

# American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org  
Encouraging Christians to guard their heart August 2021

## Household Solidarity

By: Ra McLaughlin



Have you ever noticed that Luke traced Jesus' genealogy all the way to "Adam, the son of God" (Luke 3:38)? If we're familiar with the Lord's Prayer, we know that God is our Father (Matt. 6:9). However, we don't normally think of ourselves as God's descendants. But if Jesus traced His human ancestry through Adam to God, then ours traces there, too. In a very real sense, the entire human race is one family descended from God (Acts 17:28–29).

When there weren't that many people, it was easier to conceive of humanity as a single family. Genesis 4–5 summarizes all humanity under the lineages of the brothers Cain and Seth. Genesis 6–11 provides a similar summary by explaining

that all humanity descends from Noah's sons. In Abraham's day, God promised to redeem the world through Abraham's family (Gen. 17:4–6; 22:17–18; see also Rom. 4:13) by making Abraham the "father of a multitude of nations" (Gen. 17:4). This broad concept of family is foundational not only to God's dealings with all humanity but also to His expectations and requirements for our more immediate families.

One common way that the Bible connects the broader and narrower concepts of family is through the idea of covenant. God normally governs His relationships with human beings through covenants that bind those whom He identifies as the covenant heads (such as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David), as well as their households and descendants (Gen. 6:18; 9:9; 17:7; 2 Sam. 7:12; Rom. 5:12–14).

Historically, biblical covenants tended to apply first to families and then,

as those families expanded into nations, to those nations. So, the family and household applications of these covenants are explicit in their foundational language and context. This was even true of the Mosaic covenant, which God made with "the house of Jacob" and literally the "sons" of Israel (Ex. 19:3). These names emphasized family over nationhood, perhaps because, as escapees from Egypt, Israel wasn't yet a recognized nation.

God often deals with His entire covenant people as a unified whole, often based on their actions as a whole or on those of a representative few. He rescued His entire covenant people (only eight people) from the flood in Noah's day because Noah found favor (Gen. 6:8), just as He rescued all Israel from Egypt when His people cried out (Ex. 2:23–25). He punished Israel for Achan's sin because He treated Achan as representing the nation (Josh. 7:1; 22:20).

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God also deals with households as a unified whole. When He identified Isaac as Abraham's covenant heir (Gen. 17), He required every male in the household to be circumcised (including Ishmael, whom He rejected as Abraham's heir). During Israel's rescue from Egypt, each household's Passover observance saved its firstborn from death (Ex. 12). When Achan was found out, Israel restored their standing with God by destroying his entire household (Josh. 7:24–26).

Both the larger orientation to the entire covenant community and the narrower attention to households are continued in the New Testament. For instance, Peter told Israel that forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit were promised to “you and your children” (Acts 2:38–39). This confirmed that the Old Testament promises were being fulfilled in the New

and assured Israel that children still inherited covenant status and promises based on their familial relationships. Later, Peter and other Apostles taught that the same was true for gentile households because gentiles were part of the same covenant (Acts 10:44–46; 11:12–18; Rom. 1:13–18).

Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 7:12–14, Paul taught that if a believer is married to an un-believer, then the unbelieving spouse and their children are “holy” (often translated “sanctified”). That is, they're in a covenant relationship with God (Ex. 19:6; Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 28:9; 1 Peter 2:9) and fit to participate in the life of the covenant community. This can be redemptive sanctification that leads to salvation (1 Cor. 7:16; 1 Peter 3:1–2) or grounds for condemnation if they reject the gospel (Heb. 10:29; 1 Peter 4:17). Either way, it's a reality they face because they're part of a covenant household.

As Christians, our obedience to God's covenant always affects those around us, especially

those in our households. This can be a wonderful blessing (Isa. 65:23) or a painful source of suffering (Ex. 20:5). Either way, it's a compelling reason for us to live in faithful obedience to God. After all, we want to be the reason God blesses those we love and spares them from harm.

**[Taken from *TableTalk* July 2021]**

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**A help to solidarity**  
**By: Steve Huston**

A father's diligent leadership and prayers in striving after godliness is vital to forming household solidarity. Giving himself wholeheartedly to this pursuit, he can neither be as Nebuchadnezzar's statue, a head of gold but feet of clay nor like Jehu who “took no heed to walk in the way of the Lord God of Israel with his heart.” His children must see him speak of, pray to, and walk in the ways of his God; it is to be his lifestyle and his expectation of them if he is to hope that his God will be their God. It's fine that they see the way be hard, so long as they witness that Christ be sweet and treasured in the lives of their parents.



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