The Problem of Step-parents and Blended Families

can wreck havoc with a child or teenager's mind and emotions.

I. The Problem of Step-parents and Blended Families A parent's remarriage and the resulting change in and complexity of relationships Over 40 percent of all marriages in the U.S. involve a remarriage of one or both parties. One out of three Americans—sixty million adults and twenty million kids—is a step parent, a stepchild, or a step sibling. One out of five children under the age of eighteen is a stepchild. By the year 2000, step-families (involving only one spouse who has children) and complex families (in, which both spouses have children) will soon become the majority family type." Such adjustments are often hardest, of course, on the kids. "They feel a loss going into a ---It certifies that their original family exists no more." The formation of a step-family is "hardest on children ages 9 to 15." They are struggling with their own independence, and here comes this outsider, interfering. Most of the time if remarriage occurs in early adolescence, kids respond in what Boys appear to have an easier time with both stepfathers and stepmothers than girls although it does cause difficulties for both sexes. Still, many parents and children in step-families manage very well. It is said that 80 percent of children of divorce and remarriage do not have behavior problems despite all the challenges and difficulties. II. The Effects of Step-parents and Blended Families Step-families and step-relationships can be formed in a variety of ways, of course, such as a parent remarrying after what three things? 1- Death of a spouse,

Many are happy and healthy families, but many also encounter some of the following effects of remarriage and complex family relationships:

A. Grief

As was mentioned above, the formation of a step-family often signals the "official" death of the original family to a child or young person. Since family is one of the most precious possessions in the world, severing of it can produce grief.

What can proceed from that grief?
Denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

B. Anger

Anger is the most dangerous stage of grief because a person can get stuck there for a long time. It's common for members of a blended family to bury their pain, but sooner or later it bubbles up.

C. Guilt

Parents and many kids in step-families are afflicted by guilt too.

D. Loss of Sense of Control

A significant factor in the difficulties surrounding the formation and functioning of step-families is the loss of a sense of control, a process that may have begun at the time of a parent's death or divorce.

The teen may feel that l	ne or she has lost his or her	in the family. He
may feel that he can no	longer get his dad's attention. Sh	e may think that Mom
decided to remarry with	nout enough input from her. He i	may feel that his step-
siblings have	on his "territory."	
E. Stress		

Findings suggest that the countless adjustments stepchildren must face—

1- New adult figure 2-______ 3- New ______

4- Leaving old friends 5-______.

All contribute to new levels of stress

F. Loneliness and Depression

The formation and functioning of a step-family can leave teens and preteens feeling lonely and left out—even more so at times than life in a single-parent family.

G. Lower Levels of Parental Involvement

Young people in step-families must sometimes cope with lower levels of parental involvement and support in their lives.

Studies suggest that even though they may have the time, the parents in stepfamilies do not invest as much of it in their children as the parents in intact families or even single parents do.

H. Risk of Sexual Abuse

One of the most severe and disturbing potential effects of remarriage and the formation and function of a step-family is the risk of abuse.

In a study at the University of Iowa of 2,300 cases of sexu	al abuse within Iowa,
researchers found that nonbiological "father caretakers	" (stepfathers, foster
fathers, and adoptive fathers), were almost time	es as likely to sexually
abuse children in their care as biological fathers.	
Nonbiological "mother caretakers" were almost	times more likely to
sexually abuse children in their care than biological mothers	?'

III. The Biblical Perspective of Step-parents and Blended Families

Jesus was a stepchild. Few people take time to consider that fact, but the man who helped Mary raise Jesus Christ to adulthood was not Jesus' biological father.'

Moses was a stepchild too. Though his natural mother served as his nurse, he was raised as the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Genesis 2:24 reveals God's plan:

"Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

God's commandments regarding marriage and the family are intended to reflect a universal and eternal principle; that principle is .

God designed the family as a unity;

- 1- an unbroken circle of strong, loving, lasting relationships;
- 2- the primary unit of human society

- 3- a hedge against _____ (Ps. 68:6);
 4- a defense against poverty and _____ (1 Tim. 5:4-8);
 5- an environment for childrearing and _____ (1 Tim. 3:4).

Unity is part of God's nature and character. He is one (Deut. 6:4). And it is that unity that He wishes us to reflect in our marriages and family relationships.

Genesis 2:24 says, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

This means a marriage should reflect God's nature.

God has an ideal plan, but the ideal does not always happen.

A child is conceived out of wedlock

A parent dies

Mom and Dad divorce

A parent remarries

A new household is formed, challenging old loyalties and creating new routines.

While a step-family may be a challenging and difficult situation for parents and children alike, it can reflect God's unity, even if it was born from brokenness.

After all, God Himself is an adoptive parent. He not only accepts all those who come to Him in repentance and faith into His family, but He adopts them as His children (John 1:12-13).

Romans 8:15

"For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

"I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:18).

Galatians 4:6 tells us: "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

There are many struggles and adjustments in a step-family situation. Step-families, like the people who comprise them, are ______ of God's ideals.

God is available to heal the brokenhearted and to help bring unity out of discord.

SIBLING RIVALRY

I. The Problem of Sibling Rivalry

Brothers and sisters can be best friends, bitter enemies— many factors contribute to this: the circumstance, the time of day, or their moods. Siblings can be kind or cruel to one another.

A. Rivalry

Counseling Youth I- Lecture 10 Foothills Baptist Bible College, Marion, NC Instructor: Dr. Tom Walker (D.D.) Spring Quarter- 2020
Rivalry is natural, perhaps unavoidable, between brothers and sisters. Sibling rivalry is a jealousy or competition between siblings (or stepsiblings) in a family.
Can sibling rivalry be a positive factor? How
B. Sibling Strife Sibling rivalry can become destructive instead of constructive, however, when it begins to create sibling strife.
C. Sibling Abuse Relationships between siblings can sometimes degenerate into abusive behaviors and patterns. Abuse can
Siblings are more likely to become abusive if they themselves feel victimized; by turning the tables on a (usually younger) sibling, they regain
Abuse can range from name-calling and provoking fear in a younger sibling, to threatening, destroying a sibling's personal possessions, or physically scratching hitting, or kicking a sibling.
III. The Causes of Sibling Rivalry Sibling rivalry has to do with many things. To some extent, it is simply the natural result of multiple children in a family setting, competing for attention and affection.
It may also be caused by parents' preferential treatment of one sibling, and by a number of other factors, including:
A. Jealousy What things can young people be jealous about? Name several ways jealousy can be seen according to Dr. Walker?

B. Unhealthy or Unfavorable Comparisons The root of all feelings of inferiority is comparison.

This is particularly tru 1- <mark>Physical attractivene</mark>	e in three areas. ss and body characteristics.	
2- The matter of	is another sensitive nerve.	
3- Children (and esp	ecially boys) are extremely competitive with regard'	to

C. Changing Roles

Adolescence is a time of many monumental changes.

The young person may have more responsibilities at home; he or she may be entering a new school or starting apart-time job. His or her relationships with friends may become deeper, or broader—with members of the opposite sex.

D. Stress

Sibling rivalry can become severe due to stress in a family situation.

How does sibling rivalry develop?

- 1- Stress in your parents' marriage,
- 2- Parent/child abuse,
- 3- ______. and it isn't dealt with, one child may start taking the frustration he or she feels toward their parents out on a weaker or younger sibling.

Rivalry, strife, or abuse may be ultimately directed at someone—or something (such as an undesirable circumstance---other than the sibling; the brother or sister is often simply a convenient target for the release of stress and frustrations.

E. Selfishness/Difficulty Sharing Limited

With little children it involves toys -stuff; the teen it is borrowing clothes.

Such situations can be constructive—helping kids learn "how to stand up for [their] rights, how to compete without being hostile, and how to resolve conflict through negotiation and compromise."

They can also be destructive, however, creating animosity and hurting the participants.

F. Desire for Attention

James Dobson says:

"Quarreling and fighting provide an opportunity for [siblings] to "capture' adult attention.

IV. The Effects of Sibling Rivalry

A. Not Always Harmful

Sibling rivalry is almost always deeply disturbing to parents and unsettling for the young people involved. However, it is not always harmful.

B. Destructive to Self-Esteem

When the sibling rivalry and strife is particularly severe, however, it can wreak havoc with a young person's sense of self-esteem that may extend even into adulthood.

C. Effects of Sibling Abuse

Moreover, sibling abuse produces many of the same results as any abuse: guilt, mistrust, aggression, deficient social skills, insecurity and poor self-esteem.

V. The Biblical Perspective of Sibling Rivalry

The Bible contains no discourse or instruction on sibling rivalry. As always, however, God's Word presents an honest and insightful view of family relationships, including those between siblings.

A. The very first human family, according to the Genesis account, was plagued by sibling rivalry, strife, and abuse: Cain murdered his brother in a fit of jealous rage (see Gen. 4:8).
Joseph's brothers were so jealous they conspired to sell him into slavery in (see Gen. 37:12-36).
Abimelech, son of Jerub-Baal, killed of his brothers in order to become king of Shechem (see Judg. 9:5).
Absalom ordered the death of his half-brother Amnon (see 2 Sam.13:29).
ordered the death of his half-brother Adonoijah (1 Kings 2:25), and jehoram slaughtered all his brothers upon his ascension to the throne of Judah (2 Chron. 21:4).

The Bible clearly—and forthrightly—portrays the tragic results of sibling rivalry, strife, and abuse. In addition, God's Word makes it clear that the root cause of sibling rivalry jealousy—is not only unacceptable, but undesirable.

See Mark 7:21-22, Rom.13:13, 2 Cor.12:20, and Gal.5:19-20.

The Bible does not impulsively forbid jealousy and envy; on the contrary, God's purpose in steering His people away from jealousy and envy is to

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The biblical antidote to jealousy is prescribed by Paul:

1 Corinthians 13:4

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."

How do we directly deal with them concerning sibling rivalry?

- 1. Within the teen himself or herself. The young person should be encouraged to examine his or her own feelings. Why is there a spirit of rivalry? Does he or she contribute to it? (Remember that even Joseph played a part in his brothers' jealousy [see Gen. 37:1-11.]) What can he or she do to temper the causes) of the rivalry?
- 2. Within the home. The following tactics may help parents or caregivers prevent or address sibling rivalry:
- Help youth express themselves. Help teens and preteens use words to express their feelings; to say, "I feel like you never have time for me anymore," for example, instead of sabotaging an older sibling's friendships.
- Be careful not to inflame the natural jealousy of siblings. Resist the urge to compare siblings, particularly in the three areas mentioned above (physical appearance, intelligence, and athletic abilities). Congratulate and appreciate each child without reference to his or her sibling. And never say, "Why can't you be like your sister?"
- Treat children uniquely rather than equally. Children expect equal treatment from their parents, and parents usually respond by trying to prove they're being fair.
- Erect boundaries of respect, such as a prohibition on name-calling. Dr. Dobson offers several examples he has used in his family:
- a. Neither child is ever allowed to make fun of the other in a destructive way. Period!

- b. Each child's room [or portion of the room if siblings share a room] is his private territory.
- c. The older child is not permitted to tease the younger child.
- d. The younger child is not permitted to harass the older child.
- e. The children are not required to play with each other when they prefer to be alone or with friends.
- f. We mediate any genuine conflict as quickly as possible, being careful to show impartiality and extreme fairness."

What do you do in training siblings when you encourage them by mediating?