



FAMILYLIFE®
Help for today. Hope for tomorrow.



Missionaries
With
CRU

The Walker Family Reader

August 2013

Praises & Prayers

**Did you know that 40% of families today are blended families?
Last month, I (Jennifer), became the member of a stepfamily.**



Blended and Blessed! That is how I feel. As most of you probably already know, my father passed away when I was 19 and my mom has been a widow for the last 15 years.

Earlier this year, the Lord blessed my mom by sending her a wonderful, godly man, the second "Love of her Life". On July 17, 2013 Sharon Seeley and Gary Goza became husband and wife! On that same day I gained a stepfather, 2 stepsisters, 1 stepbrother, 1 stepbrother-in-law, 1 stepsister-in-law, and 6 new nieces and nephews!



Praise: for Ron Deal and his ministry at FamilyLife helping blended families.

Praise: Jennifer has completed her training as an eMentor trainer and has several women that she is beginning to train as mentors. *Praise for our ministry partner, Temme Sides, she has answered the call and is being trained as an eMentor!*

Pray: for Nathan as he works on a management team that will be implementing a large email upgrade for FamilyLife in October.

There are various reasons that families become blended, and each blended family has its own unique situation and set of challenges that they will face. The truth is that 40% of families in America are blended. What is being done to help these blended families be "Blended and Blessed"?



Ron Deal, Director of Blended Family Ministries at FamilyLife, has been doing Blended Family Ministry for 20 years. Here are some comments he shared on a recent FamilyLife Today Radio Show.

"Don't cook a stepfamily with a blender. Cook it with a crock pot. What's different about crockpots? They're slow! Let's cook some stew... We're going to take these ingredients and put them in our crockpot. When you cook in a crockpot you just kind of dump it in, you put the lid on, you turn it on, and you walk away. It's called a wedding. Then we begin to cook."

Lots of stepfamilies have a carrot. Everything else is softening very nicely. Everything else is beginning to come together; but you have a carrot who says, "I don't think so!" It is what it is, and you can't fool food. You can't rush it. You can't force it. Trust the crockpot!

Research on stepfamilies suggests it takes the average stepfamily between five and seven years to begin to answer the question, "Who are we to one another?" to find their family-ness, to find that sense of identity and define their relationships."

We have good ingredients in our newly blended family. I can't wait to see what kind of magnificent stew God will make with us in the months and years to come.

Nathan + Jennifer



The following are portions of an article titled

Smart Churches, Smart Stepfamilies

By Ron Deal

“The truth is that most stepfamilies struggle with family life. Their divorce rate is between 60-70%. If churches are going to remain strong, they must intentionally work to build smart stepfamilies.

The first-marriage nuclear family is God’s design for the home—it’s Plan A—and it truly is the most optimum environment for intimate marriage and child-rearing. But the reality of God’s people from the beginning has been plenty of Plan B homes. Abraham’s home did not meet God’s ideal. He had multiple wives who stepparented his children by other women (with resentment and jealousy, I should add), as did Jacob, David, and many other heroes of the faith.

God has always extended grace to less-than-ideal people and families; he even used them for his purposes. When Jesus met the woman at the well in John 4, she was a cohabiting, five-time divorcee. In a matter of minutes, He not only affirmed her acceptability to God and importance (something no one else offered her unless it was accompanied by a marriage proposal). He turned her into an evangelist when she went back to town, telling everyone that grace was available no matter what your family composition, even to her!”

To view the full article as well as other articles relating to Blended Families check out FamilyLife’s website:

www.familylife.com/blended

great resources for blended families



Browse great resources for children, dating or married couples, and ministry leaders.

For those with real passion to minister to blended families, consider joining the

The Summit on Stepfamily Ministry

September 24 - 25, 2013
Watermark Community Church,
Dallas, TX

(Precedes the D6 Conference Sept. 26)

The goal of this Summit is to advance the cause of stepfamily ministry so that thousands of local churches become redemption centers for blended families. This is not a marketing event or a workshop to passively attend. This is a conversation among stakeholders. We expect a small number of participants; each attendee will contribute to small group and large group dialogue and the development of a list of best practices. Come join the conversation.

Why should I participate?

- To network with those invested in blended family ministry.
- To discuss how to raise national awareness about the need for stepfamily ministry.
- To discuss dilemmas facing the advancement of stepfamily ministry both culturally and within the local church.
- To identify best practices that can be replicated in small and large churches and to identify cultural distinctions that will impact ministry in ethnically and economically diverse families.
- To ask and answer: What are next steps for blended family ministry in terms of research, marketing, and identity building?