



Hope for Single Parents & Blended Families

Strong Families in a Broken World - PART 4
January 28-29, 2017 • Chip Ingram • Ruth 1-4

Intro: A Story of Hope and Restoration - Ruth 1-4

Naomi's Story

- Widow → Single Parent → Grieving Mother
- Living in a foreign land without help or hope
- Becomes the mother of a non-Jewish daughter-in-law

Naomi's Wisdom

- She returned to **GOD** and His **people**.
- She faced her **PAIN** and **loss**.
- She followed God's **WORD** (2:20), not the **WORLD** (3:10).

Result: God **rewarded** and **RESTORED** her life and family.

Premise: Single parents and blended families (for whatever cause), are not God's ideal, but His grace is sufficient to overcome any and every obstacle as we **surrender** and trust Him day by day.

Single Parenting – Principles and Practice

What We Know...

1. It's a high and growing percent of all families.
2. A single parent can NOT provide the same quality of care and quantity of time as a two-parent home.
3. With God, nothing is impossible.

Luke 1:37; Jeremiah 32:17

What Must You Do?

1. **MAKE** your relationship with Christ your #1 priority.
2. Get **CONNECTED** with a strong, godly, same-sex group for support and accountability.
3. **ACCEPT** "this season" of your life and set realistic expectations.
4. Remember, God can "make up" for what you can't give your kids.
5. **REFUSE** to become a victim, a martyr, or a super parent.
6. Don't **COMPROMISE** your spiritual and moral standards to "provide a father/mother" for your children.
7. A story to remember God's faithfulness and grace.

Blended Families – Principles and Practice

What We Know...

1. Blended families rarely, if ever, “fully” blend.
2. Every family relationship is a system; when one relational component changes, there is a domino effect that changes the whole system.
3. Honesty – it rarely works **WELL** or easily; success requires extreme effort, time, intentionality and outside help.

What Must You Do?

1. Count the **COST** thoroughly.
2. Get pre-marital counseling from a mutually trusted, biblical, and wise resource.
 - Work through expectations
 - Work through specific finances
 - Talk through the impact on each child
 - Agree on parenting goals, discipline, and a common front with all kids
3. Make your **MATE** your new, unequivocal #1 relationship **ahead** of children.
4. Develop a **RHYTHM** for family times together and apart. Don't force it, and don't expect too much too soon.
5. Develop a weekly **COMMUNICATION** tool and mechanism to wrestle family conflicts, schedules, and miscommunication to the ground in a non-threatening and safe environment.

6. Make the **SPIRITUAL** development of your marriage and family the utmost priority; only God and supernatural love can make this work - you don't have that apart from vital union with Christ in the context of a strong, loving, biblical community.
7. Remember it will take time, it will be harder than you thought, and it can be a glorious testimony of God's restoration and redemption – so don't quit, don't withdraw, don't bail out, and know that **PERSEVERANCE** will bring positive results.

James 1:2-4; Hebrews 10:36

Resources To Help Single Parent & Blended Families

- *Single Parenting: A Wilderness Journey* by Robert G. Barnes, Jr.
- *What Kids Wish Parents Knew About Parenting* by Joe White
- successfulstepfamilies.com
- *5 Tips for Becoming a Blended Family* - bit.ly/blendedfamilyarticle

Application/Discussion Questions

1. Do you know a single parent or blended family that could use your support? Would you take a 1st step this week to help them?
2. As a single parent or blended family, have you connected in a small group, men's or women's study, or a class at Venture to get the support you need? Would you take a 1st step to do that this week?