

GOING FUTHER: RESOURCES

The Smart Stepfamily by Ron L. Deal

Blending Families: Bringing Harmony to Your Home by Jimmy Evans and Frank Martin

The Smart Stepmom by Ron L. Deal and Laura Petherbridge

The Smart Stepdad by Ron L. Deal

The Blended Marriage by Gary Chapman and Ron L. Deal

Stepfamilies: Love, Marriage, and Parenting in the First Decade by James H. Bray and John Kelly

Building Love Together in Blended Families by Gary Chapman and Ron L. Deal

Parenting the Hurt Child by Gregory C. Keck and Regina M. Kupecky



EXPERIENCING THE BLENDER OR BLENDING FAMILY

“Did you ever notice how The Brady Bunch got just about all their step-family challenges worked out in the first episode?” Ron Deal of Successful Stepfamilies asks. Unlike the fictional Brady family, real life blended families face unique challenges that require extra effort, intentionality, and reliance on biblical principles. Blending two families into one is not easy, but with God’s guidance and the right steps, it can succeed and thrive.

STEP ONE: RECOGNIZE A HIGHER CALLING

Blended families face unique logistical and emotional challenges as they merge two homes into one. These challenges make it essential to follow the example of Christ, who laid down His life for others. Paul’s letter to the Philippians provides clear guidance: “Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant” (Philippians 2:4–7).

No matter how a blended family came to be, whether through the loss of a spouse, divorce, or other painful circumstances, there is a calling to lay aside personal interests to serve those God has entrusted. Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it” (Matthew 16:24–25). If there is not readiness for the work and selflessness required, there is not readiness for blending. If a family is already blended, the fastest path to fruit is servanthood. That principle applies across every area of life. What may seem like



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a better situation than single parenting can often feel more difficult, but it is manageable through Him.

This sacrificial mindset becomes the foundation for overcoming the emotional and relational hurdles often present in blended families.

STEP TWO: FOCUS ON THE CHILDREN

In blended families, the dynamics between parents and children can be especially complex. While it is often said that strong marriages create strong families, in blended families children often must come first in order to build trust and stability. Investing in the children being brought together is critical for the eventual health of the marriage. The complexity of stepchild relationships can easily create strain within the marriage if not handled carefully.

A key area of focus is establishing authority. Scripture reminds parents to lead with patience and godly wisdom. “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). Children may view the authority of a stepparent as illegitimate, which can create tension.

Stepparents must walk a careful path of earning respect rather than forcing authority. Instead of demanding it, it must be earned over time. At the same time, the biological parent must remain aligned. This requires intentional and sometimes difficult conversations about boundaries with children. Proverbs provides wisdom for this process: “The wise of heart is called discerning, and sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness” (Proverbs 16:21). Prayer for patience and humility is essential while navigating these relationships, especially recognizing the pain children may carry from divorce or loss. “The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18). Flexibility is also necessary, as boundaries may shift without warning.

Conflict will come, but Scripture gives guidance for how to walk through it. “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all” (Romans 12:18). There will be moments that feel beyond control, but a steady commitment to peace, humility, and grace creates an environment where trust can grow over time.

By demonstrating Christlike love and consistency, trust can be built over time, and a stable environment can be formed.

STEP THREE: ALLOW GOD TO REDEEM YOUR STORY

Blended families often carry the weight of difficult pasts, whether from divorce, death, or other broken relationships. Yet God specializes in re-

demption. He promises in Joel 2:25a, “I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten.”

Every blended family carries the hope of a new chapter, but better days do not come automatically. Healing and redemption require submission to God’s will and trust in His plan. As Revelation 21:5 declares, “Behold, I am making all things new.”

This renewal is not only about circumstances, but about identity. “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come” (2 Corinthians 5:17). The past does not have the final word. In Christ, there is a new beginning, a new identity, and a new direction forward.

Through prayer, patience, and obedience, God can heal old wounds and build something beautiful from brokenness. Honest communication of truths and feelings with God, with a spouse, and with children is essential. As Paul reminds us, “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT

Successfully blending a family requires humility, patience, and reliance on God. By recognizing the higher calling, focusing on the children, and trusting God’s redemptive power, the challenges of merging two families can be navigated. It is important to seek God’s guidance before entering into this season and to trust Him through it for His glory. God sees the effort and is faithful to strengthen and guide. “Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him, and he will act” (Psalm 37:5).

There will be moments when wisdom is needed in ways that feel beyond personal ability.

Scripture provides a clear invitation: “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach” (James 1:5). God is not distant in the process. He is present, guiding, and providing what is needed each step of the way.

Leaning into God’s promises allows Him to equip families to build relationships that reflect His love and grace.