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We see this in his church as well. His church is a blended family, if you will. We come from all walks of life, all races, and all experiences and yet Jesus brings us together. He integrates us and unites us. We don't call ourselves a blended church family, but a FAMILY of believers. This mindset carried us through many battles.

The heart is to pursue LOVING like Jesus. We learn to love and trust where God has us in this life, at this time. We learn to love who is in this home that God has put me with specifically: Striving to love the role to impact those I am not biologically connected to, but knowing that God is connecting us in, perhaps, an even deeper way. Fighting the spiritual battle and refusing to be victims, as well as not allowing our kids to become victims of unfortunate circumstances. Fighting to stand together, to be integrated and united.

The other place we had to set our minds was in our marriage, We needed to trust each other as we raised our children. We could be blind to our own similar sinful nature as it was revealed in our biological children's characters. We were keenly aware of the other children's natures because they were not the same as our own. We no longer had to live self-deceived as we guided our children. What a unique benefit of being in this kind of a family!

Jesus himself was in a blended family! Joseph was an amazing father, hand-picked by God to raise his son. We believe God hand-picked us to raise these specific children because together we were the perfect parents for the role. When we didn't trust each other, it led to defensiveness, arguing and hurt feelings. As we learned to be humble and to listen to one another's perspective, we began to be able to really help our children physically, emotionally and spiritually.

With these two things - pursuing the love of Jesus and trusting our spouse's view and insight - we will raise a family that is together, integrated and united. True FAMILY.

Editor's note: Register for the Family Conference in Denver, CO on September 1-3 at 2017familyconference.com

ALL GENERATIONS DENVER 2017 NORTH AMERICAN Family Conference

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- ***Plan a Fall 2017 "In Motion" Visit***
  Tim Sumerlin, Denver, CO, USA — Tuesday, 09 May 2017
  Tim is scheduling fall 2017 dates for the Disciples In Motion and Grief Journey In Motion workshops – email him at timothysumerlin@gmail.com. The Disciples In Motion recovery ministry is gaining traction all over the US and around the world! Disciples In Motion is affordable, effective, and Jesus-centered...

- ***Beachstock 2017 - "DEVOTED"***
  Anthony Stapleton, Hampton Roads, VA, USA — Monday, 08 May 2017
  The Hampton Roads Church of Christ is hosting Beachstock 2017 from May 26-28 in Virginia Beach. Beachstock is a beachside retreat where singles from all walks of life wil come for refreshment, fellowship...

- ***Conquering the Giant of Diversity***
  Disciples Today — Tuesday, 02 May 2017
  The Charlotte Church in North Carolina recently taught four important lessons about "Conquering the Giant of Diversity." Please listen to these timely lessons as we all grow in understanding and celebrating the...

- ***Lubbock Church Seeks Campus Ministry Leader***
  Roddy Oaks, Lubbock, TX, USA — Sunday, 30 April 2017
  The Lubbock Mission Church is searching for a campus ministry leader. Lubbock has a population of about 250,000. It is home to Texas Tech University, Lubbock Christian University, and a few other smaller schools...

• UPCOMING EVENTS

ICMC US West
Austin, Texas USA
June 29-July 1, 2017

Middle East Conference
Cairo, Egypt
July 2017

ICMC US East
Asheville, North Carolina USA
August 4-6, 2017

2017 Family Ministry Conference
Denver, Colorado USA
September 1-3, 2017

ICOC Worship Conference
Dallas, Texas USA
October 13-15, 2017

DT Hawaii Cruise
Honolulu, Hawaii USA
October 28 - November 4, 2017

2020 World Discipleship Summit
Orlando, Florida USA
July 2-5, 2020

CONNECTING DISCIPLES IN CHURCHES AROUND THE WORLD

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INTERNATIONAL & LOCAL NEWS BULLETIN
To Inspire, Inform, Unify and Grow the International Churches of Christ
DT DISCIPLES TODAY
WWW.DISCIPLESTODAY.ORG • ISSUE 606 • MAY 14, 2017

Blended Families

Rick & Kathi Norris



"Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate." – Matthew 19:6b

Many of us are in blended families. Most of us didn't plan it that way, nor would we have. We may have arrived there through death, divorce or single parenting. We would like to share the mindset that we believe rescued us many times over as Satan attacked and tried to divide our family.

This year is our 25th "FAMILYVERSARY." Our family was joined by God in 1992, after the death of both of our previous spouses. What an honor and joy to be in this family. We are sometimes referred to as a "blended family," but really we are just FAMILY.

Matthew 19:6b was our theme scripture from the beginning. Early on we saw Satan's unrelenting desire to divide us. Our culture and worldly thinking led us to naturally divide without a second thought. We constantly heard, "So, whose kids are whose?" "Oh, so she isn't really your mother?" "He isn't really your dad."

Division. Separation. Estrangement. People from church, neighbors, school staff and co-workers all wanted to know! Well-meaning folks would point and shake their heads and victoriously proclaim, "I've figured it out!" Most of the time they were mistaken. In our family we had a general practice of not telling who previously belonged to whom. That was in no way to disregard biological parents or to ignore extended family. We saw how God's heart is to bring together, to integrate and to unite. He does this, first of all, in our relationship with Him through the love of Jesus.

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