by Mac & Naudine Adaimi

Listening to Christians sharing their views on why so many families around the world are falling apart, you might surmise that the biggest culprit is the influence of the immensely secularized Western culture which we live in. But is it not more probable that the real reason for this disintegration is because ‘Christian’ families are increasingly not the kinds of godly households that God intended them to be?

God intended the family to be the most basic unit of society. In Ephesians ch 6 we read, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), “that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.” Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

This passage, and many others like it, demonstrates that family is where activities such as visiting, eating, instruction, work, and play have their center. He ordained the home to be the primary place of social interaction and then laid down guidelines for proper interaction.

God calls us as Christian parents to be good teachers and children to be good learners. Society has taught us that kids should move away from the home as the learning center and that ‘the experts’ should teach them about their sexual identity, social identity and their spiritual identity. The problem with this is that the ‘expertise’ of man has moved away from the fear of the Lord. Because of this, families get robbed of their God-purpose and God-calling.

The enemy’s ultimate goal is to attack families so that we turn against God and against the principles of the Word of God. When families fall apart, churches fall apart. When churches fall apart, communities fall apart and when communities fall apart, the world falls apart.

In today’s society, everyone is extremely busy. We often forget to slow down. We need to re-assess how families function. A family is called to serve God together. In a family, we learn to serve each other. It is a place where we give and receive and where we care for each other. This is the first training ground of how a church family should function.

A godly family is one which has a lifestyle of worship. As we worship together, both in church and in small group settings, we provide security, stability and wisdom for life. Families should not only worship but play together and have fun! Fun breeds creativity and teaches us healthy social interaction.

Fathers play a vital part in family because a father gives identity to his children in a way which mirrors Jesus and His children. A father’s voice gives direction to children. Children need to hear from their fathers that they are precious, worthy, highly esteemed and bought by Jesus!
It is in family that we learn true godliness. As parents we demonstrate through our lifestyles and through instruction that we will "serve no other gods" than Christ and we follow God obediently so that our families will be blessed to the thousandth generation. We teach our children not to commit murder with their words, we teach them not to steal - not someone else’s testimony, their belongings or their identity. We teach our children to serve others, without expecting anything back.

Unfortunately we live in a day and age where our kids grow up with a sense of entitlement. It is our responsibility to teach them at home what a life-style of thankfulness and contentment looks like – to eat what they are served, to thank God for the gifts that they receive. This is completely contrary to what we see in children that are not trained in God’s ways where it is not uncommon for a child to demand what they want rather say ‘thank you’ for what they are given. Even in other people’s homes!

We must not out-source our responsibility to teach our children how to behave on social media. This would include the right use of cell phones and iPad’s in promoting a healthy lifestyle. These technologies should not be the beginning and end of every day, people are more important! In the manner in which we meaningfully interact and serve and connect as a godly family, we model something beautiful to the broken and disjointed communities around us.

In Romans 12:2 we read, “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” As parents we will need to practice a lot of this kind of “testing” and “discerning” in order to make sure that our families properly reflect the God that we have submitted ourselves to. As we find the will of God for our families, may we bring hope to all the broken families around us instead of bemoaning the destructive influence of the increasingly godless society we find ourselves in. As parents may we reclaim our God-given responsibilities to be the primary shapers and influencers in our children’s lives’. By the power of Christ we have this opportunity to be families that live out lives of faith, families that are held together by the bonds of Christ's love. May God bless our families with this kind of grace that we may be a source of blessing to the church and to the world we live in.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS
Mac and Naudine were missionaries for 8 years, prior to becoming pastors. During their pastoring
services they became involved with various family ministries. They love to serve the people of God, especially with regards to restoring wholeness.