

BLENDED



Overview:

Use this series to help you navigate the issues surrounding blended families. Though it can be tricky, if you have the right information and a plan, you can have success.

Lessons:

1. Start With the Right Expectations
2. Make the Marriage a Priority
3. Co-Parenting in the Home
4. Co-Parenting With the Ex
5. Money Matters



START WITH THE RIGHT EXPECTATIONS

Find discipleship resources at pursueGOD.org/marriage

TALKING POINTS

There is no perfect formula for blending families together but having the right expectations can help to lay the right foundation for success.

- Blending families is challenging. You're talking two different families and combining them together. That process is bound to bring about some conflict when each family has their own set of rules, values and ways of doing things.
- You need to think of this process more like a crockpot than a blender. A crockpot allows each individual meat and vegetable to cook alongside the others without getting lost. A blender forces the food together into a jumbled mess.
- If you want to be successful at blending your families, be ready to negotiate and adjust along the way. Matthew 7:12

DISCUSSION

1. *Describe your current progress with blending your families. What has gone well? What has been hard?*
2. *What were/are your expectations for how your families would/should blend?*
3. *Think about the blender and crockpot idea. Which would you say best represents your approach in bringing your families together?*
4. *What are the pitfalls of the blender approach?*
5. *Why is having the ability to adjust so important in combining families? How well have you done in this so far?*
6. *Read Matthew 7:12. How can the Golden Rule help your family?*
7. *What are some of the issues that need to be negotiated? What are some possible solutions?*

MAKE THE MARRIAGE A PRIORITY

Find discipleship resources at pursueGOD.org/marriage

TALKING POINTS

It's a challenge to cultivate the marriage when kids are in the mix from the start. But, a healthy marriage is the foundation to building a new family.

- If the marriage isn't strong, then the family can't be strong. It may seem selfish to prioritize the marriage, but it's in the best interest of your kids for you to build a good foundation that can withstand the stresses that come with blending families.
- Make a commitment to discuss everything with total honesty. You need to be totally open about your fears and concerns and commit to working through each issue as they come. Proverbs 20:7
- Avoid bringing your past baggage into this marriage. You need to see this relationship as a fresh start. If your spouse does something that reminds you of your ex or triggers some negative response, talk to your spouse about it.

DISCUSSION

1. *On a scale from 1-10, how are you doing at prioritizing the marriage? How can you improve?*
2. *Read Proverbs 20:7. Why does your marriage need to be a priority for the sake of the family?*
3. *Read Proverbs 12:22. What are some of the issues you've been dealing with so far? Are you able to speak honestly about them? Explain.*
4. *Evaluate yourself. Have you allowed previous baggage to affect this relationship? Explain.*
5. *Evaluate your spouse. Have they allowed previous baggage to affect this relationship. Explain.*
6. *What are some productive things you can do to guard against this from happening in the future?*

CO-PARENTING IN THE HOME

Find discipleship resources at pursueGOD.org/marriage

TALKING POINTS

The wedding officially declared you a new family but there is a long road ahead to actually becoming a family.

- You have to be a united front. You can't let the kids divide and conquer. Ephesians 6:4
- Have regular family meetings. This provides everyone the opportunity to share how they are feeling about things and it gets everyone on the same page.
- Step parents, be patient and develop a relationship with your step kids. Don't jump right into a disciplinary role.
- Parents, don't talk about your struggles in front of the kids. If there is conflict, be sure to discuss that privately and come up with a plan before involving the kids.
- When kids disrespect the step parent, the biological parent has to confront that right away. Kids need to understand the boundaries and the spouse is to be respected.

DISCUSSION

1. *Do you feel like you are a united front in the home? Explain. How can you improve?*
2. *Read Ephesians 6:4. How could family meetings help your kids to not feel frustrated? What topics need to be discussed?*
3. *Step parent, describe your relationship with each kid. What has been most challenging so far?*
4. *Read Proverbs 28:26. Step parent, what can you do to better understand the heart of each kid?*
5. *Bio parent, how do you think the step parent is doing at building relationship with each kid?*
6. *Step parent, how is bio parent doing at supporting you? Where can they improve?*

CO-PARENTING WITH THE EX

Find discipleship resources at pursueGOD.org/marriage

TALKING POINTS

You may have ended your marriage, but for the sake of the kids, you have to find a way to work together.

- Tip #1: Divorce didn't end your family but it did re-organize it.
- Tip #2: Don't put the kids in the middle of your junk.
- Tip #3: Find productive ways to communicate. It may be best via text messages or through email.
- Tip #4: Be ready to compromise. You won't get every holiday you want and you may need to be ready to change parent time.
- Tip #5: Remember how hard it is for the kids. They are the ones that have to go back and forth between families.
- Tip #6: You can't control what happens in the other home so stop worrying about it.

DISCUSSION

1. *Describe your relationship with your ex. What has been the most challenging so far?*
2. *Read Proverbs 25:28. Why is self control so important in dealing with your ex?*
3. *Have you or your ex been guilty of putting your kids in the middle of your conflicts? Explain.*
4. *How has this dynamic affected your kids up to this point?*
5. *Where do you need to compromise more with your ex?*
6. *Read Ephesians 4:29. How can you improve in your communication with your ex?*
7. *What are some things you hope can be consistent between homes? What are some productive things you can do to encourage that?*

MONEY MATTERS

Find discipleship resources at pursueGOD.org/marriage

TALKING POINTS

Money can be a sticky subject in any marriage. Make sure to answer some important questions to avoid unnecessary fights.

- 3 Questions to ask as it relates to money: 1 Timothy 6:10
- #1 Are we pooling our money or keeping it separate?
- #2 What expenses should be shared and how will they be paid?
- #3 Should we create a shared budget?

DISCUSSION

1. *Describe how your money conversations have gone so far. What has been productive? What has been challenging?*
2. *Read 1 Timothy 6:10. What do you need to guard against so money doesn't just bring sorrow?*
3. *Which of the three questions is the easiest for you to answer? Explain.*
4. *Which of the three questions is the hardest for you to answer? Explain.*
5. *Read Luke 12:15. How can you work against allowing the comparison game to enter into your money conversations?*
6. *What other conversations do you need to have regarding money?*

