

How to not Ruin Your Children

Christian parents want their children to grow up to be self-sufficient adults who love and obey God and His Word. But how do we do this? What do we believe about discipline, expectations, punishment and family rules? How do love, forgiveness, encouragement and deep connectedness in a healthy Christian family look according to God's word? In this lecture and discussion, participants will talk about these challenges and receive guidelines for helping parents raise healthy children by Biblical principles.

Jelena Sivulka was born and raised in Serbia, where she got her master's degree in psychology and in theology. She became a Christian 25 years ago and a few years later got involved in ministry with her husband Greg, planting churches, distributing humanitarian aid, and partnering with Joni and Friends, serving people with disabilities. Jelena has also worked as a counsellor in Serbia's schools and a social worker, and she is currently working as therapist in a medical clinic. She is the founder and director of the non-profit organisation Hana's Hope. She has been blessed with three children: Benjamin, Sara, and Hana, who has autism.

I. Family as a System

- A. Healthy family model
- B. Unhealthy/abnormal family model
- C. Biblical family model

II. Breaking the power of the past

“Those who cannot learn from the past are doomed to repeat it.” G. Santanya

A. Going back in order to go forward

1. Patterns in the family

- a. Spiritual genogram in family therapy
- b. Ten commandments in our family

“The blessings and sins of our families going back two to three generations profoundly impact who we are today. Discipleship requires putting off sinful patterns of our family of origin and relearning how to do life God's way in God's family.” - Peter Scazzero

B. Biblical dysfunctional families

- Lessons from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
- Joseph - How to go back in order to go forward

III. 21st Century Family

A. New challenges

B. Different kind of pain

C. The parenting gap

1. Concentrate on your assets

2. Bring your liabilities to God

3. Never pretend to your children that you are better than you are

4. Don't brood over your failures

“To put the world right in order, we must first put the nation in order; to put the nation in order, we must first put the family in order; to put the family in order, we must cultivate our personal life; we must first set our hearts right.” Chinese philosopher

IV. From Utopia to Galilee

A. Adopted into God's family

B. The Loaves and Fishes principle

C. A Parent in God's Image

“For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named....” Eph.3:14-15

“It is not beyond dignity we are called to move, but out of the shallows of a sterile pragmatism into the dignity of the Imago Dei.” J. White

Suggested Readings:

1. Jones, S.L. & Butman, R.E. (1991). *Modern Psychotherapies*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
2. Berger, J., Biro, M. & Hrnica, S. (1990). *Klinicka psihologija*. Beograd: Naucna Knjiga.
3. Scazzero, P. (2014). *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality*. Grand Rapids, MG: HarperCollins publishers.
4. Stringer, J. (2018). *Unwanted: How sexual brokenness reveals our way to healing*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress & Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

5. *White, J. (1979). Parents in Pain. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.*