



THE
APOSTOLIC
FAMILY

INSIGHT
FOR LIVING
IN THE
TWENTY-FIRST
CENTURY



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PREFACE

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Aloneness is by and large a modern concept. Until recent times, being alone meant danger and even death. In the past, humans literally needed one another for physical security. Perhaps it is the diminished need in our day for fortress walls behind which people can huddle for safety that inspires the modern effort to find fulfillment in the solitary. But this modern aloneness ignores the fact that there was another reason for community in those bygone days besides physical well-being; there was a deeper, emotional need. There was no danger or death in the Garden of Eden when God saw that it was not good for man to be alone (Genesis 2:18). While solitude may be good for the soul in small, deliberately applied doses, as a lifestyle, it robs the soul of something it desperately needs. We have not progressed past, nor outgrown our need for one another, and we never will; it is part of our DNA.

God's solution for this human need for community was to create the family. He created a wife for Adam, and gave them children, thus establishing the fundamental building block of

human relationship. He did not give them friends, partners, neighborhoods, tribes, interest groups, or governments. Of course, I am not saying there is anything wrong with any of these other human relationship paradigms, they each have their function and place; I am saying the family is first, most powerful and stable of them all; and to get it wrong is to skew all the others. In this book we explore this most basic of all human relationships, discussing things that weaken it, and things that strengthen it. We can all learn from this discussion.

The Family Ministries Council is comprised of the leaders of Men's Ministries, Ladies Ministries, Children's Ministries, Youth Ministries, as well as the Office of Education and Endorsement, all of which are components of the United Pentecostal Church International. This council is chaired by the general secretary and aided by the office of communications. Its purpose is simple: to provide resources to pastors and other leaders to help strengthen the families of the Apostolic movement and particularly the UPCI. This book is part of that ongoing effort. The writers are outstanding leaders, counselors, pastors, pastors' wives, and other ministers. They bring their experience, training, and insight to you in its pages. We hope you will be helped and blessed by it, and we hope you will use it to strengthen your own family. We also hope you will use it to better help those families which God has placed in your care.



AN APOSTOLIC THEOLOGY FOR THE FAMILY

Cameron began, "I called and—"

Ashley cut him short. "So, did your pastor give us his approval or not?"

Cameron smiled. "He said 'yes' and commended us for doing things right. And he said he would be happy to be a part of the wedding."

"Do I sense a but coming?" Ashley countered.

"Well, he said that because my family is so broken and since he won't see me until the wedding, we really need to work through what it means to have a good Apostolic family. I assured him that you were raised in the church and could help me out a lot."

Ashley made a face and paused as she chose her words. "Cameron, we can hardly depend on my experience. Even though my family went to church, they're pretty dysfunctional."

Because the college from which they both would be graduating was hundreds of miles from either of their homes, Ashley and Cameron decided to start reading from a book on marriage when they got together for Bible reading and prayer. Yet that proved to be more of a challenge than they thought. When Cameron started going through

the books he ordered from Amazon, he got a little discouraged. Ashley looked at the pile of books that Cameron presented and asked, "So what is wrong with them?"

"I'm not really sure. They don't pass the smell test."

"They're not biblical?" asked Ashley.

"They certainly quote the Bible. But these books all start and end by saying that if the woman will just be in submission to the husband and if the husband listens to the voice of God, everything will work out."

"Well, all that is in the Bible, isn't it?" said Ashley.

"I know I haven't been in the church all that long, but I am pretty sure Pentecostals teach things a little bit differently, you know, a bit more nuanced. I just wish I knew more about theology."

—DSN

Note: The fictional vignettes at the beginning of each chapter were written by David S. Norris, PhD.

AN APOSTOLIC THEOLOGY FOR THE FAMILY

DAVID K. BERNARD, ThD, JD
AND CONNIE BERNARD

A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

The family is important to God's plan for humanity. God instituted marriage with the first humans, Adam and Eve. When He covenanted with Abraham, He included Abraham's household, children, and other descendants in both the commands and the promises (Genesis 17:1–14). God depended on Abraham to perpetuate truth by teaching his entire household including his children (Genesis 18:19). God thinks of humans in families; He promised that through Abraham "all families of the earth" would be blessed (Genesis 12:3).

God also cares for individuals and for broken families. He is father to the fatherless and protector of widows, which can include victims of divorce (Psalm 68:5). True religion involves caring for needy children who have lost fathers and women who have lost husbands (James 1:27). God places the solitary in families (Psalm 68:6). The church is a spiritual family of fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters. (See Mark 3:35; 10:30; I Timothy 5:1–2.)

The family is based on marriage between one man and one woman who make a lifelong commitment. We see God's plan for marriage in the creation account before the intrusion of sin. God created a man and then a woman as his helper, "an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). The word *meet* here is not a noun but an adjective meaning "suitable" (NIV) or "comparable" (NKJV). Unlike the animals, the woman is a partner comparable to and suitable for the man, and vice versa. Quoting from the creation account, Jesus stated God's original plan for marriage:

Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. (Matthew 19:4-6)

Marriage involves a public "leaving" from one's birth family, a public "cleaving" or commitment to join together, and a lifelong union of becoming "one flesh" physically, emotionally, and spiritually. (See Genesis 2:24.) The husband should love his wife sacrificially, lead his family spiritually, and support them materially; while the wife should respect his leadership and work alongside him (Ephesians 5:22-33). They submit to one another in forming a godly marriage and family (Ephesians 5:21). Each has authority to fulfill their respective responsibilities; each helps the other. Men and women have different identities and roles, but they have equal value, respect, and spiritual status (I Corinthians 11:11-16). Marriage is a coequal partnership before God; husband and wife are "heirs together of the grace of life" (I Peter 3:7). They are partners socially, economically, and physically as well as spiritually, forming one family unit for mutual benefit. (See Proverbs 31:10-31; I Corinthians 7:3-5.)