

Life, Love and Family Daily Fact Sheet
Dr. Tim Clinton

“Divorce & Single Parenting”

- **5 Principles for the Single Parent:**
 - **Be Honest**—your children will have many questions and concerns about what happened to your marriage. As much as it is possible, be honest with your kids. Your answers to them should be age appropriate and should not demean your ex.
 - **Allow Questions**—even though you may not be able to answer all of your kids’ questions, be sure that they know they are in an environment where questions are welcomed.
 - **Pray**—the most powerful thing a single parent can do for his/her kids is to pray with and for them.
 - **Be Available**—though your time as a single parent may be limited, be as available to your children as possible. Turn off the TV. Set the emails aside. Make an effort to invest in your kids’ lives and be intentional about the time you spend with them.
 - **The Ex Factor**—you must maintain some balance, politeness, and communication with your ex for the sake of your children. Your kids will sense any tension that exists with him/her. Do your best to peacefully interact with your ex.
- **The Importance of Forgiveness After Divorce** (Clinton & Hawkins, 2009):
 - Unforgiveness is a state of resentment, bitterness, hatred, hostility, anger, fear, and stress toward an individual who has transgressed against another in some way.
 - Unforgiveness is a cancer that eats away at the very soul of a person.
 - Forgiveness occurs when the cold feelings of unforgiveness are changed to warm, loving, compassionate, caring, and altruistic emotions because of a heartfelt transformation.
 - **What Forgiveness Is and Isn’t:**
 - Forgiveness does not mean that any wrongs done to you were acceptable.
 - Forgiveness does not diminish the evil done against you, nor is it a denial of what happened.
 - Forgiveness is a key part of not letting those wrongs hurt you any longer.
 - Forgiveness does not take away the consequences the other person will face because of his or her sin.
 - Forgiveness is letting go of your desire to hurt the other person. Simply put, forgiveness means you “cancel a debt.”
 - Forgiveness is an uncomfortable process. When you make a decision to forgive, God provides the grace and strength to forgive and to maintain a heart of forgiveness.
 - Forgiveness is not weakness. It is the most powerful thing you can do. Refusing to forgive allows Satan to continue to hurt you; forgiveness stops the destructive power of Satan in one’s life.
 - Forgiveness is not reconciliation. It takes two to reconcile but only one to forgive.
 - Forgiveness does not require that you become a “doormat” nor does it require you to allow the offender to hurt you again.

- Forgiveness does not wait for the offender to repent. Unlike God, who provides forgiveness when we repent, humans cannot demand repentance before granting forgiveness.
 - Forgiveness is about how much you trust God to take care of you.
 - Forgiveness is experiencing empathy for the offender, humility about your own sinfulness, and gratitude for being forgiven by God and others.
- Forgiveness sets you free to move on with your life. It refuses to let the person who hurt you have any power over your life and opens up your relationship with God (Matt. 5:43-48).
- Forgiveness keeps you from becoming bitter and thus protects those around you. It keeps you from becoming like the person who hurt you.
- **Quotes:**
 - *“God does not hate divorced people—He hates the cruelty of divorce. Divorce does not eliminate problems; it just substitutes a new set of problems.”*—Unknown
 - *“There is no friendship, no love, like that of the parent for the child.”*—Henry Ward Beecher
 - *“Perhaps it takes courage to raise children.”*—John Steinbeck
 - *“Raising a family is difficult enough. But it’s even more difficult for single parents struggling to make ends meet. They don’t need more obstacles. They need more opportunities.”*—Bill Richardson
 - *“If you bungle raising your children, I don’t think whatever else you do well matters very much.”*—Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis
 - *“Good homes are still the best source of good humans.”*—Neal A. Maxwell
- **Key Thoughts (Clinton & Trent, 2009):**
 - Research shows that, for most children, the pain they feel from the breakup of their home is just as painful ten years after the divorces as it was at the time of the divorce. The pain follows them into adulthood and affects their personalities and life choices.
 - There are few things more difficult than being a single parent.
 - A common problem faced by single parents is the overwhelming amount of work to be done. The demands of life and living come at the single parent 24/7.
 - Often single parents have unmet social and emotional needs. Consider joining a small group. Maintain relationships with friends. In doing so, you will be more emotionally healthy and able to give more to your children.
 - The key to successful single parenting is the recruitment and commitment of other “substitute parents” who can become part of the family—grandparents, aunts and uncles, friends, and neighbors.
 - A healthy church, youth mentors and pastors are sources of support for single parents.
 - Find practical and meaningful ways to show your children that you love them. Though your time may be limited, consider leaving a note in their lunchboxes, go on a day trip, visit a park, and allow them to invite their friends over.

- **Verses:**

- *"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus."*—**Philippians 1:6**
- *"I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."*—**Philippians 4:13**
- *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they might have life, and have it abundantly."*—**John 10:10**
- *"Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you."*—**1 Peter 5:6-7**
- *"The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."*—**Psalms 34:18**
- *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight."*—**Proverbs 3:5-6**
- *"'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.'"*—**Jeremiah 29:11**

Endnotes

Clinton, T. & Hawkins, R. (2009). The quick-reference guide to biblical counseling. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

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