



DEVOTION: January 29

Family (Life Realities)
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Family is potentially the greatest earthly blessing, to be cherished, protected and celebrated.

People value many things in this world — education, career, money, possessions, land, fame, and success. But among earth's greatest blessings, if not the greatest of them all outside your very relationship with God, is your family. To be sure, some of us have not entered this world in families with the most honorable heritage or the most beneficial values. But nearly everyone, regardless of background, has the opportunity to establish a new heritage for his or her own family, as God provides grace and love.

Yet how many things in this world conspire to cheat us of this great blessing from God? Some of these forces are beyond our power to control — the ravages of disease, death and war to name a few. But many things that destroy families are ours to choose or reject: greed, lust, indulgence, intemperance, anger, bitterness, contempt, neglect, and unfaithfulness. These, much more than all outside enemies, ruin families and rob us of their ability to enrich our lives.

A strong family reinforces every one of its members against feeling lost and alone in the world. Loving parents create secure children, who in turn can guide their own children with confidence. Loving siblings construct a framework for belonging and a support system for all life's troubles. Loving children reward the difficult years of parenting and temper time's onslaught.

Prudence may truly make wise a delay in building your own family, but shelving life's greatest blessing while enthroning a lesser one most often spawns regret. And necessity may demand some sacrifices of time and presence to provide for your family, but neglecting the people in your family for the possessions of your household produces resentment.

God long ago promised families who love and honor one another some of the choicest of His blessings. Length of life or quantity of things vary, even among families who love God and one another. But the blessing of each other is equally rich in this world and beyond.

SCRIPTURES

Exodus 20:12, Psalm 127:3, Proverbs 17:6, Colossians 3:18-21