



Building family connectedness

Special Strengths Amidst Special Challenges

Psalm 68:6

**God sets the lonely in families,
he leads out the prisoners with singing.**

The State of Our Families

- Divorce rates often misquoted or misleading
- Siblings generally reporting positively about sibling relationships except when there is neglect (even inadvertent neglect)
- Intentional prayer needed
- Good supports provide some proven protection

*No matter what you've done WELL or POORLY up to this point, **consider it all fragile.***





No matter what you've done *WELL* or *POORLY*
up to this point, consider it all fragile to you...
yet well within God's sovereign grasp.

Strength-Building Principle

Celebrate each other and God's faithfulness.

2 Corinthians 4:7-8

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.

Strength-Building Principle

**Create safe space
for processing individual and family grief.**

Romans 12:15-16

**Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.
Live in harmony with one another.**

SEASONS & QUESTIONS

Childhood

- What's going on?
- When is my turn?
- Why do mom and dad (and maybe older siblings) seem worried/sad/stressed?
- Why is my sibling different?
- Am I good enough?
- Why do people look at him/her/us that way?

Adolescence

- What do my friends think?
- Why did I get to be the healthy one?
- How can I get a break?
- Who am I apart from this unique family?
- Will my parents be able to sustain their marriage and a "good life?"

Adulthood

- Who will take care of my sibling?
- Will my spouse be comfortable with this?
- Does my personal experience influence my career?
- Do I want to have children?

Strength-Building Principle

Cooperate with God as He lovingly refines you.

2 Corinthians 3:8

**And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory,
are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory,
which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.**

Strength-Building Principle

Embrace challenges as adventure and opportunity.

2 Corinthians 12:9

But he said to me,

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness!”

**Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses,
so that Christ’s power may rest on me.**

Strength-Building Principle

Align your family with God's heart for community.

1 John 4:12

**No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another,
God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.**



working it out together

reflect | explore | respond

Truths for Special Needs Families

God teaches us and shapes us through our families.

God uses our families to show us who He is
and how He works.

God wants your family to thrive and has the power to do it.

God can use your family to display the Gospel!

RESOURCES

Family Retreats — www.JoniandFriends.org

Connected Families — www.ConnectedFamilies.org

Walk Right In Ministries — www.WalkRightIn.org/families/caregiver-consulting

SibShops — Sibling Support Groups through your local ARC

Sibling Support Project — www.SiblingSupport.org

How to Grow a Connected Family by Jim & Lynne Jackson

The Connected Child: Bring Hope & Healing to Your Adoptive Family by Purvis, Cross & Sunshine

Love & Respect by Dr. Emerson Eggerichs

How to Talk So Your Kids Will Listen and Listen So Your Kids Will Talk by Faber & Mazlish

Sharing Love Abundantly in Special Needs Families by Gary Chapman & Jolene Philo

Faith Begins at Home by Mark Holmen

Jesus, Let's Talk by Lisa Jamieson

Views from Our Shoes by Donald Joseph Meyer and Cary Pillo

Thriving Despite a Difficult Marriage by Misja

Boundaries by Drs. Cloud & Townsend





WalkRightIn.org