

ALL PART OF THE FAMILY

Grimsby, April 19/15

INTRO: Every week, for 9 years, 50 million TV viewers sat glued to their sets, watching Archie Bunker and his bickering, bellowing family pick on each other. Yet, somehow, the deep love, awkward tenderness and strong concern felt by each member of that family toward the others, reached the audience.

This weekly show did not portray a model, ideal, artificial family, but a living, breathing, real one. That is why the show was so popular. It depicted average, every-day, ordinary people, often annoyed with one another, often angry with one another. Still, there was a strong bond of love between them. There was a readiness to forgive that often resulted in sincere, if clumsy efforts to bring out the best qualities in each other. When the day came for Gloria (the daughter) and "Meathead" (her husband) to leave the Bunker's nest, many in the audience cried, as if they were losing a close friend.

No families are perfect, though some appear to be. It is the nature of humanity to be imperfect, that's why Jesus shines so brilliantly.

Still the church is God's family and we need to recognize it. Our biological connections are known and shown by such things as familiarity, felt freedom of speaking, and depth of trust. We do not and should not share the same things or feel the same way about those not in our family.

"We're part of the family that's been born again. Part of the family whose love knows no end. ..."

Some of our families leave a lot to be desired. Like Archie Bunker's family. Let's note:

I) FAMILY BEGINS AT BIRTH

A) *A Child, The Center Of Attention, Comes To Us*

- 1) Life now changes, there may be sickness, even birth defects, extra care needed
- 2) A drain on our wallet, but we don't wish we could send her or him back.
- 3) This should be the exact same thing in the church
 - (a) When a precious soul is born again, we rejoice.
 - (b) We then expect to see immature behaviour helped by mature members
- 4) There is a special bond found in families. Carl Ketcherside used to say that he and his brothers found like cats and dogs. But when someone outside the family picked on any one them, that intruder had to deal with all of them. They were family.

B) *Sometimes We Miss The Importance Of This Spiritual Birth By A Mile*

- 1) Many discussions held on what makes a real Christian or which church is right.
- 2) We often totally ignore the birth process! A Christian one who had been reborn.
- 3) The "who is right" is for a subsequent discussion.
- 4) Our misuse had brought a new use of the Bible's language:
 - (a) Some call themselves "born again" Christians
 - (b) And others just "Christian."
 - (c) We need to know that this language is redundant- like "He is a male."

C) *The Bible Is Clear On This:*

- 1) Jesus said to a religious leader "you must be born again." –**John 3:7**
- 2) Peter writes "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who, according to His great mercy, has caused us to be born again to a living hope."-**I Pet.1:3**
- 3) Again we find: "for you have been born again, not of seed which is perishable but imperishable."- **I Pet 1:23**
- 4) Then the writer continues, "Like new born babies long for the pure milk of the word."
- 5) Paul reminds us: "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourself with Christ."- **Gal. 3:26,27**

II) FAMILY CONTINUES WITH RELATIONSHIPS

A) *Relationships Involve Happy and Sad Times*

- 1) There is praise and discipline; laughing and crying together

- 2) All personality types are allowed in families.
- 3) People in relationship live out their plans together

B) Relationships In The Church Come From Living In Fellowship

- 1) Fellowship is koinoia which point to sharing life
 - (a) We share God's life through Jesus- I John 1:1-5
 - (b) We share our Christ-inspired lives with one another
- 2) "**Fellow**" speaks of equality as in those of same degree or interest
 - (a) Jesus was called "*My fellow*," by God pointing to equality
 - (b) Jesus was God too... "*Immanuel*"- God with us.

C) Our Family Then Is Really God's Fellow Family

- 1) We are **Fellow Citizens**-Eph. 2:19. The move was from "*strangers and foreigners*" to "*God's family*." Wherever you came from, whatever language you speak, whatever the background, you are now a child in God's family with all privileges.
- 2) We are all **Fellow Heirs**. This reminds us of our heavenly calling, of God our Father and Jesus our elder brother- Rom. 8:16, 17.
 - (a) Our family has great hopes.
 - (b) Don't forget who you are and to whom you belong**
 - (c) Actor Kirk Douglas recalls a conversation he had with a hitchhiker he picked up one day ...
I picked up a sailor who was on weekend leave. He jumped into the car, took one look at me and exclaimed, "*Hey! Do you know who you are?*"
 - (d) Yes, God loves us- all of us equally- and Jesus died for us. Each one has been purchased.
- 3) We are **Fellow Members of the body**. This tells us we are part of Christ's spiritual body. This does not identify us club members but spiritual body parts.
 - (a) If our baby toe could talk it would tell the eye it is supportive
 - (b) If the pancreas were able to speak it might remind the brain that it is appreciated.
 - (c) Do your actions and speech declare you are a body member of Christ?**
- 4) We are **Fellow Partakers of the promise**. This speaks of the ancient promise made to Abraham. Galatians 3:26-29. To be identified with Abraham is to inherit the blessings of "*the promise*."

CONCLUSION: Several years ago, the Christmas catalog of a California publishing house featured a "*made-to-order*" children's gift item: A "*Me-Book*." All the "*Me-Books*" contained the same full-page color illustrations and some prose also was the same. Other than that, each book was highly personalized. The idea was that the buyer would send the publisher personal information about the child to whom the book was to be given: name, age, birthday, address, names of brothers, sisters, parents, grandparents, friends, pets, etc. Thus, when the data was keyed into the publisher's computer, out came a book in which the child receiving the gift was the main character.

A boy named Daniel was given a gift of one of the "Me-Books" for his birthday by his grandmother. The boy's father said later ...

You can hardly imagine Daniel's surprise and delight when he unwrapped the gift and began to read: "*Once upon a time in a town called Midland Park there lived a little boy named Daniel Gallo. Now Daniel wasn't just an ordinary little boy. This is the story of one of his adventures. It's the story of the day Daniel met a giraffe ...*"

Over seventy times Daniel, and his street, and his friends and family were named. And when he got better acquainted with the giraffe, Daniel discovered they had the same birthday. Does Daniel like that book? It's his favorite. It gave added meaning to his