

# Are We there Yet?

## “God’s Design for Family”

### ***There is a problem:***

As assessed by the Commission on Children at Risk in the study, “Hardwired to Connect”,

“The first part is the deteriorating mental and behavioral health of U.S. children. We are witnessing high and rising rates of depression, anxiety, attention deficit, conduct disorders, thoughts of suicide, and other serious mental, emotional, and behavioral problems among U.S. children and adolescents.”...

“In large measure, what’s causing this crises of American childhood is a **lack of connectedness**. We mean two kinds of connectedness---**close connections to other people, and deep connections to moral and spiritual meaning.**”<sup>1</sup>

The answer:

“What can help most to solve the crisis are **authoritative communities**. Authoritative communities are groups that live out the types of connectedness that our children are increasingly lack.”<sup>2</sup> (i.e. families and social groups that teach and live out these values)

### ***There is a need: for God and others and for purpose and truth***

“In the beginning...It is good, it is good, it is not good!” God created us with the need for others.

**Genesis 2:18 (NLT)**

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.”

## **God’s Word says we need relationship with God and we need relationships with others.**

**Matthew 22:36-40 (NLT)**

“Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?”<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied, “ ‘You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’<sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment.<sup>39</sup> A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’<sup>40</sup> The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.”

### **• The Family’s Responsibility**

**Deuteronomy 6:1-9 (NLT)**

“These are the commands, decrees, and regulations that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you. You must obey them in the land you are about to enter and occupy,<sup>2</sup> and you and your children and grandchildren must fear the LORD your God as long as you live. If you obey all his decrees and commands, you will enjoy a long life.<sup>3</sup> Listen closely, Israel, and be careful to obey. Then all will go well with you, and you will have many children in the land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.<sup>4</sup> “Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone.<sup>5</sup> And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.<sup>6</sup> And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today.<sup>7</sup> Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.<sup>8</sup> Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders.<sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

### **• The Church’s Responsibility**

**Hebrews 10:23-25 (NLT)**

Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise. Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

**Hebrews 3:12-13 (NIV)**

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

## • **Our Responsibility**

### **James 4:1-10 (NLT)**

What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the **evil desires at war within you**? <sup>2</sup>You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them. Yet you don't have what you want because you don't ask God for it. <sup>3</sup>And even when you ask, you don't get it because your motives are all wrong—you want only what will give you pleasure. <sup>4</sup>You adulterers! Don't you realize that **friendship with the world** makes you an enemy of God? I say it again: If you want to be a friend of the world, you make yourself an enemy of God. <sup>5</sup>What do you think the Scriptures mean when they say that the spirit God has placed within us is filled with envy? <sup>6</sup>But he gives us even more grace to stand against such evil desires. As the Scriptures say, "God opposes the proud but favors the humble." <sup>7</sup>So humble yourselves before God. **Resist the devil**, and he will flee from you. <sup>8</sup>Come close to God, and God will come close to you. Wash your hands, you sinners; purify your hearts, for your loyalty is divided between God and the world. <sup>9</sup>Let there be tears for what you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. <sup>10</sup>Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.

### **The Word reveals the problem in James 4:**

**Vs 1: An internal battle ...the flesh**

**Vs 4: An external battle ...the culture**

**Vs 7: A spiritual battle ...the devil**

### **The Answer: A Road Trip**

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Humble yourself before God**

- It starts with you. You can't control others. You can give God a chance through your family.
- God is always right. His design for family is right.
- Leave the world's goals and solutions behind.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Take a look at the map: The Scriptures**

- You may not see the trouble ahead so you think you are ok, but it is coming.
- Where are you? Are you off the map?

#### **Psalm 119:105-106 (NLT)**

Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path. I've promised it once, and I'll promise it again: I will obey your righteous regulations.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Repent, turn around and go back. Get back on track.**

- Every mile you go in the wrong direction takes you further from the real answers.
- You are dragging your family with you.
- Every mile you go in the wrong direction means further to return.
- God gets involved when you draw close to Him. He lifts you up.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> Resist the devil. Fight the right fights. He constantly tries to distract us.**

- It is a constant battle to stay on the road.

### **The Bottom line**

#### **1 John 1:6-7 (NIV)**

If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

#### **Endnotes:**

<sup>1</sup>YMCA of the USA, Dartmouth Medical School, Institute for American Values, 2003 (pg 5)

<sup>2</sup>YMCA of the USA, Dartmouth Medical School, Institute for American Values, 2003 (pg 6)

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the Holy Bible, New Living Translation, copyright 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189. All rights reserved.

Quotations marked NIV are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright 1978 by New York International Bible Society.