

10 STEPS TO UNITY

IN YOUR BLENDED FAMILY



**A BLENDED
FAMILY RESOURCE**

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*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him and He will make your paths straight.*

Proverbs 3:5-6

STEP 1: SEEK GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR FAMILY.

The ability to seek God's will for your family involves communion with God regularly. This can include reading His word and applying it to your every-day life. Developing a daily prayer habit with God and reading the Bible with your spouse and family is powerful. When we read the Bible and mediate on His very spoken word and ask Him how to apply that to our life and our family, He gives us guidance and discernment in those specific areas.

In the Book of Proverbs, it says to not lean on our own understanding. This means that as we trust in the Lord, we will not use our own mistaken understanding against His. When we trust in Him, we govern ourselves to what He declares and not our own perception of what is the right thing to do. It is then that we are acting in accordance to His will and not our own. This will bring forth blessings upon your marriage and family.

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STEP 1: SEEK GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR FAMILY

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him and He will make your paths straight. Proverbs 3:5-6

Have you prayed for God's Will to be done in your family? We want to encourage you today to pray and take a few minutes to write down what you feel the Holy Spirit is telling you.

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*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. | John 1:9*

STEP 2: FORGIVENESS AND FREEDOM.

Can you think of anything from your past marriage or relationships that you might have brought into your new marriage and blended family that has caused issues and struggles to occur? This can happen, especially when beginning to blend, and even occur later in marriage if we allow it to. Our ability to seek healing and forgiveness for past grievances can better help us to live a life of freedom and bring forth blessings to our marriage and blended family. The baggage of past relationships is very real and heavy for most, to the point of being overbearing. Your past baggage, or “ghosts”, can haunt you in ways you might never have expected and can manifest itself negatively in your marriage and blended family. Unresolved anger and resentment are very common. Understand that they are detrimental to any relationship and have no place inside our marriage and family. Those very emotions are fueled tactics and tools from the enemy. He will use them in hopes that we will present those emotions to another person, and potentially transfer that offense onto those we love most. Think of unforgiveness as a poison you are choosing to drink that will ultimately cause you harm. It is the poison you are suffering from, not the people you are upset with!

So how do we break this deadly cycle? We can seek resolve for that pain immediately by repentance to God and asking for forgiveness. These are two great steps towards the healing and freedom process. Seeking biblical counseling or freedom and healing classes at your local church, are also great resources to aid in healing and freedom. Scripture reminds us that when we confess and seek repentance, He is faithful to forgive us and cleanse us. This allows us to live a life of His righteousness, mercy, and freedom.

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STEP 2: FORGIVENESS AND FREEDOM.

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What in your life do you need freedom from? What baggage have you been holding onto and would like to shed from your life?

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He answered, "Have you not read the he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate. Matthew 19:4-6

STEP 3: FOCUS ON BUILDING A STRONG MARRIAGE.

The first step in building a strong marriage is understanding biblically the priorities that are set before us. Salvation in Jesus Christ and the intimate relationship we have with our Father is the bedrock to our life, and the foundation to our marriage and family. Biblical priorities look like this: God, marriage, family, and work. In a marriage relationship, anything (other than God) that comes before your spouse will create opportunities for tension and resentment. Create time for your marriage! This can include regular date nights, reading the bible together and separately, praying together, incorporating healthy communication (without your phones), and surrounding yourself with Godly friends who strengthen your marriage. This not only will build up your marriage but will transcend into your family unit as well. Ask questions and listen to each other, try to become intentional about making intimacy and sex a priority, maintain a servant's heart towards each other and keep regular fellowship with other believers. Place importance on finding a biblically sound church. This is one of the best things that you can be a part of to help grow and mature your marriage.

Scripture tells us that when we marry our spouse, we become one flesh. In the bible, the meaning of "one flesh" is the sexual unification of man and woman in marriage. Marriage is a relationship filled with God-given gifts that were not there before as a single man or woman or committed children to your mother and father (Genesis 2:24). Rather the commitment is now established in a new family as a husband and wife in marriage, and the loyalty is now to one another and no one else. Marriage is a relationship and partnership with God. Christ as the foundation of your marriage is what makes you strong and powerful.

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STEP 3: FOCUS ON BUILDING A STRONG MARRIAGE.

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Do you feel your priorities are in-line with biblical principles?
If not, what are some changes that you and your spouse can implement to set your priorities in right alignment?

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When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. Psalm 56:3

STEP 4: ESTABLISH TRUST WITHIN YOUR NEW FAMILY UNIT.

One of the biggest differences between a nuclear or traditional family and a blended family is the establishment of trust. A nuclear family has been building trust since birth, versus a blended family that may require more time and intentionality in establishing trustworthy and healthy relationships. Older children are often a little more skeptical than younger children when it comes to blending in a new family unit. Building trust takes a lot of patience, prayer, persistence, and perseverance over a period of time. Learning to trust God in all of our circumstances is how we fulfill wise ways of life.

Blending can be an amazing experience, but there can also be times of trials and struggles that can place a wedge of fear and mistrust in our marriage and blended family. Christ is our focus and His word is our answer. His word says that when we are afraid, we can place our full trust in Him. By reading the word of God and acting in obedience to His truth, this will guide us in our development of trust in our family. Transparency, consistency, and active listening can go a long way when establishing the trust needed to have a healthy blended family.

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STEP 4: ESTABLISH TRUST WITHIN YOUR NEW FAMILY UNIT.

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What can you do to establish more trust within your family?

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PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
I thank you for the gift of marriage and children.
May my marriage mirror a reflection of your heart and grace,
in all that I say and do with my spouse.
Help me to steward, disciple and train up our children in the way they should go
as I seek your will for their life and our family.
I ask in Jesus name that if there is any root of bitterness,
anger or unforgiveness in my heart from past relationships or ex-spouses,
that you would begin the process of uprooting every lie of the enemy,
by exposing his tactics and replacing it with your truth.
You are the firm foundation and bedrock that my marriage is planted on and with you,
nothing is impossible and nothing in this fallen world can move me.
Today I surrender my marriage, spouse and children into your hands,
giving up all control and putting our complete trust in you.
I pray all these things in Jesus name, Amen.

Write a prayer that is on your heart:

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But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins. Matthew 6:15

STEP 5: PRAY BLESSINGS OVER YOUR EX-SPOUSE AND THEIR NEW LIFE.

Are you actively praying for your ex-spouse? That may be one of the wildest suggestions that you have ever heard to this day, but prayer is our weapon against Satan and his plan for havoc and disunity in our lives. Pray for your ex-spouse, God can change anyone's heart. Jesus emphasizes the importance of forgiving others, indicating that there is a direct relationship between having been forgiven by God and the forgiveness that His disciples must extend to others. We are His disciples and are called to live in accordance to His will and not ours, that is to forgive one another as Christ has forgiven us.

When you have feelings of anger and resentment towards someone, the best solution is to pray and ask God to reveal the condition of our heart in the matter, and to also begin praying for the other person's heart and healing. We want to encourage you to pray blessings over their life, marriage, family, finances, health or whatever you feel the Lord is asking you to pray over. It is tough to stay angry at someone who you are actively praying blessings towards. This is not only for their good but yours as well. Watch how your heart, mind, and attitude towards them will change over time and see how God will do the same for them. Scripture reminds us that if we cannot forgive others for their sins, then how can our Father forgive us? Prayer activates miracles in the spiritual realm that manifest in the physical. You can be the blessing by praying blessings over your ex-spouse and their life.

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STEP 5: PRAY BLESSINGS OVER YOUR EX-SPOUSE AND THEIR NEW LIFE.

But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.
Matthew 6:15

Have you ever prayed for your ex-spouse?
If not, try it today and watch miracles take place in your own heart and theirs.
Use the space below to write out a short prayer over your ex-spouse.

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Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

STEP 6: ESTABLISH FAMILY TRADITIONS.

Establishing family traditions in a newly blended family can look different for everyone. It may be fun and easy or tricky and hard. Getting to the place where all children are “our children” and not “his children” or “her children” helps to create an atmosphere of a unified family. In a blended family, this may take some time, but the faster you can get there, the more opportunities it can bring to help unite the family as one. Family traditions are the creation and establishment of who you are as a family unit and your family identity. This allows all members of a blended family to become united in something that they all enjoy, love, and equally share a passion for. This will help create one body, one family, one heart, which in turn creates a sense of belonging, unity, and relationship.

Family traditions are generational change agents. Setting Godly priorities in your family and then following through on these actions can and will shape many generations. The Word of God says that if we train up our children in the right way, God’s way, then they will not depart from it. What a powerful truth and gift from our Father in Heaven that helps us to navigate parenting and our blended family. One of the greatest gifts of establishing family traditions is that it allows parents the opportunities to create memories and meaningful conversations that lead us to train and steward our children in the way they should go.

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STEP 6: ESTABLISH FAMILY TRADITIONS.

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What are some fun family traditions you'd love to start in your new family?

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Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Psalms 127:3

STEP 7: SPEND INDIVIDUAL TIME WITH EACH CHILD.

Time is a valuable commodity, one of which we cannot buy or wish more in quantity. Children crave individual attention in their family. This attention makes them feel special, loved, and heard. We as parents can strive to provide each child with a special time, away from others, to bond and learn about each other. When blending a family, this can seem awkward, uncomfortable, and hard as you try to establish new relationships with your stepchildren. Navigating time with your stepchildren and biological children may present challenges when you are trying to find a balance. It takes great intentionality and effort to do this. Biological children can feel pulled from the biological parent, as they are now having to share their parent with another adult and other children. Stepchildren may not feel “as loved” and the triangulation of both parents and the child can become a push and pull motion that can bring forth difficulty.

Spending individual time with a child not only helps to establish trust, but it tells them that you “see” them and that they are important. A change in your relationship with your children occurs when a balance of love and trust is established. We cannot do this without being intentional and setting aside the time to spend with each child one on one. This time is just as important for our biological children and stepchildren alike. Scripture reminds us of the beautiful gift that children are from our Father in Heaven. In blended families, there is an amazing opportunity to reflect the love of Christ towards children that are not our own, but that God has placed in our life by design. Children are a gift and reward from Him and our time with each of them is important, powerful, and purposeful.

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STEP 7: SPEND INDIVIDUAL TIME WITH EACH CHILD.

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Do you and your spouse spend one-on-one time with each of your children,
alone or together?

How would you like to spend time with each of your children?

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PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

I thank you for my ex-spouse and the person you created them to be. I pray blessings of health, finances, prosperity, and favor over them today.

Forgive me for my feelings of _____ towards them and I ask in your son's name, that you would heal any area of my heart that is unclean and impure.

Help me and my ex-spouse to soften our heart towards one another and carry your peace, patience, mercy, grace, and love towards each other. Help me to see my ex-spouse the same way in which you do. I want your love to rule and reign in my heart for them.

I love you Lord and bless your name, Amen.

Write a prayer that is on your heart:

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My dear brothers and sisters: take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry. James 1:19

STEP 8: BE A GREAT LISTENER.

Our Father has given each of us an important calling in parenthood to teach, mold, and mature our children, therefore, when our child says something, we normally or instinctively have a word or lesson in which to respond. However, a child's words are very important in their own little world, and sometimes they just want to talk to us about their experiences or feelings. It is very important in establishing trust that you allow your children to discuss the things in which they are experiencing and walking through. Sometimes the greatest gift that we can give them is the ability to just sit and listen to them.

It is equally important to listen to your spouse and allow them the same space to communicate, and tell you what they are feeling or experiencing without criticism or defensive responses. Communication in marriage is often discussed as being one-sided. This can be due to the fact that in most marriages one person is better at listening than the other. Listening to your spouse is a part of effective communication and can give them an opportunity to feel heard. To improve on these skills, you can try listening not to respond, but just to acknowledge they have been heard and that you care about their feelings. In the Book of James, scripture states that everyone should be quick to listen and slow to speak. What great wisdom we are given to pursue hearing and listening, so that we can avoid hasty speech or unrighteousness in our words. Communication is not just the act of talking but is seen in other forms by listening, writing, and even our body language. There is power in silence. We have the ability to make the choice to simply sit and listen, which can empower your children and spouse when you practice this form of communication. Your family can feel like they are being heard, just by you simply listening to what they have to say.

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STEP 8: BE A GREAT LISTENER.

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Would you consider yourself a great listener? How can you take steps to improve?

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For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isaiah 55:8-9

STEP 9: DON'T OVERREACH YOUR EXPECTATIONS.

What expectations are you bringing into your new blended family? We all have them. The idea of the greatest husband, well behaved children, great extended family relationships and so much more are things that we can desire and expect when blending a family. With God all things are possible, and all of these desires can come to pass, but some may take more time to develop than others. We need to understand our new family is exactly that, new and unestablished. Therefore, putting an extended or immediate expectation on relationships that have not developed, and trust that has not been established, is a recipe for disappointment. We like to call it “death by expectation.”

If we are not careful, we can harm or hinder blessings in our relationships with our blended family by placing expectations on each other. Some ways in which you can manage expectations, is to be patient and prayerful in your actions. We can remember that our thoughts and ways are not the Lord's thoughts and ways, His are higher and better than ours. When we can turn our expectations over to the Lord and surrender our ways to Him, then we allow Him to work in and through us to bring forth blessings in our relationships. You will find that His outcome is better than any expectation you may have had.

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STEP 9: DON'T OVERREACH YOUR EXPECTATIONS.

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What were your original expectations in your marriage and blended family?
Do you feel as if you have any now towards your spouse and children?

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For nothing is impossible with God. Luke 1:37

STEP 10: DO NOT GIVE UP HOPE!

Blended families are challenging. Not always, but in a lot of situations they can be. Our posture in how we respond and act towards one another is what can carry us through our struggles with love, grace, and hope. There may be a time when all hope is gone, and you feel like giving up. Don't. Avoid judging the health of your blended family on a day-by-day basis, instead, look at the whole picture. There are going to be season of joy, filled with unity and peace. Enjoy these moments and build off of them as much as you can. Trials will come our way regardless, but if we are intentional in how are preparing our hearts and minds daily, we can then withstand anything the enemy will try to throw at our marriage and family.

You will have bad days, maybe a bad week or season, but that does not and should not define your blended family. There will be days of sadness and discourse, others will be filled with laughter and smiles. When things get tough, start praying, reading the Word of God, or reaching out to Godly counsel, your church or pastor that can walk alongside you in that season. Show love instead of anger and frustration. Show grace when it is least expected. Give and serve one another freely and without expectation of return. You can be the light that your family needs to start seeing its blessings over its challenges. God is with you and He is for you, your marriage and blended family, because nothing is impossible with God!

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STEP 10: DO NOT GIVE UP HOPE!

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Hope and encouragement live together. In what ways are you reaching out for continued encouragement in your blended family?

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PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

I thank you and praise you with a grateful heart today for your loving kindness and mercy.

I seek to bless your name in all that I say and do in my life, marriage, and family.

Help me to desire deeper intimacy with you daily and to seek your word as an endless well of wisdom and knowledge for my life.

As I journey with you in my blended family, I continue to pray your shield of protection, refuge, and strength over my marriage and children. Help me to press into you constantly, in the good days and bad days so that I might be better prepared to withstand any difficulties or troubles that the enemy may push my way.

I thank you for your unending grace that restores my brokenness and makes me whole.

May the redemption you bring in my life magnify and glorify you always.

I love and thank you for your son Jesus who bore every wrong on the cross, so that I may be cleansed of my sin and iniquities.

It is in His name I pray, Amen.

Write a prayer that is on your heart: