



## Lesson 6 STEP 1

July 9, 2006

Lesson 6 Focus:  
**God gives us families to teach us about life.**

Lesson 6 Bible Basis:

**Matthew 7:7-11;  
Hebrews 12:5b-10; Proverbs 18:24**



## Bloodline

A story out of a St. Louis suburb raises the question of what it means to be a family. Olivia Shelltrack, Fondrey Loving and their three kids moved into the suburb of Black Jack a few months ago, expecting to quickly settle in. However, they were denied an occupancy permit because they do not meet Black Jack's definition of a "family." (They are unmarried, two of their children were born out of wedlock, and the third child is Olivia's from a previous relationship.) Olivia told the press they had been together for 13 years and were clearly a family regardless how anyone else defined the term.

(Source: <http://www.cnn.com/CNN/Programs/anderson.cooper.360/blog/2006/04/move-or-get-married.html>)

- ▶ **Is this a family? Why or why not?**
- ▶ **Who defines what constitutes a family?**

In another story out of Pennsylvania, Suzie Izatt and her husband Jim are enjoying life as parents of three sons, even though Suzie has never given birth (the result of a hysterectomy she had when she was just 25 years old). The couple adopted their son, Josh, and then became foster parents to two more boys, Dennis and Joey. This is a happy and incredibly active family, particularly considering that by the strictest of definitions the couple never "had" children.

(Source: © 1999 CBS Worldwide Inc.)

- ▶ **Would this group be defined as a family? Why or why not?**
- ▶ **What is the difference between these two households?**
- ▶ **How are families being redefined?**
- ▶ **Is a family only defined as those who are blood relatives? Why or why not?**

Let's turn now to the Bible lesson for today and find out what God says about family.

[Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your Bible-in-Life *Middle School Teacher's Guide*; Step 4 appears below.]





## Applying God's Word

### Lesson 6 STEP 4

July 9, 2006

Lesson 6 Focus:  
**God gives us families to teach us about life.**

Lesson 6 Bible Basis:

**Matthew 7:7-11;  
Hebrews 12:5b-10; Proverbs 18:24**



What is "family"? The definition of family depends on who answers the question.

Some believe family is an institution defined as a "traditional," biological, and child-rearing structure. The emphasis is on the biological relationship among family members.

► **How does this concept of family honor God?**

Others define family based on the voluntary assumption of family-related role behaviors. They would define a group of orphaned siblings living together without an adult presence as a family if one of the siblings took a mother or father role in the group.

► **Does function define family? If so, how?**

Still others may focus on social, cultural and physical forces beyond one's control that compel individuals to assume family-related role behaviors. Temporary "families" may develop in gangs, orphanages, boarding schools, or military units. An example of this would be Dr. Xavier's school in the X-Men movies.

► **With which of these three definitions would you agree? Why?**

► **How does the concept of family get abused?**

Today there is a movement trying to redefine marriage to include homosexuals. Several states and some cities have allowed homosexuals to be united, saying that they are families, too. Several other states, including Florida, Utah, and Mississippi, have laws stating that homosexuals cannot adopt children and/or be foster parents.

► **How would you define two homosexuals living together? Are they a family? What does God's Word say about it?**

Others say traditional marriage must be preserved. There is legislation being debated in Congress to add a Federal Marriage Amendment defining marriage as between one man and one woman.

► **How is the issue of marriage integral to the definition of what a family is?**

Just doing a keyword search for family in the Bible will bring up 76 references. Psalm 68:6 says, "God sets the lonely in families." Clearly God has a lot to say about family.



► **What does Jesus say about who is His family in Matthew 12:46–50?**

If you go back and read the references for what God says about family, you will have solid ground on which to stand. Family is not a concept that man invented. It is not something that will need to be redefined with each generation.

God began and defined the idea of family way back in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. God said that it is not good for man to be alone, so He created Eve as a helper and companion for Adam (Gen. 2:18). God had a purpose in mind when He created the first family, and He had a purpose when He created your family. You are in the right family at the right time—the one God created for you. Allow Him to use your family to teach you about relationships, life, and love. That is His purpose.

