

*Creating a Family
Constitution*

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Part 1

Importance of the Family

FAMILY PURPOSE

The family is an institution ordained by God and therefore is meant to play a central role in the happiness and well-being of the individual.

The power and strength of the family is derived from the harmony of life that flows so naturally when a home is spiritually centered, ordered, secure, and operating out of its covenant relationship and commitment to mutual benefit.

Though a home has many purposes, its main purpose is to provide an abundant, wholesome environment from which the members of the family can individually and collectively “live, move, and have their being” without interference to the natural flow of life.

It is a place of refuge from a tumultuous inconsistent world, and therefore is reliable for all excellence of living, creativity, recreation, and growth with full joy and self-expression. In addition, it provides the same refreshing environment for the friends and relatives of the family, as it does for the family members themselves.

In essence, a good home is really made up of the positive energy of the family and the extended relations that frequent the home. Hence, it is a good and safe place that an individual can return to time after time, and can carry with them in their every waking moment as a buffer against the loneliness and isolation of a world, that can at times, be so vexing to the spirit and lacking in warm human relating. The “house” represents the physical base where all this good life is represented and comes together, while the soul of each individual represents the spiritual place where all the warmth that is in the house is kindled and extended to others.

It is exactly the security, warmth, and stability of a good home that allows one to flourish in life. Without a good home, the individual is alienated from a certain wholeness, and will usually seek to fill that void that a good home naturally fills from some other source or sources - of which experience shows us that these sources can often be very unhealthy ones. Not having a good home is something that is a deficit for any individual, and one that must be overcome and made up for going forward in life.

For children, a home is the first community in which they learn to interact in a healthy and vibrant way and discover the value of human relationships. It is from the home that true holistic education is initiated as it serves as a literal training for physical, spiritual, intellectual, and social formation and character development. Good homes are foundational to any great civilization, for it is from the home that a person learns true civility and purpose of life.

The effort required to build a good home is so self-evidently worth it that to neglect to do so is to ensure a certain loss of quality of life. For what makes a home special is in fact what makes life special - the ability for the individual to see the potential blessing that lies in front of him, and then to walk in gratitude and joy in the fullness of that blessing as each new day wonderfully unfolds. It is this consistency of positive expectation that allows for the rich experience of goodness and delight.

20 CHARACTERISTICS AND ATTRIBUTES OF A GREAT HOME

1. Spiritually and inspirationally based.
2. Strong leadership where the father and mother are both in their respective masculine and feminine power, and operating in their unique and equally important roles.
3. Warm, nurturing, and fun environment, where bad moods are rejected and jettisoned.
4. Adult-centered.
5. Child friendly.
6. Set up for the achievement of all vital activity.
7. Creatively, artistically and musically inclined.
8. Is permeated with positive, life-affirming associations and influences.
9. Has great activities, events, and celebrations as a regular part of the family's lifestyle.
10. Is set up and structured for social interaction.
11. Personal space, private time, and quiet time clearly outlined and respected.
12. Clean, well-ordered, and organized (physically and logistically).
13. Strong health and wellness culture and plan (nutrition, sleep, and hygiene).
14. Clear expectations and knowledge of specific individual responsibilities.
15. Physically attractive and appealing - uncluttered, airy, well lit, spacious (in terms of balance and harmony).
16. Efficiently run.
17. Strong sense of security.
18. Peaceful.
19. Integrated and flowing.
20. Light hearted and tension free.

PRINCIPLES OF A STRONG FAMILY AND A GOOD HOME

Core Concept: Great families don't just happen; they are the product of intelligent and determined action and planning.

1. Creating a good home is part of the vital expression of a healthy, dynamic marriage; it is an extension of the attracting qualities that brought the marriage together in the first place.
2. There is no real alternative to a happy, stable, functional home. Whatever is created outside the home can never quite replace what should be created inside the home.
3. All people, everywhere, have at one time or another longed for a real home.
4. The traditional, nuclear family provides a child's first community experience.
5. A good home can only be as good as its members.
6. Proper leadership is an essential catalyst to the creation of a good home, there's absolutely no substitute for a healthy, strong father, and a healthy strong mother at the center of the home.
7. While divorce situations, single-parent homes are never optimal, we live in an imperfect world made up of imperfect people, and the best can be made of every situation. With the right understanding of life and the right commitment to truth on the part of the single parent, that individual can become great, and his or her home can flourish to a certain high degree.
8. In today's world it is difficult enough to create a good home and raise healthy kids even with the right core foundation in place and everything going for you; how much more so without the right foundation in place (which is God's natural order and wisdom).
9. Without vision and leadership a family will fail to operate in the greatest dynamic, and instead, it will operate from the lowest common standards of the culture that surrounds it.
10. Without true leadership, vision, and spiritual values to guide a family, that family will succumb to all sorts of pressures and problems that could otherwise be quickly overcome.
11. Most families in America reflect to one degree or another the sub-standards of life and well-being that are so commonly accepted today.
12. It must be understood that almost everything in American popular culture militates against the raising of healthy, robust, positive children with strong characters and moral and spiritual values.
13. A good home can prevent and reverse the negative effects of a society on children and teens.
14. Children or teens that are undisciplined, unstructured, and unmotivated to live well can essentially drain a great deal of the quality of a family's life and waste huge amounts of everybody's time and energy.
15. No matter how close or how far a family has been from the ideal family life, or what stage a family is in (in terms of the ages of the children) that family can still make huge improvements and strive together towards the ideal.
16. Regardless of how seemingly hopeless a family's particular situation may seem to be, a comeback is possible and great things can still happen!

Part II

Overview of the Family

Constitution

INTRODUCTION TO THE FAMILY CONSTITUTION

A family constitution is a comprehensive blueprint and plan of action for creating and maintaining a strong, healthy family. It represents the surest way to successfully build a rock solid home.

It is the guiding principles and practical structure that forms the inner workings and expressed life of the family. A strong family constitution covers every pertinent area related to practical, successful living within a home dynamic.

A family constitution supports the concept of a covenant relationship that is based on love and common prosperity. This is because it details the roles and responsibilities that each person naturally holds within the family order, as well as the necessary and correct organizational and logistical processes that support the various aspects involved in a dynamic family existence.

Ultimately, the family Constitution allows a husband-and-wife to take charge of their family life, determine its future, and live the way they have always wanted to.

Therefore, a family constitution is effectual in bringing the following attributes into family life:

- Order
- Clarity
- Simplicity
- Power
- Harmony
- Excellence
- Peace
- Flow
- Companionship
- Love

7 REASONS WHY WRITING A FAMILY CONSTITUTION IS ESSENTIAL

1. The main reason why almost every family needs to write a family constitution is because almost every family has never done anything like it.
2. Every family in America today has been negatively impacted to one degree or another by the progressive collapse of our culture in terms of moral and spiritual values. That impact is reflected in the overall loss of happiness, hopefulness, and quality of life that is generally being experienced today, as well as specifically reflected in the poor attitudes, weak demeanors, false beliefs and waning enthusiasm of young people.
3. Most couples go into starting a family with high hopes and great expectations, but without actually putting a plan in place to support those hopes and expectations, leaving their best intentions to chance occurrence.
4. Once every important aspect of your family's life is organized, you will never have to do that major work again; all that will be needed to do is to make adjustments and add dimension to your plan as time goes on.
5. Initial enthusiasm can only go so far before the general busyness, wastefulness, and distraction of this world fatigues your ability to develop vision and operate at a high level both for yourself and your family.
6. Our country is more dysfunctional and degenerate than any time in its history. There are far too many negative influences that will disrupt your life and your marriage, and get into the moral and spiritual fabric of your children's lives. Only by having a very strong, proactive plan in place will you be able to defend yourself, your marriage, your children from the worst elements of our culture.
7. Without a strong plan of action that covers every vital aspect of family life, a family can never possibly reach its full potential.

16 BENEFITS OF HAVING A FAMILY CONSTITUTION AND A GOOD HOME

1. Provides the groundwork for having the family you always wanted.
2. Provides the foundation for many days and years of organized, happy living, while simultaneously saving you days and years of inefficient living and up and down existence.
3. Creates a home that is elevated to the highest common standards of life and creativity, as opposed to a home that is reduced to the lowest common standard of existence and pedestrian routine.
4. Creates a fully functioning, adult centered home that is enjoyable and contributes to a living dynamic marriage. Such a home has the ability to fully incorporate the needs of children through its overflow of order, power, and charisma. The opposite of this is a child centered home, which is one that has its natural adult robustness, artfulness and positive qualities drained by the chaos and ever-increasing demands of the self-centered children that have necessarily resulted from being raised in such a home.
5. Provides contentment.
6. Provides stability and security.
7. Provides companionship.
8. Creates a positive base of operation and excellent flow for all within the home.
9. Allows for self-development and creativity.
10. Gives a context and purpose in life.
11. Involves a natural conduit for extended family and community interaction.
12. Brings focus to what is most important.
13. Helps all family members remain centered and balanced throughout their entire life.
14. Becomes a place where cherished memories are created.
15. Helps develop and extend healthy personalities in all family members and friends.
16. Provides the ability for generations to be blessed.

KEYS TO CREATING A GREAT FAMILY CONSTITUTION

Core Concept: Understand that creating a family plan is a true labor of love and therefore takes tremendous effort, devotion, and perseverance. However, creating a family plan is not as difficult as one might think. It begins with the understanding of what constitutes a good home and what are the benefits of having a good home.

1. Get a brand-new vision for your family. Do not allow the shortfalls or limitations of the past to define what is possible for the future. In order to get to your greatest potential as a family, you must see the future with brand new eyes and develop brand-new expectations for yourself and your family.
2. Take the time necessary to get to what is essential. You must allow yourself to get past the superficial distractions of daily life in order to enter into a greater dimension of understanding of the importance of your family and its current potential. That means the planning time for the family constitution should be extra special and treated accordingly.
3. Review the best and worst elements of your own family life growing up, as well as other examples from your experience, in order to get ideas for your own family planning.
4. Understand that if you take the time to create a great family constitution, (and have the motivation and inspiration to do so), you will be doing the work of creating a great life for yourself and your family.
5. In the days leading up to your constitutional retreat, begin to think about your future and brainstorm for what you believe should happen, and deeply want to happen.
6. Approach the entire process of creating your family plan, from the preliminary stage to the finishing touches, with enthusiasm and excitement. Fuse the whole process with joy. Remember that despite the hard work involved, the whole purpose of creating a family plan in the first place is to produce an overflow for great family living for many years to come.
7. Make sure that everything that you put into your constitution is going to be manageable and sustainable.
8. Remember that everything that you establish in your family plan is for the effect of creating order, efficiency, and abundance of living. Don't include anything that does not fulfill your purpose.
9. Keep your standards, rules, and operational procedures relatively few in number, simple, clear, and easily monitored.
10. In writing your rules and setting your standards, do not be overly general as to provide no substance, nor be overly detailed as to be cumbersome. Be specific exactly where you need to be and want to be, and more general where it is advantageous to do so.
11. Realize that any particular aspect of your family plan can be updated at any time, so you don't have to worry about having it perfect initially.
12. Think boldly and dream big, while simultaneously being realistic according to what steady growth will produce and allow.

STEP-BY-STEP INSTRUCTION FOR DEVELOPING YOUR FAMILY CONSTITUTION

The following is the sequence that a family needs to take in order to create their own unique family constitution.

1. Understand that creating a family plan takes time; it is a true labor of love that requires a tremendous amount of effort, devotion, and perseverance.
2. Time should be set aside individually by both the husband and wife in order to gain vision for the family and work on their own versions of the family constitution.

In the preliminary planning include the following exercises:

- a. Without any predetermined boundaries or limitations, identify your ideal family life. What is it that you truly wanted when you first envisioned having a family? What is it that you want now? (Write 1-3 paragraphs, take a minimum of an hour to think about this and write about it).
- b. Determine and describe what the ideal is for your specific role. Ask yourself, "what are the leading characteristics of a great (husband, father or wife – mother)" as the case may be. (Take 30–45 minutes).
- c. Do a thorough evaluation of where your current family is terms of its total health and functionality. Also determine how it got to where it is in terms of its conditioning:
 - Identify the patterns, tendencies, and aspects that are positive and up building, and those that are negative and debilitating.
 - Identify which elements of your current family's life should be maintained as they are, which need to be reworked, and which should be rejected altogether.

One way to approach this exercise is to list that which are your family's:

- 5 greatest strengths
- 5 greatest liabilities
- 5 greatest needs

Then take that information and incorporate it into your answer.

- d) Identify where you see your family (1 year from today, 5 years from today), according to two different scenarios:
 - 1) If your family were to continue on its current trajectory, with no fundamental changes being made.
 - 2) If your family was to make sweeping positive changes according to a new determined family plan and effort
3. Plan a specific time together (husband and wife) to work on the family constitution. This could be done over several evenings, a whole day, or weekend. During this time you will then compare notes, discuss issues, and produce a product. Go through all the categories outlined in this section. Spend the most time on the areas of greatest consequence. See section on the categories of the constitution to organize (Pg. 17-18).

4. Write a rough draft, review it as you continue on in the process, making any necessary changes.
5. You can prepare your kids for the upcoming changes by letting them know that there is going to be exciting improvements made in the family that include the elimination of that which is negative and not beneficial, and the addition of that which is positive and beneficial. Let them know that all of this will be revealed in a family meeting in the near future; this will create some space for you and your spouse to work things out, as well as create positive anticipation and arouse curiosity in your kids.
6. Have your children work on their own contribution to the family constitution. They can identify their own responsibilities and evaluate past and current behavior, spotlighting what they have done well, and identify areas that they feel they need to improve on. You may also have a meeting with them to discuss certain elements of it.
7. When all the necessary steps have been taken, all input has been given, and a functional product has been produced, have a family meeting to introduce and go over the plan.
8. Remember that in all you plan and put forth, there is flexibility. A family constitution, like any good constitution, must be living and capable of adaptation and expansion in order to maintain its original positive intent and purpose.

Part III

Elements of a Family

Constitution

AREAS TO ORGANIZE AND MANAGE

Core Concept: Running a family is in many ways like running a dynamic business: It must be done with creativity, intelligence, discipline, joy and organization. And like a business, there are different areas that must be broken down and expertly managed.

The following is a list of the main areas to be organized and managed in order for a home to be more successful (and therefore detailed in the family constitution).

1. Autonomy and authority of the parents.
2. Abundant life theme and overall vision for family life.
3. Positive general disposition and attitude for all family members.
4. Communication and Relating:
 - Between husband and wife
 - Between parents and children (parent to child, child to parent)
 - Between siblings
5. Raising Quality Children
 - Character development
 - Spiritual formation
 - Standards of behavior
 - Use of phones, tablets etc. (controlling social media)
 - Curfew
 - Friends
 - Activities
 - Use of free time
 - Chores
 - Other
6. Health Culture
 - Green home
 - Total wellness
 - Nutrition
 - Other
7. Guest Policy Plan
8. Logistics and Organization Plan
 - Preparation and operation for all general activities
 - Transition times
 - Food preparation
 - General organization
9. Travel Plan
 - Includes all scenarios for when the family is mobile
10. Family Activity Plans
 - Celebrations
 - Outings

- Quality time
- Family functions

11. Home Environment

- Established boundaries (What, when, and where are certain behaviors allowed and not allowed)
- Specific activities
- Noise levels, quiet periods
- Work environment
- Order and neatness
- Use of common space

12. Weekend Plans

- Any special designations due to time off
- Sundays

13. Spiritual Formation and Life of Children

- Structured time for spiritual disciplines
- Going to church etc.
- Allotted time for reflection/meditation/prayer

HARMONY OF THE HOME

DEVELOPING AN OVERALL VISION AND ABUNDANT LIFE

Core Concept: The overall vision for your family should be centered on the level of health and vitality that you desire, are willing to believe for, work for, and pursue. The way a family relates and communicates with each other will determine how much a family enjoys being around each other and being at home in general.

1. The theme of your home represents the dominating energy of the home life – that which is experienced in the “atmosphere” of the home.
2. An abundant life theme is an expression of life that must be aspired to; a life in rhythm, harmony and balance.
3. It is essential for all family members to have a positive, upbeat, and energetic approach to life in order to really fortify the sense of flow of abundance in a household. It must be emphasized that each family member is responsible for maintaining a positive disposition (general mood) and attitude-that which is projected from their words, actions, and body language.

The following is a list of characteristics of people that are enjoyable and easy to be around:

- Abundant
- Energetic
- Enthusiastic
- Patient
- Kind
- Generous
- Helpful
- Cheerful
- Consistent
- Positive
- Upbeat Perceptive (mentally sharp)
- Reliable
- Fun
- Flexible
- Outward-focused
- Easygoing
- Forgiving
- Generous
- Consistent
- Presentable (personal hygiene)
- Humorous
- Punctual

In contrast to individuals who are easy and enjoyable to be around, the following is a list of characteristics of people who are not easy or enjoyable to be around:

- Negative
- Moody
- Selfish
- Self-absorbed
- Sluggish, Lazy
- Sloppy, Messy
- Temperamental
- Fussy, Fastidious
- Depressed, Oppressed
- Dull-witted and Weak-minded
- Lacking sense of humor
- Unaware (of surroundings and people)
- Unreliable
- Chronically late
- Bitter
- Exacting, Demanding

NATURAL ROLES OF AUTHORITY

Core Concept: A proper understanding of the natural roles of authority is essential to the strength, efficiency, and positive flow of a home. Husbands and wives have separate but equal roles to play.

1. Establishing proper authority in a marital and family setting allows for the ability to take control of the home environment for the benefit of all family members.
2. A healthy home has the man as the head of the household with the husband and wife working together in that coordination, followed by the obedience of children. The children's role of leadership is ordered from oldest to youngest. This ordering of the home is according to God's wisdom for the happiness and fluidity of the home life.
3. In cases of single parenting the parent must do the best they can in a limited circumstance and still maintain as much of the natural order as possible.
4. The more indistinct a father and mother are in their respective roles, the more insecure the children will be.
5. The blurring of the traditional and natural family roles is a modern phenomenon that has contributed to much of the marital and family discord so commonly experienced in today's marriages and families.
6. Having a division of labor within the household is beneficial for practical application of family life.
7. A marriage that is in conflict over leadership will create a divided and confused family. When both husband and wife try to make every decision together, the process becomes bogged down and burdened, interfering with both the flow of life of the home and the romantic vision of the marriage.
8. When a husband and wife are not in their respective God-ordained roles, they will also be outside of their natural abilities, power, flow, and ease of comfort and expression.
9. The husband and wife should support each other in all ways and at all times.
10. Males and females are distinct from one another in their total creative makeup and chemistry. They are mentally, emotionally, and physically created differently in order to complement and balance one another in performing different tasks, while creating a beautiful, dynamic balance of health and harmony. This dynamic balance of health and harmony exists everywhere in nature, and only modern man has intended to overthrow this natural order.
11. The distinct roles of father and mother correlate perfectly with the character traits present in a healthy man and woman.
12. Just as husband and wife complement and complete one another, so too does a father and mother complete and complement the parental unit. Though different in function and form, the roles are equally important and equally vital.
13. True manhood and womanhood and fatherhood and motherhood are causes for celebration.

FAMILY AND COMMUNICATION

HUSBAND AND WIFE

Core Concept: Expert communication between the husband and wife is vital and necessary not only for their mutual happiness, but also for the overall success of the home. The flow and bond that you establish in private will be that which you demonstrate ultimately in public, and especially in front of the children.

1. The first and most important union to be modeled is between husband and wife.
2. Be motivated by the benefits of a positive, happy marriage as well as the knowledge that your children's trials and extended difficulties will eventually yield happy well balanced adults when guided by loving and understanding parents.
3. Practice both in word and deed, positive, loving, intentions.
4. Set your own standards for communication:
 - Don't let trivialities disrupt the chemistry of love
 - Have a set time for which to have discussions relating to all items
 - Spend time each day simply enjoying each other's company

General for husband and wife:

- Work out all the differences and nuances relating to the various particulars of structure, logistics, standards, etc. in private to avoid guess work, and controversy among the children, extended family, or friends in real time.
- Stay positive, upbeat, and in concord; children instinctively sense where there is a fracture in the union, and will, by nature, become insecure and/or take advantage of that weakness.
- Never undermine one another in the presence of others, and most importantly, not in front of the children.
- Don't feel that you need to address every issue or finish every topic in the moment, on the spot when life is presenting challenges, a lack of clarity, or where there is confusion or miscommunication.
- Do not allow your children to see any significant disunity or disagreement.
- Act as if you both are in full control of your emotions - even if you are not.
- Remain considerate, loving, and upbuilding throughout all forms of communication – and especially potentially contentious ones.
- Always bear in mind the correct order of authority and communication within a family; the father and the mother are of equal authority in front of the children, but the children should recognize the father's place as head of the household. (See natural roles of authority and support).

PARENT COMMUNICATION WITH CHILDREN

Core Concept: Communication with children should be directed with the understanding that it is to the child's benefit that you are communicating with them in a proactive manner.

- Direct and Clear – you should be able to say exactly what you need to say, want to say, and when you need to say it.
- Accessible – parents should always be available to discuss anything with children that pertains to their life, health, well-being, and social order. Children, and especially teens, should always know that they can come to a parent with anything. (There are certain things that a father can best communicate to a son, and likewise, that a mother can best communicate with a daughter).
- Timely – communication should be in real time in order to meet the need of every present situation.
- Accurate (truthful) – convey what is vital in specific, truthful terms. Never over-exaggerate your points, or try to manipulate your child's behavior in any way that is contrary to sound communication principles.
- Fearless – parents cannot be overly concerned by their child's or teen's potential or actual responses to any communication which is necessary to have. Parents need to establish with their children or teens that they have a right and obligation to communicate, direct, and teach them about anything at anytime.
- Comfortable and Open – once the proper understanding of authority and respect is gained, communication should be very pleasant, flowing, kind, and inviting toward discussion. This will increase their comfort level to enhanced communication.

COMMUNICATION AND RELATING BETWEEN SIBLINGS

Core Concept: Communication between siblings should reflect the goal of having a positive, harmonious household. Because it is the parents' job to set and maintain the overall tone and mood in the house, the following standards for the positive interaction between siblings must be both put in place and guided by the parents.

1. Mutual Value and Respect:

Siblings must learn to value each other. They must understand that harmony is created in the home by positive and courteous interaction, and that discord is created by negative and discourteous interaction.

2. Support:

Make sure that siblings are engaged in each other's lives. (Events, accomplishments, birthdays, etc.).

3. Positivity:

Siblings should be trained in the positive habit of building each other up, and not allowed to fall into the negative habit of putting each other down.

- The tone of voice should be pleasant and non-cacophonous.
- There should be no yelling or screaming in the household; children literally need to learn to communicate at conversational levels.

4. Sharing and Giving:

Children need to learn to share belongings. This will prepare them to be enlightened givers instead of selfish takers.

OVERALL BEHAVIOR OF CHILDREN

Core Concept: Children and teens are naturally self-centered and must literally be taught and disciplined from the earliest age in order to become contributing, quality family members (team members).

1. The key to raising quality young people is to start your training toward this end as early as possible. You can shape or reshape behavior by setting the proper standards for them. However, no matter what stage that you are in, you can shape or reshape behavior by setting the proper personal standard for them.
2. Second only to your own behavior and disposition, how well your children behave on a consistent basis will determine the level of peace, joy and harmony of a home.
3. While children and teens are naturally self-centered, they are also naturally community oriented. The greatest job that any parent has is to train, teach, and inspire their children and teens to become quality people within the broader context of life.
4. Help build a consistent strong spirit and affable personality in your children and teens by creating a rewards based home environment. This is where children realize there is absolutely nothing to be gained by engaging in any sort of negativity, and conversely, that all the rewards and benefits come through remaining mentally, emotionally, and spiritually aligned and in the highest patterns of positive behavior.

General Standards of Behavior of Children and Teens Within the Home Environment

Core Concept: Children and teens must understand that their home can only be as positive and enjoyable as the overall energy, tone, and mood of the individual family members allow it to be. They must realize that they have a significant responsibility in doing their part in this regard, and be held accountable.

- Emphasize the general theme that their number one responsibility is to have a positive overall disposition within the household.
- Maintain a good mood. No bad moods allowed in common areas. If an individual wants to brood or sulk, they can do it alone in their room.
- Stay upbeat and positive. Children must be taught that it is a matter of choice to be upbeat and positive. They must exercise and strengthen their emotional muscles and generate a strong, positive presence.
- No outbursts, displays of uncontrollable behavior etc. random yelling etc.
- No swearing (kids and especially teenagers are constantly exposed to and influenced by bad language).
- Be present (avoid preoccupations with cell phones, devices, etc.).

12 STANDARDS FOR CHILDREN’S AND TEEN’S BEHAVIOR TOWARD PARENTS

Core Concept: It is the parent’s job to direct their children in all matters of life. Therefore continual positive interaction, as well as initiating clear mandates is essential.

1. **Present (attentive)** – Children need to focus and key on their parent’s voice and person. You must demand individual sharpness and attention. Do not allow any aloofness, scatteredness, or sluggishness to gain expression in your child’s demeanor in any way.
2. **Respectful** – Children must always act and speak with a healthy reverence and level of respect for their parents. Do not allow them to become flippant or churlish at any time.
3. **Trustworthy/Honest** – Children must be taught to be honest above all else as a pre-requisite to everything that will be entrusted to them. Trust is foundational to every form of relationship in life, and young people need to learn this as early as possible.
4. **Clear** – Children must learn to always communicate in full terms (the whole truth), always meeting the objective of the purpose of any discussion or discourse. There should never be any vagueness or evasiveness in their communication.
5. **Obedient** – Obedience is an entire behavior to be understood and mastered. Establishing obedience means that you are establishing essential leadership and flow in the life and logistics of your relationship with the child or teen. Obedience means that your child harmonizes and follows in the direction, movement, and order that you have set forth with your natural authority for their good and the good of the family.
6. **Responsible** – Children and teens should embrace all their responsibilities vigorously and routinely, as these are normal expressions of a prosperous life.
7. **Agreeable** – As a first response to every request of life, a child or teen should have a positive, affirmative attitude.
8. **Helpful** – There should be openness and willingness to contribute above and beyond what is basically required.
9. **Compliant** – Absolutely no nagging should ever be tolerated. Nagging should be treated as a breach of the covenant between parent and child.
10. **Honor/Appreciation** – A sense of thankfulness for all that you have done as a parent, should be evident in your child’s demeanor.
11. **Thoughtful** – A thoughtful person is one that demonstrates empathy, understanding, and consideration for those around him. Children and especially teenagers need to be constantly reminded of this.
12. **Flexible** – Children and teens are happiest when they are flowing in a higher order of connectedness, and this means living in such a way that they are ready for whatever positive changes or directions that are necessary to enter into abundant living.

Part IV

*Raising Healthy, Happy, and
Inspired Children and Teens*

GIVING GUIDANCE, IMPARTING VALUES, AND SETTING STANDARDS

Core Concept: For young people to have a fighting chance at living healthy, happy, and inspired lives they need crystal clear guidance to use, correct information about life's basic issues to process, and high standards to aim for.

1. A parent's first responsibility, after loving their children, is to impart to them the values that will serve them for a lifetime.
2. Young people will reflect the values, attitudes, and behaviors that have been promoted among them over time.
3. The greatest predictor of what a young person will be like when they get older, in terms of the character and behavior that they will exhibit in the world, is the set of values they were given by their parents when growing up.
4. Though in some cases (certainly not all) a young person may stray for a time in late adolescence and in college years from the values they were raised with, they will soon migrate back to the morals and values that they were solidly exposed to.
5. Do not assume your child or teen will turn out to be a "good" person just because you are a good person. You must identify the kind of person you want them to be (or that they should be), and then be very proactive in bringing that result about through the proper influencing and nurturing of their overall character.
6. Your child or teen will never realize their potential without a robust spiritual and inspirational life and a solid set of values to guide them. It is up to you as parents to expose them to the most positive influences in this regards.
7. In this world where falsehood is promoted as truth and truth promoted as falsehood, and where political correctness often dominates the airways, your young person is growing up in a total cultural environment that is often hostile and alien to the values that you teach them at home and assume are supported elsewhere.
8. There are 3 equally important elements when it comes to giving guidance, imparting values, and setting standards. They are:
 - a) making sure that what you are teaching your children or teens is in fact the truth, and in line with enlightened values, both spiritually and naturally.
 - b) setting aside time to be intentional and purposeful in teaching life's lessons, going over challenges, lessons, listening, responding to situations, and giving guidance.
 - c) role modeling, to the best of your ability, what you want your children or teens to practice in their own life.
9. Far too many parents are surrendering spiritual truths and that which their faith teaches them through the Scriptures and otherwise for political correctness and low cultural standards.
10. While good parents will have allies in their extended family and communities in the raising of young people, parents should have a mindset of warfare where it is "them against the world" when it comes to the whole domain of imparting positive values, integrity, and moral strength. This is because society is less integrated and less intellectually and spiritually imbued than at any other time in our history, and therefore young people have far less positive influences outside of the home than ever before.

NEGATIVE INFLUENCES OF MODERN SOCIETY

Core Concept: Our modern American society has many debilitating effects on the healthy growth and development of young people.

The following is a short list of some of the characteristics replete within society that must be compensated for in order to raise healthy, happy, and quality children and teens:

- Increasingly secular (anti-spiritual, anti-religious, anti-Christian)
- Overly-competitive
- Materialistic
- Undisciplined
- Self-absorbed, Self-indulgent
- Highly addictive
- Obsessed with technology
- Poor health habits
- Decadent
- Superficial
- Non-inspiring
- Degenerative – promoting of false values (including those relating to life, gender, sexuality, etc.)
- Foul mouthed
- Unenlightened
- Immature
- Entitled
- Intellectually dishonest
- Propaganda and false messages regarding sexuality and gender

7 CORE AREAS OF INFLUENCE AND ULTIMATE SUCCESS

Core Concept: There are certain centralizing influences that if developed to their highest and healthiest expression early on in life will yield tremendous strength and fortitude.

1. If you want to hit the important bullseyes in your children's and teens' lives, focus your attention and energy on the areas of most importance.
2. Most good people involved with youth today – teachers, coaches, and other well intended influences on youth – are no longer the powerful forces they once were because they have been intimidated by political correctness that has run amuck, thereby preventing the natural instincts to speak basic truth and power into young people's lives. Because of this, what is most important in the child's life often gets neglected in favor of what is most expedient in going along with the false values of a compromised society.
3. While those that seem to be the greatest influences are not, those that shouldn't be are. The total negative and degenerative influence on youth is not only increasing in amount, but also in intensity.

7 important areas to develop your children in as early as possible:

1. Work ethic/Education
2. Character development
3. Communication skills
4. Spiritual life
5. Health/Nutrition (including alcohol and drugs)
6. Healthy social life and learning the value of true friendship
7. Understanding of life and gaining wisdom

12 SUCCESSIVE ATTRIBUTES OF MORAL, SPIRITUAL, ETHICAL, AND INSPIRATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY TEENS AND CHILDREN

The following is a listing of the most important attributes that a young person can cultivate in their life in order to be the strongest person they can be and achieve real freedom and autonomy in this world.

1. Reasonable (intellectually sound)
2. Informed (knowledgeable of events)
3. Principled (idealistic)
4. Virtuous (true)
5. Courageous (willing to stand for what is good and right)
6. Motivated (desire for positive accomplishment)
7. Aesthetically minded (lover of beauty)
8. Free (unburdened emotionally and logistically)
9. Altruistic (seeker of good for others)
10. Inspired (rising in life)
11. Enlightened (spiritually opened)
12. Good natured (positive and harmonious)

7 LEVELS OF VITAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AND TEENS

The following is a listing of the ultimate excellence and goodness that is to be desired in the character of young people:

1. Self-managed and organized
2. Healthy and motivated
3. Ethical and sound
4. Honorable and true
5. Creative and intuitive
6. Engaging and refreshing
7. Loving and good

ENTERTAINMENT, MEDIA, AND MUSIC

Core Concept: The totality of your child's or teen's interaction, including what he or she is entertained by, is what will surface in his or her personality, attitude, and inspirational life.

1. There is no neutrality in this world. It is your job to safeguard your home and your family from all unnatural, unhealthy, and anti-spiritual influences. If you fail to do this, the lives of your family will be subjected to, and influenced by, a great amount of negative, dark energy that works incessantly against the mental, emotional, spiritual, and social health of everyone.
2. The associations that your child has, and the interactions that he chooses, will dictate what type of person he/she will be as a mature adult.
3. You cannot control all of your child's or teen's actions or interactions, but there are integral areas you can control:
 - Your expectations and standards.
 - What you specifically allow in your home.
 - What you consent to, and what message you communicate to your child in terms of that approval.
 - Your priorities in your child's life.
 - Staying informed and aware of the culture that effects your child.
4. Because you do not want any association in your child's life that will have a negative impact on him or her, you must become vigilant on their behalf.
5. In general, you do not want anything brought into your home, through any medium (print, audio, visual, etc.) that will in any way coarsen your home, undermine your instruction, or pollute the spiritual – inspirational environment.
6. Make it your aim to create an inspirational firewall around your children at home when it comes to their entertainment, media, and music.

FRIENDS

Core Concept: A young person typically spends more time with his peers and friends than anyone else, and as such, a young person's peer group (especially in adolescence) has an enormous influence on his/her life. This reality, combined with the fact that the growing up years are so charged with emotion and power, makes the choosing of quality friends so vitally important to the overall emotional health of a young person.

1. For the most part, the friends your child or teen chooses should be capable of being a true friend, and potentially a lifelong friend.
2. The amount of time that young people spend with their friends is tremendous; that time should pay great dividends for them. This is only possible if the friends are high quality.
3. Whatever values, vision, attitudes and associations that have influenced your child's friends will also influence your child.
4. As a parent, in terms of your child's or teen's friendships, associations, and activities, you should be aware of:
 - Who: Who are the children spending time with?
 - What: What are they doing, what are their activities?
 - When: What are the general or exact time parameters of their gathering?
 - Where: What will their location be, for the duration of the time away?
5. Know the parents of your child's friends as much as you reasonably can.
 - Assure that their standards and boundaries fall in line with yours.
 - Always have all the contact information of friend's parents.
 - There should be clear communication between you and them.
 - Coordinating gatherings and events is a great way for parents and young people to interact.
 - Attending or organizing parent seminars and discussion groups, focus groups etc. are an effective way to team together as parents.
6. Help and encourage your children or teens to identify healthy friendships.
 - Ultimately, it is more important to teach and equip your child to make good choices relating to their interactions and relationships than it is to micromanage these choices. This is especially true in the teenage years.
 - In general, the younger your child, the greater control you can naturally have over who he or she interacts with on a consistent basis.
 - Explain to your child or teen what are the positive traits that they should look for when seeking friends, and then for cultivating friendships.

MANNERS, PROPER ETIQUETTE, AND SOLID CONDUCT

Core Concept: Whatever habits or behavior your children become accustomed to will be what they exhibit virtually 100% of the time. Good etiquette and conduct are timeless and priceless attributes that will serve your children over their entire lifetime.

1. Teach children the virtues of kindness and consideration.
2. Teach children to be aware of themselves, their surroundings, and other people. Teach them to be alert, alive, and with it. Help them overcome any aloofness that makes them unenjoyable to be around, or unable to enter fully into life. The sooner they realize that self-absorption leads to boredom and depression, the better off they will be.
3. Teach children good communication skills:
 - Make eye contact
 - Engage in conversation
 - Answer questions thoughtfully
 - Practice active listening
 - Ask insightful questions
 - Take a genuine interest in others
4. Teach children proper greeting habits in relation to guests, family friends, extended family etc.
5. Teach children good grammar and proper speech. Do not allow them to use slang or develop bad speech habits such as saying – “yeah”, “you know”, “um”, and “like”, etc.
6. Generally limit the use of cell phones, tablets, etc., but especially in the presence of others. Rarely or never should they be texting at the dinner table, at a restaurant, public event or family gathering. The exception would be if they can be discreet and brief.

KEYS TO EFFECTIVELY DISCIPLINING CHILDREN AND TEENS

Core Concept: Understand that discipline is an essential component of raising healthy children. If you do not discipline (train and teach) them, the world will. And if that is the case, it will be from what is often a cold and dispassionate place.

1. Positive discipline is the proactive directing of your child along the healthiest, most vital way of living.
2. Discipline is composed of 5 aspects:
 - Instruction
 - Training
 - Setting parameters and standards
 - Giving punishment (when necessary)
 - Providing feedback and effecting restoration
3. The positive coaching of children (positive discipline) is an irreplaceable, valuable investment in your child's future.

Specific Keys:

1. Be consistent – provide discipline according to a vital set of standards rather than on variables, such as your mood, energy and circumstances.
2. Set your standards early and stick with them – the sooner you outline and communicate your standards of behavior, the earlier these can be developed by your child or teen.
3. Be clear – keep things simple, strong, straightforward and easily understood.
4. Make your absolutes few, simple and achievable.
5. Empower and encourage your child and teen to live up to your standards.
6. Be honest and transparent – let your children know that life is hard for everyone and that no one is perfect. Let them know that you as parents also strive to be solid, strong, and on point.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

Core Concept: The greatest need in the life of a family is to have a vibrant, spiritual life, to be centered in the creative purpose of God, which is the abundant life.

1. The power and joy of the spirit will lift the family above the vast majority of the normal day-to-day aggravations and problems.
2. When a home is spiritually minded, a much higher order of life is established.
3. Most homes in America suffer from a lack of spiritual focus.
4. The greatest and most concentrated attacks are against the family; hence the greatest need to be spiritually fit.
5. Almost all divorce situations, significant family problems, and general loss of quality of life result from a lack of spiritual empowerment.
6. Keys to a spiritually fit home:
 - Know what the scriptures say about all issues pertaining to life.
 - Build an inspirational fortress around your home.
 - Husband and wife will each develop a personal prayer life (time of reflection, prayer, meditation, spiritual reading, etc.).
 - Children should be taught how to develop a personal time of reflection, prayer, etc.

Part V

Enacting Your Family

Constitution

ENACTING YOUR FAMILY CONSTITUTION

Core Concept: After you have taken the time and effort to create the family plan, and have generated energy around it, nothing will be more important than establishing that plan.

1. In establishing your family plan, think in terms of territory that needs to be conquered portion by portion.
2. Develop the attitude that your family is going to be like it will run like a team or business organization, with the goal of profiting in life, health, and goodness for all its members.
3. What you're trying to establish in your family is excellence, goodness and purposeful living. When your family realizes that entropy and random living are not options, they will accept the necessary instruction and disciplined living that is associated with abundance.
4. The first 90 days (and especially the first 30 days) are extremely important in laying the foundation of the constitution. You must be extra diligent and extra intentional at this time. Keep your affairs and your family's affairs as simple and uncomplicated as possible during this time in order to master the basics.
5. Your family plan can be implemented in stages, or all at once, depending on how you feel best to set it up. If you implement it in stages, have specific goals and dates set forth to keep you on track.
6. Regardless of how you implement your program, think in terms of progression and improvement rather than immediate success or perfection. Your family will need the time to go through a growing process, therefore allow for plenty of room for mistakes and shortfalls on the way toward your ideal.
7. Regular meetings should be built into your plan for the purpose of:
 - Review
 - Evaluation
 - Corrections and Adjustments
 - Adding dimension
8. Separate meeting should be held for:
 - Husband-and-wife (to remain on the same page and set the tone for leadership)
 - The meeting between the husband and wife is the most important, and should become a normal part of your married life.
 - The whole family (to review the family plan).
 - Each individual child (to review their individual plan).
9. Meetings should be held in a consistent fashion – especially for the first couple of months. They should be efficient and to the point, lasting anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes. Individual meetings with the children can be handled according to need, and can be as short or long as needed—but in order to be effective should be specific and limited.
10. Develop a specific checklist that is tailored to your family's constitution. A good family checklist is one that can be reviewed in as little as 10 minutes if necessary.

- 11.
12. Seek to make incremental progress each week. Remain sharply focused on the goal, and yet enjoy the process of getting there.
13. Remain optimistic, upbeat, and confident throughout the whole process. Remember that your family will key off of your tone and energy.
14. Accurately assess both, where each individual family member and the family as a whole is at, in terms of cooperation, desire, and willingness to pursue the highest agenda. This is necessary in order to properly adjust your plan while protecting your own vitality and not getting frustrating, but instead continuing to approach your goals evenhandedly.
15. Always go forward with those that are deserving and eager. Don't spend extra energy or resources on those (children) who are unresponsive or ungrateful. Simply go forward with life as usual, while demanding the basic levels of respect and compliance. Each person must do their part in order to partake accordingly of the rewards and benefits.
16. Organize your family's life around the highest common denominator rather than the lowest common behavior, as is so commonly done today. This means that you should practice the biblical principle of rewarding good stewardship, which in this case means not wasting energy trying to make the potential of your family's greatness fit the mold of one dysfunctional family member. Instead, use your energy to organize yourself and the rest of your family around the potential greatness. By doing so you will compel the reluctant family member (or members) to either change his ways, or miss out on the abundance that is being created and enjoyed by the rest of the family.
17. Have clear standards, rewards, and consequences written into each appropriate aspect of the Family Plan.
18. Itemize and visualize the positive and unique things that will happen to you and your family by putting order and great plans into place.
19. Set up a plan for evaluating and follow-through (see #7).
20. Have fun and enjoy in the process of developing a great family life.
21. Be strong and consistent in all follow up

