come, when parents follow God's pattern for the home.

Marital Stability

The marriage covenant is God's foundation for a stable family. Jesus says that in marriage, we become *"no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate"* (Matt. 19:6). So a rock-solid marriage begins with reverence for God and the one-ness he creates. *"Because the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth ... your companion and your wife by covenant"* (Mal. 2:14). Sometimes couples split apart; sometimes they drift apart. But non-stop fighting and unfaithfulness will weaken the foundation of your family, eroding the bedrock on which you once hoped to build.

So, grow your love for your spouse, stay on the same page, and work out your differences in a way that honors Christ (Eph. 5:21). Sacrifice for each other, holding your relationship above all others — even above a relationship with your children! Mutual love and respect act as the reinforced concrete to keep that sinkhole from ever forming. As Paul said, *"let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband"* (Eph. 5:33).

How are you fostering stability in your relationship?

Devotion to God

Worship isn't just what we do as a family — it's who we are. The *"Lord builds the house"* (Ps. 127:1) when he's the heart of the home. Jesus grew up in a home where honoring God was the norm. The family *"went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover"* (Luke 2:41) — it wasn't a question; it was just what they did. They were poor, but they sacrificed what little they had to God, as he commanded (Luke 2:22-24). Before Mary and Joseph ever had kids, they were worshipers at their core.

So make devotion the core of your marriage from the earliest moments, before the kids come. Lay those habits and commitments deep, like concrete footers beneath your house. Serve, pray, and consistently assemble with the church, never too busy to show up for the One who showed up for us. Just imagine what might happen if more families took the "old fashioned" approach of Jesus' upbringing.

Is glorifying God the heart and soul of your family?

Integrity

Integrity reinforces our kids' structural support system. It's not enough to keep the *big* promises — you've got to keep the *little* ones too. Jesus reminds us that "*one who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much*" (Luke 16:10). Every time you make good on a promise, it's like you're using God's original — trustworthy — building material. But if you start to break your word, it won't take long before their trust in you comes tumbling down.

Whatever we say, we do. We're trustworthy and reliable — a good quality to have as a parent and in all other relationships. As James said, "*let your 'yes' be yes and your 'no' be no*" (James 5:12). Developing integrity isn't always fun or convenient, but through repetition and followthrough we strengthen our kid's trust in us. Set clear boundaries and expectations ahead of time so they know the consequences before they act. No waffling or excuses, we view discipline as an act of love — just like God does!

Do your kids see you as someone who always keeps your commitments?

Conclusion

Parenting is a serious and sobering responsibility. And while it's not easy to raise the next generation, especially in today's climate, how much harder will it be to train them up when you're unprepared for the task? May God bless you with fruitfulness in your family, as you submit to his authority and follow his pattern in your homes.