

May 18, 2014

## *Mostly Personal...*

### ***Things I've learned from the Duggar Family***

Loved Ones,  
Amazing – 19 children and a handful of grandkids as well! Maybe you've seen the show about the Duggar family – *19 Kids and Counting*.

Jim Bob and Michelle Duggar are a Christian family in Arkansas who have 19 children and amaze viewers weekly with their simple acts of domestic survival. The kids are wonderful – they are (in order): Josh, Jana, John-David, Jill, Jessa, Jinger, Joseph, Josiah, Joy-Anna, Jedidiah, Jeremiah, Jason, James, Justin, Jackson, Johannah, Jennifer, Jordyn, and last but not least, Josie.

I never intend to watch the show. I just sit down to spend a few minutes with my girls, and before I know it I'm cheering the family along in their weekly adventure. Let me tell you why I think the show is worth watching.

#### ***#1. The Duggars teach us that extra effort is required to be sure everyone feels valuable and appreciated.***

My first concern for so large a family was how could you really give each child the time they deserve. Then I remembered Susannah Wesley, mother of John Wesley (the founder of the Methodist Church), who also had 19 children. Susannah gave each child a certain time of the week in which that child was the total focus of Mother. That special moment was remembered by John Wesley all his life – and he never suffered from any type of *love deficiency*. Michelle, especially, seems to have the same *Spirit of Susannah*. These parents understand that time invested in each kid is never time wasted. Good churches understand the importance of valuing every member of the family.

#### ***#2. The Duggars demonstrate that when there is a special need, everyone pulls together.***

In the episodes focused around Josie's premature birth, one of the most impressive things was the way everyone, especially the older kids, stepped up to fill in the gaps caused by that family emergency. The lesson – good families and good churches never leave family behind.

#### ***#3. The Duggars teach us that in a larger family, everyone has to "parent" from time to time.***

One thing I don't really like is the way the younger kids are sometimes *assigned* to the older kids. At least it bothered me until I could see the rationale behind it. Mom and Dad, because of the sheer size of the family,

simply cannot be everywhere and do everything. The more responsible children have to step up and help the little ones. That is a key dynamic in larger churches that continue to grow and stay fresh. Parents always love their children, and Pastors always love their flocks, but the bigger the pasture gets, the more we need everyone to practice *pastoral care* for each other. That's why Sunday School classes and small groups are so important.

#### ***#4. The Duggars create an atmosphere in which life is honored, valued, and protected.***

I am not surprised that the Duggars are often vilified and even hated by many in society. Families like the Duggars and the Robertsons (*Duck Dynasty*) haunt secularists. Too many Americans actually call functional, healthy families *dysfunctional*. Some of us don't like it when someone reminds us that a man can love his wife, be faithful to her, and that children can actually respect Mom and Dad – and even love the Lord.

When I watch the Duggar family, in the echoes of my mind I hear Joshua declare to the new generation of Israel – ***"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!"*** (Joshua 24:15)

Yes, the Duggars have problems like any other family and you may call it irresponsible to have 19 children, but as I watch the show, I ask the question – "Which of these unique individuals is not needed? Not wanted? Not loved and valued?" There are people that say a church like ours is too large. But I ask you this – look around and find one person you'd pick to turn away - to exclude from the family. I don't think you could do it.

Why? Because you and I know everyone is loved, valuable, and worth the extra effort!

As the tagline on the show's opening credits puts it - ***"It isn't always easy, but somehow we make it all work."***

I love you,

*Pastor Stephen*