

News & Notes

Sunday, April 3, 2005

Remember in Prayer: Sally Etta Crawford; Tommy Dawson had test run this past week; Leon Jackson was injured this past week and broke his spine in two places; Mary Kidd; Deliah Mann; Howard Moody; Shirley Ortiz; Annie May Saunders, Tommy Dawson's cousin has been diagnosed with cancer; Gabriela (Gabby) Rutledge, family to Katherine Shaw, has leukemia in the worst stage and a ruptured appendix and is not doing well at all; Diana Shaver, sister-in-law to Shawna Northrop, has slipped discs in her back as well as a broken arm; Ruby Street; Calvin and Ollie Ursery; Sharon Walker, sister of Frank Walker, had surgery on the 30th; Alvie Williford.

The **bulletin is available via email**. If you would like to receive it, please give an email address to Jeremy Northrop or send an email requesting it to ashlandcoc@juno.com.

The **monthly prayer meeting** is today at 5:00 PM. Please make every effort to be a part of this event.

Sermon In Preview: Focus on the Family

AM: How To Keep Your Marriage Together

PM: My Responsibility to My Unconverted Mate

For the Record (March 27, 2005):

Attendance: 107 Contribution: \$1780.00 Budget: \$1205.00

The Ashland Church of Christ

P. O. Box 25

Ashland, MS 38603-0025

ashlandcoc@juno.com

Sunday:

Bible Study 9:30 AM

Worship 10:30 AM

Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday:

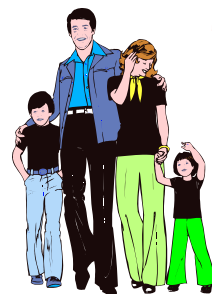
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Shepherds:

Barney King

Junior Roberson

Carrol Street



The Ashland Announcer

*"Give to the Lord, O families of the peoples,
Give to the Lord glory and strength" (Psalm 96:7).*

Sibling Rivalry

Jeremy Northrop

There is no family that is immune to sibling rivalry. If there is more than one child in the family, then the children are going to have conflict at some point in their lives. This is common and frequent in families. Every parent expects this to some degree. Unfortunately, there are some families that continue to have this problem into adulthood. First, this article will point out some biblical examples of adult sibling rivalry. Then, the latter part of this article will deal with some biblical precedents that will help to alleviate the problem in godly homes today.

Examples of Sibling Rivalry in the Bible

The account of Cain and Abel is a great example to begin this point. In Genesis 4, the all too familiar story is told of this first sibling set. The Bible says that Abel was a keeper of the sheep and Cain was a tiller of the ground. As time went on, Cain brought an offering of fruit from the plants to God and Abel brought the firstborn of one of his sheep. God was pleased with Abel's offering and was not pleased with Cain's offering. Cain was not happy with this situation and conspired to kill his own brother. He succeeded in this plan as seen in Genesis 4:8, "Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him." Of course, in the following verses, God punishes Cain for his actions.

A few chapters later in Genesis 27, there is recorded the account of the conflict that existed between Jacob and Esau. Isaac,

their father asked Esau to hunt game and make food for him. Jacob and Rabekah conspired against Esau and tricked Isaac into thinking that Jacob was Esau. When Esau returned to receive the promised blessing of Isaac, it had already been given to Jacob due to the trickery. It was too late for Esau to receive the blessing of Isaac. “Then Isaac trembled exceedingly, and said, ‘Who? Where is the one who hunted game and brought it to me? I ate all of it before you came, and I have blessed him--and indeed he shall be blessed’” (Genesis 27:33). Now much of these events were used in the plan of God to be prophetic concerning the nations of Israel and Edom. Even though that is indeed the case, the conflict that existed between Jacob and Esau serves as a fitting biblical example of sibling rivalry.

A New Testament example of two brothers having conflict is the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32. The younger son requests of his father his inheritance and goes and wastes that money in prodigal living. He, as the story goes, loses this money quickly and has to work feeding pigs. This would have been a most insulting job for a Jew in this time. Yet, it was not just that he had to feed pigs but he had to resort to eating what the pigs ate. He decided to go back to his father and ask for a job. His father rejoiced and threw a party in his honor. The older son was out back pouting about these events. Notice what the older son tells his father: “So he answered and said to his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him’” (Luke 15: 29-30). The father rebukes him for his anger concerning the situation.

Biblical Principles that will Heal Sibling Rivalry

If adult children want rivalry to be a thing of the past, then they need only to heed the words of Jesus in Mark 12:29-31: “Jesus answered him, ‘The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.

And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.’” If these two principles are heeded, then conflict can be resolved.

If one will simply love God, then much of the conflict that exists in his or her life will come to an end. Love for God means doing what God says to do. Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15). When one loves God, it means he or she will do what God says. Noticing the salvation of any particular family member will bring into perspective the serious things of life. If Cain had realized in a serious way his own salvation, he would have loved God and not murdered his brother. If Jacob and Esau had focused on God and what He wanted, there would have been less or no conflict between them. If the older brother had realized the condition of his younger brother, he would have rejoiced with the rest of the family in his decision to cease prodigal living. Today, if people will focus on God and what He wants in their lives, then much of the situations in life will naturally be resolved. This is seen specifically in the later part of Jesus’ command in Mark 12.

Love for God will lead to love for one’s neighbor, including his or her siblings. Paul describes love in a very graphic way: “Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.” (1Corinthians 13:4-8a). Genuine love puts the other person and his or her interests first. If brothers and sisters would focus on the other in the particular relationship, then much of the possible conflict will be brought to an end. Again, this can be seen in the three biblical examples set forth in this article. If Cain had loved Abel, he never would have murdered him. If Jacob genuinely loved Esau, he never would have tricked his father and stole the blessing. If the older brother had loved the younger brother in a real way, he never would have pouted about the banquet thrown in his honor.

Today, if people will love God and their siblings, they would not have near the conflict that exists. It is true that most situations today are not as severe as that of Cain and Abel but the principles to deal with conflict are the same: one must love God and love his neighbor.