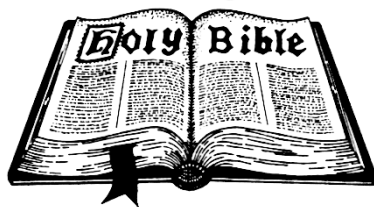


Eighth Annual  
**TRUTH IN LOVE**  
LECTURESHIP

Theme:  
**The  
Christian  
Home**



*May 13-17, 1998*

**PAUL SAIN, DIRECTOR**

Hosted By The  
**East Hill Church Of Christ**  
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# INTRODUCTION

A true statement which reflects upon the condition of our society, which should gravely concern everyone: “*As goes the home, so goes the nation.*” We know, beyond dispute, many homes around us are crumbling. Other homes have been heavily damaged or have been destroyed.

Divorce in years past was considered a shameful thing ~ no longer is such the case. Homosexuality was a forbidden topic of discussion, much less the horror of one being guilty of such action ~ now it is an accepted “*lifestyle*” and supposedly “*gay!*” Discipline was taught, practiced, and accepted as necessary ~ often today it is unknown and even some forms of correction is considered “*abuse.*” The role of man and the role of woman has been so contaminated ~ distinction and respect for the way of God is tragically gone forever (for many). Pregnancy (outside of wedlock) was a shame and disgrace in days gone by ~ to some today it is a status symbol of value. Being called an adulterer was horrible in years gone by ~ today one is considered by many as strange and weird if they have not had various “*affairs*” with different partners. Alcohol and drugs have destroyed marriages and lives. Yes, our lives have changed so drastically over the last few years. Our homes are under attack.

## *Paradise Or Hell On Earth?*

God’s plan for marriage between man and woman, creating a “*home,*” is one of happiness and joy. This is possible to its fullest extent ONLY when we follow God’s instructions in His Holy Word. God has spoken concerning the role (expectations, restrictions, etc.) of the man. God has spoken concerning the role

(expectations, restrictions, etc.) of the woman. He has spoken, giving detailed demands in reference to parents and children. He has given specific instructions concerning the husband and wife. Throughout this series, we will turn to the pages of *"inspired"* instruction and hear our heavenly Father speak on these vital and eternity-determining matters. Let us, with open minds, seek to develop the best for marriages (home) possible.

## *History Of This Lectureship And The Publication*

The **TRUTH IN LOVE** publication is a frequently published teaching tool of the church at East Hill used throughout the United States. This is the eleventh year of publishing. The East Hill congregation underwrites this evangelistic effort. Currently, approximately 28,000 are printed each issue (including some mailed/distributed by other congregations). Almost 11,000 of this number go into local Giles County homes, with the balance being sent (bundles) to hundreds of cities in many states.

The **TRUTH IN LOVE** lectureship is an annual teaching and learning opportunity, conducted the third week in May, hosted by the East Hill Church of Christ. The 1998 lectureship will be the eighth in this series.

It has been, and continues to be, the fervent desire of the East Hill eldership and her preachers to remain faithful and sound. We do not want to remove the *"ancient landmarks"* nor to go too far to the right or left. We do not want to bind where God has not bound, nor do we want to loose what God has bound.

In view of these facts, we seek in this volume to state emphatically a few truths taught by our Lord and Savior. We plead with you to read and study these chapters of valuable, basic truths on **the Christian home.**

Paul Sain  
Lectureship Director

# DEDICATION

One of the greatest blessings of a gospel preacher is the friendship and support of a faithful, Bible-loving, truth-supporting, caring, and visionary eldership. For over a decade I have been immensely blessed, far beyond what I could desire or deserve, by working with the church at East Hill in Pulaski, Tennessee. The congregation is comprised of “*some of the finest*” of God’s people anywhere. I thank God for them continually.

My elders, the overseers of the East Hill family, are the finest co-workers I know. Their sincere desire has been, and continues to be, to know, obey, and teach the faithful gospel of Christ. They have supported the preaching of the “*old Jerusalem Gospel*” as much as humanly possible. They not only ask for but demand the “*old paths*” (Jer. 6:16) and are determined to stay therein.

While none are without sin, I sincerely believe these brethren are striving diligently to continually conform to the will of the Father, not only reaching heaven themselves, but taking others with them.

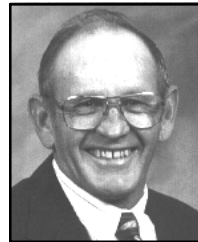
I, along with many others, hold the faithful and godly elders of this church in the highest esteem possible and dedicate this lectureship volume to them:



***Hugh Cooper***



***Louie Fuqua***



***Eldridge Woodard***

We salute these brethren (Heb. 13:24), submit to their oversight (Heb. 13:17), give unto them the “*double honour*” they deserve (I Tim. 5:17), and shall endeavor to reflect their faith and faithfulness (Heb. 13:7).

Paul Sain  
Lectureship Director

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **Overview ~ Fundamentals**

- 1 “From The Beginning” ... The First Home ..... 9  
*Bobby Liddell*
- 2 Key Ingredients For The HOME  
As God Desires ..... 24  
*Kevin Beard*
- 3 Key Ingredients For The MARRIAGE  
As God Desires ..... 41  
*Dave Miller*
- 4 What Have They Seen In Thine House? ..... 56  
*Dennis Gulledge*
- 5 Your Marriage Can Be Great ..... 74  
*Harrell Davidson*
- 6 “What Therefore God Hath Joined Together” ..... 89  
*Everett Chambers*

## **Husbands ~ Wives**

- 7 “Husbands ... Love Your Wives” ..... 107  
*Garland Elkins*
- 8 “Wives ... Submit ... Reverence” ..... 118  
*Curtis A. Cates*
- 9 What Husbands Need To Know About Wives ..... 137  
*Robert R. Taylor, Jr.*
- 10 “Older Women Teaching Younger Women” ..... 153  
*Roger Banks*
- 11 Selfishness ~ Root Of Home Problems ..... 165  
*Chris Dempsey*

## **Parents ~ Children**

- 12 Parents, Wake Up! ..... 179  
*Kelby Smith*

13	“Fathers ... Bring Them Up In The Nurture Of The Lord” .....	189
	<i>James Meadows</i>	
14	“Children Obey Your Parents” .....	205
	<i>Jim Laws</i>	
15	What Can We Do To Help Our Youth? .....	221
	<i>B. J. Clarke</i>	
16	“Shew Piety” ... “Requite Thy Parents” .....	247
	<i>Everett Chambers</i>	
17	What Shall We Leave Our Children? .....	258
	<i>Keith Mosher, Sr.</i>	

## **PANEL DISCUSSIONS:**

### **Destructive Forces On The Home**

18	Breakdown Of Authority .....	277
	<i>David Sain</i>	
19	Crime, Television And Music .....	287
	<i>Roger Banks</i>	
20	Atheism And Humanism .....	294
	<i>Kelby Smith</i>	
21	Women’s Movement .....	301
	<i>Harrell Davidson</i>	
22	Homosexual Agenda .....	308
	<i>Dave Miller</i>	
23	Sexual Revolution .....	315
	<i>Jim Laws</i>	
24	Abortion .....	322
	<i>James Meadows</i>	
25	Evolution .....	331
	<i>Kevin Beard</i>	

## **WOMEN’S CLASS:**

26	What Wives Need To Know About Husbands .....	339
	<i>Irene C. Taylor</i>	

*The  
Christian Home*



**Overview ~ Fundamentals**



# **The Christian Home**



Eighth Annual  
**TRUTH IN LOVE**

LECTURESHIP  
PAUL SAIN, DIRECTOR

Hosted By The  
**East Hill Church Of Christ**

## Chapter 1

# From The Beginning... The First Home

*Bobby Liddell*

Bobby was educated at Walker College, University of Alabama, Memphis School of Preaching and Southern Christian University ~ Local work in Alabama and Florida ~ Extensive radio and television work ~ Served as editor of the **Defender** and **The Beacon** from 1989 to 1994 ~ Presently working with the Memphis School of Preaching ~ Joan and Bobby have three children.



**B**ut from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder (Mark 10:6-9).

Scriptures, to encourage all to work together to build godly righteous homes. Thereby shall be insured the joy which God has, from the beginning, intended for all His creation. Truly, this is a noble undertaking set forth for us by our beloved brother, Paul Sain. To him, and to the godly, dedicated, courageous eldership of the East Hill congregation, we all are indebted for their,

...work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;

for from them has “...sounded out the word of the Lord...” (I Thess. 1:3, 8).

## **From The Beginning, God Designed The Home**

The one true and living God, creator of Heaven and earth, giver and sustainer of all life, unparalleled because of His omniscience, from the beginning of His creation, determined the participants, particulars, and the perimeters of the home. God, not man, planned the home (Gen. 1-2). He conceived its formulation and determined its form. He drew up the blueprint for a happy healthy home (cf. Matt. 19:4-6). It is to Him the wise will go, looking to God’s perfect plan, not man’s mistaken models. Not only has God given the plan, the blueprint, He has also supplied the “*materials list*,” detailing what are the necessary components to be used in constructing the home as God would have it to be.

A godly home is built upon the foundation of God’s inspired and revealed truth. As Peter responded to our Savior, “...*Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life*” (John 6:68), so we should go to God’s word, understanding that God’s truth, His word (John 17:17), is the rock solid, time tested, indestructible basis upon which righteous homes are built. The truth that is living and active (Heb. 4:12), God breathed (II Tim. 3:16), profitable (II Tim. 3:17), perfect (I Cor. 13:10; James 1:25), never passing away (Matt. 24:35), but enduring for ever (I Peter 1:25), and which has been once and for all delivered (Jude 3), is the sure foundation of every happy home.

The foundational truth for the home is this: God’s plan, as taught in His Book, is that one man and one woman, both eligible to marry according to God’s word, leave father and mother, come together in holy matrimony, and cleave (stick to each other as though they were glued together) to one another for life. Meeting

these God-given requirements,

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge (Heb. 13:4).

This is His plan now, today, in our modern culture. It has been His plan throughout the ages. It was His plan from the beginning, and He has not changed it.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth...And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them...And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul...And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him...And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh (Gen. 1:1, 26-27; 2:7, 18, 21-24).

Now, who can improve upon God's perfect plan for the home? More than that, who dares to tamper with the Divine arrangement of the home? How can mere man improve upon the determination of Deity? He cannot. Modern psycho-babble books are sold by the millions of copies extolling the misguided "*wisdom*" of

man contrary to the word of God (cf. I Cor. 1:17-31). The televised trash of talk show perversions does not satisfy, and can never supply the correct answer to the ever present and every important question set forth by men and women, *“How can we have a happy home?”* Instead, they, all too often, and as a general rule, encourage evil, laugh off the abominations of unbridled iniquity, mock the idea of God-given boundaries, applaud the twisted, soul-damning, corruption of hedonism, and mercilessly ridicule, with howling jeers and hateful sneers, any poor soul who would be so bold as to try to direct their thinking toward a higher moral plane.

The guidelines for having joy filled homes, which homes are so desperately needing in our world, but so lacking, will never be set forth accurately and appropriately by the sorry sordid examples of the shattered *“homes”* of the worldly, nor by the teachings of those who contradict, and hold as contemptible, every God-given precept for real happiness now and eternally (John 10:10; Phil. 4:4). However, God’s answer is plain and understandable, rising far above the abysmal muck of human depravity, and is as distinctive as is the bright sunlight at noon on a cloudless day in comparison with the fog shrouded darkness of midnight on an overcast moonless night, presenting that which is definitive and doable—one man, one woman, joined together for life, producing offspring within the bounds of God’s ordained marriage (Gen. 1:28). This is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—the foundation of every wisely built home.

The home God designed not only has for its foundation the truth, but has, in its building, walls of love. Love, in the home God planned, is pure, holy, true, and giving, an emulation of God’s love, and an expression

of hearts in tune with Heaven. Love in the home, as a wall, keeps the cold of discouragement away, and keeps the howling winds of destruction at bay. It keeps the warmth of hearth and heart within while keeping the thief of souls without. True love puts God first (Matt. 6:33; John 14:15; I John 5:3). Such enables husbands and wives, and children and parents to love the others in the home more than if they loved them more than they love God. One who loves spouse, child, or parent more than God has missed the true depth of love possible in the home (cf. Matt. 10:37). He has missed the mark in his search for real love, forever walking in the shadows but never entering the light, and will, as long as he continues in this upside down approach, fail to be all he should be in the home. The home that lacks love for God lacks the love of God, but where the walls of true Christian love stand, the home stands.

The home, according to God's plan, has over it the covering of faith. Faith that is Bible faith is faith that works.

For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love (Gal. 5:6).

Faith that works (obedient faith [James 2:22, 24]) is faith that will work; that is, it will accomplish what God intended, and what wise men and women, who want what is best, desire. Thus, the canopy of faith, extending over all the home, keeps out the rain of divisive, destructive, damning doctrines of men which doctrines are fraught with the ungodly foolishness, unbalanced perception, and unmitigated ignorance only the children of the devil (cf. John 8:44) can spew forth. In faith's safety and security, the inhabitants of a godly home dwell, knowing no harm shall come to their souls while

they put their trust in the one who has promised never to leave them nor to forsake them. They can confidently say, “...*The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me*” (Heb. 13:5-6).

### **From The Beginning, Working Together To Build A Happy Home**

From the beginning, God’s divinely given plan for a joyful home called for all in the home to work together to build a happy home, to serve Him faithfully, and to help one another get to Heaven.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them (Gen. 1:27).

God created, as partners in the first marriage, a man and a woman. God does not condone any other arrangement! He does not condone, and He will not excuse or tolerate homosexuality, polygamy, polyandry, or pre-marital, extra-marital, or anti-marital fornication (Gal. 5:19-21). Contrary to what many think should be done today, the first marriage was not a “*trial arrangement.*”

God created Adam and Eve to be different from each other, and men and women are different in many ways—physically, sexually, emotionally, etc. Yet, in marriage, the male and female wonderfully complement each other, supplying what the other lacks, all according to God’s wonderful purpose. In marriage, as God planned, there is companionship (cf. Song of Solomon 4:9-10; 8:1-2). God saw it was not good for man to be alone (Gen. 2:18). Adam needed someone he did not have. Though Adam looked, he found no suitable companion among the animals (Gen. 2:19-20). So, God created a helper suitable for man. God did not create a slave, nor did he

give to man a master, but a suitable helper.

The woman, the wife, is to be man's companion for life, as he is to be hers. They are to work together as best friends, helping each other with the tremendous task of successfully navigating their course through the rocky seas of life. Anyone who has been married for long knows it takes both husband and wife to accomplish this. According to God's plan, married life provides each one with the fulfillment needed to enjoy life. Without each other, life is not the "good" life God intended marriage to be, but with each other, there is friendship, love, comfort, strength, joy, help, encouragement, intimacy, and satisfaction. Man, and woman, are not alone, and that is good.

Adam and Eve were given work to do in the garden of Eden (Gen. 2:15). As the first husband and wife, they also had the important task of working together to build a happy home. God wanted them to be happy as he wants us to be. Adam's response, when God brought Eve to him, was one of joy:

...This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man (Gen. 2:23).

With Eve, he found a co-worker. With her, he could have the tender, personal, human relationship he could not have with the animals. Marriage, God's way, promises joy. Newlyweds enter this relationship with great anticipation of "*living happily ever after.*" While, in reality, there will be disappointments, and real life does not measure up to fairy tale expectations, still there is real joy and true happiness in God's plan. However, building the home according to any other plan will have disastrous consequences.

Workers building a house of wood and brick must



follow the plan, observing the correct dimensions, layout, materials, etc. When all work together, they will complete the building of the house as it should be. So, it is in marriage. All must work together, but cannot work together as they should without working for Christ together (I Cor. 15:58).

As husband and wife must work together, so must parents and children. If one is building, and another is tearing down, the home is never built, but is always harmed, often irreparably. The wise man recorded: *“Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands”* (Prov. 14:1). Nehemiah’s account of the rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem contains this encouraging word:

So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work (Neh. 4:6).

Building a happy home requires all the members of the home to have a *“mind to work.”* It is not just the responsibility of one member, usually the wife/mother, as so many think. If one will honestly consider the following verses, he will surely conclude that all members of the home must be involved in its being what it should be.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth (Eph. 6:1-3; cf. Exod. 20:12; 21:17).

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows

are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate (Psm. 127:3-5).

That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed (Titus 2:4-5).

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it....So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself....For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh....Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband (Eph. 5:22-25,28,31,33).

All must work together to build a happy home, but the home will never be happy without Christ. In Christ is where real rejoicing is, for in Christ is where one has reason to rejoice, for in Christ is where one has redemption (Phil. 4:4; Gal. 3:26ff). To work diligently, yet without heeding Divine direction, will produce results which fall far short of accomplishing what God wants in

the home. This principle stands: *“Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it...”* (Psm. 127:1). Please note that we stress the home is to be HAPPY. This is not to say the house, in which the home resides, must be big, expensive, fashionable, lavishly appointed, impressive, or exclusive. Some of the finest Christians I have ever known have been poor, some extremely poor, but they were happy together in a home where Christ was the honored guest.

A young Christian lady attended her friend’s sixteenth birthday party. Upon her return home, she excitedly described how her friend had received a new car for her birthday present, how impressive was the party, and how expensive was the house of the friend’s divorced father. The young Christian’s father observed, *“I just imagine she would quickly and gladly trade all the cars and houses in the world to have her home back together, to enjoy a happy home with her mother and father, and to be as ‘rich’ as you are.”* With the home built according to God’s plan, comes the happiness He desires for us.

Children have a part in making the home happy. Children are to obey parents, and honor father and mother. Parents and children, according to God’s plan, are not enemies. Nor are parents, in exercising parental authority, seeking to punish children, keeping them from having fun. Parents are seeking to mold a young life for time and eternity. From the child’s conception, a godly mother would have prayed for him, seeking God’s blessings, petitioning Him for His help that she might be the mother she should be, and which the child deserved. Daily, she brought her pleas before the throne of God, promising to do all she could to direct the child in the right way, and seeking the wisdom to do so. Father

also, before the child was ever born, was offering his thanks to God for the prospect of having this precious little baby. He planned how to provide for him, and longingly looked to the day he would see this baby become a strong; productive, happy adult. To God, he made a solemn vow to be the father he should be, and which this beloved child deserved. When the child was born, the sacrifice of sleep, the care of nourishing and protecting, and the expense of providing were gladly borne by loving parents whose thoughts were for the welfare of their child. They loved and gave willingly and abundantly, thanking God for having so blessed them.

Now, should not this child love his parents? Should he not be filled with trust, knowing they would give their very lives for his? Should he not respect them—even when they have grown older, when the years of care of rearing him have wrinkled their faces, and whitened their hair, and the costs of providing for him have bent their backs from toil? If children will love, trust, and respect parents, they will not have a problem obeying them. It is just that simple. Proper discipline, to such a child, will be recognized as an act of love: *“He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes”* (Prov. 13:24). When Mom and Dad restrict the places the child can go, the people with whom he can run, or the activities in which the child can participate, the child should realize it is for his good, not his harm (I Cor. 15:33). He should thank God that his parents keep him from certain dangers of youth. If not, he might, in his inexperience and ignorance, place himself in grave jeopardy, or ruin his life, even destroying hope for a happy eternity.

## **From The Beginning, Working Together To Serve God Faithfully**

What would you give to have a happy home? Would you give a million dollars? Would you give all your worldly possessions? Would you give yourself? Would you give your time, energy, and ability? Perhaps, a better question would be, “*What would you give UP to have a happy home?*” Some might need to give up a selfish, self-centered, self-serving attitude (Matt. 7:12; Phil. 2:21), and begin to be a servant (Matt. 20:26-28). Others might have to give up love of the world (I John 2:15-17), to know the love of God and family. Some may well need to give up pride that keeps them from saying, “*I’m sorry,*” and/or, “*I have sinned,*” thus, keeping them from beginning anew to work toward a godly joy filled home. Perhaps, others need to quit feeling sorry for themselves, and crying, “*Poor me,*” but should rise up from self-pity, and get busy being constructive. All must give up sin, any sin, for sin is the undoing of happiness in the home and in every other relationship (Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Isa. 59:1-2). Considering the importance of having a happy God-centered home, to have it, what would you give, or what would you give up?

Adam and Eve had the responsibility to serve God in every aspect of life, including in their marriage and home. Though Adam and Eve had no earthly parents, from the beginning, God made his pronouncement:

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh (Gen. 2:24).

Marriage requires, as one man said, a WHOLE lot of leaving and a WHOLE lot of cleaving. The most important human relationship prior to one’s marriage is the child-parent relationship, yet marriage takes

precedence over it. To work together in marriage means to work without the interference of parents, though parents have good intentions. No wise spouse will allow parents to drive a wedge between him and his mate. With “*I do*” also comes “*You don’t*” to all who would harm the marital relationship, whether intentionally or not.

Husband and wife cleave to one another in love. True marital love is ready to sacrifice for the other. This kind of love makes service so much easier, and an attitude of readiness to serve is a godly attitude.

But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many (Matt. 20:26-28).

As God’s love, it is a giving love: “*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it*” (Eph. 5:25; cf. John 3:16; Rom. 5:8). It is a love that will be extended to no other, but keeps itself only unto the spouse. In it, two become one flesh (Gen. 2:24; Eph. 5:31). Becoming one flesh requires a man and a woman, not two men, not two women, not one man and more than one woman, not one woman and more than one man. Only in man’s immoral, distorted, depraved lust of the flesh can such a thing as a “*homosexual marriage,*” an “*innocent affair,*” or “*consenting adults*” engaging in multiple relationships be imagined. Becoming one flesh involves the most intimate of relationships. Outside of marriage, this relationship is sinful, but within marriage, it is as God

ordained; thus, it is right, good, and without shame. From this relationship, children are brought forth. “*And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain...*” (Gen. 4:1).

### **Conclusion**

From the beginning, husband and wife have had the responsibility of building a happy home (together, for each other), and helping each other get to heaven. Dillon and Patti Bayes, members of the Talladega Church of Christ, in Talladega, Alabama, won the **Good Housekeeping Magazine** Happy Marriage Contest by telling how they worked to have a happy marriage.

We gave when we wanted to receive. We served when we wanted to feast. We shared when we wanted to keep. We listened when we wanted to talk. We submitted when we wanted to reign. We forgave when we wanted to remember, and we stayed when we wanted to leave.

On the other hand, “*He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind...*” (Prov. 11:29). Is your home happy? If not, are you the troubler? Friend, sin is the problem and Christ is the solution. One need not think he can continue in sin and be blessed by God. It will never happen (II Thess. 1:6-9). If you have not already taken these steps: believe in Christ (John 8:24), repent of all sins (Acts 2:38), confess your faith in Christ (Acts 8:37), and be baptized to have your sins washed away (Acts 22:16). You will then be forgiven, and the Lord will add you to His church (Acts 2:47). If you have done these things, but have turned back (II Peter 2:20-22), you must repent and return (Acts 8:22). You owe it to

your family, and to yourself to become and to continue as a faithful child of God (Rev. 2:10). Nothing less will do—if you want to have a happy healthy home now, and a home with God eternally, as God intended “...*from the beginning...*” (John 14:1-4).



## Chapter 2

# Key Ingredients For The Home As God Desires

*Kevin Beard*



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**B**roken homes,” “latch-key kids,” “blended families:” all of these common terms of today suggest the need this society has for seeking divine guidance for the home. American homes at the close of the twentieth century are in grave danger because in too many homes, parents and children lack the qualities of character that keep families happy and strong. What an ironic situation exists! The home, which ought to be a steadying influence in society, is directly contributing to society’s downfall. When parents view children as a burden, and children view parents as their adversaries, those homes are doomed to fail.

However, many have realized how great this problem is. Many self-styled experts on the subject of child rearing have emerged. Their “*expertise*” can be found in books, magazines, seminars, and self-help programs in just about every kind of communication medium there is available. Much of what they have to

say may be very beneficial. However, if these “*experts*” do not direct their students to the only source of help that is absolutely right and reliable, then their help is imperfect and incomplete. God designed the home and His Word gives the perfect instruction for building homes in which each member builds up himself and all other members of the family as well.

It must be understood that the Bible is not a handbook on happy homes, per se. That is, one cannot turn to the “*How to Have a Happy Home*” section of the Bible and read the divinely given instructions on how to have good family relationships. There are specific passages of Scripture that instruct man regarding the responsibilities within the home, but one should not expect to find the same volume of material devoted to that as various human authors have produced. Much of the process of training people to be better parents and better children comes through the process of making them better people. When men, women, boys, and girls follow the teachings of the Bible, they will be better parents and better sons and daughters because they will be better people. So then, a study of what the Bible teaches to be key ingredients in the home must be done both directly and indirectly. That is, one must learn what the Bible says specifically about parents and children, as well as learn those things which make for righteous living. This study will concentrate on four qualities which must be present in the relationship between parents and children: love, discipline, respect, and commitment.

### **Love**

How important is love? Paul said,

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the  
poor, and though I give my body to be burned,

and have not love, it profiteth me nothing (I Cor. 13:3).<sup>1</sup>

Love is the key to pleasing God in every area of life, including the family relationship. But a quick glance at statistics of divorce, child abuse and neglect, abortion, and such like will reveal that many homes lack the love they need.

Most people, likely, would agree that love is necessary in a home. But the love that most people probably think of is the love that exists between the family members. As will be shown shortly, that love is necessary, but first there must be a love for God. This predominating love for God provides a foundation for all the family’s relationships. Families can function without it, but those families will not function as well, nor will they measure up to God’s standards.

Love for God must be preeminent in every person’s life. Jesus said the first and great commandment is to “...*love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*” (Matt. 22:37). Jesus referred to this instruction given by God under the Old Law:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one  
LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God  
with all thine heart, and with all thy soul,  
and with all thy might (Deut. 6:4-5).

That the Lord intended for this principle to reign in the family is obvious:

And these words, which I command thee this  
day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt  
teach them diligently unto thy children...  
(Deut. 6:6-7a).

Jesus also said,

If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:26).

So God intends for people to love Him, and to love Him supremely. Why this is so important to serving the Lord is easy enough to understand, but what does this have to do with right relationships within the home? It has everything to do with right relationships in the home.

Love is not a limited commodity; its supply cannot be exhausted. A children's song says of love, "*...give it away, and you'll have plenty; you'll end up having more.*" That principle is true. Since all love ultimately comes from God (I John 4:8), the more that people love God, the more they are capable of loving others; a true love for God demands a greater love for others (I John 4:20). When all members of the family love God supremely, they will not mistreat, abuse, neglect, or take advantage of any other members of the family. Those kinds of things cannot co-exist with a real love for God.

When it comes to loving relationships within the home, things must begin with the parents. One of the greatest gifts that a parent can give his children is to love his mate. When mom and dad love each other, they lay a strong foundation for the entire family because everything flows from their relationship. If they criticize and condemn each other, then their children will be likely to treat each other the same way. But if they truly love each other, then their children will be much more likely to love them and each other as well. While it is not within the scope of this study to examine the relationship between husbands and wives, let it be sufficient to state that if that relationship is not what it ought to be, then none of the other relationships within the family will be what they ought to be, either.

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The love that grows in the home is a multifaceted thing. There needs to be a warmth, an affection, that each member holds for the others in the family. This is considered a “*natural*” emotion. In describing two different sets of people who turned away from God, Paul used the phrase “...*without natural affection*...” (Rom. 1:31; II Tim. 3:3). The phrase translates a single Greek word, **astorgos**, and refers to being without the “*love of kindred, especially of parents for children and children for parents.*”<sup>2</sup> This love serves as an example to the spiritual family in their relationships with each other as well. “*Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another*” (Rom. 12:10). To be “*kindly affectioned*” is to have this warmth and closeness which is present within the family relationship, and the phrase comes from the same Greek word from which “*without natural affection*” comes. This warmth and closeness provides each family member with the sense of community and belonging that they need. It provides a safe haven from the world. This is one major ingredient in a “*home.*”

But the love in the home is more than tender affection. Paul described this love:

Love suffers long, and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things (I Cor. 13:4-7; NKJV).

Imagine a home in which every member lived only for self. No one would ever help another with a problem or with a chore. No one would ever volunteer to give in

when a disagreement arose. Everyone would do all he could to see that his own interests were satisfied and never show concern for the interests of others. Everyone would be selfish, jealous, petty, and unforgiving. This would be the home without the kind of love described above.

The fact is, even in the closest and warmest of relationships, family members do not always feel warm and affectionate toward each other. Sometimes they disagree. Sometimes they argue. Sometimes they get mad at each other. But in homes where the right kind of love exists, these situations do not cause the home to self-destruct.

## **Discipline**

Perhaps the greatest ingredient missing in so many homes in America today is discipline. It is easy to look at the problems this society has and trace them to a lack of discipline in the home. Behavior problems in the home, in the schools, in society in general, arise when there is no consistent discipline within the home. Strained relationships between parents and children often result from a lack of caring, loving discipline. When the home lacks discipline, then the children grow up without a vitally important quality they need to lead lives that are meaningful and productive. Without discipline, lives are governed by whatever urge or impulse happens to be predominant at the time.

But God would have homes that possess discipline. This responsibility rests in the hands of the parents. They must instill discipline within their children, if they will be pleasing to God. This discipline is exercised through three means: instructive discipline, corrective discipline, and self discipline.

## Instructive Discipline

The word “*discipline*” means “*training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character.*”<sup>3</sup> It is by nature an instructive process, a training process. Instructive discipline focuses on training one in the proper ways to live and to behave. This must be the foundation of all discipline in the home. If members of a family (whether children or parents) have not been instructed properly, how can that home be expected to demonstrate the discipline which God approves? There must be a strong emphasis on learning the right way to live. And of course, “*...the ways of the LORD are right, and the just shall walk in them...*” (Hosea 14:9).

If parents are to be successful in training children to know and to love the way of the Lord, they must know it, love it, and live it themselves first. A father who has no respect for the law of God should not expect his son to grow up to love it “*Do as I say, not as I do,*” just does not work. Under the Old Law, parents were commanded to teach their children the word of God in all the routines of life (Deut. 6:7). Many Bible teachers refer to this principle (and properly so) when teaching about parents’ responsibility to instruct their children. But do not lose sight of the fact that this command of God to those parents stressed the parents’ responsibility to know the law and to live by it themselves. The Lord said to parents,

And these words, which I command thee this day, **shall be in thine heart**...And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon **thine** hand, and they shall be as frontlets between **thine** eyes (Deut. 6:8).

Can one teach others what he himself does not know?

The Lord knew that if children were to learn His way from their parents, then their parents must first have that way committed to their own lives.

As parents instruct themselves in the ways of God, they also instruct their children. This responsibility rests on both parents, but the Bible places particular weight on the father's responsibility to see that his children learn the ways of God.

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

A passage cited earlier showed God's insistence that the parents in Israel teach their children the ways of God. This does not require situations of formal teaching, rather finding in the everyday routines of life those valuable opportunities to teach children about God and His Word.

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up (Deut. 6:7).

Notice the times and the places of instruction. All of these are routine activities of every day. What was God saying? Teach your children throughout the day. Show them the practical application of divine principles. Use the illustrations life provides to make the Bible memorable to them. Children (and adults, too) learn so much better when they can see how principles are used within the context of real life. Parents must take seriously their responsibility to teach their children the things of God. If they do not, then who will?

Children need boundaries. And they need parents



who will set those boundaries clearly and fairly. James Dobson writes, *“it is the ultimate paradox of childhood that a youngster wants to be controlled, but he insists that his parents earn the right to control him.”*<sup>4</sup> Parents can set boundaries properly when they submit to God’s will. This is of utmost importance to the children. Why? Think of what a child learns from his relationship with his parents. He learns about authority. He learns the concept of law. He learns that some things are acceptable and others are not. All of these things will play a major role in developing that child’s relationship with God, when the child reaches maturity. The Bible says that God is the **Father**. If a child has learned from his physical father that a father’s laws are not binding, that fathers do not mean what they say, that they are inconsistent, or unfair, or impossible to please, then how will that child view the heavenly Father? Parents must establish boundaries, guidelines, and rules and hold their children accountable to them. This involves so much more than rearing well-mannered children; it teaches children the concepts they need to develop a right relationship with God.

### **Corrective Discipline**

What happens when children disobey the laws of their parents? How should parents react? This is one of the crucial areas connected with discipline. Whatever the parents do when the child blatantly defies parental authority can leave lasting impressions with the child. Those impressions can be good or bad; it all depends on how the parent handles the situation, how the parent corrects the inappropriate behavior. And in particular, it depends on how the parent handles the situation through the years of that child’s development. If parents

are inconsistent in dealing with disobedience, then children develop no respect for any authority figure in their lives, and that includes God. But if parents lovingly and consistently correct their children when they violate parental laws, then the children develop a respect for and an appreciation for authority in their lives.

Think of the consequences of some common reactions to children's disobedience. Some parents respond to their children's disobedience by ignoring it. Their reasoning is that if they respond in some way to the misbehavior, they will reinforce it and thus encourage the child to repeat the action. But what do they really teach the children? They teach them that disobedience is inconsequential. How sad for the children.

Another common way that some parents respond to their children is by making empty threats. Many parents threaten their children with punishment for misbehavior, only to give in when the threats do no good. What a terrible injustice this is to the child! It teaches children that the word of those in authority means nothing. Second, it teaches children that if they act badly enough, they can get their own way. What parent would ever intentionally teach those principles to their children? Yet many parents unintentionally teach those very principles by the kind of action just described.

Many examples of ineffective or even dangerous parental actions could be listed, but the point is this: disobedience must be corrected, and this must be done appropriately and consistently.

Consider what the Bible teaches regarding correcting disobedient children.

He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes (Prov. 13:24).

Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying (Prov. 19:18).

Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him (Prov. 22:15).

Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell (Prov. 23:13-14).

Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul (Prov. 29:17).

Wrong action cannot be ignored; it must be corrected.

When discussing corrective discipline, a major question arises concerning what methods are appropriate. Many today ridicule the idea of spanking. But from the verses cited above, it seems clear that God does not ridicule that idea. Children are not hurt by being spanked. That is, they are not hurt emotionally. (Of course, no one condones child abuse. Any physical punishment that injures a child is wrong. This is not under consideration in this discussion.) When a child defies the authority of his parents, and refuses to conform to their will, he needs to be shown clearly that such behavior is unacceptable. An old fashioned spanking on the back-side sends a rather clear message. Other forms of punishment have their place in the parents' repertoire as well. Withholding privileges, “*time out,*” grounding, and such like all have their appropriate usage in correcting wrong behavior. The wise and loving parents will learn to “*let the punishment fit the crime,*” and use whatever means of punishment best suits the situation.

## **Self Discipline**

The ultimate goal of instructive and corrective discipline is self-discipline. As children mature, they must learn how to make proper decisions. Their parents will not always be with them to guide them through life's choices. As independence increases, the need for self-discipline increases. Children who have received loving, consistent discipline from their parents all of their lives, will be better prepared to make the right decisions when their parents are not around.

Many dangers exist in today's world, threatening the lives, both physical and spiritual, of children. What makes the difference between "good kids," and "bad kids?" Self-discipline. Those kids who get into trouble with the law, or get hooked on drugs, or face pregnancies outside of marriage, or get into any kind of trouble do so because they make wrong choices. Parents ought to be keenly aware of their role in helping their children stay away from these kinds of troubles. They cannot make decisions for the children all of their lives. The older children get, the more choices they will face on their own. If parents can instill a godly self-discipline in their children, then their children will be much more likely to stay away from the terrible dangers that plague so many of today's young people. Remember the words of the proverb: "*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it*" (Prov. 22:6).

## **Respect**

Lack of respect is seen in the family when family members do not treat one another with the dignity they deserve. Parents show the ultimate lack of respect for their children by abusing them, either physically or verbally. The following incident truly happened. During

a worship service, a child, perhaps four or five years old, was crying during one of the prayers. The child’s father, having failed to quiet the child, in a harsh voice said, “*Shut up! Shut up, you crybaby!*” Most people have probably witnessed similar demonstrations of disrespect that parents often show toward children. And some children often show no respect for parents. They may ridicule their parents to their friends. They may argue with their parents and willfully violate their rules. God does not approve of these kinds of relationships within the home. There must be respect.

Webster defines respect as “*high or special regard.*”<sup>5</sup> In American culture in 1998, some attach more meaning to “*respect*” than is shown in Webster’s definition. To some, respect for another person means not making moral judgments of others’ actions. Thus, to “*respect*” the beliefs, or opinions, or actions of another means to tolerate them without passing judgment on the morality of those beliefs, or opinions, or actions.

That kind of respect is not the kind needed in the home (or anywhere, for that matter. Making moral judgments and condemning morally wrong behavior is commanded by God. See John 7:24; I Thess. 5:21-22; Eph. 5:11; II Tim. 4:2; etc.) The kind of respect the home needs is the high regard that each family member has for the family as a whole and for each member individually. This kind of respect grows out of the love and discipline that are present in the home that is pleasing to God.

Parents who love their children will naturally have a high respect for them. They will view each child as a gift from God: “*Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward*” (Psm. 127:3).<sup>6</sup> With this understanding, parents see children as a great treasure to be cared for, not as a hindrance to their

lifestyle. So there is no problem with neglect or abuse because the parents have this high regard for the children God has given them. The kind of respect produced by love prevents favoritism, too. When parents show favoritism toward their children, only bad things result. Think of the problems that developed in the home of Isaac and Rebekah when favoritism reared its head. Brothers were estranged, Rebekah plotted against the wishes of her husband, Isaac fled for his life to a far away land, all because parents did not respect each of their children equally. And Jacob must have learned nothing from his own childhood, except to repeat the mistakes of his parents. He too showed partiality toward one of his sons, Joseph. Again, tragedy resulted. Jealous brothers sold Joseph into slavery and deceived their father into believing that Joseph was dead. Parents must learn that each child is a unique person with his own inherent value.

For the children, respect for their parents come from both love and discipline. Love produces the appreciation and discipline produces the admiration. When parents exercise appropriate discipline within the home, children can respect their parents. They come to know that their parents set boundaries for them and consistently demand adherence to those boundaries because of love. They come to know that their parents are fair and just in the way they run the household. They know their parents mean what they say. This is the respect involved in Paul's admonition to children:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) (Eph. 6:1-2).

Every family member also needs a respect for the

family as a whole. Parents and children alike ought to consider their family to be something special. The actions of family members often affect how others view the family as a whole. A child who excels in school brings honor to his family. A father who is trusted and respected in his community also brings honor to the entire family. But negative actions likewise can affect the entire family. Several of the Proverbs allude to this principle,

The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice:  
and he that begetteth a wise child shall have  
joy of him (Prov. 23:24)

...A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish  
son is the heaviness of his mother (Prov. 10:1).

Whoso keepeth the law is a wise son: but he  
that is a companion of riotous men shameth  
his father (Prov. 28:7) (See also Prov. 15:20;  
27:11; 29:3; etc.)

When parents and children alike realize that their actions influence the way people perceive their entire family, they will be more likely to stay away from shameful acts, if they have this respect for their family. Who knows how many children have said no to temptation mainly because they did not want to dishonor their parents and family? That kind of respect is healthy and contribute to the home as God would have it.

### **Commitment**

The Lord has no use for quitters. Concerning those who would give up following Him, He said, “...*No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God*” (Luke 9:62). It is not that the Lord does not still love those who would quit His cause, but that He demands complete and lasting commitment to his cause. No cause, no matter how great

or small, can succeed without committed supporters of it. The home is no different. Family members must be committed to the family for it to succeed.

Examples of what happens when this commitment is lacking in the family are sometimes very clear. Too often in this society, people give up on their marriages. They divorce because of “*irreconcilable differences*.” All too often, this simply means that they are tired of being married to one another and want to try again with someone else. But what happens to the children when parents quit, and divorce? Their lives are torn apart. They are left in the middle, often feeling responsible themselves for their parents’ lack of determination to make their marriage happy and loving. When this happens, a family is destroyed for lack of commitment.

Children also demonstrate a lack of commitment sometimes. One way they do this is by running away. Eager to begin life on their own, and to escape their parents’ authority, they run away to start out on their own. Unfortunately this decision often results in tragedy for the child. The child’s life is ruined, and the parents and brothers and sisters are devastated. Such a child shows absolutely no commitment to his family. He thinks only of himself.

But lack of commitment often reveals itself in more subtle ways. Sometimes parents give in to the frustration of dealing with children and give up serious attempts to instill discipline in them. Sometimes parents give up on one another, yet they stay together “*for the children’s sake*.” What results is a home lacking the love it needs to thrive. Dissatisfied children may not run away, but their lack of commitment makes them rebel at every chance, making life miserable for their parents.

The instructions given by God for all family



members require commitment. It may not always be easy for husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church (Eph. 5:25), but they must do it anyway. Wives may not always enjoy submitting themselves to their own husbands (Eph. 5:22), but the Lord requires it. Many times it is difficult not to provoke children to wrath and to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but God commanded it (Eph. 6:4). Children may not always understand their parents' rules, but obedience is still mandatory (Eph. 6:1). The point is this; making the home happy, healthy, and loving does not come easily or without effort. Since this is true, each member of the family must be committed to the cause of making the family all that God wants. If they lack that commitment, they will give up when difficult times come.

### **Conclusion**

The family is the foundation of all of society. If it crumbles, society will crumble with it. Satan attacks the family continuously with unnumbered forces. But the family can withstand his fierce attack by seeking to measure up to God's standards. As for parents and children, their relationship before God will be pleasing if they develop the qualities of love, discipline, respect, and commitment.

## Chapter 3

# Key Ingredients For Marriage As God Desires

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**I**t is no secret that American civilization is disintegrating. This moral and spiritual breakdown is simply a mirror reflection of the condition of the home. The breakdown of the home is merely a reflection of the dissolution of the marriage relationship. If we could get our marriages back on track, our homes would straighten out and our nation, in turn, would be pointed back in the direction from whence she has digressed.

If the key to the health of a nation is the home, and the key to the home is the marriage, then the key to the marriage is its head – the man. A few years ago a book made the bestseller list that was entitled **Real Men Don't Eat Quiche**. The book was a discussion of the author's views concerning true manhood as defined by choice of food, styles of clothing, etc. Most people appear to be oblivious to the fact that the Creator – the One who created the human race, the home, and the marriage

relationship – has His own definition as to what constitutes a “real man.”

Consider the following key ingredients.

### **Attributes Of A Real Man**

**1. A real man recognizes that he needs his wife.** God so stated this fact when He announced at the dawn of history, “It is not good that man should be alone” (Gen. 2:18). Paul echoed the same sentiment when he said, “neither is man independent of woman” and “man also comes through woman” (I Cor. 11:11-12). Most men are too proud to admit to themselves (let alone to their wives) that they need their wife. In fact, many a man is jealous of his wife – jealous over her talents, education, independence, ideas and recommendations. We men tend to be in competition with our wives instead of ridding ourselves of our egos and letting down our guard so that we can relax and relate to our wives. We are too proud to admit to our wife our shortcomings and mistakes (even though she already knows them!). If we men would learn to do so, we would find in our wife our greatest supporter, helper and encourager. She is in a position to make our lives run smoother and easier – if we would just swallow our stubborn pride. Men, we need our wives!

**2. The woman was specifically and divinely designed for the man.** Twice God stated that the woman was made to be “a helper comparable to him” (Gen. 2:18,20, NKJV). Paul stated the same point: “Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man” (I Cor. 11:9). Even Adam understood that she had been given to be with him (Gen. 3:12). We must not understand this point to mean that a woman was created to be a man’s maid or slave. Rather, she was intended to be an appropriate partner or suitable counterpart. In other words, she is a crucial asset to a husband and is valuable

if treated as such. The man should accept and value her input, understanding that she was designed to be responsive. “He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord” (Prov. 18:22). “Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the Lord” (Prov. 19:14).

A real man can listen to and respect his wife’s counsel and advice, knowing how to weigh and compare this advice with God’s will. He knows that he can learn from his wife and he will not stubbornly refuse to accept her good advice just because it came from a woman. Pride and ego cause a man to be rankled when his wife corrects him or gives a suggestion or solves a problem that he hasn’t solved. A real man realizes that his wife was created to be a mirror through which he can see himself. She can help him to mature if he will recognize her rightful role.

Likewise, a real man – one who recognizes his wife was created for him – will trust her to make wise decisions about many things (e.g., money matters, child-rearing, housing, business concerns). “The heart of her husband safely trusts her; so he will have no lack of gain” (Prov. 31:11). Solomon recognized that a wife is capable of making many decisions and engaging in a variety of business transactions (Prov. 31:16,24). Yet, a husband can tend to be suspicious and distrusting of his wife’s ability to act competently. No doubt many women have become hesitant and unsure of themselves simply because their husband’s trust has intimidated them into doubting their own competence.

**3. While God created the man from dirt, the woman was literally assembled from the man’s own body** (Gen. 2:21-23). Consequently, the man should treat the woman as thoughtfully as he treats his own body:

“So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church” (Eph. 5:28-29). Many men seem to have bought into the “macho” myth that women want to be dominated, suppressed, bossed, and told “how it is” so that she can “like it or lump it.” Such an attitude flies in the face of Paul’s declaration. A woman wants to be loved and treated with tender respect. She was, in fact, created to want to be loved, taken care of, protected, and provided for. When the man fails in this regard, the woman is thrown into a state of frustration, despair, disorientation, loneliness and even rebellion.

A woman needs and desires that her husband show her love, attention and tender affection. Most men are too busy tending to their own little world not realizing that the number one sphere of responsibility and activity should be their wife and home. Since the woman was geared to be responsive to the man, she needs praise and compliments to reassure and affirm her in that role. A husband should never criticize his wife’s appearance. After all, looks do not matter to God (I Sam. 16:7; Prov. 31:30). When a husband places a premium on physical appearance to the extent that he says things that hurt her feelings, he damages her sense of self-worth and her ability to please him. The same principle applies to his criticisms of her actions and decisions. When he is critical of her efforts – and even overrules them – he will kill her desire to function and he will damage her self-assurance. Such a man is not treating his wife the way he himself wants to be treated.

**4. The husband is to be the head of his wife and home.** “The head of woman is man” (I Cor. 11:3); “For the husband is the head of the wife” (Eph. 5:23).

But what does being “head” of a woman mean? What does being “head of the house” mean? Probably most men conceptualize “head” to mean “boss” or “dictator” or “decision-maker.” We men think our primary role is to walk through the household telling everyone what to do, arranging everyone’s schedule and generally directing the movements of family members. We are control-oriented. We even bully our wives to get our way. This concept of “head” is incorrect and unscriptural. It is rooted in selfishness and stubborn pride. Instead, a husband should function as a leader, facilitator and initiator. His headship means that he sets a proper example before his wife and children by involving himself in family matters. It’s one thing to dictate to everyone else what they ought to be doing; it’s quite another to be a part of the action.

A husband will cultivate his relationship with his wife. Rather than remaining lazy, inactive, detached or preoccupied with other concerns, he will actively promote the well-being of his marriage and home life – more than all of his other pursuits and interests. This responsibility will not happen naturally; it takes effort, deliberate planning and attention. A husband will not be too proud to seek assistance in these endeavors. As “head,” he must take the lead in initiating love and kindness toward his wife. He must be aggressive in promoting the health of the marriage and home. He must take the lead by doing what needs to be done instead of ordering everyone else to do it.

When men neglect this critical task and shirk their role as husband/father, the wife and children tend to react accordingly by becoming dysfunctional, angry, and rebellious. At that point, the man becomes alarmed and reacts (where he has been nonreactive before). Suddenly, he commences to “rule as head” by coming down on his

wife and kids, oblivious to the fact that their conduct is simply a reflection of his failure to be a proper husband and father. The authority to be the head of the wife and home is an assigned gift from God that demands tremendous care and responsible conduct. Since the wife was created to be a responder and reflector, if she is out of sorts the husband ought to recognize that he has evoked that reaction by conducting himself irresponsibly in his God-ordained role as initiator.

### **What It Means To Be The “Head”**

To be more specific, being the head of the wife and home includes at least the following ingredients:

**a. Acting as protector and guardian.** A man will be protective of his wife’s physical well-being. He will attempt to shield her from being overworked and overburdened. He will guard her from mistreatment by others, including the children. He will also be concerned about his wife’s spiritual well-being. Before Adam ate the fruit, he first failed as the head of his home. Though he was “with her” (Gen. 3:6) as she was being seduced by the snake, he failed to intervene on her behalf by protecting her from the wiles of the devil and urging her to act in harmony with God’s will. Instead, he glibly followed her lead and participated with her in sin. God rightfully confronted the man first as the head of the home (Gen. 3:9). Paul rightfully identified the man as ultimately responsible for the introduction of sin into the world (Rom. 4:12-14; I Cor. 15:21-22,45).

**b. Serving as trouble-shooter.** A man must bear ultimate responsibility for how the home goes. As president of the United States, Harry Truman had a placard on his desk that read, “*The buck stops here.*” So it is with the husband. As head, he is responsible for

keeping the marriage and family on the right track. If something in the marriage is broken, he is supposed to fix it. He must bring all of his love, energy and wisdom to bear on correcting the problems and keeping his wife and children happy and contented. Real men do not whine when things in their lives do not go smoothly or to their liking. They sure do not put the blame on their wives or God or others. Adam was weak and unmanly in this regard (Gen. 3:12). As head of his home, he should have considered himself responsible for the spiritual direction of his marriage and led his wife in their obedience to God. Instead, he “listened to his wife” (Gen. 3:17) and shirked his God-given responsibilities.

**c. Acting as facilitator and initiator.** Being head means taking responsibility for moving the family in the right direction. He establishes the pace. He sets the tone. He shows the way. He is the primary mover. He does not relinquish his responsibilities to his wife, the church, or society. He “takes the bull by the horns” and lovingly strives to mold his marriage and family into the strong domestic units that God intended them to be. Rather than sitting back and waiting for his wife to take the initiative and lead, or pouting when things don’t go his way, the real man thinks through the proper steps to be taken to promote a healthy marriage and family and then he acts. He investigates the emotional, psychological and spiritual needs of each family member and offers counsel, guidance and understanding rather than rejection, criticism and tongue-lashing. He looks for opportunities to be helpful, supportive and encouraging – especially when family members are discouraged, have had a bad day, or are facing a crisis.

**d. Demonstrating honor and respect.** Peter insisted that husbands simply must “dwell with them



with understanding, giving honor to the wife” (I Peter 3:7). Giving honor to a wife means treating her with respect. It means learning to truly listen to her, taking the time to probe her feelings and understand what she is thinking. It means giving her full attention when necessary rather than remaining preoccupied with one’s own concerns. It means encouraging discussion. Many men spare no expense to pursue their hobbies (e.g., fishing and hunting) and secure their trinkets and toys. Yet, they will gripe and complain if the wife spends money on some needed item. A real man encourages his wife to purchase appropriate things to please her and the kids. He will not act suspicious or reluctant about her ability to act competently in this regard. “Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them” (Col. 3:19).

**e. Manifesting sacrificial love.** Being the head of the wife means loving her to the point of sacrificing self. Paul compared this sacrificial love to Christ: “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her” (Eph. 5:25). A husband so loves his wife that he “nourishes and cherishes” her as much as he does his own body (Eph. 5:29). To “nourish” and “cherish” implies careful, consistent, tender attention. It implies pre-planned, thoughtful intention. Real men sacrifice their own desires, wishes and wants for others – especially for their wives. How many men expect their wives to wait on them hand and foot and center their lives upon them? Many men need to be told to get up and wait on themselves! They need to be told to serve others (including their wife) instead of expecting to be served (Matt. 20:26-28; Luke 22:27; John 13:14). Sacrificial love sets self aside – even after a tiring day of work at the office – and seeks to serve wife and family. Such conduct fulfills Paul’s admonition to “so love his

own wife as himself” (Eph. 5:33). Most men apparently do not realize that homebound women have just as many hard days at work as their husbands (maybe more) and they don’t get to leave work and go home!

Abraham sure committed a major blunder in this regard. He was self-centered and loved his body more than his wife’s – in direct violation of Ephesians 5:28. He subjected her to an incredibly callous, degrading, embarrassing situation by encouraging her to lie and then be taken as another man’s wife, just so he could save his own skin (Gen. 12:10ff). Lot’s attitude toward his daughters was even worse than his uncle’s behavior (Gen. 19:8; cf., Judges 19:23-25).

**f. Being an active participant in child-rearing.**

Many men think raising children is women’s work. But God says otherwise. Being the head of the home includes the awesome responsibility of making certain that children are properly trained, that spiritual principles are instilled within them, and that they achieve emotional stability (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21). God expected Abraham to understand this point: “For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord” (Gen. 18:19). Job possessed the same concern for his children and attended to their sanctification on a regular basis (Job 1:5). Joshua saw to it that his own family was committed to serving the Lord (Josh. 24:15). The law of Moses required the same thing (Deut. 4:9-10; 6:2,7; 11:19; 32:46). A man is not to be appointed to be an elder in the Lord’s church unless he has seen to this responsibility (I Tim. 3:4-5). When Eli failed to be the head of his family in this regard, disastrous consequences followed (I Sam. 2:29; 3:13). The man who becomes so busy in his chosen profession that he neglects this responsibility or

tries to push it off on his wife is guilty of sin and shirking his manhood and headship.

**g. Keeping sexual appetites in check.** Being a real man and head entails confining one’s sexual interests to the realm designated by God. A husband will continue to find sexual satisfaction in the “wife of his youth.” He will not allow himself to be attracted to other women or alternative forms of sexual release (like pornographic magazines). Solomon had much to say about this matter that needs to be trumpeted all over our brotherhood and our society since so many men are selling out to their sexual desires and betraying their wives.

Consider the following timely warning:

Drink waters out of thine own cistern, and running waters out of thine own well. Let thy fountains be dispersed abroad, and rivers of waters in the streets. Let them be only thine own, and not strangers’ with thee. Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord, and he pondereth all his goings. His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins. He shall die without instruction; and in the greatness of his folly he shall go astray (Prov. 5:15-23).

In view of the permissive times in which we live, husbands are under heavy obligation to give particular attention to keeping their sexual appetites under proper control and directed toward the legitimate object of those

appetites, i.e., the wife of one's youth. Even within the marriage relationship, sex should not be allowed to achieve an inflated role.

Samson's life was fraught with turmoil, unhappiness, and misery because he lived to gratify his lusts and fleshly appetites. He failed to learn the lesson of unselfishness. The selfish tone which dominated his entire life is reflected in a statement which he made at the very beginning of his adulthood: "Get her for me; for she pleases me well" (Judges 14:3). He went from one woman to another indulging his sensual desires until he paid the ultimate price (Judges 16:1,4,21,30). In our culture, the so-called "mid-life crisis" has been blamed for the foolish decision of many a man to divorce the wife of his youth in exchange for another – an action that God hates (Mal. 2:14-16).

#### **h. Displaying tenderness and affection.**

Biologists inform us that the female sex drive is far weaker than the male sex drive. A real man will recognize that his wife is in great need of receiving his nonsexual affections. Real men are able to hug their wives frequently and show them tender affection. God has fashioned a woman in such a way that she is most responsive to her husband when he treats her with courtesy, gentleness and tenderness. Though tokens of affection (like candy, flowers, etc.) are important, they are no substitute for praise, attention and tenderness. In fact, the key to a woman's sexual arousal lies in the husband's prior nonsexual tenderness, kindness and thoughtfulness that he displays throughout the day.

A real man can even cry at the right times. His manhood is not threatened by the need to "weep with them that weep" (Rom. 12:15). Even Jesus – a real man – wept when the situation called for it (Luke 19:41; John

11:35). This compassionate, affectionate attribute makes a man “gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy” (James 3:17).

Perhaps many other attributes and qualities could be pinpointed to help us to understand what it means for a man to be the “head.” Certainly, being the spiritual leader of the home is essential, which includes taking charge of the spiritual sphere, planning for worship and doing those things that facilitate the spiritual well-being of the family. Being head also entails bearing up under adversity and suffering like Job, even if friends and loved ones turn against him (e.g., Job 2:9). Perhaps the bottom line, foundational attribute and pursuit of the real man who is truly the head of his wife and home is humility. If a man is to be head, he must constantly strive to rid himself of his pride, his ego, his stubborn inclination to have his own way. He must empty himself and take on the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7).

### **Attributes Of A Real Woman**

But what about the women? Are they not equally responsible for producing a successful marriage and home? Certainly. However, I am convinced that if men would take the lead in being the kind of man and head that God intended, most women would fall right into their proper place. I believe God so created the woman – her body, her emotions, her psyche, her will – that she would be naturally (by nature) responsive to a real man. She would literally have to go against her natural inclinations to fail to fit properly into the marriage relationship and the home. Three characteristics are especially worth noting.

**1. A wife should willingly subordinate herself to her husband, encouraging him to be the leader and guardian.** Perhaps the feminist rebellion is largely

the reaction of disenchanted, frustrated, hurt women who have had bad experiences with the men in the lives. In any case, current culture is pressuring and bullying women to be more aggressive and to abandon “traditional” roles. But the Bible still teaches that man was created first and that the woman was created out of the man (I Tim. 2:13; I Cor. 11:8). This priority does not imply superiority or greater worth. Rather, it implies the man’s responsibility to lead.

The multiple admonitions to women to obey and submit to their husbands (Eph. 5:22,24,33; Col. 3:18; Titus 2:5; I Peter 3:1,5-6) are referring to the need for the woman to follow his leadership. That is not to say that men are smarter, more talented or more capable than women. But in God’s arrangement of the universe, He chose to place the male in the leadership role in the home and in the church. Just as He places upon the male an awesome, terribly responsible role as head (and will hold him accountable for his failure to discharge that role properly), so He places the woman in a subordinate role and will hold her equally accountable.

Notice the restatement of this principle after the Fall. When the woman chose to heed the advice of the snake and her own lusts, and when the man failed to step forward and offer leadership to his wife, sin was introduced into the world (Gen. 3:1-6). When people fail to fulfill their God-ordained responsibilities, sin results (I Tim. 2:14). Consequently, afterwards God reminded the woman (and all women) that she must suppress the desire to take the lead and instead to submit to the leadership of her husband: “thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Gen. 3:16). How difficult it is for a woman to comply with this arrangement in a society where, on the one hand, the feminist clamor

is deafening while, on the other hand, her husband refuses to be the man, the head, the leader that God expects him to be.

**2. A wife should give careful attention to how she dresses.** The Bible seems to go out of its way to stress to women (more than men) proper attire. In contexts stressing female subordination to the leadership of the male, both Paul and Peter refer to appropriate female attire (I Tim. 2:9-10; I Peter 3:3-4). Women seem to have a natural tendency to give attention to external beauty. They enjoy attending to clothes, makeup, jewelry, hair, nails, perfume, etc. They tend to do the same for their husbands and children. Women like to decorate – everyone and everything. They are style conscious. They notice artistical detail and symmetry. That’s okay! God simply warns women to make certain that they keep that natural inclination in proper perspective. He stresses very strongly that she must so adorn herself that she does not unduly distract others – especially males with their stronger sexual appetites. And He wants her to understand that external beauty inevitably fades – it is fleeting and frivolous (Prov. 31:30). In addition to her attention to external beauty, she must place a greater emphasis upon internal beauty, attitude and spirit, and demeanor. She must cultivate the attributes of godliness (I Tim. 2:9-10,15; Titus 2:3-5; I Peter 3:2,4). In the final analysis, after a man’s initial appraisal of a woman in terms of the sexual and physical wears off, what he finds most attractive about a woman is her femininity brought under the control of Christ: “a meek and quiet spirit,” “chaste behavior,” “holiness with sobriety,” “shamefastness” – a gentle, mature woman whose purity and femininity is bolstered by a buoyant spirit that remains persistently and firmly fixed in the will of God.

**3. A wife should actively promote the well-being of her family.** The Bible no where teaches that a woman must “stay at home.” “Keepers at home” in Titus 2:5 (KJV) is a Greek word that means “homeworker.” In other words, she has work pertaining to the home for which she is responsible. Whatever else she may do with her time, she must not neglect her domestic responsibilities (just as the man must not neglect his domestic responsibilities). Of all people who pass through her life, she should want her husband and children to make it to heaven. Therefore, she will give her foremost attention to this goal (Titus 2:4). The best overall description of the many activities of an effective wife is Proverbs 31:10-31. Here was an industrious woman who devoted her time and attention to advancing the best interests of her family. As a result, they called her “blessed” and praised her. Whatever a woman thinks the world has to offer her by means of the corporate ladder and the business world, she will never find a more satisfying, fulfilling meaningful pursuit in life than serving her family in preparation for eternity.

### **Conclusion**

We live in a world and at a time when a correct understanding of marriage and the home is nearly nonexistent. But God’s word was designed to assist every generation and every culture in knowing what it’s all about. The Creator has provided us with the necessary information to negotiate this life successfully in order to arrive safely on the eternal shore. He has given us key ingredients to make our marriages and homes successful. May God bless you and me to that end.



## Chapter 4

# What Have They Seen In Thine House?

*Dennis Gulledge*

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The student of the Bible will recognize the question, which forms the basis of our lesson, as coming from the Old Testament. It has its setting in the days of Isaiah the prophet and Hezekiah, king of Judah (ca. 713 B.C.). It has its basis in II Kings 20 that tells the interesting story of king Hezekiah's sickness and recovery (vs. 1-11). It will be remembered that Hezekiah was ill and warning was brought to him to prepare for death. The king craved to live and his cry for life was heard. His lease, which he thought was about to expire was extended and fifteen years were added to his life. The shadow going back ten degrees on the sundial was God's sign of the king's recovery.

The next section of the chapter records Hezekiah's foolish mistake and subsequent rebuke (vs. 12-19). Hezekiah was visited by an embassy from Berodach-Baladan (spelled **Merodach-Baladan** in Isaiah 39:1), king of Babylon. It appears that this show of compassion on the part of the Babylonian king was designed to pave

the way for an alliance between Babylon and Judah. Hezekiah was of a receptive disposition. He showed the Babylonian emissaries all of his royal treasures, possibly including vast spoils taken from the Assyrians:

And Hezekiah hearkened unto them, and shewed them all the house of his precious things, the silver, and the gold, and the spices, and the precious ointment, and all the house of his armour, and all that was found in his treasures: there was nothing in his house, nor in all his dominion, that Hezekiah shewed them not (v. 13).

Isaiah, who had often been Hezekiah's comforter now becomes his reprover. The prophet examined the king with two questions: (1) "...*What said these men? and from whence came they unto thee...*" (v. 14). Hezekiah answered only the latter part of that question by saying, "...*They are come from a far country, even from Babylon*" (v. 14). (2) "...*What have they seen in thine house*" (v. 15). Hezekiah made this ingenuous confession:

...All the things that are in mine house have they seen: there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them (v. 15).

Then Isaiah pronounced the penalties for his thoughtless and vain ostentation (vs. 17-18). The chapter ends with the conclusion of Hezekiah's reign (vs. 20-21).

The question, "*What have they seen in your house*" is a question for the ages. Perhaps we should first approach this question with skepticism that is characteristic of our age and ask, "*Why should it matter what people see in our homes?*" In answer to that query I would suggest that if there is nothing of importance to the home, then it would not matter what people see in

our homes. The often repeated proverb “*As goes the home, so goes the nation*” is sufficient to suggest to us the weighty importance of the home. The fact that the home was instituted by God himself from the beginning of human existence lends even greater weight to the question. From a pragmatic point of view it would seem that the wounded condition of modern home-life in America is a telltale sign that something is terribly wrong.

Just as Isaiah knew that some were observing Hezekiah’s house, it is just as true that some are observing our homes as well. It is certainly proper for inclusion in a lectureship with the theme of “*The Christian Home*.” Herbert Lockyer put the question in its proper perspective when he asked, “*What are people impressed with when they visit our homes—our prayers or our treasures?*”<sup>1</sup> Beyond the amenities of modern day living, and the richly furnished homes that so many of us have, what do people really see in our homes? That is, what do they see in the realm of ideas, philosophies, standards, principles and rules that guide our homes? It should be of considerable importance to us whether or not our homes reflect all that is implied in the name **Christian**. Is Christ truly enthroned there?

One of the best lessons dealing with this topic that I have ever read is the one given by brother Garland Elkins at the **Spiritual Sword Lectures** in 1979.<sup>2</sup> I must say that I have preached this material in the past. I believe that other preachers would do well to do the same. In my development of this lesson I am largely indebted to brother Elkins in his approach to the passage.

Even though our text uses the word house, we recognize that there is a difference between a house and

a home. A house may or may not be a home, even with people living in it. A home does not require a house in order to qualify as such. Charles Swain wrote,

Home's not merely four square walls,  
Though with pictures hung and gilded;  
Home is where Affection calls—  
Filled with shrines the Heart hath builded.<sup>3</sup>

In the words of Edgar A. Guest,

It takes a heap o' livin' in a house t' make  
it home,  
A heap o' sun an' shadder, an' ye sometimes have  
t' roam  
Afore ye really 'preciate the things ye lef'  
behind,  
An' hunger fer 'em somehow, with 'em allus on yer  
mind.  
It don't make any differunce how rich ye  
get t' be,  
How much yer chairs an' tables cost, how great yer  
luxury;  
It ain't home t' ye, though it be the palace  
of a king.  
Until somehow yer soul is sort o' wrapped round  
everything.<sup>4</sup>

The question for our consideration is, "*What have they seen in your house?*" The personal pronoun they is, for the purpose of this lesson, all inclusive and suggestive of more than just what others may see in our homes. First, it includes the omniscient God who sees in our homes that which human visitors cannot. Second, it includes those members of our family who see the honest inner-workings of the family structure that may be hidden from the eyes of outsiders. Third, we will inquire into what others (friends, neighbors and associates) may see in our homes.

## **What Has God Seen In Our Homes?**

As important as it is to consider what others may see in our homes, it is far more important to remember that there is One who sees even what and when others do not. If what others see in our homes is what God sees, then, what they see is exactly what they should see. The Hebrews writer reminds us,

Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do (Heb. 4:13).

The inspired Psalmist tell us,

The LORD looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of his habitation he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth (Psm. 33:13-14).

We know that *“Hell and destruction are before the LORD: how much more then the hearts of the children of men”* (Prov. 15:11).

From these Scriptural statements we know that there is nothing in our homes that is hidden from the eyes of God. He sees the public and the private, the known and the unknown, the visible and the invisible. He sees that which is helpful and that which is harmful; that which is constructive and that which is destructive; that which is right and that which is wrong.

What has God seen of our thoughts in the home? The Omniscient One sees the good and evil that originates in our hearts (James 1:13-15). The seeds of lust that lead to marital infidelity (Matt. 5:28), and hatred that leads to spousal abuse and murder (I John 3:15) are seen by the Searcher of hearts before domestic

problems ever result. The sinful world of Noah's day was destroyed because of wicked thoughts that began in the home and resonated to the world at large (Gen. 9:5-6). Countless homes are destroyed by evil thoughts.

David said, "*The LORD knoweth the thoughts of man, that they are vanity*" (Psalms 94:11). Consequently, God knows what husbands and wives think of one another, what children think of parents, and what family members think of him. God once said of some, "*...all their thoughts are against me for evil*" (Psm. 56:5). God sees when spiritual concerns are given a low priority in our homes and when worship and Bible study are neglected. On the other hand, God also sees when spiritual matters are important in our homes. God sees what is in our homes because he sees what is in our heart, and home is where the heart is!

What has God seen (heard) of our words in the home? How helpful or harmful are words in any area of life, including family life? One of my favorite proverbs says, "*Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof*" (Prov. 18:21). Will we ever fully realize the effect of our words for good or evil? Will we ever learn that our words to spouses and children should be reflective of the love we have for one another? Paul said,

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it....So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself...Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them (Eph. 5:25, 28; Col. 3:19).

You will never hear a man, who loves his wife, spew out

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verbal atrocities toward her such as profanities, insults and demeaning clamor. He will never speak evil of her in her presence or behind her back.

You will never hear a woman who “*respects her husband*” (Eph. 5:33) hurl verbal abuses and hateful innuendo toward him. It is a sad commentary upon our society that so many children grow up in homes where they are subservient to a nearly constant barrage of maniacal monologue from out-of-control parents. Such things are all too common and destructive of a happy home life. Yet, God sees it all.

We need to remember the teaching of God in this area. Jesus said,

...how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned (Matt. 12:34-37).

Solomon, by divine inspiration, wrote,

A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city: and their contentions are like the bars of a castle (Prov. 18:19).

Also, “*...the words of the pure are pleasant words*” (Prov. 15:26). If the apostolic admonition...

And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you (Eph. 4:32).

...applies anywhere, it applies in the home, and should

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be manifest in our words.

What has God seen of our actions in the home? Most people consider their homes a private domain, and such they are. What we do in our homes is either private or public to the extent that we chose to make it such. Some people use their homes as shelters for crime, brutality and immorality while putting up a front of innocence before observers. It would be well for us to remember that God sees all our actions whether good or evil.

For Christians, homes should be the center of many godly activities such as work, fellowship, benevolence, hospitality, Bible study and prayer. The actions that take place there should be such as would bring glory to God and instill love and faithfulness to God in the heart of all who make up that home. As Jesus said,

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven (Matt. 5:16).

Does God see you giving attention to Bible study in the home? Does he hear you pray at meal times and other times? Does he see you extending love and kindness to guests and friends? Does he see that whenever it comes time to assemble with the saints, that such a privilege is given top priority at your house?

### **What Have Our Children Seen In Our Homes?**

The question of greatest importance in this study is the one that we have just examined. The reason being, as already stated, that, if God sees in our homes that which he ought to see, them, others will see that which they ought to see. If a home is blessed with children it



becomes very important what those children see in the home during their growing up years. It is in this area that parents will find one of the greatest challenges they will ever face.

What do children see of proper spiritual priorities in the home? Dr. C. Everett Koop, former Surgeon General of the United States, tells of a decision he made while his children were still young. In spite of his busy schedule he was determined that the family would attend worship services every Sunday. His reason was that *“It was easier to go every Sunday than to decide which Sundays to miss.”* Although, a Christian’s convictions for faithfulness in worship should have deeper spiritual roots than this reason would suggest, it certainly is good advice. Are we going to decide one Lord’s day that we will go to worship and the next Lord’s day that we will not? Is our worship to God to be an **occasion** of edification, or an **occasional** edification? Is it an event we look forward to **every time** or **sometimes**? Such is not the lesson learned from the New Testament. The early disciples met weekly (John 20:19-26). The early church met on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). The Christian has the opportunity to give on *“every first day of the week”* as the *“distributive force”* of **kata** would suggest in I Corinthians 16:1-2.<sup>5</sup> In Hebrews 10:24-25 we are exhorted to,

...consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

The home is the place where children will find either **pervverted** or **proper** priorities indelibly written

upon their tender hearts. What will be the nature of those impressions when they see parents who put work, sports, leisure or hobbies above the Lord on any given Sunday? What are our children to think if we expect them to have their school lessons prepared throughout the week, but do not care whether or not they prepare their Bible lesson? What are they to think if they are not permitted to miss school for just any reason, and yet worship is dismissed upon the flimsiest of pretenses? What are they to think if extra-curricular activities are hardly missed, but activities of Bible study, worship and service are of small concern? What are they to think if their summers are full of sports activities that are followed “*religiously*,” and worship is pushed aside if a ball game happens to conflict? Are we to think that these inequities will not be reflected in the lives of our children as they grow up and forge their own priorities in life?

Brethren, if we, as parents, are really going to point those precious young souls in the direction of heaven, we are going to have to do more than preach a standard that we do not care to follow. We are going to have to do more than “*take them to church*” every Sunday. We are going to have to touch their hearts!

What do children see of love in the home? Home should be love’s domain. Oliver Wendell Holmes once wrote, “*Where we love is home, home that our feet may leave, but not our hearts.*”<sup>6</sup> Something is sadly amiss if children do not see a father who reigns affection upon their mother and a mother who reciprocates.

There is no love quite like that of a parent for a child. May it be that as our children grow up and leave home they can say as did Elizabeth Akers Allen, “*Over my heart in the days that have flown, No love like mother-love ever has shown.*”<sup>7</sup> May they also feel that affection

that is uniquely a father's, and reach adulthood with that well-rounded nurturing which only God's arrangement for the home can provide.

What do children see of discipline in the home? Little or none in too many cases these days! Wise parents regard discipline as essential to the proper training of their children. It is a characteristic of a father to discipline and correct his children. The Bible says,

Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live (Heb. 12:9)?

Mothers share in that responsibility, *“My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother”* (Prov. 1:8).

Discipline is not beating, bruising, burning or berating a child into submission. Discipline is corporeal and it is positive, it is preventive and it is corrective; it is instructive in both word and deed. It does involve punishment for deviations from the right course. Discipline is proof of the regard parents have for their children just as it is of God's regard for his children (Heb. 12:5-11).

What do our children see of purity in the home? There are many challenges to our faith that did not exist a generation or two ago. Our culture is becoming increasingly rotten morally, ethically, and spiritually. The problem of utter godlessness has spawned the symptoms of family breakdown, out-of-control crime, rampant drug use, unrestrained expression, the widespread erosion of standards (most often in the areas of education and morality), the race to fill the media with increasingly cruder content, the skyrocketing rise

in sexual deviance as well as promiscuity, and the spiritual void that causes people to wonder if life is worth living.

This is a difficult age in which to bring up children and expect to shield them from the eternally deadly influences of Satan. It is my experience to know some young parents who take seriously their responsibility to guard their children from the evils of the world in which we live. They do so by becoming more involved in their children's lives and refusing to put their education into the hands of humanistic public educators. Unfortunately, they are criticized by their own brethren who say, "*You are merely shielding them from the real world.*" The opposite, however, is true. They are really preparing their children for the kind of world that we all should be making for themselves, and teaching them how to recognize and revolt against this present evil world (Rom. 12:1-2; I John 2:15-17).

### **What Have Others Seen In Our Homes?**

It would seem that the Creator of homes has witnessed some drastic alterations in his original intention for the home (Gen. 2:18-24; Matt. 19:4-6). The contempt that is often expressed for the **traditional** family is largely defiance directed against the Biblical teaching for the home. We are often reminded that the traditional family is no more the norm for the home today. We are told that the television image of the family epitomized by "*Ozzie and Harriet,*" and, "*Leave It To Beaver*" is a relic of the past. We see that it is worthy only of scornful reminders of the non-realistic standard it presents for the home today. Dr. James Dobson and Gary L. Bauer were right on target when they said, "*Along with sneering references to 'Normal Rockwell's*

*America,’ the cultural elite frequently remind us that the model of the traditional family—homemaker mother and breadwinner father—is virtually extinct, and they’re obviously glad it is gone.”<sup>8</sup>*

Now, events may re-arrange the number of family members living under one roof, thus making for different realities than those mentioned above. Death may claim a spouse or a child. Tragic divorce may break up a home. Children grow up and leave home. Still God’s design for the family structure is our pattern for the home, and if it is not seen in the homes of Christians today it is becoming less likely that it will be seen anywhere.

The word **family** means different things to people today. The debate over family values generally finds advocates in two main camps: First, the **traditional** family (mom, dad and the kids [if any]). This would include widowed and divorced people, and extended families that might include grandparents or guardians. Second, is the **nouveau** or **alternative** family. This camp says that one should append a strict definition to the family because people disagree on a definition and deviant idealists might be excluded. Many different living arrangements are considered to be families. Below, are a few alternative arrangements:

- A man and woman who live together, but are not married, and are rearing children.
- A man and woman who live together, but are not married, and have no children.
- A never-married father. A never-married mother.
- A group of unrelated adults who live together and consider themselves a family.
- Two lesbian women with children that they are rearing.
- Two homosexual men with children that they are rearing.

- Two lesbian women who are living together.
- Two homosexual men who are living together.
- A homosexual man with two lesbian women in a “co-parenting” arrangement.

Well, regardless of how societal standards for home and family may change, it is true that the design of God in this realm remains unchanged. There is no amount of cultural deviation from the divine plan for the family that either can or will make a better home than the one that is patterned after God’s design.

God appointed different roles for men, women, and children in the home. A family begins with a man and a woman—one man for one woman in a life-long marital relationship (Matt. 19:3-9). This is God’s arrangement. This necessarily rules out homosexual couplings and cohabitation relationships as being legitimate family options (Rom. 1:26-27; I Cor. 6:9-10; Heb. 13:4). What should be seen in our homes?

What have they seen of the husband’s relationship to the wife? Paul said,

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body (Eph. 5:23).

As such, it is his responsibility to “*provide for his own, and especially for those of his household,*” and if he refuses to do so, “*he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever*” (I Tim. 5:8). The man of the home must also be mindful to love his wife and participate with her in teaching his children in the way of the truth. In both of these realms the Bible has spoken: “*Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them*” (Col. 3:19). Kenneth S. Wuest comments on the word for **love** in this verse, saying, “*The word here is not **phileo**, a*

*non-ethical fondness or affection. They all did that. That was the type of love which was exercised when they fell in love with them. It is agape, the love that...will cause the husband to sacrifice himself and his own wishes in the interest of the well-being of the wife.”*<sup>9</sup> Again, Paul said,

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

God has placed upon the man’s shoulders the role of spiritual leader.

What have they seen of the wife’s relationship to the husband?

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord (Col. 3:18).

Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband (Eph. 5:33).

This is not a demeaning position for the wife despite modernistic contentions to the contrary. In the same vein Paul said, “*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord*” (Eph. 5:22). Please note that the wife is taught to submit to her **own** husband, that is, she is to do so because of the unique, personal relationship involved. Marvin R. Vincent says, “*The peculiar personal relationship is emphasized as the ground of the duty.*”<sup>10</sup> Thus, the contention that female subordination has its basis in the “*inferior*” of the fairer sex, is destroyed. Again, we learn,

Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing (Eph. 5:24).

The commands expressed in the verses mentioned above

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mean that the wife should submit to her husband as far as she can do so and not violate her higher obligation to obey God (Acts 5:29). If the husband is half the man he ought to be these commands will not be a burden to her.

What do they see of the children in the home? The children (if any) should be seen loving and honoring their parents. Paul wrote, "*Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right*" (Eph. 6:1). "*Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord*" (Col. 3:20). Therefore, children in the home should reflect the qualities of love, respect, honor, honesty, and responsibility.

### **What Have They Seen Of A Spiritual Atmosphere In Your Home?**

If a visitor were to stay in your home for an hour or a day, a day or a week, what would they see that would convince them that they are in a Christian home? Would they see the Bible in your home? Better yet, would they see that your Bible serves any useful purpose, or, that it lies covered with dust or buried under magazines? Not only should the Bible be seen in our homes, but it should be seen as having an emphasis there, because as one "*...thinketh in his heart, so is he...*" (Prov. 23:7).

When it comes time for Bible school and worship on Sunday and Wednesday nights, what would your visitor find you doing? Watching television? Playing computer games? Entertaining company? Going hunting? Or, would your guest find that the worship of God claims priority in your life, and that you are not inclined to "*forsake the assembling*" of the saints at any time (Heb. 10:25)?

Would your friend find that your busy schedule



not only includes, but prioritizes such activities as gospel meetings, vacation Bible school, visitation programs, singings, personal work programs, and other aspects of the Lord’s work?

Would this outsider find that the reading material in your home includes anything in the way of good Bible related books, magazines and periodicals? Would he find salacious trash or spiritual treasures on your book shelves? What sort of magazines would he find that you like to read? Those of the gospel or of the gossip variety? Would your company see that your television viewing does not include the filth that makes up the majority of living room entertainment these days, and is therefore fairly limited? Would he ever be treated to the sound of religious programming of the **In Search Of The Lord’s Way** program, produced by the Lord’s church in Edmond, Oklahoma, or such radio programming as **Truth For The World**? When sitting at your dinner table would he observe you offering thanks to God for the food that you enjoy? The Scriptural injunction, “*Pray without ceasing*” (I Thess. 5:17) means to keep up your appointed times of prayer. Does this include meal time? Would he find that you are grateful to the benevolent God of heaven for the blessings you count each day? What have others seen by way of a spiritual atmosphere in our homes?

### **Conclusion**

The implications of Isaiah’s question to Hezekiah are broad and comprehensive, touching on the many vital aspects of the home. It constitutes a sobering reminder of the fact that there is one who always sees that which is in our homes. Our task is to make sure that what is seen in our homes is that which should be seen there.

## Endnotes

- 1 Herbert Lockyer, **All The Books And Chapters Of The Bible**, (Grand Rapids; MI; Zondervan Publishing House, 1966), p. 93.
- 2 Garland Elkins, "*What Have They Seen In Thine House?*" **The Home As God Would Have It—And Contemporary Attacks Against It**, being the **Fourth Annual Spiritual Sword Lectureship**, Garland Elkins and Thomas B. Warren, ed., (Algood, TN: National Christian Press, 1979), pp. 43-54.
- 3 John Bartlett, **Familiar Quotations** (Garden City, NY: Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., 1936), p. 375.
- 4 Hazel Felleman, Ed., **The Best Loved Poems Of The American People** (Garden City, NY, 1936), p. 375.
- 5 Marvin R. Vincent, **Word Studies In The New Testament**, Vol. III (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1973), p. 288.
- 6 Bartlett, p. 453.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Dr. James Dobson and Gary L. Bauer, **Children At Risk: The Battle For The Hearts And Minds Of Our Kids**, (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1990), p. 110.
- 9 Kenneth S. Wuest, **Wuest's Studies From The Greek New Testament—Ephesians And Colossians In The Greek New Testament**, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981), p. 229.
- 10 Vincent, p. 401.

## Chapter 5

# Your Marriage Can Be Great!

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**W**e appreciate this good congregation, brother Sain, and her elders for the invitation to come and participate in another great lectureship. Your lectureship is one that continues to stand among the faithful in our brotherhood. May you keep plowing a straight “*furrow*” for the truth in the future. In order to do this you must look ahead through the ears of the mule if you want straight rows. If you wander off the rows will be crooked. We can’t plow straight by looking back. Jesus warned of putting the hands to the plow and looking back in Luke 9:62. We want to be “*fit*” for the kingdom. We can profit from the past, but our time is spent today in the present and then tomorrow if the Lord wills.

My (our) marriage is the greatest in the world. We say this without any reservation whatsoever. The writer does not take any credit, for he is unworthy, for the success of this union. My dear wife has endured all the pitiful faults that I have had over these many years and has raised our children in the nurture and admonition

of the Lord. Thank God all of them are still faithful to the Lord. Anyone's marriage can be great. We must not minimize the importance of this study because marriages are crumbling across our nation. Marriage is important because God has definite laws and instructions concerning marriage.<sup>1</sup> We honor God by obeying His instructions. Moses said it this way,

Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known (Deut. 11:26-28).

David would appeal to much the same in Psalms 128:1, "*A Song of degrees. Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.*" Solomon wrote: "*Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying*" (Prov. 19:18). Quite to the contrary, we dishonor God by disobeying His will. When brother Paul addressed the church in Thessalonica he said;

And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power (II Thess. 1:7-9).

Our response to God's instructions on marriage is proof of our obedience or lack of obedience. Jesus said in Matthew 5:32;

But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

Also see for reference Matthew 19:3-12. When we have read and digested these passages we have what God prescribed for marriage in the beginning. These are not my laws! They are God’s laws ordained in the beginning with Adam and Eve. Jesus would have us know that it did not originate with His ministry, rather He pointed us back to the beginning.

This study is important because of the great consequences of marriage—both good and evil. Through marriage we can elevate ourselves or degrade ourselves. In order for marriage to be great the groom must pick a bride that will help elevate him. The bride must pick a groom that will elevate her. There is more than enough tearing down today. We need some picking up, and the place to start is before we get to the marriage altar. This is true because marriage involves more than two people getting married. When we marry there are parents on both sides of the aisle. Sometimes a marriage “hangs” on the balances of the parents. Many parents have spoiled what otherwise would have been a great marriage. Every gospel preacher can vouchsafe this statement. The battle ground for marriage should not rest on the parents of the bride or groom, but sometimes it does. Look at Proverbs 14:34; *“Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.”* Marriage influences the nation. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of perverted homes. Destroy the home, and you have destroyed the moral fiber of our nation. Look at the lack of morals in the political arena! Shame

and disgust register when we see the lack of scruples our leaders often have. How do we explain these things to our children? We must teach and instruct them in the way that is right lest we have our own Sodom today. Our children are the result of our marriage union. The atmosphere in which they are raised is vital to the happy marriage.

There are deliberate attempts to destroy the home in our society. This is nothing new. It had its start by the time the Equal Rights Amendment started or maybe before. The social and political views in this regard are phenomenal. The "*Women's Liberation*" movement taught that child rearing "*is not the responsibility of the home but of the state.*" We were privileged to visit a commune near Galilee several years ago. We saw what some would like to develop in America. Men and women worked side by side. A mother was given three months off for having her baby, and then the baby was turned over to the commune and raised by it. She could visit her child each day for three months. After that as frequently as she could because she must not miss an hour or day of work in the fields to see her child. Some women had the responsibility in the commune of raising those children. A mother was very lucky if she was able to work in the area that housed and raised the children. Is that what we want America to turn out to be? Some years ago in the **Voice of Freedom**, the editor was taking issue with someone that had written the following; "*Socially marriage is being taught as a claptrap about family and education. Marriage is not a hallowed relationship.*" We don't know who made such claim, but it is dead wrong. Some proclaim that "*even if God does exist, He is not the God of the bible so do what you think is right.*" Some religious leaders teach that we have no obligation to

submit to the teachings of the Bible for “*after all it was written for antiquated people.*” No wonder that skepticism has entered into the marriage arena. Skepticism denies the basic fundamentals of the scripture. As a result we have “*quickie*” divorce courts, “*no fault divorce,*” and “*do it yourself packets.*”

A glance at the social culture of our nation being destroyed by our sexual standards should convince us that marriages are in trouble. Pre-marital sex is accepted generally as a thing for our times. The “*pill*” is sometimes bought by parents encouraging their children to have fun “*but don’t get caught.*” There is an avalanche of books attacking marriage. Publishers are getting rich on such books. Colleges are also leading in the battle over marriage. Both students and teacher are influencing each other. My elders wrote one such College and the president answered by saying, “*We teach both ways (referring to marriage and divorce) and let the students make up their own minds.*” Some couples say that their relationship is “*a commitment to no commitment.*” This cannot make for great marriages.

This study needs to be made because of the purposes of marriage. One reason is to provide human companionship. According to God, in seeing man’s need in the beginning, made a woman for man (cf. Gen. 2:20-25). Man needed the love of a woman. He is not complete without her. She enables him to express himself, know himself, and develop himself. Man needs to love a woman. She is his “*superwoman.*” She is his queen! She is his everything on this earth. Another purpose of marriage is to propagate the race of man (cf. Gen. 1:28). Bearing children is not the only purpose of the sexual relationship (cf. I Cor. 7:1-5). It is pointedly clear from such passages that marriage is for the prevention of

immorality. Another purpose of marriage is that marriage provides men and women with such experience as will help them develop spiritually. Study in this regard (Eph. 5:22-23; I Peter 3:7). Marriage is more than human contract. It is what God has decreed for men and women (cf. Matt. 19:9). Marriage should be studied because it is everybody's business. It is God's business. He hates covenant breakers (cf. Mal. 2:13-16). Marriage is the children's business. Marriage is the business of the families of the bride and groom. It is the business of the community and the nation. A study of this magnitude is not just for those who are young because many older people are having problems with their marriage and need help.

### **God Intended Happiness**

God desired happiness in man, and in order for that to be provided He made woman from man's rib. Marriage was there instituted and the home founded with one stroke from Deity. God made man and woman on day six of creation. Man consists of dust and spirit. He must return to the dust, but the spirit to God who gave it. Man is a free moral agent. By this we mean that he can make choices in life. Joshua said,

And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD (Josh. 24:15).

No one argues this fundamental liberty. Man is responsible for his deeds. *"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God"* so said Paul in Romans 14:12. Man is sinful (Rom. 3:23) and as such needs a



Savior (Matt. 1:21). Man is finite (Jer. 10:23), and so he needs guidance (Psm. 119:105). His missions is stated in I Corinthians 10:31; “*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*” When we fail to glorify God we are failures in life and our reward will not be heaven. Man’s destiny is to die, and be raised (Heb. 9:27); to be judged hearing either depart or enter in to heaven (Matt. 25:31-46).

In a great marriage there is an inter dependence of men and women. Adam was first formed and then Eve according to scripture in I Timothy 2:13, “*For Adam was first formed, then Eve.*” Woman was created for man, not man for woman. “*Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man*” (I Cor. 11:9). Now look at I Corinthians 11:11-12;

Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God.

Paul here argues that even though the woman was made for man that he is also made by woman through the natural process so one is not without the other. Woman is the counter part of man “*...an help meet for him*” (Gen. 2:18). In the Hebrew this means “*as one before him.*” The Greek means “*according to himself.*” She is a compliment to his life. So Solomon wrote in Proverbs 18:22; “*Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.*” There is nothing in this passage that indicates that woman is man’s slave. Consider too, that “*meet*” is an adjective and means suitable. She is the weaker vessel (I Peter 3:7). She is more delicate; smaller, but not inferior; smaller physique, finer features, finer sensitive abilities. Next to our

Saviour my wife is the finest thing God ever created. She is the glory of man (I Cor. 11:7). J. P. Sanders said it this way: *“Marriage is the union of man and woman as husband and wife and is to last as long as they both live on earth. God’s purpose in creating male and female was that they should live together in a permanent relationship as one flesh. They constitute one whole, one biological and social unit; they make one family. They are to be united as one on all levels of living. Marriage is not merely a physical connection but a spiritual companionship in which each seeks to promote the other’s highest well being through mutual forbearance and love and prayer.”*

### **Preparation For Marriage**

With one half of all marriages in America ending in divorce, and last year more people started living together in California than bought marriage licenses, some time should be taken in preparation for marriage. There is the need for courtship. Preparation is required in almost all fields of endeavor, eg. Law, Medicine, business or religion. Marriage is a sacred relationship that should not be entered blindly. Marriage was intended to be a blessing (Gen. 2:22-24). Someone asked, *“What is courtship?”* We suppose that there are various answers, but we record our thoughts for this study. It is a course of inquiry or a voyage of discovery. The object and purpose of courtship is to choose a suitable companion for marriage, with a natural temper of mind, tastes, aspirations and ambitions, likes and dislikes similar to one’s own. Love is great, but it does not work miracles. Amos said, *“Can two walk together, except they be agreed”* (Amos 3:3)? There are some things to keep in mind. (1) Do not marry the first man or woman you find. Remember that courtship is a voyage of discovery.

- (2) Keep thyself pure. Flee fornication (I Cor. 6:18). Flee youthful lust (II Tim. 2:22). Do not defile the temple of God (I Cor. 3:17). These suggest that one should be as pure as you expect your companion to be. One must not take privileges that belong **solely** to husband and wife.
- (3) Keep your examination on a high plain. If you see you are not suited for one another—break it off. This will prevent false hopes from occurring.

### **What Kind Of Companion Do You Want For Life?**

- The kind of boy/girl who (1) Seeks God’s will first. (2) Has associates that I like. (3) Is liked by my friends and kinsman. (4) Is neat and orderly. (5) Is practical. (6) Thoughtful about small things. (7) Deep thinker—not silly talker. (8) Manages time wisely. (9) Is tactful. (10) Is agreeable but not at the expense of righteousness. (11) Good cook/provider. (12) Child cherishing and loving. (13) Cheerful and charming.

One boy said: *“Give me a strong, sound sociable, serious, sensible servant of our Saviour, burdened for souls and selected for the same field of service I am. The worst predicament possible for me would be an unhappy marriage. Therefore, take away the nagging neurotic, the giggling no-account, the gossiping gadabout, the spendthrift, socialite, or painted plutocrat—a mixture of artificiality’s, which leaves me in doubt as to where the humbug (deception) ends and the woman begins.”*

One girl said: *“Give me the kind of boy who (1) Love’s the Lord with his whole heart. (2) A servant of all mankind. (3) Quiet and serious by nature, but great sense of humor. (4) Gentleness of spirit. (5) Nobility of character. (6) Aggressive not slothful. (7) Friendly and courteous. (8) Manners above reproach. (9) He is patient, kind, forgiving, willing to acknowledge his own shortcomings.*

(10) *Happy.* (11) *Good conversationalist. And I will be a busy helpmate—when I find him—for I will be everlasting patching his clothes, especially the **knees** of his trousers!*" In both of these lists we have the ideal and a little humor.

### **Should Marry In The Lord**

The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord (I Cor. 7:39, please see Barnes' notes, p. 726).

Many other passages apply and we list some for our study: Genesis 6:1-2; 24:2-3; 28:1-2; Deuteronomy 7:3; I Kings 11:1-13; I Corinthians 6:14. Also see Nehemiah 13:23-27; I Corinthians 9:5 and ask, has God's law ever changed concerning marriage? This is one reason that a Christian should never marry a non-Christian. You cannot make any compromise with the non-Christians. But the attitude usually arises and says, "*I know of a case where it has worked out.*" This is the exception not the rule. "*Ours will work out for we are in love.*" You are to love God first. "*We will just not talk about it.*" It is hard to imagine such a thing. "*We will worry about children later.*" Children should be thought of before marriage.

One should not reject character for beauty. Solomon said, "*Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised*" (Prov. 31:30). Much prayer should be offered up before taking a wife/husband. Take advice from parents, elders and preachers. Where should one look for a companion? Dance-hall? Other worldly places of amusement? The

church? Bible school? Christian Colleges? One selects his/her companion from his/her associates. Remember Lot’s children!

### **The Christian Male As Companion**

We should emphasize the overall togetherness of the husband and wife. In so doing we need to look at the responsibilities each has to make sure we do not infringe upon duties of each other. The word companion means, “*comrade or one of a pair of matched things.*” For the Christian man to be the comrade of woman he must have the right attitude. That attitude is stated in Ephesians 5:23:

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

Men, in this comparison, are compared to Christ. Christ devoted his entire life to the establishment of His church.

Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also (John 15:20).

He endured criticism unjustly. In everything He set the right example for us to follow. Taking the 53rd chapter of Isaiah let us notice some statements and make a few observations. He was despised and rejected by men. He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He was wounded for our transgressions. He poured out His soul to death. If man will follow these examples of Christ he will devote himself to his wife—their development. He will make great sacrifices for her even to giving his life for her well being. These could be summarized in I

Corinthians 13:4-7: Patient, kindness, not jealous or boastful, not arrogant or rude, not irritable or resentful, rejoices in right, bears all things, believes all things, endures all things. We should note that happiness can depend on moods and attitudes.

The Christian male should set the example for all others in the family to follow. This was the case under the law of Moses. Participate in those things that you wish for your wife and children to participate in. His life should be characterized by the golden rule (Matt. 7:12), and “...*let not the sun go down upon your wrath*” (Eph. 4:26). We have formulated ten rules for men to follow in order to have a great marriage. (1) Remember that thy wife is thy partner and not thy property. (2) Think not that thy business is none of thy wife’s business. (3) Thou shalt hold thy wife’s love by the same means that thou won it. (4) Thou shalt cooperate with thy wife in establishing family discipline. (5) Thou shalt not let any criticize thy wife to thy face and get away with it, neither thy father, nor thy mother, nor thy sister, nor thy brother, nor any of thy relatives. (6) Thou shalt not take thy wife for granted. (7) Thou shalt not praise thy neighbor’s wife; but praise thy one. (8) Thou shalt not be stingy with thy wife. (9) Thou shalt not fail to kiss thy wife good-bye in the morning. (10) Thou shalt be especially kind when she is experiencing trying times. These practices will bring great joy to our marriages.

### **The Christian Woman As Companion**

The proper attitude for a Christian woman may be partly described in I Peter 3:6,

Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

Woman was created for man (Gen. 2:18-25). She was taken from man’s side where she finds her greatest happiness. Solomon wrote eloquently about God’s description of a worthy woman. Paul told her to: “*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord*” (Eph. 5:22). Submit comes from the word “*hupotasso*” which means to arrange under, to subordinate, put in subjection, to obey. The woman is to be in subjection to her husband with the only limitation being that first she must be subject to Christ.

Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband (Eph. 5:33).

The word for reverence is “*phobeo*” and it means fear in the sense of reverence, spontaneous, obedient regard. Paul directed the women that Titus would teach to be— “*sophrinizo*” meaning to restore senses, control and duty. He said to love and these characteristics are summed up in I Corinthians 13. Christian women are to be discrete which comes from the word “*sophronas*” and means sound mind, sane, self-control. He ordered the Christian women to be chaste which comes from the word “*hagnos*” which is translated eight times in the New Testament. Four times translates pure, and four times it translates exciting, reverence, pure from carnality, or fault.

The Christian woman is to be a keeper of the home. Scripture describes her by these words: kind, good, obedient to her own husband, wife, and mother. She should be a good companion in spiritual matters, a good companion in the home, in parenthood, in her husband’s vocation, and in recreation (do things together, have a second honeymoon often). To be fair we now list ten commandments for wives: (1) Expect not thy husband

to give thee as many luxuries as thy father hath given thee after many years of hard labor. (2) Forget not thy virtue of good humor, for verily all that a man hath will he give for a woman's smile. (3) Thou shalt not nag. (4) Thou shalt coddle thy husband, for verily every man loveth to be fussed over. (5) Remember that the frank approval of thy husband is worth more to thee than the sidelong glances of many strangers. (6) Permit no one to assure thee that thou art having a hard time of it, neither thy mother, nor thy sister, nor thy maiden aunt, nor thy kinfolk, for the Lord will not hold her guiltless who letteth another disparage her husband. (7) Commit thy way unto the Lord thy God and thy children shall rise up and call thee blessed. (8) Thou shalt dress up for thy husband, with an eye to please him, as thou didst before marriage. (9) Thou shalt not hesitate to assure thy husband that he is, at least to you, the greatest man alive. (10) Thou shalt make every effort to be a warm wife. Live as a wife to thy husband and thou shalt never have to worry about another woman.

Your marriage can be great if you will apply all these things. I close with a poem of love that the late brother Gus Nichols wrote. I dedicate this to my good wife, Carrie. The poem is called **I Love You**. It was written by brother Gus Nichols on February 28, 1959.

*"I love you! I love you because your very heart is so much like my own, that my greatest need and joy in life is to ever have you by my side.*

*I love you because your very presence makes me happy, and your voice to my ear, is sweeter than a melody of song or the music of the violin.*

*I love you because your high ideals match and even surpass my own, and you have been able to reach down deep into my heart and discover lovely virtues which no other looked quite deep enough to find.*



*I love you because you are the inspiration I need, and because your countenance drives away darkness, as the glowing light of the morning sun.*

*I love you because you have a sympathetic understanding of all my weaknesses, and yet, you love me in spite of them all. Your love for me is cherished far above all the earth's silver and gold.*

*I love you because you have already made me very happy and enriched my soul with a joy which only you could impart, and you have done it without an effort, by simply being yourself. Your natural goodness and lovely spirit have been more than enough for the longings of my heart, for someone who could fill it with the fragrance of love divine.*

*I love you now more than ever before, because I am now to take you to be with me and to be mine, to live in my heart and in my life, to be a part of me and all that I am and ever shall become as long as we both shall live in this beautiful, wonderful world.*

*In a word, I love you because you are you and because God drew us to each other, and brought us to this hour and to this altar, where we, like two rippling rivers, are to become united and submerged, each losing itself in the other, to ever afterward flow on together toward a silvery sea of a glorious eternity. We are now to become one flesh, one heart, and one soul, the stream of our life ever deepening and widening to the enrichment of that nobler life which we, together, are to make more abundant and sweet for ourselves.*

*Only God can know all the reasons why I love you, but since you are giving me the rest of your life, may I say now, with all my heart, I love you, and then spend the rest of my life proving I do.”*

Endnote #1: Most of this material was taken from a 13 week study course that the author wrote in 1973. It was printed again in 1976. It is out of print at this time.

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## Chapter 6

# “What Therefore God Hath Joined Together”

*Everett Chambers*

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**M**arriage, divorce and remarriage is a touchy subject even among Christians.<sup>1</sup> One wonders whether the world is even aware or cares that God has a law of marriage. Multiple views and doctrines exist on the subject. The present state of affairs have come about because men refuse to believe the plain teaching which God has given us on the subject. In direct violation of Scripture, man holds on to the mistaken belief that he can direct his own steps (Jer. 10:23). The result of this kind of attitude is mass confusion with every man doing what is right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6). But there is a Sovereign with whom we have to do (Heb 4:13) and He is not the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33). In any event, God claims that He has given us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence (II Peter 1:3). How then would this teaching be truthful if, as some claim, the Scriptures are vague and ambiguous on the subject of marriage, divorce and remarriage?

In dealing with the issue of marriage, divorce and remarriage, as with any other issues which face us, the first question in our minds should be, “What does the Scripture say?” (Rom. 4:3a). We should then study God’s directions carefully and prayerfully and bend our wills to conform to them. While there are some things which are hard to understand, to ignore or distort them would be to our detriment (II Peter 3:16). If ever there was a time for true and clear teaching on a subject, this is the subject and the time is now.

Nationwide, America is experiencing moral and spiritual decline. Since the 1960’s the divorce rate has been increasing at an alarming rate. Divorce overtook death as the leading cause for the breakup of the home in the ‘70’s. Now almost one in every two marriages ends in divorce. Some state legislatures are recognizing that the current flood of divorce and remarriage is wreaking havoc on the family. To this end, they are attempting to tighten their marriage and divorce laws. In effect, they are really seeking to get couples to keep their vows. So how does this sit with God? Do we need new legislation, or do we simply need to practice marriage as God ordained it?

### **God’s View On Marriage**

The only reason for protracted debate on the subject of marriage and divorce is that, like the Pharisees of Jesus’ day (Matt. 19:3-12), men have come to believe that a man can divorce or put away his wife for every and any cause. The Pharisees desired to know the lawful basis for divorce. Could divorce be for any cause at all (Matt. 19:3b)? Jesus’ resounding “No” in answer to the Pharisees question was and is, and ever will be, God’s definitive discussion on this subject. No, man cannot

divorce for just any reason. Why is this so? The answer is tied up in the original design and intent of marriage.

Although, the question raised by the Pharisees concerns divorce, Jesus answers it by reiterating God's law of marriage. Quoting from Genesis 1:27, Jesus tells them that at the beginning, God created gender, male and female, as suitable counterparts for marriage (Gen. 1:27). From this we must necessarily infer that God did not intend for people of the same sex to be married. In fact, a simple reading of (Gen. 2:18-24) will reveal the following:

1. When God had finished creating, He gave Adam instructions concerning his conduct in the garden. At that time, He also concluded that it was not good for man to remain alone in the garden. He needed a suitable counterpart to help him.

2. But before God created woman, man apparently made an extensive search through the living creatures that dwelt upon or above the land. But he did not find a helper which was suitable to be his companion among them.

3. Therefore, God performed the first surgery by making an incision in the side of Adam and removed a portion of his body. He then used that portion to fashion a woman, the female of the species, and brought her to man. This is certainly an interesting method which God utilized in order to prepare a counterpart for man.

4. In his joy, the man acknowledged that woman was taken out of him and he named her appropriately.

5. God then said, according to Jesus (Matt. 19:5), "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen 2:24).

Jesus' commentary on the Genesis record is

enlightening; “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt. 19:6). In other words, woman is taken out of man, but through marriage, she can be joined to him again as his wife. In that way, the two who properly belonged together are rejoined in marriage becoming one flesh. God did a kind of separation by removing a portion of Adam’s body. He did this to create woman. Through marriage he rejoined them and he does not want them separated again. Jesus is emphatic that what God joined together should not be separated by man. Divorce is a violation of God’s will because it severs the unity of God’s creative act.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, God’s view on marriage can be succinctly stated:

**“One man, one woman for life.”**

Marriage is not a human invention. It is integrally tied up in God’s divine will for man’s happiness. God brought about the union of man and woman in order for man to accomplish the things which God desires for him to do while he is on the earth. God joins people in marriage. He envisages uniting two people who have never been married and He wants this union to last until death separates them. In God’s sight marriage is a permanent arrangement, and He has not, nor will not, change His mind about this. Therefore, it should not be entered into lightly or ill-advisedly. Those who hate long term commitments should avoid marriage or they should change their minds about commitment. Marriage is the avenue which God has given to man as the legitimate outlet for his sexual desires. To this end the Hebrews writer says; “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4). This is a clear prohibition on all unlawful sexual activity. Marriage is both desirable and honorable.

If we are serious about living to please God, we should immerse our spirits and saturate our understandings with God's view of marriage.<sup>3</sup> Long before we look for loopholes and circumstances under which we can get out of our marriages, legitimately or otherwise, we should endeavor to fashion our marriages with the permanence which pleases God. What we need is to bend our wills not God's laws. When we drink deeply from God's fountain of knowledge, we will be filled with the understanding that God wants husbands and wives to stay together and work things out. This is good for the human spirit and it is a part of the training that we need to fashion our spirits to inhabit the eternal abode.

Our mates are not like our cars which we can trade in for the latest model or to reduce our payments. Our young people must be counseled and told to be diligent and patient in their search for finding a mate to love. They must make sure to find a "keeper." Those who are married need to be reminded that they are bound before God, to love the mate they have found.

### **God's View On Divorce**

Unfortunately, divorce is rampant but ***God hates divorce*** (Mal. 2:16). He does not want people to divorce for just any reason as the Pharisees supposed. But many people today exhibit the attitude of the Pharisees who questioned Jesus. These rebellious Jews pressed Him and tried to pit the Lord against Moses. They did this because they wanted to have free reign in the matter of divorce. But if divorce, as practiced among the Jews, was a settled issue, why did they think it necessary to refer the matter to the great Rabbi? Obviously they were uneasy and may have sensed that something was wrong with their practice.

Jesus' answer to their succinct question did not

suit them. They asked Him; “Can we divorce our mates for just any and every reason?” Jesus said, “NO.” But they claimed that Moses **commanded** them to give a bill of divorcement. According to reasoning, this command served as positive proof that they could divorce freely. In effect, they said to Jesus, “You are out of touch. Whatever God may have intended in the garden has changed. For Moses, His servant, gave us different guidelines.” But they are dead wrong and Jesus proves this to them in His reply. Moses had not given them a command to divorce, he only allowed them. He suffered them. Jesus told them that Moses only regulated a rampant practice which had come about among them due to the hardness of their hearts (sin, the transgression of God’s law, hardens the heart).

In any event, a closer reading of the passage on casuistic law (Deut. 24), which the Pharisees attempt to cite as their proof for their unbridled divorce practices, reveals that they are inappropriately using Scripture, just like Satan used it against Jesus (Matt. 4:1-11). In Deuteronomy 24, Moses describes a number of conditions (indicated by the “if/then” clauses) which do come about. In describing the multiple divorces which were occurring among the Jews, Moses refrained from passing any further judgment since God had already passed judgment elsewhere. He proceeds to regulate, but he does not sanction their practice. Through these regulations, he attempted to limit or restrict the practice, not to legitimize it as such. He did not want these hard hearted men to continue in their multiple divorces and remarriages in further violations of God’s law. Moses’ law was not designed to encourage divorce. To the contrary, it was intended to restrict divorces which were already a sinful custom among the Jews who, had disregarded God’s law

of marriage due to the “hardness of their hearts” (Matt. 19:8).

Quite rightly, Jesus tells the Pharisees that Moses did not command them to divorce, rather, he put up with it. Since they were going to divorce their wives anyway, (in violation of God’s law), Moses put in a restraining device. He was trying to quell the practice of multiple divorces and remarriages to which the women were being subjected. Whatever our understanding of what Moses did, Jesus is about to reveal that the Mosaic edict would be rescinded in His soon to be established kingdom. God’s original law of marriage is to be reestablished as the sole standard, and that was that.

Jesus tells the Pharisees that God never intended for there to be divorce from the beginning. Interestingly, God created multiple animals etc., but when it came to man, He created only one person of each sex. Adam and Eve would not have had anyone else to turn to if they divorced each other for they were made exclusively for each other. Therefore, it was not necessary for God to give His one exception to the law of marriage at that time. Similarly, Adam had no mother and father to leave in order to cleave to Eve. The “leave and cleave” terminology which God used proves the scope and intent of the law. Therefore, what was stressed in the garden is the foundation law of marriage, good for all people, for all times. This was not a law just for the garden, meant only for the first couple. Neither was it a Jewish law since, at that time, the Jews did not exist as a distinct race. When God gave His law of marriage in the garden he had all humanity in mind.

Naturally, Jesus uses this same “old” law to answer the Pharisee’s question. For He was there at the beginning with God (John 1:2) and He knew the scope



and intent of the law. Jesus makes direct application of the law to these stiff-necked Jews although they were several thousand years removed from it. This proves the enduring and universal scope of the law. It was a law for all humanity, for all times. By citing it in Matthew 19, Jesus was simply driving home the permanence of the marriage arrangement and reiterating that it is in fact a New Testament law. That is why Jesus was so slow in giving the one except under which a union could be broken up and a new one formed.

Although, the Pharisees feigned astonishment, Jesus was not giving them new legislation. He implied that God’s law had been written down and was available for them to peruse (Matt. 19:4a “...Have you not read...”). To be sure, God’s law was tight and this was what the Pharisees found troubling. God meant for marriages to be permanent. “Til death do us part,” is not a man-made idea. The wording may be man’s, but the idea is actually God’s and He put it into law.

The breakup of a marriage was envisioned only under the rigid technical point of one of the parties being sexually unfaithful.<sup>4</sup> The Pharisees knew that, but they wanted their practice of multiple divorces to be justified. They tried to persuade Jesus that Moses had loosed them from the strict bonds of marriage which God had given at the first union in the garden. Even if Moses had loosed them, someone greater than Moses was here (Heb. 3:3) and He was about to remove Moses’ provision.<sup>5</sup> Later all of the Mosaic law would be taken away and nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14)

### **God’s View On Remarriage**

Remarriage is a rare thing with God. Having expressed God’s desire for married people not to separate and end their marriages in divorce, the Lord gives the

one exception under which divorce is permitted by God. Apart from the dissolution of a marriage due to death (Rom. 7:1-3), the Scriptures give one legitimate ground on which a union can be dissolved and one of the parties be eligible for remarriage. Here it is in the words of Jesus; “And I say to you, **whoever** divorces his wife, **except for fornication**, and marries another commits adultery” (Matt. 19:9).

The only justifiable grounds for divorce and remarriage is adultery; sexual unfaithfulness. Only the one who has been sinned against when his/her partner committed immorality/fornication is free to pass on to another marriage without sin. I believe if you gave this context of Scripture to an honest and ordinary man who has the ability to comprehend simple truths, he would understand just what Jesus meant. His understanding would be similar to that of Jesus’ disciples. These untrained and uneducated men (Acts 4:13) understood the full meaning and implication of their Lord’s teaching with a great degree of wonder and shock (Matt. 19:10).

Fornication (*porneia*), as used in Matthew 19:9, means illicit sexual intercourse of any kind, including homosexuality or bestiality. It definitely refers to actual sexual intercourse, every kind of sexual intercourse, outside marriage. Combining the teaching in Matthew 5:32 with Matthew 19:9 here is the gist of Jesus’ teaching on divorce. One spouse cannot divorce his mate for just any reason. What Moses said in Deuteronomy 24 does not apply to the situation which the Pharisees brought up. Whoever puts his wife away except for fornication and marries another commits adultery and whoever marries her who is put away commits adultery.

Adultery (*moicheia*), throughout the Bible, is unlawful sexual intercourse between two parties, one of

which has a prior marital obligation. It is the more specific term which refers to intercourse where at least one of the persons involved has prior marital commitments to which he is still obligated. It has everything to do with sex. It is not enough to pass it off as any kind of covenant breaking. Those who postulate the view that adultery does not have anything to do with sex are dead wrong. The covenant breaking which can lead to legitimate divorce and remarriage is sexual unfaithfulness.

God only envisages one situation, apart from death, when a married person can remarry with His approval. Only the innocent party, who divorces because his spouse who has been sexually unfaithful to him, can remarry with God’s approval. God does not countenance divorce. Therefore, in the context of Matthew 19:9 during His discussion with the Pharisees, Jesus necessarily envisages a marriage involving two people who have never been married before. He taught His hearers that the only way ONE of those two parties can form another marriage is if he puts away his first wife because she is sexually unfaithful to him.

Sexual unfaithfulness has to be the reason for the “putting away” at the time of the divorce. It is not possible to put away one’s spouse for something other than fornication and then claim that fornication was the reason retroactively. Therefore, burning the toast, “irretrievable” breakdown of the union or falling out of love is not a legitimate reason for divorce. Jesus says that the only way a man can put away his first mate and marry another, without sinning, is if she was sexually unfaithful to him and that is the real reason why he divorced her.

Although in Matthew 19, Jesus speaks of the husband divorcing his wife and remarrying, the same standard applies to a wife divorcing her husband and

remarrying (Mark 10:11-12). There is no relaxing of God's standards if a woman desires to divorce her husband and remarry. Therefore, neither a husband or a wife is permitted to divorce and contract a second marriage for just any reason. There is only one legitimate reason: divorce due to sexual unfaithfulness.

So what about the party that has been put away because he has been sexually unfaithful? Is he free to remarry? Do his obligations before God end when his mate has remarried? After all, he is not the one who initiated the divorce. Why should he be consigned to a life of singleness? Surely he should be free to remarry if his spouse has divorced him and moved on. No matter how compelling these arguments are for remarriage, Jesus legislated only one reason which is acceptable to God. Like most things, the bottom line comes down to choice and consequence. If one mate chooses to be sexually unfaithful to his spouse, he is taking a huge risk as far as his married life is concerned, not to mention his soul. It is not automatic that a marriage must end in divorce; when one mate has been unfaithful. There can be forgiveness and a working out of the relationship. But, as far as the continuation of the marriage is concerned, the consequence is up to the other party who has been sinned against. If this was not the case, what regulation or restriction would there be on remarriage? There would be no possibility of adultery after a divorce if no restrictions were placed on any of the parties involved in the divorce. Adultery, as with all sin, carries serious and terrible consequences.

A crucial implication of Jesus' teaching is that people must check out the eligibility of their intended partner before they enter into a marriage. Do they have previous entanglements? If there are any previous marital

entanglements to which any of the parties had previously committed it must be ascertained whether they were legitimately freed from them. Starting from ground zero (the very first marriage of each party) is the only way to be certain of their eligibility. Someone has said that the best time to get a divorce is before you marry.

Jesus’ disciples recognized and acknowledged the stringency of the marriage law which Christ outlined. They suggested that singleness, life without ever being married, seemed to be a better course for a man to pursue. The disciples came to the realization that marriage was a binding contract. They understood that God was the enforcer, He holds man to his marriage vows. The disciples interpreted the law as being very rigid, narrow and restrictive. Their understanding was not in keeping with the liberal interpretation by which the Jews had been living. In crude terms, they saw Jesus’ provision as meaning marriage without the possibility of parole except for the one reason He gave.

### **The World’s View On Marriage**

In an attempt to accommodate his practice of multiple marriages, man has disregarded God’s law and replaced them with his own ideas. Regrettably, some of our own brethren are among those who are facilitating wholesale divorce and the breakdown of God’s family structure. To this end, they have come up with all kinds of neat little theories such as redefining adultery as covenant breaking. Surely the “act” of covenant breaking in which the adulterous woman was caught was not toast burning or excessive shopping. Moses did not stipulate that adulterers were to be stoned for mere “covenant breaking.” Based on the charge against the woman, only adultery attracted stoning (John 8:1-11; Lev. 20:10; Deut 22:22f.). What covenant was she caught in the act of

breaking which necessitated her stoning? Notice that Jesus called her action sin and told her to stop (John 8:1-11). Perhaps, the sin to which Jesus referred in his challenge to the woman's accusers was their own adulterous practices. Based on Matthew 19, we know that adultery was such a common practice among the scribes and Pharisees.

Like the Pharisees of Jesus' day twentieth century America believes that a nagging mate can be legitimately put away through divorce papers and another union entered into legitimately. The prevailing attitude is, "Try again, if it doesn't work the first, or, second, or third time," and even up to the eighth time, in the case of some of our celebrities and politicians. "Let's get out of this relationship and move on," or, "Keep trying until you find the one that's right for you." But God has mandated that people stick together and work things out.

Unfortunately, to preach on the evils of illicit divorce and remarriage is taboo even in many congregations of the Lord's church. Elders and members do not wish to hear anything mentioned from the pulpit on this troubling and divisive subject. The reason is that preaching the truth could cause many heartaches and the break up of too many families. It could even lead to congregational splits. So we are being destroyed for lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6). Like the Jews of Jeremiah's day, we love to hear teaching which ratify our illicit behavior (Jer. 5:31). We want to hear smooth things (Isa. 3:10). Like our first century brethren, we are fast resorting to gathering around us a number of false teachers who tell us what our itching ears desire to hear (II Tim. 4:3-5). In some congregations, a preacher cannot preach the truth on this subject without becoming the enemy of some (Gal 4:16). In fact, some elderships warn the

preacher to stay away from the subject.

While the subject must be handled with tact and tenderness, it must be handled. And it cannot be so sanitized that people miss the point. Certainly Jesus was compassionate as He discoursed on the subject, but even His close confidants got the point. Surely preaching the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27) means warning our young people about the seriousness of the marriage commitment as well as persuading others to take remedial action where necessary. America desperately needs the Lord's church to shine its light so that marriages and families can be strengthened by our preaching and example. But as it is, we are hiding the light through false living, by inventing our own doctrines, by failing to correctly interpret the Scripture and by our callous distortion of clear Scriptural teaching. We must develop the conviction that what breaks up families is no adherence to God's law of marriage, but the violation of this law.

In his discussion of submission in relationships in Ephesians 5, Paul says that the bond between a man and his wife is akin to the bond between Christ and the church. Since God does not want Christians to turn back or fall away from their commitment to Christ, why would he want marriages, which are supposed to mirror the union between Christ and His church, to break up? But the truth is that God wants people to keep their commitment and to stay together to work things out.

The claim by some of our brethren that the Scriptures are silent on the eligibility of the guilty party to marry is patently false and disingenuous. By stating who can remarry God forbids all others to remarry. Suddenly the silence of the Scriptures becomes an unsound principle of hermeneutics. Did Jesus not give

the one exception in Matthew 19? In any event, Matthew 5:32 makes it clear that the man who divorces his wife except for the cause of unchastity makes her commit adultery. Neither is the man who marries such a woman exempt from sin since Jesus says that by marrying her, he too commits adultery.

### **Conclusion**

It is not possible to deal with every nuance of argument which exist or is being developed on the subject. So I have outlined the truth on marriage, divorce, and remarriage. This is not the only subject on which God's truth is being repudiated and replaced with man made dogmas. When we distort or disregard God's Word our destruction is the inevitable consequence. Unfortunately, the pages of human history are littered with examples of those who refuse to conform to God's will. "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4). Let us be encouraged that we are not left in the dark to direct our own steps on this difficult and emotional issue. Only let us be willing to trust and obey God's direction so that hope will not disappoint us.

### **Endnotes**

1 I am deeply indebted to two sources for this sermon:  
(a) A sermon the subject of Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage delivered by Dr. Dave Miller at the Bonham Street church of Christ, Paris, TX on 10/13/97 and (b) An exposition of Matthew 19:3-12 by Dr. Earl Edwards of Freed-Hardeman University, Henderson, TN.

2 A direct quote from Dr. Edward's Article.

3 A direct quote from Dr. Miller's sermon.

4 Ibid

5 A direct quote from Dr. Edward's Article.





The  
Christian Home  
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**Husbands ~ Wives**

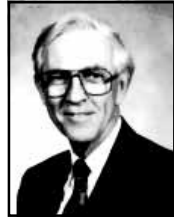


## Chapter 7

# Husbands...Love Your Wives

*Garland Elkins*

Garland has been preaching the gospel for half a century; known and highly respected throughout the brotherhood. For many years he worked with the Getwell church in Memphis and directed the *Spiritual Sword* lectureship. Presently he works with the Memphis School of Preaching. He is the author of "*The Saviour's Way*" and numerous tracts and fine articles. Garland and Corinne have three girls.



**F**or any institution to survive and do well it must have a head. The Lord God said to Eve, and about Eve,

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee (Gen. 3:16).

The inspired apostle Paul wrote,

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God (I Cor. 11:3).

Paul also wrote,

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body (Eph. 5:23).

The position of husband is one of responsibility. It

is a position not only of responsibility, but additionally it is an honor to be a husband. Let us together study some of the duties, privileges and responsibilities peculiar and applicable to the husband.

The husband must “*Leave*” his father and mother and “*cleave*” to his wife. In Genesis 2:24 we read,

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

The husband must love his wife in a different way, and put his relationship with his wife even before that of his father and mother. He does not love his parents less, but only in a different way. Jesus quoted the words of Genesis 2:24 and said,

...For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh (Matt. 19:5)?

From these passages we learn that the husband is to love his wife more than any other person. One could no nearer go to heaven without repenting than he could without loving his wife. Both are required by the Lord (Eph. 5:25).

Paul wrote on the subject of husbands and instructed them, “*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it*” (Eph. 5:25). Please note that Christ told husbands to “*Love your wives even as Christ also loved the church.*” From this we see that the Lord has put some very strenuous requirements on this particular love. “*Love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and **gave** himself for it.*” In other words love enough to die for her! Also Paul wrote to husbands and instructed them, “*So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself*” (Eph. 5:28). From

these scriptures we learn that men ought to love their wives as Christ loved the church, enough to die for them. Then in still another scripture we read, "*Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them*" (Col. 3:19). These three scriptures, Ephesians 5:25,28 and Colossians 3:19 show plainly, clearly, and concisely how much a man, the husband, is to love his wife! Let us give ourselves a test on this subject. Paul wrote,

Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth..." (I Cor. 13:4-8a).

Do we as husbands possess this kind of love for our wives?

A home that is correctly founded upon love will stand. Let each one of us determine to make our homes according to God's blueprint, the Bible.

1. He may do many of those nice things that he did for her before they married in order to show appreciation to her. Many of those little things that he did for her that meant so much to her during their courtship would still mean much to her. He should never have occasion to doubt her. However, those things that he did that pleased her so much before marriage would work wonders for their marriage, after they are married.
2. A husband can let the wife know how much he appreciates all of the many good things that his wife does in taking care of the home i.e.,

the children, and the multitude of tasks which she performs so well.

3. Husbands should look for the good qualities in their wives, and pay the wife true compliments relative to those matters.
4. Husbands should show maturity in the marriage. They should take the lead in mental and emotional leadership, and especially in spiritual leadership.
5. When there are children the husband should, as father, take the lead in bringing up the children “*in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*” (Eph. 6:4).
6. The husband should seek to understand and fulfill the needs of the wife. Peter wrote,

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (I Peter 3:7).

7. The husband should make it clear to the wife that she is necessary for his happiness. God, said that it was not good for the man to be alone. Husbands are not truly complete without their wives.
8. Husbands need to confide in their wives, but they should not burden them with every little detail of their problems.
9. Husbands should make certain that their wives are their best friends.
10. Husbands should above all, love their wives as Jacob loved Rachel.

And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few

days, for the love he had to her (Gen. 29:20).

### **The Husband Must Protect, Encourage, And Comfort His Wife**

Not only are we to love our wives, but we are also responsible for their general welfare.

Ye husbands, in like manner, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honour unto the woman, as unto the weaker vessel, as being also joint heirs of the grace of life; to the end that your prayers be not hindered (I Peter 3:7).

When we think about the wife our thoughts might be mostly of her physical comfort and her physical welfare, and they are certainly included in this. However, a husband has failed miserably if he is only concerned with his wife's physical comfort, and her physical protection. His most important responsibility to his wife is her spiritual well-being.

A good husband will be thoughtful of his wife. When the couple has small children it would be good sometimes to take the children to the grandparents if they live near, or if not to secure a reliable baby sitter, and the husband and wife, then go out for a brief period of time, perhaps to dinner, and to enjoy some wholesome entertainment. Likewise the husband should permit, and even encourage his wife and children to visit her parents a reasonable amount of time.

### **The Husband Must Support His Family**

The husband is charged by God with the responsibility of providing for the support of his family. Paul wrote,



But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel (I Tim. 5:8).

If you can think of anything that is **worse** than an infidel, it is a man who refuses to provide a living for his wife and children. Men should learn, and boys should be taught at an early age that when you marry you pledge your all, and all that you will ever have, to the support of your home: In the very nature of things as God has arranged it, the man is expected to take the lead in this area as the supporter of the family.

It should be pointed out that though God has made the man responsible for the support of the family there could be extenuating circumstances. A husband may have a lengthy illness, or lose his job and have difficulty finding another. However, in the normal course of affairs the God of heaven has charged the male, the head of the house, with the responsibility of providing for that household.

### **Some Important Matters For Marriages**

All members of the home need to seek ways that will help in making the home as God would have it. The following suggestions make the difference in the kind of homes that we have.

1. Build your marriage with Jesus Christ as its foundation (Matt. 7:24-27; I Cor. 3:11). Much planning, hard work, and an abundance of prayer (Phil. 4:6) are required in order to build a good marriage.
2. The husband should love his wife more every day, and his love should often be expressed. The same applies to the wife's responsibility to love her husband.

3. Do not gamble with your marriage. Build your marriage upon scriptural principles, and thus your marriage will be successful.
4. Marriage should be approached, and entered, with much prayer.
5. For marriage to succeed we must be willing to receive sound advice. Rehoboam, the young and ruthless ruler, refused advice from those older and wiser than himself. Good advice to the unmarried is: seek the counsel of those who have lived longer, and who love both God and you.
6. Married couples should do as many things together as possible. God made husbands and wives interdependent, not independent.
7. Couples need to spend much time in the study of the Bible. Likewise they should spend much time in communication with God.
8. If couples will solve the little problems, they will be in much better position to solve the big problems of life. Little problems are often more dangerous than the big problems. They are more numerous. They are harder to keep out of marriage. Sometimes it is harder to recognize little problems. They grow and multiply. Often they appear to have a destructive ability that exceeds the glaring, larger problems. The Bible admonition is to, "...let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Eph. 4:26). All problems should be properly dealt with instead of being ignored.

### **Some Rules For Happiness**

I do not know who wrote: "*Twelve Simple Rules For Happiness.*" However, they are excellent.

1. *Live a simple life.* Do not plan too many things for each day. Be temperate and moderate in your lifestyle.
2. *Spend less than you earn.* This may be difficult to do, but it pays big dividends in contentment and peace of mind.
3. *Think constructively.* Store useful thoughts in your mind.
4. *Cultivate a flexible disposition.* Resist the tendency to want your own way. Try to see another person’s point of view. Listen.
5. *Be grateful.* Begin each day with a prayer of thanksgiving for all your blessings.
6. *Rule your moods.* Your mental attitude is all-important in living at peace with others.
7. *Give generously.* Intelligent giving of your time, talents, personality, and money will bring great joy.
8. *Work with right motives.* Seek to grow in favor with God and man, seeking His will first in your life.
9. *Be interested in others.* As we serve others, we reap happiness as a by-product of a life of self-giving.
10. *Make the most of today.* Use it wisely so you may look back on it without regret.
11. *Take time for a hobby.* Time spent on leisure interests should bring you diversion and relaxation.
12. *Stay close to God.* Enduring happiness depends on continuing spiritual nourishment. As God’s children, we have His promise of constant love and care.

## **How To Prevent A Divorce Before You Marry**

Divorce has never been God's plan. He permitted it in the days of Moses because of the cruel way men treated women:

...because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so (Matt. 19:8).

But, what about some guidelines for today so that before you get into a bad situation, you will have done all you know to prevent divorce?

- **If you desire a Christian home and family**, then you do not even consider marrying someone who is not a Christian.
- **If your parents violently object to your choice**, then I would doubt if you should get married until you have had time to convince them of his/her character. Like it or not, you marry a person's family.
- **Do not marry someone who drinks**, even if it is "*just for fun.*" Remember, drinking or drunkenness is one of the chief causes for divorce.
- **Watch how your potential mate's parents treat each other.** If you don't like it, remember that they have been his/her model, and probably that's the way you will be treated. If you don't like it, then don't marry him/her.
- **Can he/she manage his finances?** A young man who cannot manage his money when single will not suddenly change when he gets married. Many divorces are caused by "*money troubles.*"
- **Is he/she truthful?** Can you depend on them to do what they say? Marriage is built on trust. If you do not have complete confidence in the person, don't marry him/her.

- **Can he/she hold a job?** A good test of a person’s ability to get along with others is in his/her job record. A failure here indicates a character flaw that should signal danger to you.
- **Is he/she a quitter?** Character is seen in one’s ability to “*hang in there*” when the going gets tough and not give up. One who gives up easily in other areas may give up easily on your marriage in the difficult times that are ahead. Don’t marry a quitter.
- **Does he/she abuse you physically or verbally now?** If he/she does so now, what makes you think that saying the marriage vows will change such conduct? In fact, in most cases such conduct becomes worse after the wedding. Why borrow trouble such as this? There are plenty of eligible prospects who will respect you—find a faithful Christian.
- **Be “picky” and patient.** Don’t fall for the first person who pays attention to you just because others may not have done so. Marrying out of a sense of desperation often results in failure. Don’t lower your Christian standards or compromise them. Go where faithful Christians are to be found.

### **Things I Wish I Had Known Before I Was 21...**

- That my health after thirty depended in a large degree on what I put into my body before I was twenty-one (I Cor. 6:19-20).
- How to take care of money (I Cor. 4:2).
- That a man’s habits are mighty hard to change after he is twenty-one (Prov. 13:15).

- That a harvest depends upon the seeds sown (Gal. 6:7).
- That things worthwhile require time, patience, and work (Rom. 8:25).
- That you cannot get something for nothing (Luke 14:28).
- The value of absolute truthfulness in everything (Eph. 4:15).
- The folly of not taking older people's advice (Prov. 2:1-2).
- That what my mother wanted me to do was right (Prov. 1:8).
- That dad wasn't an old fogey after all (Eph. 6:2).
- More of the helpful and inspiring messages of the Bible (Rom. 15:4).
- The greatness of the opportunity and joy of serving our fellowman (Gal. 6:10; Acts 20:35).

### **Endnotes**

1 The above articles "*How To Prevent A Divorce Before You Marry*" and "*Things I Wish I Had Known Before I Was 21...*" are from **Heaven Word**. A publication of the Jacksonville Christian Student Center at Jacksonville State University in Alabama.

## Chapter 8

# “Wives ... Submit ... Reverence”

*Curtis A. Cates*



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**A**s never before in this generation, or perhaps in any generation (in America—and in the Lord’s church), God’s pattern is under attack. Especially is this seen relative to His regulations concerning the home, the oldest sacred institution known to man. God’s authority in the home goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden, for there He made the original pair male and female (Gen. 1:26-27). As our Maker, God had/has the divine right to govern His creatures, His very offspring; He alone has the ultimate authority in the home.

God wants His offspring to be as happy as they can possibly be. He knows what is in man and thus is keenly aware of what brings true happiness and fulfillment. His divine pattern for the home is designed for that very purpose. When God’s instructions are heeded, we find our greatest joy; when abandoned and neglected, we confront our most dreaded tragedy and misery. The home should be a shelter and shield from the assaults and sorrows of the world; but, a failure in the home can bring our greatest pain.

Every person in the home has his or her own part in making the home a beautiful, blessed place, a haven of happiness and security; for any member of the family to fail in honoring God's pattern, the whole household is effected, and the intended happiness and peace of the family is marred. Just as surely as the one flower can send its fragrance throughout a room, the influence of one beautiful, generous, loving, sacrificing mate, parent, or child can enrich the happiness of the home; however, for the home to be truly happy, the husband, the wife, and each child must honor God's divine pattern for the home. As a smooth running engine depends upon every part, the beautiful painting upon the combination of each color, and the pleasant musical harmony upon each note, harmony and pleasure in the family depend upon each family member.

In a day of decadence and degeneracy, in a day of promiscuity and compromise, in a day of situation ethics and the new morality, in a day of license and no objective standard, in a day of rebellion and blasphemy, in a day of selfishness and bigotry, in a day of sodomy and living together, in a day of child and adult delinquency, in a day of glorifying Humanistic, atheistic, philosophy and theology,<sup>1</sup> the great East Hill church, their splendid elders, and their gifted and beloved evangelist, Paul Sain, are to be commended for this outstanding **Truth In Love Lectureship** on the great theme, "The Christian Home." This chapter shall investigate the Bible-based topic, "Wives...Submit...Reverence."

### **The Christian Home Under Attack**

The church of Christ is not a denomination; it is unique. It was established by Christ (Matt. 16:18-19) on the day of Pentecost of Acts 2, and it is guided by Holy Writ. The role the Christian woman can and should



assume in the church is established in the Word. That role, which finds its foundation in the Garden of Eden, is increasingly coming under attack by those who have little or no regard for Biblical authority (Col. 3:17). Some have declared “war” against the divine pattern of men functioning in the leadership role in the church.<sup>2</sup> In a “kind of robed rebellion,” “many are upsetting their churches’ patriarchal hierarchies, teaching and traditions.” “Today, most Protestant denominations in the United States admit women to the ministry,” Mary Tabor reports in **Woman’s Day**. She reports that according to some, those refusing to allow women preachers make them “second-class citizens.” Tabor further reports,

Besides challenging the structure of the hierarchy, women are altering the sound of the services.

For example, some Christian congregations who formerly sang ‘He Leadeth Me’ and talked of ‘God the Father,’ are now using references such as ‘Father-Mother God.’ And Jewish services, once exclusively patriarchal in tone, may include ‘God of our fathers and mothers, of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.’

One group, Chicago Catholic Women, has forgone conventional masses in favor of experimental worship services led by women. Words like ‘Father’ and ‘Lord’ are replaced with ‘Loving God’ and ‘Weaver of Our Experience.’<sup>3</sup>

In a work entitled, “Submission, not Inferiority,” Annette B. Cates asked,

Is the Christian woman denigrated by her submission to the authority of her Creator?  
Does this submission make her an inferior,

second-class citizen of the kingdom? Does the fact that women are making significant contributions in the secular realm (in the workplace, corporate leadership, governmental positions, etc.) authorize them to assume leadership positions in the spiritual realm?

In every issue, there are extremes of opinion. Truth is usually somewhere in the middle. One of the extremes is the idea that a woman can do anything in the church she chooses to do, that any restrictions from the New Testament are purely cultural with no implications for us today, that all we do in the church is bound in tradition, and traditions change. To withhold opportunities from woman, they say, is sexist, prejudicial, ignorance, and implies that she is inherently inferior to the male leadership, thus a second-class person, exploited by that leadership. The other extreme would deny a woman any leadership, educating, or supervisory role, i.e., teaching English in a high school or college classroom, or being over male employees in a business setting, or holding political office.<sup>4</sup>

In describing radical feminism, Annette wrote,

Many women react to 'submission' with anger. The woman's movement uses the symbol of a clenched fist molded into the ancient symbol for female. Not only are these women not submissive, they actively seek **control** of churches, homes, social organizations, businesses, and governments. Why should women feel insecure with such terminology as 'mankind' and 'chairman?' Why do we now have to use the convoluted but 'politically correct' equivalents, 'person-kind' and 'chair-person?' Some are going to the extent of spelling 'women'

and ‘wimmin!’ It is this writer’s opinion that it goes back to a lack of understanding of **personal** value. The use of the generic ‘man’ for all people—male and female—does not devalue the **woman**, just as leadership of men does not devalue the worth of woman.<sup>5</sup>

The crowning acts of God’s creation was the creation of woman, after which He pronounced, “...behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:31). Through the ages, the influence of woman has been powerful. “The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world.” The history of womanhood is the history of nations. To determine a nation’s moral fiber, look at the morals of its women; they mold its future.

As the woman is vital to society and civilization, she is necessary to the existence of the Lord’s church. Think of the indispensable support and encouragement given by women to the Lord during His personal ministry, to the apostles during the early days of the New Testament church, and to the work of congregations everywhere today. So likewise is the God-given role of woman critical to the existence of the Christian home, the home as God would have it.

In our day and age on the other hand, Don McWhorter observes,

Sadly, some women are unhappy with being a woman. They classify childbearing as a burden and the institution of marriage a farce. They view the patriarchal family as a form of female slavery and classify the Bible and Christianity as women’s greatest enemy. Yet they do not rally around a feminine image. Though they may address God as **Her** and proclaim a goddess religion, their icons, as feminists are male women. They dress women in pants and coat, complete with shirt and business tie and say, ‘You’ve come a long way, baby!’ Such

feminists rebel against everything that is female. If men dressed and acted in such opposite ways how would we classify them?<sup>6</sup>

In his excellent work, brother McWhorter points out that the feminists has “a new agenda for this age” and “is seeking self-satisfaction and glory.”<sup>7</sup> In his work which is designed to “honor godly women,” he had praise for the women’s having organized to bring about women’s suffrage in America, leading to the nineteenth amendment to the Constitution (1920). However, he observes that the modern feminists movement is different.

Brother McWhorter points out that the feminists today are challenging God’s authority to govern mankind relative to the spiritual roles of the man and the woman through the Bible. They are attacking the very foundation principles found in the historical record of Genesis one through three. He points out that feminists are divided into several segments within the movement. First, there are the “radical feminists,” those who deny any connection to God and the Bible but their philosophy is a “religion.” In fact, they are anti-Bible.<sup>8</sup> He wrote,

Radical feminists are violently anti-male. Such organizations as WITCH (Women’s International Conspiracy out of Hell) and SCUM (Society for Cutting Up Men) give some idea of their nature and intent. Patriarchy is their number one enemy and they vow a violent overthrow of it. (Though not violent in their actions, all segments for the feminist movement are allied by their common fight against patriarchy. In their eyes it has been the source of **all** evil. WITCH characterizes marriage as ‘dehumanizing institution—legal whoredom for women.’<sup>9</sup>

Second, there are the “moderate feminists,” who are

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somewhat less radical. Though still opposed to Biblical values, they seek to bring about changes relative to home and religion. They have softened in their attitudes toward those women who seek to marry or co-habit and bear children. They yet oppose traditional values in family life and in the church.

Third, there are the so-called “Christian feminists,” wishing to assume authoritative, leadership roles in churches. McWhorter quoted **Newsweek**, February 13, 1989, as saying that these feminists are no longer satisfied with having more women preachers as their main aim:

Instead, ‘their aim is a thorough and comprehensive transformation of the language, symbols, and sacred text of the Christian faith and therefore of the faith itself.’<sup>10</sup>

Instead of male names and pronouns used for deity in the Bible, the feminist “Bibles” use the preferred female names and pronouns. They really have a problem with the idea that a male Jesus can save them.<sup>11</sup>

Fourth, there are the “Biblical feminists,” McWhorter says. These he defines as averring loyalty to the inspired Word of God but arguing that “culture” rules out the authority of the Bible in this century. Besides, Paul likely was biased against women and was mistaken relative to the teachings of Genesis and Christ. Other passages were mistranslated because of a similar bias. They call for a “new hermeneutic.”

An example of trying to get around the universal, timeless principles of Genesis one and two may be seen in the book **Chauvinist or Feminist? Paul’s View of Women**. Richard and Joyce Boldrey wrote,

...those who emphasize Paul’s teaching on women’s submission overlook the fact that for him submission is a universal principle,

applicable to all Christians, that it did not make females and males different kinds of people, and that each is to be subject to the other – not because of the other’s “place” but because of reverence for Christ.<sup>12</sup>

They wrote further,

The old orders were characterized by the law and came about as a result of Eve’s and Adam’s sin. Traditional commentaries have based their view of women’s subjection on the rabbinic interpretation of the orders of creation (woman was created after man and hence is inferior to him) and transgressed (she sinned first and so is inferior).

We acknowledge that Eve was created second but do not consider this sufficient cause for her subjection, since both she and man were created in God’s image and both in their worship have direct access to Him. Eve, weakened by her sin, usurped God’s authority over Adam, and he sinned. God’s curse broke their unity with Him and with each other, and the law codified the differences between them. But Christ’s coming broke down all the rules and regulations, including the Jews’ privileged position, the master’s control, and the males’ authority over females (Gal. 3:28).

No longer was only the weaker to submit to the stronger, but each was to submit to the other out of love for Christ, who by making Himself the lowest became the highest.<sup>13</sup>

The fallacies in the above arguments will be noted later in this work.

Brother McWhorter observed that the churches of Christ have not been uninfluenced by the women’s liberation philosophies. He cited Lynn Mitchell and Robert

Randolph, who attempted to defend their feminist positions in the 1990 Freed-Hardeman University forum on the work of women in the church, in which they warned that if the Lord’s church does not place women in leadership roles, then more and more women are going to depart from the church.<sup>14</sup> He also cited the Cahaba Valley Church of Christ, Birmingham, Alabama, as “arguing against male-only authority in spiritual leadership.”<sup>15</sup> Note how they pervert the Scriptures:

Bobby Lee Holley labeled the passages from Paul that deal with the spiritual leadership of man and submission of women as ‘rabbinical trappings, the innate prejudices of a patriarchal school structure, psychological ignorance, and obsolete structural patterns.’<sup>16</sup>

She blamed some “unknown scribes of a later period” for having added the non-Biblical passages,<sup>17</sup> an untenable position.

The Women’s Liberation Movement, which is motivated by “non-Christian and anti-Christian principles,” “a secular movement with a secular cause,”

...is confessed a revolutionary movement. It seeks to uproot marriage and the family and all conventional male-female relationships. It aims to power and rule by the sheer weight of female numbers and has spawned radical feminist groups such as WRAP (Women’s Radical Action Project) and WITCH (Women’s International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell).<sup>18</sup>

This desire to assume more powerful and rule is seen in Naomi Wolf’s book, **Fire With Fire: The New Feminine Power And How It Will Change The 21st Century**, which book is designed,

...to lead the women of America in their final siege to gain control of the male-dominated

institutions and social structures in this country. She thinks it's almost a done deal. And as leader of the pack, she just might help to pull it off.<sup>19</sup>

Patti Doten quotes Wolf as saying,

'It's time for us to use our collective clout and force change. After all, women represent 51 percent of the population. It's totally illogical for anyone to yield power, so we can't sit back and wait for men to give it up. It just won't happen. We have to take it.'<sup>20</sup>

'To avoid ostracism, girls make nice,' says Wolf, who stresses that women must move from victim feminism or powerlessness to power feminism and the exercising of a long-sublimated will to rule.<sup>21</sup>

This article in the secular realm has also impacted the religious, even in the Lord's church and in the Christian home. What does the authoritative, inerrant, inspired Word of God teach regarding the role of the wife in the Christian home?

### **The Wife In The Christian Home**

Very vital to this study is the fact that Christ is the one who controls the Christian home. In fact, He has all authority (Matt. 28:18), and the will of Christ is revealed in the teaching of the New Testament, the apostles' doctrine (John 14:26; 16:13; Acts 2:42; II Peter 1:3). Thus, the Christian family is one whose relationships are aimed at pleasing Christ.

### **The Christian Husband's Responsibilities**

The Scriptures are clear relative to the role of the husband. God's line of authority in the home is revealed in I Corinthians 11:3, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the



woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” Note Ephesians 5:23: “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.” Then, observe Paul’s words to Timothy in I Timothy 5:14. “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, rule the household...” Thus, the order of authority established by God is as follows: God–Christ–Husband–Wife–Children.

As head of the family, the husband must be a responsible person in capability and performance. He must be the proper leader. As God is the head of Christ, the husband is the head of the wife. This relationship does not indicate superiority versus inferiority, but a difference in role and in areas of responsibility. Christ is not inferior to God; both the husband and the wife are equal before God; they are one in Christ. The husband must realize, though, that his responsibility involves financial, moral, ethical, and spiritual responsibilities. If he humbles himself before his head, Christ, the woman will not be reticent to submit to his headship, knowing that he will do what is best for her welfare, protection, and growth as well as for the children. The thoughtful husband will not “lord it over” the wife; he is not a dictator or a tyrant! He will carry out his responsibility in love, considering also the wife counsel and wishes of his wife (Eph. 5:25, 28-33).

The husband must assume his leadership role. Eve was told in the Garden, “...thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee” (Gen. 3:16). Jehovah said of Abraham, “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment...” (Gen. 18:19). Joshua did likewise (Josh. 24:15). To abdicate the husband’s responsibility is to sin grievously! It is your full time job, husband, not to be assumed on

an inconsistent basis. "Show thyself a man!" Do not forsake your role as husband and cause your wife to feel she must assume your God-given responsibility.

The husband is also to assume his responsibility and headship on religious matters. How tragic it is to forsake and disobey the command, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4)! The greatest bond which should exist between husband and wife is their common, mutual love for the Lord. Some husbands love and are devoted to their wives, but they fail their mates here. They want them to serve the Lord and bring up their children in the Lord alone. In the greatest responsibility of the marriage, he abdicates his responsibility. How tragic, how wrong to treat one's wife! In the deepest area of love, sympathy, and devotion, the wife must go alone. She must learn of God alone, become a Christian alone, worship alone, serve the Lord alone, bear the responsibility of rearing the children in the Lord alone, and approach God's throne alone. Extremely sad, if his attitude persists, she will hear God say, "Well done," alone.

How wonderful it is for the husband to unite with the wife in the Lord! Think of the burdens lightened and the smile brightened, of the enhanced joys of the marriage relationship and the more close-knit union of hearts, of the renewed strength and hope through prayer and the heightened comfort and blessing through God's grace. Think of the new zest and excitement of having a family—husband, wife and children—traveling hand in hand unto that "land that is fairer than day."

The leadership and authority of the husband is from God; it is a gift. The husband must be a good steward in fulfilling his responsibility relative to this gift. He must be submitted to Christ, his head. He must not

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forget his responsibility to love his wife, as Christ loved the church, and to sacrifice himself for the wife. Both are to humble themselves before God; both are servants. Christ, though the head of the man, came to serve (Matt. 20:25-28). As husbands, we look to Christ as our example. And, husbands must seek to understand and be sensitive to the needs, emotions, and feelings of their wives.

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (I Peter 3:7).

Think of the sensitivity of Elkanah of his wife, Hannah. “And Elkanah her husband said unto her, Hannah, why weepest thou? And why eatest thou not? And why is thy heart grieved? Am I not better to thee than ten sons?” The command is also to bestow honor on the wife; she is very deserving of great praise and respect.

### **The Christian Wife’s Responsibility**

In the Christian home according to the Biblical model in Ephesians 5:22, 24, the wife is subject to her husband. “Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord...as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything.” “As unto the Lord” indicates that the wife is to look beyond him to God; she is in subjection to him as unto God. It is a loving type subjection, as the Christian wife lovingly subjects herself to the lordship of Jesus. As noted earlier, God’s order is God the head of Christ, Christ the head of the husband, and the husband the head of the wife. The wife in role and function is never called head.

Some feminists have averred that the word “head” (Gk. **Kephale**) actually means “origin” or “source” rather

than “rule or authority over.” The example often used is the origin, or headwaters of a river. They go to I Corinthians 11:8, “...but the woman of the man.” In other words, Adam was not made for woman, but he was the source of woman. He is not over his wife, but he is rather just where she originated; she is not subordinate to her husband. However, there are critical, fatal problems with this liberal reasoning. One, if “head” means origin or source, then because God is the head of Christ (I Cor. 11:3), then Christ originated from God and has not eternally existed as a person Himself, not in the Godhead. Rather, the meaning is that Christ is subordinate to God (I Cor. 15:27-28; et al.).

Two, “head” **cannot** mean origin or source. Brother McWhorter cited the scholarly research conducted by Wayne Grudem, in the book, **The Role Relationship of Men and Women**, thus:

The conclusion of this scholarly work was that there is not one example (in a survey of 2,336 examples in Greek literature) of the Greek word for ‘head’ ever being used in the sense of ‘source.’ Citing that work (Walter) Liefeld and others chided their liberationist compatriots who insist that ‘head’ does not imply authority. No work of scholarship from the first century through the twentieth century ever assigned any meaning to the word **head** except ‘authority over.’ Christ is the **head** of the church, Paul argues. It is the same as the statement made by Jesus Himself when He said, ‘All authority had been given me’ (Matt. 28:18).<sup>22</sup>

Other feminists have averred that Paul’s reference to the submission of the wife to her husband is simply an enlargement upon the mutual submission that all Christians (male and female) have to each other, per

Ephesians 5:21, “...submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ.” Richard and Joyce Boldrey wrote, as noted earlier,

...those who emphasize Paul’s teachings on woman’s submission overlook the fact that for him submission is a universal principle, applicable to all Christians, that it did not make females and males different kinds of people, and that each is subject to the other—not because of the other’s ‘place’ but because of reverence for Christ.<sup>23</sup>

Such argumentation disregards the fact that Ephesians 5:21 is in the context of the relationship which Christians (males and females) sustain with each other in living the Christian life generally and in the reciprocal nature of worship in song in the assembly [in the immediate context (5:19)]. The relationship between husband and wife begins with verse 22 and continues through verse 33. It is the same as Paul commands wives in Colossians 3:18-21, “Wives, be in subjection to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord...” Where is a man, a husband, ever told to submit to a woman, a wife? This is a submission that is **specific in marriage**, not as Christians do one to another. Contrast the headship of the husband and the submission of the wife in marriage, to the “lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself” required by all Christians to each other (Phil. 2:3-4).

Three, still others say that Christ removed the subjection of the wife to her husband, which was brought about as result of Eve’s having been the first to sin. They say that Christ’s coming broke down the partition between Jew and Gentile—and also between the husband’s authority over the wife in the home. It is true that all are **one “in Christ,”** per Galatians 3:27-28:

For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

However, there is a very real sense in which we remain males and females, and the New Testament abounds in regulations governing both (e.g. I Cor. 7; I Tim. 5; Titus 2; et al.). If there is no longer at times bond or free (by the same argument), why did Paul give regulations to Christians who might find themselves in these circumstances (I Tim. 6:1-2; See also Philemon 15-21).

Again, the context is vital. Both the male and the female become heirs of the spiritual promise through Abraham of all spiritual blessings in Christ, as is clearly shown in Galatians 3:29, the very next verse. Where is found any indication that when Christ died, He would abolish the headship of the husband in the home, or abolish the leadership of males in the church of Christ? There is none!

Four, even others aver that the leadership of the men in religious matters and the headship of the husband in the home is but a matter of culture. Why did Paul in I Corinthians 11 and I Timothy 2:11, 13 base his argument upon the created order—Adam first formed, then Eve? Is that culture? And, why in I Timothy 2:14-15 did Paul refer back to the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3) and the fact the woman was beguiled and the first in transgression, whereas Adam was not beguiled? Were not these facts the basis of Paul's prohibition for the woman to teach or in any other way to exercise dominion over the man in religious matters? Also, in I Corinthians 11:3, "the head of Christ is God;" is that relationship only cultural? If not, neither are the relationships of Christ being head over the man and the man being head over the woman.

Now, we hasten to remind you, dear reader that subordination is not inferiority. This writer is not president of the United States, but is subordinate to him. However, the writer is not inferior to the president of the country. Again, Christ, though subordinate to God, is not inferior to Him (John 1:1-3, et al.).

### **The Christian Wife And Submission**

For any organization to succeed, it must have a head. This principle includes the marriage institution, the home. One member of the home must be the head, to whom the others in the home (including the wife) are to submit. Older women are to “train the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children...being in subjection to their own husbands” (Titus 2:2-5).

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord (Col. 3:18-20).

“In like manner, ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands” (I Peter 3:1). This subjection is to the husband, who is to submit to the Lord. The husband violates God’s law when he demands the wife submit to sinful, demeaning, ungodly demands, not pleasing to the Lord. She is not in such slavery to her husband as to be expected to depart from Christ or violate His will to please her ungodly mate (I Cor. 7:15). Of course, the believing wife is married to and is under obligations to fulfill her duties to an unbelieving husband, living as a loving Christian and companion with him (I Cor. 7:3-5, 10-14; I Peter 3:1-6). The universal principle is, though, “We must obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29). The husband who truly loves his wife will not make sinful, unbecoming demands of her. And, the wife will seek to please her

husband in all things (Eph. 5:24). And, the husband must never forget that he is also in submission—to Christ. And, let the husband not forget that the wife is still a person, an individual; she also may have aspirations and ambitions relative to personal successes and service, as the worthy woman of Proverbs 31. Her husband did not feel threatened by such, but arose and called her blessed; he had complete trust in her.

Paul urged, “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband” (Eph. 5:33, KJV). The American Standard Version (1901) reads, “...and let the wife see that she fear her husband.” The wife honors the headship of her husband in such a way that she places him in the position of head. He is her leader, under Christ. She is free to voice her convictions and thoughts; she is not a manipulative schemer, neither is she a slave. She realizes that the greater burden and responsibility falls upon him; he will make mistakes at times. She will be encouraging to him, and not nag. She will seek to be content (Phil. 4:11). She will exhibit patience, affection, loyalty, optimism, selflessness, a lack of materialism, a joy of living, loving support, and be available to meet her husbands physical needs, as he hers. Whereas the man is the head of the family, she has been described as the emotional hub of the family. Especially must she be a Christian.

### **Conclusion**

The relationship between husband and wife is not a matter of culture; it transcends culture. Principles governing the home are universal in nature, reaching all the way back to when the sacred bond of marriage was instituted. No human “theology” or philosophy can negate God’s universal absolutes, applicable to all mankind. The



bonds of matrimony are holy. One tampers with God’s will in marriage to the destruction of his own eternal soul, brings upon himself untold misery in this life, and deprives himself of some of this world’s greatest joy—the joy of a Christian home.

## Endnotes

1 The above taken from the author’s chapter, “God’s Pattern for the Home—Husbands,” in Bobby Liddell, ed., **God’s Pattern For Christian Living** (Pensacola, FL: Bellview Church of Christ, 1993), p. 63-76.

2 Mary Tabor, “The Holy War,” **Woman’s Day** (July 20, 1993), p. 66.

3 Ibid., p. 68.

4 Annette B. Cates, “Submission, Not Inferiority,” in Curtis A. Cates, ed., **Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon: Divine Wisdom on Life, Love, and the Mutual Affection of Christ and the Church** (Memphis, TN: Memphis School of Preaching, 1994), p. 587.

5 Ibid., p. 592-593.

6 Don McWhorter, **God’s Woman: Feminine or Feminist?** (Huntsville, AL: Publishing Designs, Inc., 1992), p. 4.

7 Ibid., p. 5.

8 Ibid., p. 9-10, 34.

9 Ibid., p. 10-11.

10 Ibid., p. 12.

11 Ibid., p. 12, 34.

12 Richard and Joyce Boldrey, **Chauvinist or Feminist? Paul’s View of Woman** (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976), p. 67.

13 Ibid., p. 70.

14 McWhorter, p. 14.

15 Ibid., p. 50.

16 Ibid., p. 34.

17 Ibid.

18 Neil R. Lightfoot, **The Role of Women: New Testament Perspectives** (Memphis, TN: Student Association Press, 1978), p. 8.

19 Patti Doten, “Author Is Armed for Power Feminism,” **The Commercial Appeal** (December 14, 1993), p. C-1.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., p. C-4.

22 McWhorter, p. 48-49.

23 Boldrey, p. 67.

## Chapter 9

# What Husbands Need To Know About Wives

*Robert R. Taylor, Jr.*



Robert graduated from Freed-Hardeman, David Lipscomb, and George Peabody Colleges ~ Faithfully preaching the gospel for almost fifty years ~ Has worked with the Ripley, TN congregation for over twenty years ~ An outstanding writer ~ More than two dozen books in print ~ Written for many journals and brotherhood papers ~ Irene and Robert have two children.

**D**eep appreciation is expressed to Paul Sain, the elders and this entire congregation for the privilege and pleasure of appearing on this exceptionally fine lectureship year after year. I am especially delighted that we are making a study of marriage and the home this year. It is an idea whose time has come.

In the marvels of matrimony ignorance is no part of bliss. Knowledge of one's marital mate is an intense imperative. This is true of husbands; it is true of wives. Peter, a married man himself and one who led about his wife in his apostolic travels, knew that knowledge was indispensable. In I Peter 3:1-6 Peter gave sound and solid counsel to Christian wives relative to their unbelieving husbands and how to convert them to Christ. Then he addressed a needed note to husbands in words of weight and wisdom,

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being

heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (I Peter 3:7).

Husbands cannot dwell with wives within a knowledgeable framework if they are ignorant of the womanly make-up. Man is complex; so is woman. Seeking for a better understanding of one’s marital mate makes for good, common sense. To ignore such a marital quest is a sure vote for a disintegrating marriage. It takes a heap of work to blend and bond two lives into a happy and well-adjusted union where the marital music is played out in harmony and rhythm. It can be some of the sweetest music possible this side of heaven when both play the same notes.

I propose to number and note some fourteen essentials in answer to this challenging inquiry.

### **1. Know Of Her Queenly Origin**

We do not have to be in the dark about how man came to be, how woman came to be or how marriage originated. “*By faith*” we know. Genesis depicts the beautiful beginning of all this thrilling trio—man, woman and marriage. Adam and Eve were created by God the very same day with Adam’s being made first. After making the man God surveyed the lonely, incomplete Adam and stated that it was not good for man to be by himself. As long as he was alone, he was only half of human kind. The other half, the Queenly half, needed to be made. God prompted a deep sleep to descend the incomplete man. While asleep God performed painless surgery. He removed a rib and, perhaps some flesh also, from Adam’s riven side. From this God builded (literal import of the Hebrew term) a woman. His building skill was consummately perfect. The product turned out was indescribably beautiful, gracious and charming. She was

Jehovah's crowning act of creation. She would be both the heart and the heartbeat of matrimony. Minus her the marvels and majesty of marriage would have never materialized. Witnessing initially the good, great and gracious creature now his and at his side, he was led to exclaim, "...*this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man*" (Gen. 2:23). Look at the kingly kinship between **man** and **woman** in our English language. The Hebrew words for man, **ish**, and for woman, **ishshah**, are just as intimately close. Note the same closeness between **male** and **female**.

This worthy wife was from the Lord and great was his gratitude for her and his immediate love toward her. Solomon reinforces the heavenly origin of wives by writing some three thousand years ago that "...*a prudent wife is from the LORD*" (Prov. 19:14). Every man who has a prudent wife is beautifully blessed and excellently enriched.

## **2. Know That She Is A True Help Meet**

This was God's original intent in the fashioning and forming of woman. After stating that loneliness was not in Adam's best interest the Mighty Creator said, "...*I will make him an help meet for him*" (Gen. 2:18). Note that this is not helpmate, as is frequently quoted and understood. It is help—one word; it is meet—one word. The woman about to be made was to be a helper worthy of man. Likewise, he was to be worthy of her. It is a two-way street and each must travel one of the lanes. God intended her to be a completion for man. She would make up what was obviously lacking in man. She was a worthy and wonderful object for him to love, honor, cherish, sustain and protect. Man is more course by nature; woman is more refined. The feminine touch in

marriage supplies a needed blessing of beauty for man. He needed her as lover, confidant, partner, motivation, encouragement and fellow traveler down the pathway of life. He needed her as spiritual comrade. He needed her to worship with him, pray with him and as a shield against what later would result in a world filled with burdens, trials, tribulations and temptations. In all necessary realms in which man needs help the woman, as wife, plays a very important role. How wonderful is a good help meet!

### **3. Know Her As A Good Find**

This is how preciously and precisely the Wise Solomon expressed it excellently, eloquently and elegantly, “*Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD*” (Prov. 18:22). However, as is implied, she must be a good person for the finding of her to be described as good. Equally important is the goodness inherent in the husband who seeks to woo and win a good wife. Some years back I read of an interview with a young man who had been in service. He spoke openly and candidly of the many women he had known sexually. Like a magnet he had been drawn to lax and loose women in his dating choices—many of them one-night stands. He bemoaned the lack of virgins among women. He failed to realize that men like he was reduced the number of virginal women! He said he dreamed one day of marrying a pure virgin. Evidently, it never dawned on this wanton man of the world that such a wife, if he found her, would not have a virginal vessel in him at the marriage altar or in the honeymoon bed for the first time. It would be the case of her bringing virginal purity to the wedding altar and his bringing a marred vessel to that same altar. He wanted to practice a double standard in wife selection

with what he had to offer her.

Isaac viewed Rebekah as a good find; Jacob viewed Rachel as a good find; Joseph viewed Asenath in Egypt as a good find; Amram looked upon Jochebed as a good find; Moses did the same with Zipporah; so did Elkanah toward holy Hannah; so did Zacharias toward Elisabeth; so did Joseph toward Mary; so did Zebedee toward Salome; so did Aquila toward Priscilla.

Sons of God in Genesis 5 did not achieve good finds in marrying the daughters of men—righteousness teaming with ungodliness. Outlandish or foreign women were not good finds for Solomon, the very author of the current statement we are examining. Jezebel was not a good find for Ahab. No daughter of the devil ever is! Athaliah, daughter of Ahab and Jezebel, was no good find for Jehoram, son of the goodly Jehoshaphat in Judah or the Southern Kingdom. Foreign words were not good finds for the Jewish peers of Ezra and Nehemiah. When Herod Antipas married Herodias he surely did not make a good find but a very evil one as with the others portrayed in this paragraph.

Dutiful wives will make sure they stay “*good finds*” for their husbands.

#### **4. Knowing Her Need To Be Secure**

A man takes a beautiful young woman away from her parents who have loved, cared for and made her childhood and teen-age years secure. The mother and father give this young man their precious daughter—one they love better than life. He is lacking in manhood and character if he mistreats her, abuses her, refuses to be a provider for her needs and later reneges at any and all responsibility of fatherhood. Failure in any or all of these means he does not deserve to be called a man period!

A sweet, gentle wife needs the security of one who will love her and provide for her. She needs the security of his loyalty. She needs the security of his leadership in the family. Abdication here robs her of what a family should be. He needs to head the house. She does not need that heavy burden with all the rest she shoulders in marriage and family. She grew up with a fine father who headed her early family. In marriage she needs a fine husband who will do for her what her father did for her mother. She needs the security of trust. She should not have to agonize every time he is away whether he is maintaining marital loyalty to her. She needs the security of one who will join hands and heart with her in order that they might have a truly Christian home. She needs the security that he will back her in child-rearing guidelines and not undermine the discipline she has taken while he was away on the job or on an out-of-town trip for business. She needs the security of hope. If he is taken suddenly, she needs hope that he has not died outside Christ and His church. She does not need the heavy burden of facing life as a widow with fatherless children knowing that her husband died as a rebel against God. This is the very type of insurance that all too many husbands do not provide for the one(s) they leave behind. Many faithful Christian widows do not have a scintilla of hope of ever seeing their infidelic husbands ever again. How tragic; how heartbreaking! Husbands are the **ONLY** ones who can do anything about this momentous matter.

### **5. Knowing That Her Sexual Needs Are Met**

In the opening part of I Corinthians 7 Paul dealt with reciprocal duties of a sexual nature. The wife is not to deprive the husband of the joys of sex. The husband is not to deprive the wife of her *“due*

*benevolence*” either. She has a need to be loved sexually by him. A refusal in this vital realm of marriage is labeled by Paul as defrauding the deprived mate (I Cor. 7:5). Husbands and wives are told by apostolic authority, “*Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence [her due—ASV]; and likewise also the wife unto the husband*” (I Cor. 7:3). A man of my acquaintance sought to justify his adulterous liaisons by saying, “*She closed her bedroom door on me years ago.*” Obviously, he was not justified in turning to other women but neither was she guiltless in this matter of defrauding him. Many women have turned to other men because their own husbands robbed them of the sexual part of a fulfilling marriage. They are not justified in such but their negligent husbands do not have records free of guilt either!

## **6. Know Her Need For Full Commitment Or Total Loyalty**

This is reflected in Genesis 2:24 wherein Moses wrote,

Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Jesus reinforced this for marriage under His coming covenant as well. His enemies were thinking of dissolving marriage ties “*for every cause*” in Matthew 19:3. Jesus responded by saying,

...Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What



therefore God hath joined together, let not man  
put asunder (Matt. 19:4-6).

Paul, in discussing the majesty and marvels of matrimony in Ephesians 5:22-33, had his eye riveted on Genesis 2:24 and quoted it in verse 31. Full commitment is seen in leaving the parental fold and cleaving to the marital mate. Total loyalty is seen when children leave the family next and only husband and wife are left. Their marriage should then be stronger than ever as they face the sunset years together. A new bride and her husband pulled away from the church building on their honeymoon. The bride's grieving mother was overheard to say, *“There goes my last reason for living!”* Her husband tapped her on the shoulder and asked, *“Have you forgotten about me?”* Apparently, she had. How crushed he must have been! Marital love supersedes love for parents, love for children and even love for grandchildren. Husbands are charged to love wives as Christ loves the church (Eph. 5:25). This spells full commitment and total loyalty in breadth and beauty. We, as husbands, should know that we owe this commitment and loyalty to our wonderful wives.

## **7. Know Her Needs To Be Counted A Full Partner**

Aquila and Priscilla, immediately, come to mind. They are mentioned some six times in the New Testament. (1) They were fellow tent-makers with Paul at Corinth (Acts 18:2-3). (2) They traveled with Paul from Corinth to Ephesus (Acts 18:18-19). (3) They corrected Apollos, a deficient preacher relative to Great Commission baptism (Acts 18:25-26). (4) Paul admirably alluded to them in Romans 16:3-4 as a couple who helped him much, had laid down their lives for the preservation

of his own life and for whom he and others were so appreciative. (5) They housed the church in their own home in Ephesus as per I Corinthians 16:19. (6) Their final mention is in Paul's final chapter, II Timothy 4, where they again were saluted by Paul (v. 19).

When they are mentioned they are a team, a team of truth, a partnership in piety. They were partners in working with Paul. As a team they traveled with the greatest missionary of all time—the apostle Paul. They were partners in laying the groundwork for the cause to be established in Ephesus of Asia. As partners they helped deficient Apollos. They were partners in the aid they rendered Paul. They were partners in laying down their lives for Paul. They were partners in housing the church in their own home. This could not have been done had one of the team been defiant against such a congregating habit. They were together the first time we meet them; they were still together as partners the final mention made of them in Sacred Scripture.

Husbands need to know that wives are full partners with them in the marvels of matrimony. Other than the church of the Lord this is the greatest institution on earth. It requires three to enter into a great marriage—the Lord, man and woman. It takes three to make it permanent in peace and happy of heart—the Lord, husband and wife. Husbands and wives who are full partners with the Lord and with each other can experience a fullness of felicity in the majesty and marvels of matrimony that others know little or nothing about.

There was a time when husbands and wives spent most of their time together. They worked the fields together. They worked around the house together. They shopped together. They shared many of the same hobbies. Our era has become so very complicated with

husband pulled one way by his work, wife is pulled another way by her job, children are pulled another way by school and all other activities linked therewith. Being partners in marriage and in child rearing has become more and more difficult and complicated. Yet, I know couples who lead busy lives and yet they are partners in the fullest sense of the term. They still find time to do things together. They eat meals together either at home or at restaurants. They share common problems in their respective careers with each other. They worship together every time their home congregation meets. They vacation together. They rear their children as a team. Their children have BOTH a father and mother.

Husbands need to know that their wives are their closest partners in all the challenges of life.

### **8. Know Her Need For Quality Time**

Moses made a provision in recognition of this very principle for the beginning of a new marriage. He wrote,

When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken (Deut. 24:5).

This would have been an extended honeymoon period. We still have the honeymoon custom though it is considerably shorter than a full year, at least it is for most couples. Whether long or short the honeymoon allows quality time for the new couple. They need this time together when the world can be shut out and they can concentrate on each other. If they have remained virginal in the past, as they should have, the honeymoon allows them the initial joys of physical intimacy for the very first time and with heavenly smiles tendered upon

their sexual union. It can be an exciting time for both of them. Proverbs 5:18-19 reads,

Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.

Quality time is needed to keep a marriage well lubricated. Wise is the husband who says some “No’s” to those who would lock up ALL his leisure time in order that he might spend quality time with his wife. Birthdays and anniversaries should be special times with just husband and wife the focus of the planned events. A meal at her favorite restaurant will be special to a wife who does not get to dine out often. An overnight trip would be even better with just husband and wife.

When children grace the household there will need to be quality time for them. It is amazingly amazing how little time fathers now spend with their children. We are paying the high consequences of such parental neglect.

It is little wonder why both wives and children feel unloved and unwanted by the male figure of the household. He is seldom around!

## **9. Know The Need To Show Her Precious Worth**

Peter injects a great gem into his counsel for husbands in I Peter 3:7. The apostolic directive touches the giving of honor to her. This translates a Greek term which means precious. The man who is beautifully blessed with a wonderful wife should deem her as very precious indeed. She is precious as his lover—the only one with whom he can be physically intimate in a lawful

way. She is precious as homemaker. She is precious as the mother of his children and later down the line the grandmother of his grandchildren. She is precious as his sympathetic ear when problems plague him and he needs sound counsel. She is precious as his confidant. She is precious as together they study God’s word, pray together and worship together. She is precious when sorrows sweep into his life and he needs a Gibraltar upon whom to lean during the storms of life. She is precious as encouragement when trials and tribulations descend. She is precious to him when she is ill and he sees to her every need. She is precious to him when he is sick. She does not punch a time clock in ministering to his every need whether it be middle of the day or middle of the night. She is precious as she goes down into the very shadows of death to bring him a son or daughter. Childbirth pains are proverbial throughout the Bible and these reflect a wife’s love and a mother’s love in the delivery of a precious babe.

When wives are counted as precious there will be no harshness manifested toward them. Spouse abuse does not breed in marital frameworks where husbands count wives as precious and wives fully reciprocate.

Elkanah once said to his beloved Hannah, “...*am not I better to thee than ten sons*” (I Sam. 1:8)? Hannah was precious in the eyes of her husband. Ruth was precious in the eyes of Boaz both prior to marriage and subsequent to their marriage. The book of Ruth so attests.

## **10. Know Her Spiritual Needs**

Marriage should be a threesome—not a twosome. It should not be like a straight line with husband at one end and wife at the other. It should be triangular in shape with the Lord at the apex angle and husband and

wife at the base angles. This means both have a link with the Lord and with each other. Earth's first marriage was composed of a threesome—the Lord, Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:18ff). Names of the bride and groom are not mentioned in the marriage feast at Cana in John 2. Jesus was invited. Hence, we have the Lord, the bride and groom all present for the wedding in Cana of Galilee. When the Lord is the invited guest at marriage's beginning and continues to be the welcomed Guest in the future of that budding marriage and home formation, there will be a keen recognition of the spiritual aspects of that union. Husbands can aid wives to grow spiritually; wives can be of inestimable help in developing spiritually-minded husbands. This is why Christians should choose Christians for marital mates—not children of the devil as partners in life's most intimate relationship. When both are Christians, Bible reading will be an intense imperative. This is why prayer should grace every meal and be part and parcel of daily family life. This is why worship time together with a solid and sound congregation can be a cementing force for happy, holy and harmonious homes. Husbands should be the spiritual leaders of their homes. Most modern husbands renege here. How tragic when they do. Wives and children pay the costs as well as irreligious husbands.

### **11. Know Her Great Need To Be Loved Tenderly**

Greek-spelling people had a number of words for love—**eros**, **storge**, **phileo** and **agape**. The latter two are used with forceful frequency in the New Testament Greek text. Both terms are translated as love. **Phileo** is warm, emotional attachment and affection. **Agape** is love governed by the will, a love that can be commanded, a love that seeks the very best for the object of its

affection. Wives need a generous compounding, blending and bonding of **phileo** and **agape**. Both play a strategic role in the blending and bonding of husband and wife in the marvelous majesty of matrimony. Husbands are charged to love their wives as Christ loves the church (Eph. 5:25ff). He loves the church fully, sacrificially, selflessly and permanently. His is a giving love and a forgiving love. His is an expressed love from both lips and life. He spoke of His love for the church and eloquently exhibited it in sacrificial action. Marriages are frequently marred because husbands love themselves selfishly and feel little or no magnet of deep love drawing them to the very wife they promised, at a wedding altar, to love, honor, cherish and shield all the future days they both shall live. Love should be the golden tie that binds, blends and bonds a husband to his wife and a wife to her husband.

## **12. To Know The Adeptness Of Her Feminine Touch In The Home**

Men, as a rule, do not have the ability to beautify a house like women can do with masterful precision. They have that feminine touch that can make a house livable and lovable. They can turn the drab and dull into an area of attractiveness, a den of delight. It is little wonder then why God, in His wisdom, chose woman to be the keeper of the home, the wise worker in its domestic designs (Titus 2:5). Being a wonderful homemaker is part and parcel of the tremendous tribute the inspired scribe laid down at the feet of the virtuous or worthy woman in Proverbs 31:10ff. She looked well to the ways of her household. This included the lovable home she provided for her husband and children. Toward such right-thinking husbands and smart, well-mannered children will arise to bless and praise her (Prov. 31:28).

I have been doubly blessed in having such a woman as mother and such a woman as wife. In creation the Holy Spirit garnished or made beautiful the Universe. In human emulation of such worthy wives garnish or make beautiful the homes in which husbands and children inhabit. How grateful husbands and children should be for the Queens of our households.

### **13. Know Her Need To Feel Appreciated**

As grateful husbands we should let our wives know frequently that we appreciate all they do to make homes happy, harmonious and holy. *“Thank-you”* is still one of the most powerful of all communicative expressions we utter on any given day. It is a strange irony of our day when we know how to express gratitude to our peers in the workplace but feel little or no tug to do the same within the family framework. It would be of intense interest to know just how many wives NEVER receive one word of appreciation for meal preparation, keeping clothes clean and ironed, keeping a tidy house and a mountain load of other domestic duties wives do at home. Incidentally, wives should have the chief say-so in furniture arrangement, in kitchen set up, in how she wishes to hang pictures and paintings, etc. This is her domain and she has a natural mastery therein denied most men. Let her fix up the house as she dreams and then tell her often what a wonderful home manager she is. Along this line she has Scripture on her side. In I Timothy 5:14 Paul gave a directive for younger women to marry, bear children and guide, manage or rule the household giving none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. This does not nullify or negate husbandly headship. It gives her what she can do so well—fixing up the house, making it into a warm and cozy place of residence and setting the family tone for its success.



## **14. Know How To Help Her Go Home To Heaven At Last**

This is the very thing Peter envisioned in I Peter 3:7. Both husbands and wives are herein portrayed as Christians. Both are prayerful. Holiness of life and household harmony can work marvelously in keeping prayers from being short-circuited on their way to the heavenly throne of grace. Peter portrayed them as “...*being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered*” (I Peter 3:7).

As husbands we can be millstones around the necks of our wives pulling them down to eternal perdition. Or, we can be a marital helper, by example and teaching, for her to be in heaven in yonder’s world. When we help her, by example and teaching, to be saved eternally, we are enhancing our own going to that heavenly realm of rest, security, pleasure and fellowship with God, Christ, the Spirit, elect angels and all earth’s redeemed.

### **Conclusion**

Why not resolve to be the kind of husband to your wife God would have you be, the kind she most needs in a world filled with so many marred marriages and messed-up lives? As a husband I need to do this and so do you. And it should not take a denominational Promise Keepers’ organization to motivate us to do what we promised God and our brides at a wedding altar that we would do without fail! Why have not more of us done what we said we would do for a lifetime?

## Chapter 10

# Older Women (And Men) Teaching The Younger Women (And Men)

*Roger Banks*



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**O**ne of the greatest needs facing the New Testament Church today is the need to involve both the elderly and the young in active service of our Lord. We have for the last several years seen many congregations of the Church begin *“involvement ministries.”*

The need for greater involvement crosses all generational boundaries. We need the young of today involved in active service to Christ. We need the older and more experienced members of the church involved in active service. There is a place and a very great need for both the older and younger generations to be more active in the greatest work on earth!

We have heard much in the news media recently about the coming problems concerning Social Security and services for the elderly. There is a very real threat that Social Security will not be able to continue helping elderly people of America simply because the elderly constitute the fastest growing segment of American

society. More than 5,000 people celebrate their 65th birthday each day in America! In the 1980 census, more than 25,400,000 people over 65 were counted. In 1987 more than 27,000,000 were over 65 years of age. Today more than 38 million people are over 65 years of age. To say the very least, there is a very great potential for power and good in older people.

On the young side of the ledger, there is a great deal of disappointment. Young people that were reared in Christian homes are now leaving the Church in record numbers. Other young people that were reared in Christian homes are steadfastly refusing to become obedient to the gospel of Christ. The population of young men and women that are leaving the home to enter our schools and colleges or the workplace that have not yet obeyed the gospel has never been greater than it is today. Never in the long history of the New Testament church has more effort been made toward the saving and retaining of our young people. In almost all of the congregations of the Lord's Church that are capable of such, there is a very active program directed toward the young people of today.

About 2,000 years ago the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to address this problem. It was a problem in the New Testament church of the first century; it is a problem of the New Testament church of the 21st century. Paul wrote to Titus about the great need to speak sound doctrine. A very important part of the sound doctrine that was expected to be taught and preached had to do with the age and experience of the elderly generation and a profitable way to pass that information and experience on to the younger people. In Titus chapter two there is a very strong admonition to the older men and women to be proper examples that they may be

able to teach the younger men and women to be faithful in service to Christ. The information given in verses 2-8 are considered as “*sound doctrine.*”

Titus 2:2 says, “*That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.*” In practically every walk of life younger men have needed the example of older men to help them learn successful living. There is no place where this idea is more clearly stated than in the words of Solomon, the wisest man born of flesh in Proverbs 22:6, “*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*” Young men are as clay in the hands of more experienced and serious minded men. They (the older men) can form them (the younger men) to be vessels of honor and purity. This is exactly the method that Paul is representing to Titus in this letter. Older men can teach younger men to be sober minded and at the same time give them a living example of sobermindedness. To be soberminded is the ability to refrain from everything that is harmful or will cause injury. There are many things that we learn not to do through the school of “*hard knocks.*” Sobermindedness comes as a result of learning things the hard way. Paul is giving young men the ability to learn some things at the expense of others who learned the hard way. Sobermindedness also has to do with developing the ability to use ourselves and our abilities to the highest positive possibilities. Sobermindedness is the very opposite of youthful carelessness. Paul simply states that since the older men have learned that some things are harmful and not practical, they have the responsibility to pass that “*sage*” advice on to the younger generation.

Take a look at the New Testament church of today. Where did the major problems that we are facing, such

as liberalism, leaving the old paths and the soundness of “*sound doctrine*” have their beginning? Was it in the older generation or the younger generation? Soundness or sobermindedness should be a characteristic of older, more experienced men. Paul recognized this wonderful attribute as a precious natural resource that could be passed from one generation to the other.

Paul also encouraged Titus to prepare the older men to teach the younger men how to be temperate. Simply stated, to be temperate is to possess self control. Basic understanding of self control is simply not to be given to excess in anything.

In most cases when we think of moderation, or self control, we think of our news media stressing the importance of learning to use alcoholic beverages in moderation. They stress the importance of knowing when to stop. For all practical purposes “*knowing when to stop*” is a good definition of temperance. We need to observe temperance in those who have learned to be temperate. Temperance is needed in many different areas of our daily life. Temperance in speech, work, eating, pleasure; almost anything that comes to mind needs to be practiced with temperance. Pleasures of self-indulgence usually cost more than they are worth. We can be extreme in any area of our life. Temperance is a wonderful virtue that can be both observed and learned. The fact that older men are charged with the responsibility to teach temperance to younger men is a solid indication that older men have learned by the process of time and experience to “*get their life together.*”

The latter part of verse two states that older men should display the soundness of their faith. Obviously, we are not talking about older men being stubborn or closed minded. We are stressing the fact that by

displaying their faith, younger men will see that the Christ life can in fact be lived with a wonderful degree of success. We should strongly urge the elderly men of the Church today to “*display*” the soundness of their faith. Example is a wonderful teacher.

One of the sweetest possibilities for our elderly members of the Lord’s Church is to have the “*grandparents*” attitude toward the younger generation. One of the most wonderful thoughts we can possess of the “*grandparent*” generation is that they are beautiful examples of Christian charity. The ability to love other people unconditionally is one of the most needed things in our society today. The younger generation is looking toward the older generation for understanding and acceptance. They very often stress the fact that they need “*unconditional love.*” Can you think of any greater example of unconditional love than that of our Heavenly Father and His Son. The very foundation of Christianity is charity. Paul stressed in I Corinthians 13:1-3 the importance of charity. One of the unique abilities of older people is that they learn tolerance toward people that have made mistakes. Younger people need to see that uniqueness in the New Testament Church. Charity and forgiveness are partners that stroll hand in hand throughout our Christian life. Both of these Christian characteristics need to be observed in every age group of Christian people.

To be an example of patience older men need to influence younger men with the ability to be persistent, endure, or keep on keeping on. Paul is a good example to Timothy, II Timothy 4:7-8. He states that he fought a good fight, kept the faith, finished the course. As a result of his patience, he was certain of his reward. No one could better urge younger people than elderly

Christians of the certainty of a reward if we keep on enduring.

Older men have learned some very important things by practical, personal experience. The Hebrew writer in 5:12 talks about the “*reason of time.*” There are some things that can only be learned by the passing of time. William Barclay states: “*One of the most tragic sights in life is a man who has learned nothing from the years.*” When God’s word has had proper influence in the life of an older man, he can then be a fitting example to the younger generation. Younger people need purifying personal examples of not only how to live, but, how to accept disappointment, and how to face death.

One of the greatest needs of our day is for sound, experienced, faithful men to be able to teach the younger generation how to live successfully and how to tell those things that are so very important from those things that are not so important. Moses stressed in the book of Deuteronomy that there are certain things that must be taught diligently. Belief and behavior must be consistent. In all of Scripture nothing is as repulsive as a hypocritical lifestyle. Jesus strongly condemned such in Matthew 23. There are powerful points of Christian character that can only be taught from generation to generation. Some things must be observed in order to become learned behavior.

The older women are also instructed to be active in following God’s plan for their lives. It is interesting to note that Paul left Titus in Crete to set in order some things that were lacking there. The responsibilities of the older generations to themselves and to succeeding generations were among the things that were to be discussed. Paul urges Titus to teach in a way that was sound and healthy. Paul knew that sound, or healthy,

doctrine would strengthen families. Titus 2 is a chapter about strong and healthy families.

No society has ever risen above the quality of it's womanhood. Paul lists for Titus certain things that older women are to be taught. Some older people have accepted the mistaken idea that they cannot be taught things that are important to them. Brother Tom Holland used the wonderful illustration that Grandma Moses was 71 years of age when she did her first painting. At East Wood Street in Paris, Tennessee, where I have been privileged to work for the past nine years, one of our older ladies at the age of 83 prepared, applied for and received her GED and then took computer courses! She died a few months after learning to operate the computer at the age of 83!

According to Paul, older women are to do two things. They are to *"be in behavior as becometh holiness."* They are to be examples of goodness. The widow in I Timothy 5:10 was to be noted for her good works.

Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.

The KJV describes these good works as *"holiness."* Paul urges the older women first be holy and then to teach the younger women to be like them. Paul admonishes in verse three that these elderly ladies are not to be false accusers. They are to decline the urge to be involved in needless or hurtful gossip. Both men and women today need desperately to be taught the harmful results of needless gossip. Paul says there is a place for teaching proper use of the tongue. If younger people see responsible use of the tongue and language in older



generations it will be an encouraging trait to be learned. The older women must be very careful to guard their speech. It is very easy at any age to become cynical and critical. Paul warns against the misuse of alcohol. It should be understood that the people of Crete, both men and women faced the danger of alcoholism. As a matter of fact, the tense of the Greek participle makes this verse say that women are not to be alcoholics. If any message is meant to be taught, received and practiced, it was that people were not to be guilty of drunkenness. There is no clearer contrast in the message of Paul to Titus than the fact that the older women are not to be given to much wine, but, to be teachers of good things.

We so desperately need the good things that are mentioned in Titus taught as a way of life for young married people today. We have a very precious natural resource in our older couples that have been married for 50, 60, 65 years. I am firmly convinced that if there was a clearly defined way of passing information and experience from one generation to the other, we could help so many struggling marriages today. Paul recognized this problem nearly 2,000 years ago as he by inspiration of the Spirit penned the words before us. In Titus 2:4 Paul expressed the wish that,

That they [the older women] may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children.

The word “*sober*” in verse four has the same meaning as it did as relating to the older men of verse two. These people are being cautioned to have a very sincere outlook for the second coming of Christ and to have their spiritual eyes set on Satan to be aware of the danger he always has at his disposal. In I Peter 5:8 Peter warns people to be,

...sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

He is always on the prowl. He is always looking among the young and those who have the world tugging at the strings of their hearts. He finds easy prey in young marrieds.

Paul instructs the younger women to love their husbands and children. One might think it a foregone conclusion that married young women will love their husbands and children; but that is not always the case. The State of Tennessee has the unpleasant honor among all the United States of boasting the fourth highest divorce rate in the country. Someone needs to be teaching people how to love each other and how to love their children. In the beautiful fifth chapter of Ephesians, Paul talks again to women about their responsibilities to their husbands. In 5:21-24 Paul states:

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

A very large part of the woman's responsible role in marriage is to be the truest helper to the husband in attaining a true and holy life. She should be very much aware that she is responsible to helping him on his way to heaven. She has a spiritual role as the husband in the family has a spiritual role.

To love their children is to nurture them in the upbringing and admonition of the Lord. Of course, Paul

places this responsibility on the husband's shoulders in Ephesians chapter six, but that does not relieve the wife of any spiritual responsibility to love their children and raise them right. It will take both parties and then there will be trying times!

Paul in Titus 2:5 says the young wife is to be discreet and chaste. This simply means that she is to be sober minded about her role as a wife and mother and she is to do nothing that would give any grounds for any evil report. Her responsibility is to the Lord as it is to her husband. She is to be a good wife and obedient to her husband. This does not mean that she is his slave. It does not mean that she is to jump at his every command. God has higher ideals for marriage than the above. The wife has the responsibility to be a spiritual helper as well as a physical helper.

In the marital relationship the woman is to be the keeper at home. There are duties that can be best performed by a woman. A man can be a father and a woman can be a mother, no one can be both. In the Word of God the woman was to be in charge of certain family responsibilities. That law has not changed. She is to be a keeper of the home. It is her duty to make the husband and the children love home. Christian women realize their responsibilities in the home.

In this day, almost every young couple will report that they must have the security of two incomes in order to be financially successful in this world. I cannot argue that point. I cannot say that it is a sin for the woman to work outside the home and provide part of the family income. I can say, however, that the fact that she may work outside the home and provide a part (maybe the larger part) of the family income DOES NOT relieve her of any of the responsibility placed upon her in Holy

Scripture to be a proper wife to her husband and a proper mother to her children. Her FIRST and FOREMOST responsibility in life is to be the kind of wife and mother as directed by inspiration of Scripture!

When the wife or mother in the family setting refuses to fulfill her responsibility, there is no way that she can be a person pleasing in the sight of God. It is much more than domestic responsibility, it is concerning spiritual responsibility. To refuse to fill your prescribed role for either male or female is to blaspheme the Word of God.

Finally, Paul turns to the younger men for their responsible role in the spiritual setting. Again, Paul begins by saying that the young men must be sober minded. It would be a very difficult, if not impossible duty, to find any one characteristic that would add more stability to the family role. Therefore the spiritual role of young couples, especially for the young man who is the spiritual head of the family, is that of a responsible thinker. How many of the problems that relate to early marriage, or marriage at any point, find their roots in irresponsible thinking? The need for sober minds is a tremendous one. The tendency of youth to be lighthearted and irresponsible often leads to sin. Christianity does not deny the presence of joy on one's life, but it does place at a premium the proper restraints of sober thinking. The young men are simply encouraged to be proper examples of good works. The older men were to teach the younger men to be sober minded. Older people should practice what they teach. When they were directed by their own lives to be examples to the younger, they were not being asked to perform some impossible task. The instruction of both older and younger men is to be practiced as given in Christ. Their first responsibility is to Christ, then to mankind. Paul points

to the fact that men are to have a life that is connected to their teaching. They must practice what they preach.

There is a place for lightheartedness in living the Christian life. There is a place of joy and happiness. But, there is always the first rule that we must be true to our doctrine. To do otherwise is to be a hypocrite. Nothing is more distasteful and confusing than a person male, or female, young or old, that is not what he or she supposes to be.

Paul concludes this very important passage by urging all concerned to be sound in speech. One of the most familiar things in Christianity is to be accused of evil. There is only one thing that is of more importance than being accused of evil. That is to be innocent of evil doing. Paul says there is a way of living that will insure that no one can prove evil against us. To be accused of evil is one thing, to have the ability to prove it is quite another thing. The pure life of the child of God will put to shame opposition to the Christian life.

When all is considered, Paul’s instruction to Titus concerning the older people and their responsibility to teach and influence the younger generation goes not farther than Christ’s admonition to us in Matthew 5:16,

Let your light so shine before men, that they  
may see your good works, and glorify your  
Father which is in heaven.

There is no point in life when we are not important. There is no age in life when we are not able to influence someone. The people we influence are usually those closest to us. Paul is reminding Christian people of any age to be aware of their own lifestyle and of the lifestyle to other people. We are in fact, our brother’s keeper.

## Chapter 11

# Selfishness ~ Root Of Home Problems

*Chris Dempsey*

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**H**e was quickly climbing the corporate ranks; in fact, he was one of the youngest executives the firm had ever had. A deacon in the church and a volunteer in the community, he was well thought of by all. The Lord had blessed him and his wife of twelve years with three beautiful children. But the church and the community were shocked when he admitted he was having an affair with a woman ten years younger than him. When I asked him which one he was going to choose, his family or his mistress, he replied the latter. When I asked why, he said, "Because that is what *I* want!"

I. Me. Mine. My. All of these can be danger words in the home. When attention becomes focused on self, instead of one's partner or children, trouble is sure to follow. In fact, if one looks at the word "SIN," he will notice "I" is right there in the middle. The root of our sin lies in our own desire to please self. James 1:13-15 says, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man is tempted, when

he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” What is the cure for the “I” problem? Take the word SIN, remove the I, and insert an O in its place. The only cure for SIN is the SON. This principle is true even in the home. Jesus must reign as King in matters of marriage and the family.

Every Christian should have Galatians 2:20 printed on his head:

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Part of our problem is that we have not learned to die to self. Everything about Christ focused outward; Jesus was not thinking of Himself as He hung on the cross. Even so, as individuals our focus must be on others. This discipleship principle affects every part of our lives, and must be true in the family. Christ lives in us and that affects our family relationships. When our focus turns inward, selfishness soon has its way.

### **Selfishness In Marriage**

Some have said marriage is a 50/50 proposition; others have said it is a 100% give relationship. Love, however, does not keep track of percentages. Paul wrote in I Corinthians 13:4-7:

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

In the marriage relationship, when *both* partners love one another, love will do whatever needs to be done, will give whatever needs to be given.

However, when the mindset of one or both partners changes from what can I give to what can I get, problems immediately arise. Partners will become critical of one another, focusing on the things that aren't being done to suit. This criticism breeds more criticism, and marital satisfaction plunges. The partner focused only on self will be convinced the problems are all the other person's, when actually the problem is his/her own selfishness.

Because selfishness is an easy trap to fall into, each of us would be wise to examine ourselves. Think for just a moment about Jesus' parable in Luke 12:16-21:

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Count how many times the rich man used personal pronouns in verses 17-19. At least ten times, the rich man said "I" or "my". His concern was only for himself, not for God or anyone else. Now note what God called the selfish man: "Thou fool" (v. 20). We are foolish to become so wrapped up in self that we neglect the needs



of others. As we think about the marriage relationship, focus on verse 21: “So is he that layeth up treasures for himself, and is not rich toward God.” Now place your spouse’s name in the blank: “So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward \_\_\_\_\_.” Marriage is not designed for one to be rich to himself, but not to his spouse. Are you rich toward your spouse?

### **His Needs, Her Needs**

One of my favorite books on marriage is Willard Harley Jr.’s **His Needs, Her Needs**. Harley’s basic premise is, “You can build or rebuild your marriage if you learn to become aware of each other’s needs, and learn to meet them” (9). If both partners meet the other’s needs, then the marital relationship will flourish. Trouble develops when one partner habitually neglects a basic need in his/her partner.

From his years of counseling experience, Harley identifies these five basic needs in a wife. Men, these needs are different than yours; take note and apply. One is **affection** (27). Affection involves non-sexual tenderness (holding hands, hugging, cuddling). “To most women affection symbolizes security, protection, comfort, and approval, vitally important commodities in their eyes” (29). Affection may also be expressed by cards, flowers, and other small, unexpected surprises. Men, how often do you do extra, thoughtful things for your wife? Do you thank her for meals? Do you open her car door? Shower her with affection.

The second need common to wives is **conversation** (55). Wives need their husbands to talk to them. Men, when you were dating your future spouse, how much time did you spend talking to her on the telephone? How much time do you spend in undivided attention to her now? Is there a difference? Often women will ask their

husbands how their day was, to which the husband responds, “Fine.” He usually will not ask her how her day was because he is afraid she will tell him, and he does not want to listen. His failure to give his wife this basic need for communication is selfishness. Harley writes, “If a husband seriously wants to meet his wife’s need to feel close to him, he will give the task sufficient time and attention.” Now, men, keep in mind this conversation is to be positive, not critical. Looking for a natural way to converse? Spend time together.

A third basic need in her is she needs to trust him totally—**honesty and openness** (86). Genesis 2:24 says, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” The “one flesh” involves the sexual union, but it goes deeper than that: an emotional union. Any deceit destroys her emotional connection; “mistrust destroys her sense of security” (87). A “lying tongue” is listed as one of the things God hates (Pro. 6:16-19), and is the enemy of marital happiness. Men, keep your promises to your wife. “Honesty is the best marriage insurance policy” (98).

Four is **financial support** (114). “She needs enough money to live comfortably” (114). For the past several years, the number one source of friction in marriages in the United States has been money. Couples must communicate openly about their financial situation. It is important for the wife to not have to worry about her or her children’s next meal. This may require the family to establish a budget. Learn to live beneath your means. Give to God first, save second, and spend the rest as you see fit. Provide your wife with enough money to eat out with other women occasionally or get her hair fixed. Discuss as a couple the difference between needs and

wants. Be disciplined and your finances can be a source of strength rather than conflict.

Five is **family commitment** (138). She needs him to be a good father. This will be discussed further in Parent/Child Relations, but a word should be mentioned here. She needs for him to spend time with her and the kids. She needs to count on him to help in the training of the children and to keep the children so she can go out at times. Create activities for the family to be together.

A wise wife will likewise pay attention to the needs of her husband. Harley identifies these five basic needs in a husband. One is **sexual fulfillment** (40). Men and women differ sexually; a wife should be aware of her husband's basic sexual need. The sex act was created by God and is proper only in marriage. “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4). The word translated “the bed” refers to the sex act. Thus, marital sex is ordained by our Maker.

Many men have sacrificed years of marriage and successful careers in pursuit of sexual fulfillment. The great King David, who was God's man, committed adultery (read II Samuel 11:2-17, 27; 12:1-4). (Of course, David lived the rest of his life regretting his mistake.) Certainly this author does not wish to imply that a husband's sexual unfaithfulness is always the fault of his wife; this is not always the case. The purpose of this discussion is simply to remind readers that the sexual need is a strong force in most men.

Two is **recreational companionship** (72). The married couple needs mutual recreational activities. What are your shared interests? Men, do you spend all of your personal time on interests in which your wife can not participate? Wives, do you make a special effort to take

part in your husband's leisure activities? Develop a list of things you can do together. Happily married couples have mutual interests.

A third basic need found in men is an **attractive spouse** (100). He needs her to look her best. While dating, partners usually go to great lengths to look their best, but after marriage, sloppiness often becomes the norm. This is not to say that every woman must look like a model, but keep in mind your husband fell in love with you, and part of his attraction was your looks. Keep him interested by looking your best. Harley writes, "Attractiveness is what you do with what you have" (110).

**Domestic support** is the fourth need common to husbands (126). By this, Harley refers to the husband's need for peace and quiet at home. In our busy age, many women may think it unreasonable to keep a neat house, keep meals prepared, and keep the children disciplined. However, most men indicate they need their wives to take care of these things for them. This does not mean that men should not be involved in household matters; men should help out. However, wives can fulfill a need in their husbands by taking care of many of these concerns. This will help make coming home a time he looks forward to every day.

The fifth male need is **admiration**; he needs her to be proud of him (150). "When a woman tells a man she thinks he is wonderful, that inspires him to achieve more" (151). A man's ego can be significantly affected by his wife; wives, you can play a great role in the self-esteem of your husband. Thank him for what he does; praise him for his success. (Husbands do the same thing for your wives.) This will create an atmosphere where mates want to be together.

Examine yourself and your relationship to your

spouse. In what ways do you show selfishness? Are you giving your best to meet your partner’s needs? How can you better meet your spouse’s needs?

### **Selfishness in Parent/Child Relations**

Children are a blessing, and are worthy of the best love their parents can give. Many parents do a wonderful job loving their children, and are truly selfless in their love. Two areas, however, should be avoided. One is parents living their lives through their children. This is a form of selfishness. Sometimes parents may push their children into sports or leadership activities in which the child is not interested. Parents, always make sure you are acting in your child’s best interest, not your own.

A second area, and probably a more serious problem, is neglect. Busy schedules leave children with baby sitters or television, and not with the loving interaction of their parents. Remember that presents do not replace presence. The following poem by Edgar Guest conveys this message well:

#### **Orphans of the Living**

We think of orphans only, as the little girls and lads,  
Who haven’t any mothers, and who haven’t any dads.

They are grouped with other children and  
in groups they’re put to bed,  
With some stranger paid to listen,  
while their little prayers are said.

All the grown ups look with pity on  
such lonely children small,  
And declare, to be an orphan, is the saddest fate of all.

But sometimes I look about me, and  
in sorrow hang my head,  
As I look on something sadder  
than the orphans of the dead.

They're orphans of the living,  
    left alone to romp and play.  
From their fathers and their mothers,  
    by ambition shut away.

They have fathers who are busy,  
    and so weighted down with cares,  
That they haven't time to listen to a little child's affairs.

They have mothers who imagine,  
    life could give them if it would  
Something better, something richer,  
    than the joys of motherhood.

So their children learn from strangers,  
    and by strangers hands are fed,  
And the nurse for so much money,  
    nightly tucks them into bed.

Lord, I would not grow so busy  
    that I cannot drop my task,  
And answer every question which  
    that child of mine can ask.

Let me never serve ambition here so selfishly I pray,  
That I cannot stop to listen to things my children say.

For whatever cares beset them,  
    let them know I'm standing by;  
I don't want to make them orphans,  
    till the time I come to die."

Parents, you will have an enormous influence on your children, either for good or for bad. Paul wrote, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). Remember, your children will learn more from what you do than what you say. The following selected article is a sobering reminder.

## **It's Hard To Convince Your Children...**

That the work of the church is really important when you are not taking an active part in the work of the church.

That faithfulness to the church is the most important loyalty in life when you permit them to forsake worship services to engage in other activities.

That the church is the body of Christ when you are indifferent to the welfare of the members of that body.

That they are to respect the church when you are constantly complaining and criticizing the efforts of those who care enough to do something.

That the church is the world's most important institution when you give so little to finance the church's work.

That they can believe God's Word if you don't believe Him enough to place the kingdom first in your life.”

On the other side of the coin, children should be respectful to their parents. The apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 6:1-3:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

Young people, you show selfishness when you refuse to obey or grumble about obeying your parents. Though you may disagree with them, your parents are usually acting in the way they think is best for you. Show them respect. Do not allow your own selfishness to add strain to your relationship with your parents.

## **Conclusion**

Always keep in mind the example of Christ. Philippians 2:3-7 says:

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

Jesus' focus was on the best interest of others. This is essential for happy home relations. The odd acronym still rings true: **J**esus first, **O**thers second, **Y**ourself last.

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The  
Christian Home  
~~~~~  
**Parents ~ Children**



## Chapter 12

# Parents Wake Up!

*Kelby Smith*



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**O**ur children are among our most important possessions. One may be successful in many endeavors of life, but is definitely a failure if he loses his children. Therefore, it is basically important that every effort is made to guide them correctly.

Parents need to be impressed with regard to how rapidly their children are growing up. Once they start to school, they are increasingly being affected by forces outside the family unit. Most every parent has experienced that sad feeling when the child, for the first time, gets on the school bus or is carried to school and left there. Before we know it, they are in high school, and then soon they go off to college. The older they become, the less influence we have toward molding their lives. It is therefore essential that

### ***“PARENTS WAKE UP”***

and realize the dangers facing our children and the wonderful privileges we have to teach them and direct their lives.

## **Parents Wake Up: To The Dangers Of Materialism**

Our whole nation seems to be obsessed with “*things*.” The effort to make more money, to live in better houses seem to be the order of the day. So many around us want to drive bigger cars, wear nicer clothes, and have more gadgets! While these things are certainly not wrong in themselves, they can become wrong when we fail to put our priorities in proper order. The tragic thing is that fathers and mothers often neglect their children while they are in pursuit of “*things*.” Jesus made it very clear that a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of “*things*” (Luke 12:15). It is well worth while to consider what Jesus said in its entirety.

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God (Luke 12:16-21).

When parents are so obsessed with “*things*,” children grow up and usually follow the example of their parents. All their lives they put things before God. How tragic!

Parents need to realize that putting so much

emphasis on the things in this material world is basically unwise. One day this world and all the things in this world shall be destroyed. Peter graphically expressed this idea in the following passage.

But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up (II Peter 3:10).

### **Parents Wake Up: To The Dangers Of Worldliness**

Evil influences of the world are everywhere around us. There is always the danger that both we and our children may be adversely affected. It is imperative that we are acutely aware that as Christians we must never be of the world (John 17:16). The New Testament has much to say with regard to warning of the dangerous influences of the world.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him (I John 2:15).

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you (II Cor. 6:17).

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:14).

Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul (I Peter 2:11).

Parents are responsible for setting standards for their children to follow. They should not allow themselves to be made to feel guilty for refusing some of their requests! For example, they should say “no” to some movies. This would also be true in regard to many of the movies shown on the movie channels on television. Parents must be in control!

The same would also be true in relation to dancing. Though young people say they do not understand WHY they should not dance or go to the prom, their desire to participate is usually based on peer pressure and the desire to fit in with the group. Yet parents must realize that God characterizes such as lasciviousness (Gal. 5:19) and revellings (Gal. 5:21).

The influence of worldliness exerts itself powerfully through immodest dress. The New Testament is very specific concerning modesty.

In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array (I Tim. 2:9).

Parents should have the courage to say “no” to immodest dress, and mean it! The problem of dress starts when they are children. A little girl wears shorts to elementary school, and she thinks nothing of doing so as a teenager. A little first grade boy wears his shorts and cut off top to school, and never gives it a second thought later. Don’t ever start what you don’t want to continue! Parents should wake up and train them properly from the time they are children. This training

process will take into account the ever present danger of the influence of worldliness.

## **Parents Wake Up: To The Importance Of Spiritual Matters**

The continual influence of materialism and worldliness makes it essential that we as parents never lose sight of the importance of stressing spiritual matters. The spiritual stands in direct opposition to the material. We as parents must always remember to instill spiritual principles, and not allow our children to be engulfed by the material and worldly concerns that are so very evident all around us. God, through the New Testament, has spoken clearly on this matter.

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3:2).

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal (Matt. 6:20).

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light (I Peter 2:9).

Parents need to always encourage spiritual activities. We should insist that they be involved in activities that would encourage their spiritual growth. That would involve visiting the sick, visiting the hospital on occasion, the nursing homes, the elderly and doing things in general that would help others. They should also be involved in working the Vacation Bible School and even Mission V.B.S. They could even be an assistant Bible class teacher. Devotionals for young people should



be a must. In a broad sense, they should be involved in all church activities planned for their benefit. They may say: *“But I don’t want to go!”* That is just *“tough!!!”* Do our children and young always want to go to school, do their homework, study for a test? We simply must see that they are exposed to every activity that would promote spirituality.

### **Parents Wake Up: To The Need To Be The Right Example**

Is it impossible to place enough emphasis on the basic importance of being a good example. Demonstrating Christianity to them by our example can help them overcome materialism, worldliness, and be more spiritually minded. In fact, living the example of New Testament Christianity before them is beyond doubt our most powerful means of influencing them for good. Without the right example set by parents, nothing we may say to them will be very influential.

Therefore we as parents must be careful to always use the right kind of language (Eph. 4:29; James 4:11; James 1:26). We must exert every effort to attend all services, even when we are out of town (Heb. 10:23-31). They need to see us actively involved in the work of the church. God’s word is specific:

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord (I Cor. 15:58).

And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them (Rev. 14:13).

That means that our children will never hear us make excuses for not teaching the lost, restoring the erring, helping the needy, or preparing food for the sick. To the contrary they will see by our example that we are faithful to God. They will be convinced that Christianity is important to us.

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful (I Cor. 4:2).

...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life (Rev. 2:10).

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you (Matt. 6:33).

### **Parents Wake Up: To The Need To Discipline Our Children**

The word “*discipline*” comes from the word “*disciple*.” A disciple is a pupil, a student or a learner. The basic idea of the word “*discipline*” is to correct or mold through the process of instruction. While discipline must be maintained, we need to be careful that discipline does not simply provoke our children to wrath and anger (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21).

A generation ago discipline may have been generally too harsh, and even somewhat unloving. That has now changed, and the pendulum seems to have swung to the opposite extreme. Now many parents seem to let their children get by with almost anything. This has resulted in an obvious lack of respect for parents, teachers, policemen and authority in general. Parents should heed the instructions of the Bible.

He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes (Prov. 13:24).

Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying (Prov. 19:18).

Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell (Prov. 23:13-14).

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

## **Parents Wake Up: And Spend Time With Our Children**

We live in a busy world. We have so much pressure. The result is that we often do not spend very much time with our children. The greatest gift we can give to them is not money, a new car, or a swimming pool, but our **time**. That says in a very eloquent way that we care, and that they are important. I really admire the mother who does without things, and chooses to stay home and devote her time and effort toward rearing her children properly.

Parents need to realize how quickly they grow up. I know that my wife and I have made many mistakes in rearing our children, but there was never a ball game, a sports activity, or a school event that we did not make every effort to attend. I have never regretted spending that time, but now I wish I could have found even more time to spend with them. Parents should wake up and realize how rapidly they are growing up. If that truth could be fully comprehended, we would make some obvious changes in our lives.

## **Conclusion**

Parents need to wake up to the dangers of materialism and worldliness. Doing so would help us become more spiritually minded and determine to be a better example. Not only would we be concerned about providing proper discipline for our children, but we would also determine to spend more time with them. The following poem written by Betty Choate, should help us put everything in perspective.

### ***How Will It Be?***

I stand with my back against the door,  
Seeing this place as never before;  
“How will it be?” I question again,  
“Alone in a house where children have been.”

“The work will be light,” says a voice in my head.  
Think of all the things you can do instead!  
So little cooking, so little mess,  
The clothes in the wash will surely be less—  
And now with no children to train or correct,  
No quarrels to right, no lack of respect,  
You’ll be the ‘perfection’ you’ve longed to become,  
Surrounded by nothing but healing balm.

I turn with impatience away from the voice,  
The children—the work—were ours by choice;  
Whatever they cost in money or time,  
Whatever they took out of me that was mine,  
Was minor compared to the fullness they brought,  
In living learned and living taught,  
You tell me its better having them grown,  
That life eases up when children are gone.  
I question you now, beginning this time,  
Rooms that are empty, don’t seem to shine.  
And its sadness that now lives in this lonely heart,  
Not the contentment, you named at the start.

“Parents Wake Up”

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I stand with my back against the door,  
Drawn to the past as never before,  
The voices are silent and all that I hear,  
Is the echo of footsteps, dull in my ear.  
My own, as unguided I walk through the rooms,  
Knowing these years have ended too soon.  
Feeling the loneliness fill up my soul,  
Feeling the emptiness taking control...  
No bickering echoes down the hall,  
No music, no laughter, no sound at all;  
I stand in silence, a world apart,  
And listen to the teardrops fall in my heart.

## Chapter 13

# Fathers...Bring Them Up In The Nurture...Teach Them God's Commands And Statutes

*James Meadows*

James Meadows is an excellent speaker, writer, and widely known throughout the brotherhood for his excellent classroom and private study books (almost forty) ~ He has written many articles for several different religious papers ~ James is presently working with the East Tennessee School of Preaching in Knoxville, TN.



**A**merica stands alone among modern societies that pay special honor to fathers. The designation of a specific Father's Day is a 20th Century one. In 1972 President Richard Nixon signed a Congressional resolution establishing permanently the third Sunday of June as Father's Day.

The word father appears more than 1,000 times in the Bible. Yes, the Bible has much to say about fathers—some good and some bad. It reveals Abraham's great love for his son Isaac; Jacob's great devotion to his sons, Joseph and Benjamin; David's broken-hearted cry for his son, Absalom; and above all the Fatherhood of God.

In this lesson I propose to study (1) A Declining Culture—Absent Fathers; (2) What The Bible Says To Fathers; (3) Some Practical Suggestions To Fathers; (4) Conclusion.

## A Declining Culture–Absent Father

One of the great needs of today’s society is fathers. Many researchers believe,

the most urgent domestic challenge facing the United States at the close of the 20th Century is a re-creation of fatherhood as a vital social role for men. Fatherhood was once almost exclusively a Christians-only topic. Now it is becoming a societal and cultural concern.<sup>1</sup>

We are living in a culture of perpetual change. Consider what is happening in America today to our homes.

- A Since 1960 violent crimes in America have grown nearly 600%.
- B Illegitimate births have increased 400%.
- C Tonight 40% of our children will sleep in houses where their fathers do not live.
- D We have entered into a place in America **where the father is absent**. This causes many other problems.
- E There are several reasons why the father is absent.
  - 1 Teenage girls often become pregnant and the boy doesn’t marry the girl.
  - 2 Sometimes the teenage boy cannot support the family and so he just leaves.
  - 3 There is divorce—about half walk away from their marriages.
  - 4 The changing role of fatherhood. Father is away from home and his responsibility is passed on to the mother.
  - 5 Death. Sometimes the father dies.
  - 6 Then sometimes fathers are absent when they are present.

Harvard University has demonstrated, in research, that fathers spend, on average, less than 37 seconds a day of meaningful interaction with children. It is not only father absence that we're combating, but fathers who are in the home but do not know how to be involved in the lives of their children.<sup>2</sup>

Social concerns such “*as teenage pregnancy, crime, violence, educational failure and child poverty are the symptoms of a much greater sickness: the absence of fathers.*”<sup>3</sup> Research clearly shows that the absence of fathers has a devastating effect on children. Consider some of the negative factors:

- (1) Half of all fatherless families live below the poverty line;
- (2) Adolescents of fatherless families are more likely to be sexually active and more likely to commit delinquent acts;
- (3) Young adults who grow up in fatherless families are more likely to drop out of school, divorce and engage in drugs and alcohol abuse;
- (4) The best predictor of violent crimes and burglary in a community is the proportion of households without fathers.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand when fathers are present positive results accrue for the children and their fathers.

**First**, “*children with effective fathers score higher on intelligence tests and are more comfortable in new situations. They adapt to change more easily.*”<sup>5</sup>

**Second**, “*a father’s involvement produces a more self-controlled son who recognizes the need for restraint.*”<sup>6</sup>

**Third**,

from major studies of factors leading to the successful development of children have shown that youngsters who have an active, participative father demonstrate better



thinking ability, increased empathy for others and a greater ability to rely on their own judgment.<sup>7</sup>

## **What The Bible Says To Fathers**

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged (Col. 3:21).

**First**, *“fathers, provoke not your children to wrath...”* (anger). *“Provoke”* means *“to anger, enrage, exasperate, or vex.”* *“You fathers, again, must not goad your children to resentment”* (New English Bible). The opposite of *“provoke”* is to *“encourage.”* *“Fathers...are especially cautioned not to provoke their children to wrath, meaning that great care is to be exercised so that the child will not be ‘provoked’ in such a way to incite anger.”*<sup>8</sup>

What are some ways in which a father might provoke his children to wrath?

1. By administering unreasonable punishment. Fathers sometimes chasten *“after their own pleasure”* (Heb. 12:9-10). It may be a passionate, angry kind of punishment that gets one’s own frustration out rather than what is best for the child.

2. By uneven and inconsistent punishment. One can be extremely severe at one time and then allow the child to go unpunished at another time for doing the same thing. One child said, *“I either get away with murder or get blamed for everything.”* Another said, *“my parents never cared enough to discipline.”* A cartoon caption of a little boy standing in the corner read: *“Daddy didn’t have to stand in the corner when he said that word.”*

3. By being too strict—not allowing them innocent, childish pleasures enjoyed by other children.

4. By being negative in discipline. Refusing to allow them to do things they suggest and never furnishing them something to do for pleasure and recreation.

5. By expecting them to be “*grown-up*” and to act like mature people.

6. By making unreasonable demands so that they decide they can never please you anyway. They become “*disheartened*.”

7. By always blaming and never praising.

***For Parents***

“I’ve got two A’s,” the small boy cried,  
His voice was filled with glee,  
His father very bluntly asked,  
“Why didn’t you get three?”

“Mom, I’ve got the dishes done,”  
the girl called from the door.  
Her mother very calmly said,  
“Did you sweep the floor?”

“I’ve mowed the grass,” the tall boy said,  
“And put the mower away.”  
His father asked him, with a shrug,  
“Did you clean off the clay?”

The children in the house next door  
seemed happy and content.  
The same things happened over there,  
but this is how it went.

“I’ve got two A’s,” the small boy cried,  
His voice was filled with glee,  
His father very proudly said,  
“That’s great; I’m glad you belong to me.”

“Mom, I’ve got the dishes done,”  
the girl called from the door.  
Her mother smiled and softly said,  
“Each day I love you more.”

“I’ve mowed the grass,” the tall boy said,  
“And put the mower away.”  
His father answered with much joy,  
“You’ve made my happy day.”

Children deserve a little praise  
for the tasks they’re asked to do.  
If they’re to lead a happy life,  
so much depends on you.

-Author Unknown<sup>9</sup>

8. By showing favoritism in the home. Isaac and Rebekah had this problem (Gen. 25:28). Jacob showed favoritism toward Joseph (Gen. 37:3).

9. By making promises and then not keeping them. After a while they won’t believe you mean them.

10. By making “light” of their problems which to them may be extremely important.

**Second**, fathers “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (“but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord,” ASV). The word translated “bring them up” is the same word translated “nourisheth” in Ephesians 5:29. “Nurture” means learning through discipline. The same word is translated “chastening” in Hebrews 12:5. Discipline is a basic principle of life and an evidence of love (Heb. 12:6). “Chastening” means training by action. Training involves rules and restrictions. Susannah Wesley, the mother of seventeen children, including John and Charles, once wrote:

The parents who studies to subdue self-will in his child, works together with God in the renewing and saving of a soul. The parent who indulges it, does the Devil's work, makes religion impractical, salvation unattainable, and does all that in him lies to damn his child, soul and body forever.<sup>10</sup>

Kindly and earnestly train them in the discipline of the Lord. It may be severe, but it is for the good of the child, and is prompted by love. In no point do Christians fail more than in the training of their children in the Lord. They allow them to grow up ambitious of worldly preferment, lovers of pleasure, greedy of gain, and frequently scoffers of God. This is due to lack of faithful training.<sup>11</sup>

Literally nourish them in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. *"Discipline"* may *"refer to all that knowledge which is proper for children, including elementary principles and rules for behavior...."*<sup>12</sup> *"Instruction"* implies whatever is necessary to form the mind. It includes the whole of religion.

God's revelation reveals all the important lessons necessary, therefore they are called the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

The following steps may be helpful in disciplining children: (1) Define the boundaries; (2) when defiantly challenged, respond with confident decisiveness; (3) distinguish between willful defiance and accidental violation; (4) use the occasion for further teaching opportunity; (5) let the child know he is loved.<sup>13</sup>

If there are parents who don't believe in discipline then this poem ought to be helpful.

### ***We Need More Grandpas***

Junior bit the meter man; Junior hit the cook!  
Junior’s “anti-social” now (according to the book).  
Junior smashed the clock; Junior hacked the tree.  
(Destructive trends are treated in Chapters 2 and 3).  
Junior threw his milk at Mom;  
Junior screamed for more.  
(Notes of “self-assertiveness” are found in Chapter 4).  
Junior tossed his shoes and socks out into the rain,  
 (“Negation,” that is normal, disregard the strain!)  
Junior set Dad’s shirt afire; whittled Grandpa’s pine;  
(That’s to gain attention, see page 89).  
Grandpa seized a slipper and  
    yanked Junior across his knee;  
(He’s read nothing but the Bible since 1893).

-Author Unknown

### **Some Practical Suggestions To Fathers**

First, be an example to your children and your family. Your children will become like you. Jehosphat “...walked in all the ways of Asa his father; he turned not aside from it, doing that which was right in the eyes of the LORD...” (I Kings 22:43). Ahaziah, the son of Ahab, “...did evil in the sight of the LORD, and walked in the way of his father, and in the way of his mother...” (I Kings 22:52).

*“For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him...” (Gen. 18:19). “Abraham’s effectiveness as a role model and family leader lay in the fact that he practiced what he taught others....Abraham provided leadership through his own consistent behavior. He did not provide direction for his children that he himself did not observe.”<sup>14</sup>*

A father that prays teaches his children to pray; a father that reads his Bible teaches his children to read their Bible; a father that is faithful in attendance is

teaching his children to be faithful in attendance. A father's example makes an impression early in life, either for good or bad.

He swung on the gate and looked down the street.  
Awaiting the sound of familiar feet,  
Then suddenly came to the sweet child's eyes  
The marvelous glory of morning skies;  
For a manly form, with a steady stride,  
Drew near to the gate that opened wide,  
As the boy sprang forward and joyfully cried,  
"Papa's coming!"

The wasted face of a little child.  
Looking out of the windows with eyes made wild,  
By the ghostly shades in falling light,  
And the glimpse of a drunk man in the night,  
Cussing and reeling from side to side.  
The poor boy trembling and trying to hide,  
Clung to his mother's skirts and cried,  
"Papa's coming!"

-Author Unknown<sup>15</sup>

### ***An Alleged Letter To A Father From His Son***

Dear Dad:

I am just a little fellow, but I have been doing some thinking. Some day I will be a big man just like you. You are my ideal—I think you can do anything. I like to hear you talk, and watch you walk, and to see you drive the car. You are so strong, and it seems that you know how to handle any situation. I am never afraid when you are around.

But, Dad, there is something bothering me a lot. I know that I am going to be like you, even though I should try to be different. I like to go to Sunday School and church. When I get a little

older, very likely I will not—cause you don’t go. I like to study the Bible now, but will I when I get as big as you? You do not. When I get big like you, Daddy, I want to go to church with my wife; but, will I? You don’t very often. I am going to be like you. I want to give thanks at the table for food, clothing, and the home God has given us. But, Daddy, I want to help my wife win others to Christ, and especially our children—but how can I? You think only of your work, and paying for our house, and buying our food and clothes. This is very nice, Daddy; but the Bible says, “Man shall not live by bread alone,” and I know that is true, because people are dying every day and leaving pretty homes behind, and also their savings accounts. Daddy, I am afraid you wouldn’t take time off from the store to go to heaven.

Anyway, Dad, I have enjoyed talking with you about these things. I do hope you will become a Christian some time—so that I can be the kind of man I want to be—and be just like you, too.

Love,

Your Son

(Selected)<sup>16</sup>

Second, take time for your children. Experts agree that the number one responsibility of good fathers is to be involved with their children. Your children want your time and attention while they are young; if they don’t get it the day will come and you will want theirs; but you won’t get it.

### ***A Parable Of A Prodigal Father***

A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father: “Father, give me the portion of thy time and thy attention and thy companionship and thy counsel which falleth to me.” And he divided unto them his

living in that he paid the boy's bills and sent him to a select preparatory school and to dancing school and to college and tried to believe that he was doing his full duty by the boys.

And not many days afterwards the father gathered all his interests and aspirations and ambitions and took his journey into a far country, into a land of stocks and bonds and securities and other things which do not interest a boy; and there he wasted his precious opportunity of being a chum to his own son. And when he had spent the very best of his life and gained money, but had failed to find satisfaction, there arose a mighty famine in his heart; and he began to be want of sympathy and real companionship. And he went and joined himself to one of the clubs of the country; and they elected him chairman of the house committee and president of the club and sent him to Congress. And he would fain have satisfied himself with the husks that other men did eat, and no man gave unto him real friendship.

But when he came to himself he said: "How many men of my acquaintance have boys whom they understand and who understand them, who talk about their boys and seem perfectly happy in the comradeship of their sons, and I perish here with heart hunger! I will arise and go to my son, and will say unto him: "Son, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight; I am no more worthy to be called thy father. Make me as one of thy acquaintances." And he arose and came to his son. But while he was yet afar off, his son saw him and was moved with astonishment and instead of running and falling on his neck, he drew back



and was ill at ease. And the father said unto him: “Son, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy father. Forgive me now and let me be your friend.” But the son said: “Not so, I wish it were possible, but it is too late. There was a time when I wanted companionship and counsel and to know things, but you were too busy. I got companionship and I got the information, but it was the wrong kind; and now—alas—I am wrecked in soul and body; there is no more heart left in me, and there is nothing you can do for me. It is too late, too late, too late.” (Selected)<sup>17</sup>

**Third**, begin to teach your children spiritual truths early. Timothy’s grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice, began to teach him early.

And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (II Tim. 3:15).

God reveals that Abraham (Gen. 18:19) would teach and build up his children in three important areas. (1) To instruct his family to be obedient to the will of God. The Hebrew phrase: “*And they shall keep the way of the Lord*” means there is a “*way*” of living which the Lord has decreed is best for man.... (2) To instruct his family to practice justice (“*righteousness*”); and (3) To instruct his family to make righteous judgments.<sup>18</sup>

**Fourth**, teach your children daily.

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine

heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up (Deut. 6:4-7).

Just as one needs daily food to nourish the physical body, so one needs the daily nourishment of God's word in order to grow.

And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified (Acts 20:32).

Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby (I Peter 2:1-2).

**Fifth**, put your family first. God, of course, must be first in all of our lives, but one's family should be next. It's very easy for preachers to get so busy trying to save everyone else that they neglect their own family. Father is the chief servant in the family. Every man can be a great father because every man can serve his own family. Show by your actions and your words that your family is first. Do not be indifferent to their needs.

The story is told of a State Fair. A hog took the blue ribbon. The keeper of that hog was a small boy, stunted by smoking one cigarette after another, and giving utterance to profanity. As a boy he was about the poorest specimen at the fair. And strange to say, the same man that raised the hog, raised the boy. The father was interested in hogs—he read up on them. But he

was indifferent to the spiritual, physical and mental needs of his son.

**Sixth**, love your children. *“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him”* (Psm. 103:13). The word *“pitieth”* in this verse means *“love, pity.”* A father’s love means more than just furnishing them a meal ticket, or buying them clothes, or providing a place to live. A father’s love will include all that will result in the best interest of his children. *“He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes”* (Prov. 13:24).

**Seventh**, a father will pray for his children. David offered a prayer in behalf of his son Solomon.

O LORD God of Abraham...And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies, and thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision (I Chron. 29:18-19).

Last night my little boy confessed to me  
Some childish wrong  
And kneeling at my knee  
He prayed with tears;  
“Dear God, make me a man  
Like Daddy,—wise and strong,  
I know you can.”

Then while he slept  
I knelt beside his bed  
Confessing my sins,  
And prayed with low-bowed head  
“O God, make me a child,  
Like my child here,  
Pure, guileless,  
Trusting thee with faith sincere.”<sup>19</sup>

## Conclusion

Joseph Meador recently wrote an article in **The Southwesterner** entitled “*Fathers: How Are You Known Of God?*” It dealt with Abraham and how he was known of God. He concluded his article with these questions:

Fathers, how are you known of God? Are you active in providing godly directions for your family? Are you a living example of that which you teach? Are you actively involved in providing spiritual teaching for your children and your household? And, are you providing clear spiritual goals to your family? Indeed, how are you known of God?<sup>20</sup>

Fathers, take time for reflection and self-examination. Do my children see how much I love their mother? Do they sense how much I care about their development? Do they feel that they can come to me without being cut off or put aside? Do they know how often I pray for them? Do they see Christ living in me at home as well as at church?

## Endnotes

- 1 Dennis Robertson, **The Plain Truth**, May/June, 1996, p. 25.
- 2 Christian Chronicle, August, 1995, p. 50.
- 3 David Blankenship, **Fatherless America: Confronting Our Most Urgent Social Problem**, (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1995).
- 4 Robertson, op. cit., p. 25.
- 5 Henry B. Biller and Robert Trotter, **The Father Factor**.
- 6 Michael Segell, “*The Pater Principle*,” **Esquire**, March, 1995.
- 7 Joyce Brothers, “*Is He A Good Dad?*,” **Reader’s Digest**, June, 1995.
- 8 Marvin L. Weir, “*Instruction For Parents And Children, Slaves And Masters*,” **Studies In Ephesians**, Edit. Dub McClish (Denton, TX: Valid Publications, Inc., 1997), p. 311.
- 9 David Powell, “*Fear Father And Mother*,” **Studies in**

**Leviticus**, (Delight, AR: Delight Publishing Co., 1998), p. 452.

10 William McDonald, **Ephesians: The Mystery Of The Church**, (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw, Pub., 1969), p. 132.

11 David Lipscomb, **A Commentary On The New Testament Epistles: Ephesians Philippians and Colossians**, (Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1969), pp. 119-120.

12 Adam Clarke, **Romans To The Revelation**, (New York, NY: Abingdon Press), Vol. VI, p. 467.

13 Powell, op. cit., p. 452.

14 Joseph Meador, *“Fathers, How Are You Known To God,”* **The Southwestern**, July 10, 1994, p. 2.

15 P. D. Wilmeth, **The Christian Home**, (Dallas, TX: P. D. Wilmeth, Publisher, 1955), p. 89.

16 Ibid., pp. 92-93.

17 Ibid., pp. 94-95.

18 Meador, op. cit., p. 3.

19 Wilmet, op. cit., p. 93.

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## Chapter 14

# Children Obey Your Parents ~ Remember Creator In Youth

*Jim Laws*



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**T**here is the old saying that “*a house is not a home.*” When one gives some brief reflection to this, then one understands some of the truthfulness to this old adage. It is the attitude and the atmosphere of the home that helps to shape the attitude and life patterns of the children growing up in that home. If our homes are not what they ought to be, then the spiritual growth and development of our children will be dwarfed in a variety of ways. It goes without saying that the home in our western culture is under severe attack and is in serious danger. In fact, I believe that I am well within the mark when I say that in the history of this country never has there been such a sinister threat against the American home. The efforts to undermine the biblical values of the Christian home are somber, ominous and very cunning. This threatening storm comes from newspapers, television and radio news of spiraling divorce rates, broken vows, abandoned children, juvenile delinquency and child abuse.

A greater “sexual freedom” has been the call of modern times, and all the while it has produced an ever accelerating decent into moral bankruptcy.

One important aspect of the home is the children of the home. God knew how important children would be and how important it would be to teach, guide, train, and provide for them. Someone once said, “*God must love young people, because he has made so many of them.*” The birth of children revitalizes love, cements a marriage and blesses the home in so many wonderful ways. In effect, children give life to a home. Therefore, it is only natural to find important passages of Scripture which are designed to give man inspired guidance regarding children. It is important that both parent and child come to know and understand these great verses of Scripture so that our homes can be all that God wants them to be. Therefore, this research will devote itself to a presentation and explanation of what might be termed “*Classic Texts of Scripture*” which pertain so vitally to our children.

This matter of training our children and understanding what the Bible says about the matter has far reaching consequences. For instance, notice the reward which will be ours if we train our children well. Proverbs 10:1 states, “...*A wise son maketh a glad father...*” Proverbs 23:24-25 states,

The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice:  
and he that begetteth a wise child shall have  
joy of him. Thy father and thy mother shall be  
glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice.

Consider Proverbs 29:17,

Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest;  
yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul.

It is clear that God promises a blessing to the wise father and mother who train their children properly. Notice,

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however, that God has said that if we fail in this regard there is sorrow to be had. Once Again Proverbs 10:1 states, "...But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." Notice Proverbs 17:21, "He that begetteth a fool doeth it to his sorrow: and the father of a fool hath no joy." Proverbs 29:15 states,

The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.

It is therefore clear what we shall receive if we fail to train our children as we should. Therefore, notice a few of the classic texts of Scripture regarding our children.

### **Parental Accountability**

God has entrusted parents with his gift, our children, making parents responsible for the way they care for that precious gift. Psalm 127:3-5 states,

Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.

To refer to our offspring as "*children*" and "*fruit of the womb*" is but to refer to the physical results of human reproduction. However, the phrase "*heritage from the Lord*" refers to the source of the soul, that being God. The term "*heritage*" in the original language refers to the idea of inheritance or receiving a gift. Consequently, children are to be considered as a gift or an inheritance from God.

Accountability for our children is further seen from the fact that our children did not ask to be here. They did not choose their parents nor the time or the place



of their birth. They did not come with personalities nor were they forced to take on inherited potentialities. They are not responsible for the background of their parents nor their home environment. They come totally dependent for their food, shelter, clothing, protection and training. All of these matters are important to children, not just one or two of them. One begins to see the significance of this even more when we realize that they are as dependent upon us for their well-being as we are upon God for ours. We look to him for food, clothing, shelter, training and care. We realize that we would be nothing nor have anything if it were not for God and his wonderful care of our lives. The child of God turns to God in prayer and sincerely speaks to God and his providential care of our lives. The Christian has come to know how important God is to us; may we never forget how important we are to our children. Obviously, we are not saying that parents are to be as god's to their children, as they are responsible to God just as adults, but it does help each parent to become keenly aware of his and her accountability for their children. So, may parents ever come to a keener realization of parental responsibility and accountability before God.

### **Children Are To Honor Both Their Father And Mother**

Ephesians 6:1-2 states,

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)

Paul begins this paragraph of Scripture with the instruction for children that they obey and honor their parents. Parents are to treat their children in such a way

that their children will give them respect, as respect and honor is something that is to be earned. Paul's phrase "*in the Lord*" suggests that children are to obey their parents even if their parents are not Christians, that is they are to do it for Christ's sake. It has always been a part of God's plan that children honor their parents. This is seen from the fact that in the old law, which God commanded the children of Israel to keep, that they, too, were to honor their father and mother (Deut. 5:16), and then the promise is given, "That your days may be long, and that it may be well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you."

One sees in addition to this the importance of children honoring or respecting their parents in that they will learn little else if they do not indeed respect their parents. Parents, therefore, are to receive the respect from their children that is due them. Parents must not allow children to disrespect their rightful position as the parent. The word authority is a word that every rebellious person hates. If children do not learn this matter of authority and come to respect it first in their parents, then they will not learn to respect God, nor Christ as the Son of God, nor the Bible as the word of God, nor the church of the Lord which we read of from the Bible. The matter of learning respect is extremely important in the life of the child.

It is important for parents to understand the matter of authority as they stand in a position of authority over their children. For instance, the term authority, simply put, is the right to act, to rule, or the power to decide. It is the right to set policy, the leadership to command those who are under them. First, God is the ultimate authority (Psalm 47:2; 83:18; Daniel 4:34). When studied carefully, one sees that there is no end to the reign of God. Second, God has delegated his authority to others;

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Christ (Matt. 28:18-20), the inspired apostles and writers of the New Testament (John 14:15-18; 16:12-15). Third, God has established institutions such as the government, such divine institutions as marriage and the home, as well as the church, for the purpose of orderly administration of his divine plan and has given specific authority to such (Rom. 13:1; Gen. 2:24-25; Matt. 19:9; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:19-22). God’s word gives specific limits or boundaries for each so that, when followed, it will insure protection and blessings which God wants us to have. Any problems with authority are not due to God but due to man and his unwillingness either to properly learn about and understand God’s ultimate authority as well as his delegated authority or man’s refusal to submit to God’s divine authority or both.

Closely connected to this matter of recognizing and respecting authority is obedience. The Bible teaches that children are to obey their parents. Colossians 3:20 states, “Children, obey your parents in all things.” The original word used in the text for “*obey*” basically refers to the fact that children are to both hear and obey. Children must do what they are told. Even though this command is given to children, it is the parent who is accountable for seeing that such a command is fulfilled. Perhaps parents have not considered the matter of their right or authority to create law as it pertains to the matter of raising their children. This law is to be obeyed by their children. If children are disobedient, they have in effect broken the law. Therefore, both parent and child need to understand what God has legislated about this matter and respect each other’s God-given role: children honoring and obeying parents and parents who have the authority to rule over the lives of the children under their control.

## **Children Are To Be Trained By Father And Mother**

Proverbs 22:6 states, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." It is important to know what is meant by training children. By better understanding this, one will better understand what God expects of both parents and children. If one were to train the growth of a young sapling, one would string out line to encourage the young tree to grow in a certain direction, straight and tall. To train an athlete means that one will provide the necessary regimen for that individual to become fit and become a winner. To train an animal is to cause it to accomplish a certain function like run a race, work, or perform a task. To train someone to perform a skill is to teach and guide the progress of that individual so as to become proficient in that skill. To train a child is the process of parenting that will cause that child to reach the desired objectives which we as parents want them to attain. In each of these matters, training is not complete until the subject actually attains the intended purpose of the process. Therefore a number of elements may be concluded about training. First, training is not a one time exposure to godly rules or principles for living but a continuous process until the intended purposes are accomplished. If the trainee cannot do the job, training must continue until the desired skills are achieved. The same is true with training our children in living godly lives. Second, it can be seen from this that telling your children what you expect of them is not training. It is only when our children actually arrive at the point of functioning on their own in conformity to what they have been taught that we can consider them to have arrived in the training process. This would also include the idea that teaching is not the same as training. Teaching, an exposure to

truth, is to be distinguished from training, which involves the process of development. Third, the exposure of a good home life is not training, even though this is very important. Simply because we raise them in a moral environment is no guarantee that our children will accept the standard for living as his or her own. There have been many moral parents raise immoral children. Fourth, simply exposing our children to Bible class, as important as that is, is not training. We must not depend solely upon the Bible class or the Christian college to train our children. The training that this passage teaches (Prov. 22:6) is the kind of personal training that can only come from parents for their children. Fifth, raising a child, as important as that is, is not training. When we raise something, we grow it. Raising a child would certainly include feeding, clothing, and protecting them from danger until they reach physical maturity. However, training involves the development of the soul as God intended.

This passage is very interesting exegetically. It is clear that Solomon is emphasizing that training is a great duty, particularly to those who are the parents of children. It is necessary for the propagating of wisdom, that it may not die with them. Therefore, train children during those early formative years, to keep them from sin, to prepare them for what they are to face. We initiate them; keep them under discipline. Train them as soldiers, who are taught to handle their arms, keep rank, and observe the word of command. Train them up, not in the way they would go, but in the way they should go, the way in which, if you love them, you would have them go. Train up a child according as he is capable (as some take it), with a gentle hand, as nurses feed children (Deut. 6:7).

Solomon gives the reason for such; when they grow up, when they grow old, it is to be hoped they will not

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depart from it. Good impressions made upon them will abide upon them all their days. The passage does not intend to say that such is a type of “sure fire guarantee” that children will never fall away. Solomon is not saying that such faithful teaching somehow does away with the free will of the child and that he will always be faithful. Many indeed have departed from the good way in which they were trained up; Solomon himself did so. But early training may be a means of their recovering themselves. The teaching they have received will go with them and urge them conscientiously to do what is right. At least the parents will have the comfort of having done their duty.

### **Children Are To Be Taught By Their Father And Mother**

A classic text which needs to be considered at this point comes from Deut 6:6-7 which states,

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

It has been seen that parents are commanded to train their children but they, as this passage teaches, are commanded to teach them also. The Hebrew word translated here as “*teach*,” **shanan**, is a word which means to inculcate. Positive teaching is a repetitive matter; it is taught time and time again. In addition to this, such a passage implies that parents themselves know the word of God sufficiently so as to teach it to their children. Other great passages such as Deuteronomy 4:10 and 11:19 use another word for teaching, that being,

**lamad**, which means to exercise, or learn by means of intensive drill. New recruits were taught in Israel’s military in this fashion (I Chron. 5:18).

This passage is also very interesting exegetically. Moses is delivering the instruction of God on how to maintain and keep God’s word in their hearts and houses. First, meditate or reflect upon God’s word so that it will be laid up into one’s heart so as to be employed daily. Second, repeat these important matters to our children insuring exactness. Teach these matters to all who are in any way under your care. Third, talk about these matters. One is to do so with due reverence and seriousness. To do so will prove to be a benefit to both our children as well as ourselves. Fourth, read regularly God’s word. He makes mention of them writing God’s word upon their walls, and in scrolls of parchment to be worn about their wrists. The intent of the passage is become familiar with Gods word. Read it carefully and study it regularly. To do so will cause us to be ready to use God’s word upon all occasions, to restrain us from sin, and direct us in duty. It will help us not to forget God in the day of prosperity and plenty. Therefore, negligence will ruin us; but diligence in these matters will help save us as well as our children from falling away from God’s divine standard. Godliness will become our duty, but not only this, our interest, as well as our life.

### **God Promises To Bless Our Children**

With regard to our children there is a further important emphasis, that being, a blessing is promised to those who learn to respect and obey the godly parent. For instance, Ephesians 6:2-3 states,

Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may

be well with thee, and thou mayest live long  
on the earth.

Closely related to this is Exodus 20:12, “Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.” For God to promise long life in the days of the Old Testament meant that one would not face the prospect of a violent end due to war, disease, famine, or the wild beast. It was a promise of death at the right time. The longer one lived the more one would be able to accomplish in life, the more to accumulate wealth in land, livestock, and children. It was a promise of living in the land that God would give (Exod. 20:12). Notice Proverbs 3:1-2,

My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart  
keep my commandments: For length of days,  
and long life, and peace, shall they add to  
thee.

When one honors and respects one’s parents, then one expects to receive the blessings of God; when one fails in this, naturally one will not receive God’s blessing. In consideration of such blessing we must always remember that God has a plan for every life, a plan that incorporates even the unfairness of this world.

### **A Few Practical Suggestions**

At this point, may I suggest just a few areas of concern and instruction regarding our children. Please keep in mind that the teaching of Christian truths and training in Christian disciplines is a continuous process and must begin early in life. First, teach them about God and the judgment. This will prove to be a lifelong study. The fact of God and his existence underlies all other consideration, for, if there is no God, then Jesus Christ cannot be the Son of God, and if there is no God, then



the Bible cannot be the word of God, and if there is no word of God, then there cannot be any objective authority from God teaching of a morally right or morally wrong way of life. In fact, without the existence of God there is no real meaningful reason for living. However, the great God of the Bible does exist; because of that, there is every reason in the world to go on living. We live to glorify him and his matchless name. We live to be more like him day by day. We live so as to tell others of this wonderful life which is to be lived in Christ Jesus. Due to God and his existence there is great purpose and meaning to life as one lives each day knowing that he will one day stand before God in judgment. Morality and good citizenship, as commendable as they are, cannot take the place of this orientation to God. We need to teach our child of God, his existence, his nature and the judgment to come.

Second, give your child the gift of love. Every child desires and deserves a faithful, loving father and mother. It is important that children see that father loves mother and vice versa. A loving home gives children assurance and confidence. Think how difficult it is for children when they are being raised in an atmosphere where there is no love. The atmosphere of a home without love and affection for one another is desert like, it is parched and dry. The home cannot be the happy, serene place that it was meant to be without such love and affection. Therefore, work toward creating an atmosphere of love. “Husbands love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it” (Eph. 5:25). Also, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord” (v. 22). “Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband” (Eph. 5:33).

Third, as you teach your children to live godly lives, live a consistent, godly life before them. Children need examples to follow. The examples that they choose are often those that they respect and will emulate. They, therefore, need an example in life that will encourage them to live above the crowd. They need to see mother and father living the lives we all read about from the pages of the Bible. It is simply absurd to think that our children will listen to us as they ought in matters of life and godly living when all the time we ourselves do not live as we should. That method of teaching fools no one. We cannot expect our children to be truthful when all the time they see us lying. We cannot expect our children to be honest when all the time they see us stealing. We cannot carry them to Sunday school and leave them for worship when we go home to the newspaper and the television. Nothing in life works that way and certainly not the teaching and the training of our children. To try to teach our children to live wholesome, godly lives while all the while we ourselves do not is but a pretense and is to be hypocritical. Our children will see through this cheap pretense quicker than anyone else. Therefore, parents must first determine to live for Christ. Do not try to teach them a way of life you are not willing to live yourself.

Fourth, teach children to have the proper attitude toward authority. There has always been a tendency for employees to run the business, students to run the school, and children to run the home. This of course is not God's plan for the home. God's plan for the home is for the home to be led by God and his word, for the father to be the spiritual head of the home, the wife to be submissive to her husband's role as the head of the home and the children's responsibility to recognize the authority

of both. Ephesians 6:1-3 states,

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

If parents give ground on the matter of parental authority and allow children to argue and question their decisions, then it causes confusion in the minds of children, causing them to think that the parent really does not have the authority they claim to have. This, of course, does not mean that parents are dictators over their children, making rules and stifling all comment; however, parents are not to give away their authority through weariness and permissiveness. Somehow a happy medium is to be maintained where parents stand firm by being the parent of authority, not the weakling who can be argued into anything, and at the same time be loving, understanding, compassionate and kind. As a school teacher in the past, I have often seen parents bring their children to class the first day having already taught their children the alphabet, to read, and even to write, all the while thinking that they had given their children a big head start in their school career. As a teacher, I had much rather see a child coming to school for the first day with a healthy respect for authority, because with that attitude he will easily learn all the other. It is the child who does not respect authority who has the difficult time in learning.

Fifth, build courage in a child. Courage comes by having a good, healthy self esteem about oneself. Build positive attributes such as this, as they are the keystone to character. To have this, one must be reconciled with God, with self and with others. It comes from living the right kind of life. Proverbs 28:1 states, “The wicked flee

when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion.” It will take courage to live the Christian life in this age of compromise and liberalism. The weak Christian will fall as more and more pressure is placed upon them to compromise their faith by accepting more of this world’s way of life. James 4:4 states,

Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

I John 2:15-16 says,

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

It will take great courage upon the part of our young people to live for Christ in a world that is ever growing more materialistic and worldly minded.

Sixth, make sure that your children are exposed to the influence of wholesome leaders and exemplary people. No one would knowingly put their child in with a den of vipers. However, the associations which our children keep may be just as deadly spiritually for them as vipers are to one physically. The minds of children are both pliable in direction and sponge like, soaking up all they see and hear. Therefore it becomes imperative that they be exposed to the right kind of influence early in life and continue that positive Christian influence throughout life. No one would want to put the development of children in the company of those who teach evil, those who are of an unsavory character, as well as those who teach and live morally impure lives. Rather, take every opportunity

to monitor the material children watch, read and listen to. Carefully consider who their friends are as well as the company they keep. Make every effort to put them in contact with Christian men and women who are sound in faith so that they may see for themselves lives that should be emulated. Show respect for sound elders and faithful deacons, the faithful gospel preacher, and Bible class teacher. Expose your child to men and women who stand for things that are worthwhile, those who have high and noble convictions.

This list of suggestions certainly does not end here, nor do I mean to suggest that this list of suggestions should take priority over all others. They are offered to help each of us to fulfill the divine responsibility which we have to do our best by our children and to recognize the truth that, “Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord” (Psm. 127:3). They are a legacy from God, and we must accept our children as being of paramount importance and deal with them wisely. May the Lord say of us as he did of Abraham, “For I know him, that he will command his children...and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment” (Gen. 18:19).

## Chapter 15

# What Can We Do To Help Our Youth?

*B. J. Clarke*



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The chapter title implies that our youth are in trouble, and that they need our help. When we mention “*our youth*” in this lesson we refer to all young people, but especially those who are of the household of faith. When we refer to the “*we*” mentioned in the above title, we have reference to both the home and the church. Of course, it is the primary job of the home to bring our children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:1-4). However, the church can (and must) contribute to the efforts of the home in helping our youth find their way from earth to glory. Hence, this lesson addresses two vital questions: (1) Why Do Our Youth Need Our Help, and (2) What Can We Do To Help Our Youth?

### **Why Do Our Youth Need Help?**

During the next ten minutes some very disturbing things will happen to America’s youth:

10 kids will attempt suicide.

105 kids will quit school.

618 high school seniors will smoke marijuana.  
20 girls between ages 15-19 will become pregnant.  
5 of those girls will give birth to illegitimate babies.  
8 of those girls will have abortions.

The above statistics clearly demonstrate that the problems facing our youth are serious, and diverse. The gravity of these problems becomes even more apparent when we compare the seven problems in school during the 1940's with the top seven problems in school in the 1990's. In the 1940's, the top seven problems were (1) Talking in class; (2) Chewing gum; (3) Making noise; (4) Running in the halls; (5) Cutting in line; (6) Dress code violations; and (7) Littering.

And what are the top seven school problems in the 1990's? Read it and weep: (1) Drug abuse; (2) Alcohol abuse; (3) Pregnancy; (4) Suicide; (5) Rape; (6) Robbery; and (7) Assault. The contrast between the two lists of problems boggles the mind. Even more mind-boggling are the statistics regarding the problems of our young people. As you read the information printed upon the following pages, your heart will grieve. The problems of our youth are considerable; they are not confined to one or two small areas.

### **The Problems Of Our Youth With Crime**

Children and youths ages 12 to 20 constitute 57% of all serious arrests made in America. And the problem is getting worse. Even as these words are being penned the nation is reeling from the tragedy in Jonesboro, Arkansas, wherein an 11 year old boy, and a 13 year old boy, ambushed their classmates and teachers with gunfire. Five are dead, and many others suffered severe physical injuries, not to mention the emotional damage done, even to those children (and surviving family

members) who were not hit by a bullet.

Everyone seems to be asking the same questions: "How could it have happened? How could these two young people, at such a seemingly innocent age, even conceive of such a heinous act?" It would be bad enough if the event in Jonesboro were an isolated incident but, of course, when the shocking news from Arkansas broke, the ink was barely dry on newspaper reports of similar acts of violence perpetrated by other troubled young people from across this nation.

The tragic truth of the matter is that children increasingly are committing crimes ranging from armed robbery to murder, sociologists and criminal justice experts say. One in every three crimes is committed by a juvenile. People under 21 account for more than half of the arrests for serious crimes. "Ten years ago, it was a shock to see a 7, 8 or 9-year-old come into the system; now it's not," said Danny Dawson, chief of the Orange-Osceola County state attorney's juvenile division in Orlando. "*It's a trend.*"

### **The Problems Of Our Youth With Drugs**

Five thousand American teenagers will try cocaine today for the first time. Two thousand will start using crack. And some 3.3 million American teenagers are alcoholics. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Consider the following:

- One in every three teenagers has used an illicit drug within the past thirty days.
- Approximately 6.2 million young people age 12-17 have used marijuana at some time during their lives; 2.7 million have used marijuana in the last month; 4.8 million have used marijuana in the past year.
- One out of every twenty high school seniors



- (4.9%) smokes marijuana on a daily basis.
- Approximately 30% of high school seniors have smoked cigarettes during the last month, a substantial proportion of whom are daily smokers.
- About one in twenty seniors (5.0%) drinks alcohol daily.
- Approximately 92% of all high school seniors have used alcohol; 66% used alcohol in the last month, and 86% used it in the past year.
- Nearly half (45%) of boys and more than one-fourth (28%) of girls in the 1985 senior class report heavy party drinking (five or more drinks in a row) on at least one occasion in the two weeks prior to the 1985 survey.
- Motor vehicle accidents involving alcohol are the leading cause of death for young Americans aged 15 to 19, accounting for 45% of fatalities in this age group.
- Although 16-24 years-old comprise only 20% of licensed drivers in the U.S. and account for less than 20% of total vehicle miles traveled, they are involved in 42% of all fatal alcohol-related crashes. Close to 8,000 people between 15 and 24 were killed in alcohol-related traffic accidents in 1984, and an additional 220,000 were injured.

### **The Problems Of Our Young People With Sexual Permissiveness**

The National Sunday School Association's Youth Survey asked 3,000 teenagers what kind of help they would like to receive from their churches. Counseling for sexual problems ranked first among twenty-one items. One out of three asked for help in this area. In a similar survey by the Lutheran Church, instruction on Christian views of sex, courtship and marriage ranked first among forty items.

As members of the Lord's church, we must not, and

cannot, stick our heads in the sand and pretend that such difficulties do not exist at all among our young people. I am not suggesting that the statistics are identical, but I did my own informal survey and asked a number of young people “*off the record*” to tell me what they considered to be one of the most frequent sins committed by today’s teenagers. They answered, almost uniformly, “*Premarital sex.*”

Indeed, the sexual revolution has filtered down to teenagers with a vengeance. Nearly six out of ten 16 to 18 year-olds admit to having had sexual intercourse. In fact, nearly half of the nation’s 15 to 19 year old girls have had premarital sex, and the age of initiation keeps dropping. Believe it or not, researchers at Indiana University surveyed 677 seventh through ninth-graders and found 55% admit they have had sex! By age 13, guys who have never had sex are in the minority. Girls who are virgins are in the minority by age 15.

The statistics are nothing short of staggering: American girls, on average, begin having sex at age 16, boys, at 15. By the end of their teens, 70% of girls and 80% of boys have been sexually active. (**U.S. News & World Report**, December 22, 1986, p. 8). Even more startling is the report that 50% of today’s sexually active males had their first sexual experience between the ages of 11-13. (Robert Coles and Geoffrey Stokes, *Sex and the American Teenager*, New York: Harper & Row/Rolling Stone Press, 1985). **Parade Magazine** surveyed 303 guys and learned that by the time the average guy reaches 18, he’ll have had sex with five girls.

Equally frightening is the seemingly nonchalant attitude many young people have toward sexual immorality. Even during the sexual revolution of the 1960’s, 85% of the teenagers surveyed believed that

premarital sex was morally wrong. In 1981, only 21% felt it was wrong. With our present culture constantly bombarding our teenagers with the idea that one's sexual preferences have nothing to do with character and job performance, one can only wonder what percentage of America's youth would find premarital sex morally objectionable today.

The modern attitude of many young people today regarding the propriety of sex before marriage is summed up in an article from a May 1993 edition of the **South Bay Daily Breeze** in southern California. One of the young people said:

Nobody wants to leave the Prom and go straight home. The parties at the hotels are where most people are going. Generally, groups of young people pool their funds to rent a room and have parties with a large group. But students say there often are opportunities for couples to be alone, and some sexual activity is expected.  
— James Cummings, Cox News Service, “Proms: A Magic Night of Temptationa,” **The Daily Breeze**, May 13, 1993, c-4.

With attitudes like this, is it any wonder that teenage pregnancy is the number one cause of school dropouts for females? Is it any wonder that:

- 1.1 million teens become pregnant each year, representing 11% of all teens aged 15-19.
- 40% of today's 14 year old girls will be pregnant at least once before age 20. (Claudia Wallis, “*Children Having Children*,” **TIME** December 9th, 1985).
- 70% of the unwed teenage mothers will go on welfare. (Jay Kesler, **Parents of Teenagers**, Illinois: Victor Books, 1984).
- In 1981, teens aged 15-19 had 433,330 abortions, a rate of 43.3 abortions/1000 pregnancies, this is over

one fourth of the abortions performed in the U.S. (Alan Guttmacher Institute, **Teenage Pregnancy: The Problem That Hasn't Gone Away**, New York: Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1981).

- Almost half of all teen pregnancies (449,000) end in abortion.
- The U.S. spends 16.65 billion per year on health and other services for families started by women who gave birth while in their teens.
- The suicide rate among teenage mothers is ten times that of the general population. Furthermore, only one of every ten teenagers who get married because the woman is pregnant stays married, meaning that nine out of ten get a divorce.

Is it any wonder that teen-age pregnancy is epidemic, and venereal disease is rampant? Yet, remarkably, numerous parents and educators are still uncertain about how, what or even whether they should teach teenagers about sex.

### **The Problems Of Our Youth With Suicide**

As teenagers face the tremendous pressures of living in this old wicked world, they often lack the skills to cope with difficulty and disappointment. Lacking these skills, many teenagers see suicide as an option. In one study, 24% of teenagers said they “seriously considered” suicide; 32% said they had made plans; and 14% said they had made an attempt.

Another study found 20% of teens claimed they were “empty, confused, and would rather die than live.” One survey of high school and college students asked the question. “Do you ever think suicide among young people is an option?” Forty-nine percent said “yes.” A more recent study reveals that 85% of all adolescents think about attempting suicide, at some point. It is an epidemic of

despair.

Unfortunately, many teenagers do more than just think about suicide. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among youth age 15 to 19. It has tripled since 1960. It is the second leading cause of death among college students.

### **The Problems Of Our Youth With Leaving The Church**

A recent study commissioned by a major conservative evangelical denomination reported that within two years after graduation, 96% of their high school students leave the church. Less than 30% eventually return. Within the Lord's church the statistics are not much better. The late and esteemed Guy N. Woods, who traveled the brotherhood more than any other man of his day, suggested that the Lord's church is losing six or seven out of every ten young people after they move away from home. There is obviously much work to be done.

### **What Can We Do To Help Our Youth?**

Of the numerous things that could (and should) be done to help our youth, we will list four items: (1) Educate; (2) Demonstrate; (3) Participate; and (4) Supplicate.

#### **EDUCATE**

I am often amazed when parents brag about the intellectual freedom they give to their children regarding the formation of their religious convictions. These parents say, “We will not influence our children in making choices and decisions in matters of religion!” But why not? The ads will! The press will! The movies will! The neighbors will! The forces of sin will! The politicians will! We use

our influence over flowers, vegetables, cattle, etc. John Flavel is credited with writing,

If you neglect to instruct your children in the way of holiness, will the devil neglect to instruct them in the way of wickedness? No; if you will not teach them to pray, Satan will teach them to lie and curse. If ground is uncultivated, weeds will grow.

Not only is it important that we, as parents, influence our children, it is important that we do it early! I read the story of two heads made of metal, lying side by side in a sculptor's workshop. One was perfect. All the features of a manly, noble face were clear and distinct. The other, however, had scarcely a single, recognizable human characteristic. It was marred and spoiled. The sculptor explained, "This one is badly distorted because the metal was allowed to cool before it was stamped out, and therefore it wouldn't take the impression." The application is clear: many souls might have been stamped with the likeness of the Savior while they were still warm with the glow of early youth, but they were allowed to become cold. Thus, they were misinformed and their lives ruined. Parents must dedicate to educate their children.

Of course, it is self-evident that we cannot impart unto our young people what we do not ourselves possess. Therefore, it is impossible for us to educate our youth concerning the Word of God, if we have not first educated ourselves. You can't teach what you don't know! Almighty God expects His followers to perpetuate His cause by educating their children concerning it. Moses exhorted the children of Israel:

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt

teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates (Deut. 6:6-9).

And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth (Deut. 11:19-21).

It is apparent that God expected the children of Israel to educate their offspring concerning His commandments. Moreover, they were to teach these precepts “*diligently*,” whether they be sitting in the house, walking by the way, rising up in the morning, or lying down for the evening.

People often write things upon the palms of their hands to remind them of something they deem to be important, or they post a note on the front door or the mirror where the message will be seen, and not forgotten. In a similar way, we must teach our children the will of God so diligently that it will be as prominently impressed upon their hearts as a message on a neon sign, and as permanently inscribed as indelible ink!

The Psalmist echoed the same emphasis regarding the spiritual education of our children, He speaks of the will of God:

Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: (Psm. 78:3-7).

Our view of religion and theology is vitally connected with what "*our fathers have told us.*" As parents, we must not hide the truth from our children, but rather, we must make it known to our children in order that the generation to come might arise and declare them to their children. The father is to make known the truth of God to his children (Isa. 38:19). Parents must pass the knowledge of God down to their children as a precious family heirloom.

This is precisely what occurred with Lois, Eunice and Timothy. Grandmother Lois passed her sincere faith down to mother Eunice, and they jointly transmitted such to Timothy (II Tim. 1:5). They made certain that from a child, Timothy knew the Holy Scriptures (II Tim. 3:15).

After crossing the Jordan River, a monument, consisting of twelve stones, was erected to memorialize the event. Joshua told the people

...that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying. What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the



waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever (Josh. 4:6-7).

Modern day parents have no less responsibility to educate their children concerning all things that pertain to life and godliness (II Peter 1:3). When our children ask what the Lord’s supper means, we ought to be able to tell them the Bible answer (I Peter 3:15). Likewise, when they ask why we do not use mechanical instruments of music, we should be able to show them the truth. We must not assume that our children will learn all they need to know about the Bible in their Sunday school class or Wednesday night Bible study.

We must impress upon our children the fact that we consider their knowledge of God’s Word to be the most important and valuable knowledge they can accumulate in this life. What impression is left with our children when we make certain they have their books with them before they leave the house for public school, but fail to see to it that they have their Bibles with them before they go to Bible class? Moreover, what impression is received by our children when we expect them to do their homework for public school, but never encourage them to prepare their lessons for Bible class?

In addition to educating our children at home, we, as parents, must also see to it that our children attend services and gain the most out of it. Some years ago, Thomas Eaves wrote a short, but powerful, piece on why we are losing so many of our young people. Consider the impact of his words:

Parents in the past have come to preachers  
with tear-filled eyes, wringing their hands in

anguish over the spiritual conditions of their children. They were heard to say, "I just don't understand it..my son/daughter has attended services of worship since he/she was a toddler."

Where did they sit?...On the back rows.

What did they do?...They played.

What did they learn?...Not God's word. They didn't hear it.

My brethren, many parents will continue to agonize over the spiritual state of their children as long as they are allowed to socialize on the back seats of our meeting houses.

It is the responsibility of parents to teach their children the value of worship and hearing God's word and to supervise their children as God's people gather to worship.

Parents, it is the eleventh hour...do you know where your children are? In the house of worship...do you know in what activities they are engaged?

One final aspect involved in the education of our children is that of discipline. Like it or not, discipline is an absolutely indispensable part of training up our youth in the way they should go. At a psychologist's conference many years ago, one of the keynote speakers said, "the greatest social disaster of this century is the belief that abundant love makes discipline unnecessary." Love and correction are not mutually exclusive. The Lord corrects those whom He loves (Prov. 3:11-12). Refraining from physical discipline is not proof of one's love; it proves just the opposite (Prov. 13:24).

The practice of discipline is urgent. We must not allow the tears of our children to keep us from doing what needs to be done for their benefit (Prov. 19:18). *All* children exhibit certain types of foolish behavior and physical punishment is sometimes necessary to eliminate

it (Prov. 22:15). Someone has aptly observed that many parents are discovering that a pat on the back helps develop character...if given often, early, and low enough. A measured dose of physical discipline won't kill our children, but it may save their souls from a death far worse (Prov. 23:13-14; Rev. 21:8). If our children do not learn to respect the authority of an earthly father, how will they ever learn to respect the authority of the Heavenly Father? We must not hesitate to teach our children that we love them too much to let them behave in a manner detrimental to their eternal welfare.

As already noted, the primary mantle of responsibility for educating our youth, falls first, and foremost, upon the shoulders of parents. However, this is not to say that the church has no part to play in the education of our youth. The teaching done in the Bible School program, and from the pulpit, is an invaluable part of our children's education. However, there always seems to be a shortage of teachers who are ready to step in and teach our youth. The following piece was collected from a church bulletin I ran across several years ago. Its message is haunting:

Once upon a time, there was a church staff looking for teachers for children—preschoolers and youth. And some adults said, “I don't want to leave the good fellowship and study in my adult class.” But the drug pusher on the street said, “Not even the threat of jail will keep me from working with your children.”

And some adults said, “I could never give the time required to plan and to go to teachers' meetings.” But the pusher, the porno book dealer, and the movie producer said, “We'll stay open whatever hours are necessary every day to win the minds of the kids.”

And some adults said, "I'm unsuited, untrained, unable to work with children, preschoolers or youth." But the movie producer said, "We'll study, survey, and spend millions to produce whatever turns kids on."

So the adults stayed in their classes and enjoyed the fellowship and absorbed the good Bible study, and could go out of town often on the weekend and were available to do whatever was good to do on Wednesday or Sunday night instead of teachers' meetings.

And when Sunday came, the children came to their classes and no one was there except the church staff going from one room to another trying to assure them that someone would surely come to teach them some Sunday soon. But no one ever came, and the young children soon quit coming because they had gone to listen to others who did care about the things they did and what went into their minds.

Children need to be taught, and such necessity requires teachers! In fact, my appreciation for faithful Bible school teachers is well stated in the following letter, written by a parent to a Bible class teacher. The author of the letter is unknown to me, but the words of the letter say exactly what I would like to say to the teachers of my children.

### **A SEMI-OPEN LETTER TO THE TEACHERS OF MY CHILDREN**

Two or three times a week I trust you with my most prized jewels, and those two or three times a week, you live up to that trust and return them to me-though not quite the same. Somehow you manage to take them and gradually, week by week, polish them to make them shine a little more than I sometimes think possible. That, or you are patient and wise

enough to see the potential for riches in what others may see as only rough ore.

I know you spend much unnoticed time in preparation to teach my children about Jesus. I’ve seen the literally hundreds of objects they bring home to remind them of your object lessons. You always win when I prematurely suggest discarding certain Bible class memorabilia. Much of it has a lot of your TLC, not to mention time and creativity, behind it.

I saw a note one of you wrote to one of my children, challenging her to be the great Christian leader and example you expect her to be. You even promised to pray for my daughter and reminded her that you are always there if she needs to talk. Thank you for the time, the love, the prayers, the expectations and the support you devote to my children. And thank you for being a constant reflection of Jesus. They notice. And when they do, so do I.

Please resist the temptation to feel unappreciated. You’re not only appreciated but needed...and not just by my children but by me. And please don’t underestimate your influence or your teaching role...on them.. or me as a parent. My children echo much of what you teach them, probably more than you think they hear. In fact, they remember some of your stories and illustrations long after they’re promoted to another class.

As a Bible class teacher, you give my children Christ and yourself. You can’t give a greater gift. I can’t give you enough thanks.

## **DEMONSTRATE**

It is important to observe that we educate our children, not only by what we say, but also by what we do. We must demonstrate our Christianity before our

children. In fact, what we do before our children speaks even louder to them than what we say. Actions do speak louder than words! Our children are watching our lives carefully. A little boy was playing with a toy car when his mother heard him let out a string of profanity. She reprimanded him and asked, "Where did you learn those awful words?" The boy replied, "From Daddy. That's what he says when he can't get his car going." Sometimes we are so quick to label today's young people as delinquent that we forget to analyze what factors have contributed to their delinquency. The following poem, entitled "***The Real Delinquents***," gives adults something to think about:

We read in the papers, we hear on the air,  
Of killing and stealing, and crime everywhere.  
We sigh, and we say, as we notice the trend,  
"This young generation! Where will it all end?"  
But can we be sure that it's their fault alone?  
That maybe most of it isn't really our own?  
Too much money to spend, too much idle time;  
Too many movies of passion and crime;  
Too many books not fit to be read;  
Too much of evil in what they hear said;  
Too many children encouraged to roam,  
By too many parents who won't stay at home.  
Kids don't make the movies, they don't write the books,  
That paint a gay picture of gangsters and crooks.  
They don't make the liquor, they don't run the bars,  
They don't pass the laws, nor make the high-speed cars.  
They don't make the drugs that addle the brain;  
It's all done by older folks greedy for gain.  
Thus in so many cases it must be confessed,  
The label "Delinquent" fits older folks best.

The best teacher is the one who practices what he teaches. If we tell our children that worshipping God is

important, then we had better demonstrate an unwavering commitment to attend the worship services. In fact, recent in-depth studies indicate that the single most important factor in young people remaining faithful to the Lord’s church revolves around the immediate family and its faithfulness in attendance and supporting the work of the church.

Where both parents are faithful to the Lord, meaning that the parents not only attend regularly but also participate actively in the work of the congregation, 93% of the kids remained faithful. If only one of the parents were faithful the figure dropped to 73%. In homes where only one of the parents attends, and is only mildly active in the work of the church, only 53% of the children stay faithful. Finally, and most disturbing of all, in cases where both parents attend only infrequently, the percentage of their children who remained faithful plummeted to a woeful 6%.

Therefore, the solution for our problem with losing young people to apostasy is not dependent upon more youth programs, activities, and rallies. Rather, the best way to make sure that our children go to heaven is by our leading the way. While a cement sidewalk was being laid outside of a church building in Kansas, a young mother received permission to stand her baby boy on the wet cement with his toes pointing toward the church building. She was determined to start her boy out right.

A word of caution is in order. Even if we attend all of the services, and fail to put into practice what we have learned, our young people will not be fooled. A young boy was riding along in the automobile with his father. He looked up at his father and asked, “Daddy, what’s a Christian?” His father, familiar with the Bible definition of a Christian, gave his son a detailed answer. Convinced

that he had provided a superb answer, the father looked to his son for a nod of approval. However, his son's next question pierced his heart with searing pain. After hearing the description of a Christian, he looked up and asked, "Daddy, have I ever seen one?" Apparently, his father knew the definition in his head, but did not live it out in his heart. Our children will not be impressed by our knowledge of the Bible if it is not coupled with a life of devotion to God. We must "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Titus 2:10).

### **PARTICIPATE**

One of the popular programs in America today is P.L.A.Y.—Participate in the Lives of America's Youth. One would think that such would be only natural for parents. However, the race for affluence has produced many casualties when it comes to parents participating in the lives of their children. Socrates wrote:

Could I climb the highest place in Athens, I would lift my voice and proclaim: 'Fellow citizens, why do you turn and scrape every stone to gather wealth, and take so little care of your children, to whom one day you must relinquish it all?'

Some families can trace their family tree back several generations, but can't tell you where their children were even last night. Our society has so many latch-key kids that one comedian mused that the reason so many children are found on the streets at night is because they don't want to be left at home by themselves. Who among us is not still haunted by the words to the song "Cat's In The Cradle?" The song is about a father who is always promising to spend time with his son, only to find that when he is finally ready to do so, his son has grown up



and has no time for him.

The value of time spent together should not be underestimated. Charles Francis Adams was a 19th century political diplomat. One of his diary entries read, “*Went fishing with my son today – a day wasted.*” His son, Brook Adams, also kept a diary. His entry, for the same day, is, “*Went fishing with my father today – the most wonderful day of my life.*” We need to spend time with our children, helping them to deal with their personal problems in life. This takes time, listening, advising, and assisting when needed.

Unfortunately, the home has become a filling station where members of the family pop in and pop out. Very few families know the joy of dining together as a family. Study says there is more happening at family meal times than just eating. A recent study shows that high school students who interact with their families at dinner are more likely to spend time studying, on part-time employment and participating in athletics. “*A family that eats dinner together is doing a lot more than eating.*” said Paul Krouse, publisher of Who’s Who Among American High School Students.

The survey also showed:

- Students who never eat dinner together with their families are three times less likely to have a happy and close home life than those who regularly eat dinner with family.
- High school students who rarely or never eat dinner together with their families are almost four times as likely to have engaged in sexual intercourse (67%) than those who regularly eat dinner as a family (17%).  
— **Washington Times National Weekly** edition, 11/27-12/2/95.

Tragically, television often wields more influence

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over our youth than parents do. Academy Award winning composer Al Kasha said, “MTV is a very destructive force in society primarily because, for many, it plays a surrogate parental role. MTV is raising a generation of young people.” (AFA Journal, January 1996). Moreover, many parents have made the conscious decision to turn the responsibility of raising their children over to paid strangers. A disturbing article appeared in **The Wall Street Journal**, Thursday, January 8, 1998. The article was entitled, “***A Dangerous Experiment in Child-Rearing.***” Consider some of the excerpts from this article:

Examining nearly 57,000 households across the U.S., the bureau found that 55% of new mothers return to the work force within one year of giving birth. In 1976, by contrast, the figure was only 31%. Ours is now a day-care culture....for both parents in a majority of families to be employed before their children can even walk is startling. Yet there are few stirrings in the culture suggesting anything but a complacent acceptance of this revolution in child rearing. Few political, cultural or religious leader have spoke our against the growing practice of abandoning infants to paid strangers. Yet recent research, not to mention common sense, tells us that this quiet overhaul of American families is a profound tragedy whose bitter fruit will be reaped for decades to come.

These remarkable words were not written by a “right-wing, fundamentalist” preacher who has some chauvinistic ax to grind. They are words of truth, and studies show that we are already reaping some of the bitter fruit of not participating in the rearing of our

children. Note the following evidence from the same article:

Social science confirms that babies raised in day-care centers and similar institutions are often emotionally maladjusted. Research beginning in the 1979s has found that such children are more likely to be violent, antisocial and resistant to basic discipline. Psychology reported that children who entered day care before their first birthday were “significantly more aggressive” and more physically and verbally abusive of adults than other children.

A 1985 study by Ron Haskins in *Child Development*, another scholarly journal, compared two groups of day-care children and found that those who had spent more time in day care suffered from proportionately greater ill effects, regardless of the quality of care.

Titus 2:4-5 is still in the Bible. The passage teaches that the older women are to teach the younger women to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, and keepers at home. The phrase “*keepers at home*” is translated “*workers at home*” by the American Standard Version and the New King James Version renders it “*homemakers*.” This does not mean that the mother can never leave the house to go out and take care of business affairs pertaining to the home. The worthy woman of Proverbs 31 considers a field and purchases it (Prov. 31:16). However, some have taken this reference and equated it with the modern situation of the woman who bears children and then turns them over to someone else to raise while she pursues her career. The worthy woman of Proverbs 31 was not out advancing her career to the detriment of her domestic responsibility. It is still the will of God that “the younger women marry, bear children,

and guide the house” (1 Tim. 5:14)

But what about hardship cases? While it is true that there are certain situations where real economic hardship forces the mother to work outside the home, it is also true that many employ the excuse of economic hardship as a crutch for making enough money to purchase things that they want but really don't need. Even Mr. Thomas' article from the **Wall Street Journal** remarks:

Americans today are sophisticated at rationalizing vice, but the justifications offered for day care are surprisingly thin., The most common excuse is that young couples need the extra money. But U.S. News & World Report found that the median income of two-earner families is \$56,000, compared with \$32,000 for male breadwinner homes. At neither salary is a four-member family lacking for necessities. Per capita disposable income, adjusting for inflation, is more than twice as high today as it was in 1950, and three times as high as in 1930. Families are spending much of this money on luxuries like bigger homes (new homes are 38% larger now than in 1970) - not on their kids.

A **Reader's Digest** article, "*Hard Truths About Day Care*," concludes: "What the very young want, and urgently need, child development experts agree, is not education or socialization, but the affection and unhurried attention of their parents. The deepest problem with paid child rearing is that someone is being asked to do for money what very few of us are able to do for any reason other than love."

The value of taking the time to listen to our children is well expressed in the following lines:

Take a moment to listen today  
To what your children are trying to say;  
Listen today, whatever you do  
Or they won't be there to listen to you.  
Listen to their problems, listen for their needs,  
Praise their smallest triumphs, praise their  
    smallest deeds;  
Tolerate their chatter, amplify their laughter,  
Find out what's the matter, find out what they're after.  
But tell them that you love them, every single night  
And though you scold them, be sure you hold them;  
Tell them “Everything's all right;  
Tomorrow's looking bright!”  
Take a moment to listen today  
To what your children are trying to say;  
Listen today, whatever you do  
And they will come back to listen to you.

## SUPPLICATE

Last, but certainly not least of the things we can do to help our youth is to make prayer and supplication on their behalf. David prayed to God on behalf of Solomon in I Chronicles 29:19:

And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart,  
to keep thy commandments, thy testimonies,  
and thy statutes, and to do all these things,  
and to build the palace, for the which I have  
made provision.

The fervent prayer of a righteous father or mother can accomplish much on behalf of their children. In his book, **Christ In The Home**, Robert R. Taylor, Jr. tells of the power of a parent's prayer:

Several years ago a boy was in the service. He was far from home. Some of the boys had planned a night of sin, revelry, and debauchery. They invited him to go. He was

tempted and agreed to accompany them. Then he remembered that it was Wednesday. Back home his mother would be in Bible study. When they had their prayers she would be remembering her son in service. This was too much. He could not spend a night in sin while his mother prayed for him in a church service. He told the young men that he would not be going after all. What would happen if this boy had had a mother that ignored Wednesday Bible study as many mothers do? What if she had been of the disposition that prayer is prayer and I can pray just as well for my boy at home as at a scheduled church assembly? The matter could have ended in a night of tragedy for the young man. He might have gotten into moral trouble that would've wrecked his whole future.

As parents, we must continue to pray without ceasing that our youth will live for God now so that they may live with Him hereafter (Col. 4:2; I Thess. 5:17).

### **Conclusion**

I will never forget the feeling of joy which surged through me when I held our firstborn child for the very first time. As I gazed down in amazement at our son, the responsibility of bringing a soul into the world hit me with brute force. I kept thinking over and over in my mind of how the eternal destiny of his precious soul would depend largely upon my performance as a parent.

If we will educate our children regarding the will of God, and demonstrate the will of God in our lives as we live before them, and if we will make certain to participate in their lives, and if we never cease to supplicate the throne of God for help in rearing them, then we help our youth avoid the problems which surround them. May God help us all as we strive to help our youth!

## Endnotes

1 Unless otherwise specified, all statistics and illustrations used in this chapter are from a computer software program known as ***Bible Illustrator for Windows***. The software is distributed by Parsons Software, Inc. One Parson Drive, Hiawatha, Iowa, 52233.

## Chapter 16

# Show Piety At Home ... Requite Thy Parents

*Everett Chambers*

Everett is a native of Jamaica ~ Resided in Florida and Texas for nine years ~ Graduated from the University of the West Indies in 1984 and Brown Trail School of Preaching in 1996 ~ He has been preaching for the past twelve years ~ Everett presently serves as an instructor at Brown Trail School of Preaching and travels on behalf of “The Truth In Love” television program.



**M**any Christians will lose their souls because of the sin of neglect (Matt. 25:41-46; James 4:17). Unfortunately, among some brethren, the command to requite their parents is an obscure New Testament teaching which holds little significance for them. It is seldom studied or preached about and perhaps even less obeyed. How sad it would be to find ourselves excluded from our eternal home because we overlooked what we considered to be a trivial command. Of course, no command of God is trivial (Psm. 119:172b; Matt. 5:18; 24:35; Luke 16:17; II Tim. 3:16-17). In this same letter in which our text is located, Paul urged Timothy,

Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee (I Tim. 4:15-16).

Therefore, it is of great importance that we are devoting



time to study this subject.

To requite means to pay back in full. Obviously, it is impossible for us to fully repay our parents. Nevertheless, there are specific ways through which we can show gratitude for what our parents have done for us. In God’s way of thinking, children have a special opportunity to reciprocate when their parents are older and in need of their financial help. In any event, God has always had a “*soft spot*” for those who are not in a position to help themselves and He gives special attention to their needs (Deut. 14:28-29; Psm. 146:9; Isa. 1:17; James 1:27; 2:5). In the case of aged and needy parents, He has given special legislation to ensure their welfare.

Paul wrote his first letter to Timothy so that, the younger preacher,

...mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim. 3:15).

In chapter five of this letter, Paul gives Timothy some specific instructions concerning how to handle various members of the church. In the immediate context of our study, I Timothy 5:1-4, he gives special instructions about how members of the church are to treat their aged relatives, especially older, needy widows. In giving these instructions, Paul draws on a timeless principle which God had articulated to the Jews many centuries before. Therefore, he makes the Old Testament commandment a New Testament obligation as well.

### **The Old Testament Commandment**

When God gave the law to the Jews through Moses, He left no doubt how He wanted children to treat their

parents. The fourth commandment, although succinct, makes it clear that children were expected to honor their parents.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee (Exod. 20:12).

Through this and other commandments, God regulated the conduct of the nation which he had called out to be his own special people. The Almighty was concerned that children should have a clear understanding of their obligations toward their parents. God also stipulated that those who obeyed this command would be prosperous in the Promised Land. The penalty for violating this command was death, *“And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death”* (Exod. 21:17). In the New Testament, Paul points out that the fourth commandment is the first commandment which came with a promise attached to it (Eph. 6:2).

### **Jesus Explains The Commandment**

But how were the Jews to understand this law? Does *“honoring”* parents simply mean being obedient and respectful to them? At the time of the Lord’s coming, some fifteen centuries after Moses had given this commandment to the Jews, it is clear that the Jews still understood what God wanted them to do (Mark 7:1-13). But they had nullified God’s statute and replaced it with one of their own making. From Jesus’ interpretation and application of this law, we see that honoring our parents goes beyond the years when a child is directly under parental authority. It also goes beyond mere lip service or even faithful obedience to the instructions of one’s parents. Honoring of parents extends to the days when our parents are aged and in need of our financial support.

Obviously, when children are older and parents are advanced in years, the commandment takes on new and expanded dimensions.

In spite of clearly understanding God’s directive, the Jewish leaders had handed down an erroneous interpretation of this law to the people. Notwithstanding the clear teaching of Moses on the financial obligation of children to their parents, they taught that it was acceptable to God for children to waive this obligation. They could get around taking care of their parents. They simply needed to explain to their parents that the funds which they had air marked for helping them would be given directly to God (Corban—Mark 7:11). In other words, they taught it was acceptable for the Jews to neglect their parents and give the money directly to the temple. They reasoned that nothing could be wrong with contributing money to be used in the service of the Lord in lieu of giving it to their parents. Surely God would be pleased with such sacrificial giving. In their way of thinking, it was all right to rob their parents to pay God. But God did not want them to sacrifice to please Him. For He always desires obedience over sacrifice (I Sam. 15:22b).

Unbelievably, in their arrogance, the Jewish leaders had stepped in and circumvented God’s law by giving their own law. Needless to say, their new law benefited them directly. As administrators of the temple, they were the first to benefit from any financial gifts made to the temple. They had countermanded God! Talk of arrogance and rebellion! The worse part is that they thought that their worship would still be acceptable to God. According to Jesus, the Jews had “...*Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition*” (Mark 7:9). He also said that they had

neglected the commandment of God and had invalidated the word of God by their tradition (Matt. 15:9b).

Jesus roundly condemned the Jewish leaders. He said that when they disregarded God's laws and substituted their own, their worship was in vain. To be sure, the Pharisees and their disciples seemed to be sincere worshippers, but God would not accept their worship. Jesus told them that their worship was vain because they were teaching as doctrine the precepts of men. Do we think that we can faithfully worship God if we neglect any of His commands? The answer is a resounding NO, "...for ALL thy commandments are righteousness" (Psm. 119:172). God does not want us to neglect one of His commands to keep another and certainly not to keep a command of our own making.

### **Joseph Met His Obligations**

But the principle of children being obligated to take care of their elderly parents predated the giving of the Mosaic Law. Joseph made special provisions for his indigent relatives and especially for his aged father, Jacob. Even Pharaoh, the godless and rebellious Egyptian leader, understood this principle. He immediately granted Joseph's request that assistance be made available to his aged father and his other relatives (Gen. 45:9-13; 47:11-12). Therefore, we see that the New Testament injunction has its roots as far back as the time of the patriarchs. It seems that Abraham may have delayed the final stage of his journey into the Promised Land until Terah, his aged father, had passed away (Gen. 12:1-5; Acts 7:1-4).

### **Ruth Understood And Discharged Her Obligations**

Perhaps, the best example of a child who obeyed

this commandment is Ruth. The ironies in this beautiful story are too many to enumerate in our brief study. Ruth was not the blood relative of Naomi. She was only her daughter-in-law. In any event, with the death of Naomi’s son Mahlon, the case could have easily been made that Ruth no longer had any obligations to her mother-in-law. In fact, Naomi herself made the case rather forcefully (Ruth 1:8-13). It is also important to remember that Ruth had not been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. She was a Moabitess by birth and had only come to learn Jehovah’s law after she had married into the Jewish family of Elimelech.

But Ruth seemed to fully understand what it meant to requite one’s parents. She did not hasten to leave her mother-in-law upon the death of her husband. Her understanding of God’s law led her to conclude that she would deserve the most severe divine sanction if she allowed anything but death to separate her from her mother-in-law (Ruth 1:16-17). For her part, Naomi seemed to be willing to release Ruth so she could get on with her life. But Ruth believed that she had an inescapable obligation to honor the aged Naomi. Her life’s work, based upon her understanding of God’s commands, meant that she should take care of Naomi until death separated them.

What was Ruth’s value to the aged Naomi, who for all intents and purposes, was having a nervous breakdown (Ruth 1:8-13, 20-21)? What could Ruth, a mere woman, do for Naomi in a foreign land? The women of Bethlehem summarized it this way “...*for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons...*” (Ruth 4:15b). She became the bread winner for the family at no small risk to her person (Ruth 2:2, 8, 11, 17-18).

At this stage in our discussion, we are forced to ask about Orpah, Naomi's older daughter-in-law. Had she not been exposed to the law of Moses? Did she not understand the fourth commandment? We would not be overstating the facts to conclude that Orpah reflected the shallowness of the Jews and the lawlessness of her Moabite brethren, "*In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes*" (Judg. 17:6; 21:25). All too easily, Orpah took Naomi's recommendation that she should put herself first. She ignored God's law rather easily. Perhaps she reasoned that the cost of obedience was too high. What would become of her future if she devoted herself to an old woman who had no one else to turn to? Ruth however, took God's commands to heart and obeyed them faithfully. The price of obedience was not too high for her. Therefore, what could have been the story of Orpah and Ruth is simply the story of Ruth.

Just as God promised in the fourth commandment, it went well for Ruth who left Moab, and crossed the Jordan to live in the Promised Land. What great honors she received! She married Boaz, a man of great wealth and gave birth to a healthy baby boy who would later become the grandfather of David. But most significant of all,

...The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel... (Ruth 4:11).

The Messiah descended from her union with Boaz. Could it have gone any better for her in the Land of Promise? Can we fail to see the connection between the tremendous blessings which she received and her whole hearted obedience to God's commandment?

## **Jesus Made Provisions For His Mother**

Although Jesus was not Mary's only son (Mark 6:3), He made it His responsibility to see after her welfare prior to His departure from the earth. We see Him entrusting her welfare to John, His beloved friend and disciple. John understood Jesus' request because from that day, he took Mary into his own house (John 19:26-27). Jesus was no doubt in great agony suspended as he was on that cruel cross. Scripture tells us that He looked for sympathy, but there was none, and for comforters, but He found none (Psm. 69:20). But in spite of his personal pain, He made the welfare of His mother a priority. Jesus could have assumed that his brothers would take care of His mother. But as Mary's eldest son, He squarely embraced this responsibility as His own. We should not, however, be surprised that Jesus, the God Man, obeyed the fourth commandment.

## **20th Century Parents & Children**

As we have previously stated, the commandment to look after our aged parents is a timeless principle. But it is explicitly taught in the New Testament.

Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God (I Tim. 5:3-4).

Here we have the direct command of Paul to look after widows. But the principle also extends to our elderly parents whether or not they are widows. It certainly becomes even more important if they are widows. In addition Paul reiterates the Old Testament commandment in the New Testament.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth (Eph. 6:1-3).

Therefore, we incur the same obligations as the Jews. Honoring our parents also means taking care of them in their old age.

In our culture, the affluence of our society may lessen the relevance and urgency of this command. After all, many of our parents end up leaving us money in their wills, thereby proving that they did not need our financial help. Nevertheless, we must pay close attention to make sure that our parents are not needy. The church must also be prepared to take over according to the principles which Paul outlines in I Timothy 5.

But God commits the welfare of our parents squarely into our hands. This goes beyond providing them money. The command extends to decisions about their care when they are no longer able to take care of themselves. Obviously, decisions about assisted living and nursing care are very traumatic for all concerned and should not be made lightly. The convenience of the children cannot be the only criterion by which such decisions are made.

According to New Testament teaching, the welfare of the elderly is not the responsibility of the state. Certainly, Christians who have voluntarily placed themselves under God's law should understand this. The welfare of the elderly is the responsibility of their children. This is not to argue against Social Security, etc. But if our parents have failed to make adequate



provisions for their old age, or if they are otherwise unable to take care of themselves, we, their children, must do as God has instructed. Welfare is not a substitute for the duty of children.

Scripture also teaches us to do good to all men, especially to those of the household of faith (Gal. 6:9-10). Therefore, we Christians have to be concerned about the welfare of the elderly, especially those in our congregations. We cannot neglect these commands and still be pleasing to God. In addition to these teachings, we have this guideline from Jesus, *“And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise”* (Luke 6:31). No one would want to be abandoned, friendless and penniless in their waning years. So we should do good while we have the opportunity.

### **Conclusion**

We all lead busy lives. Oftentimes, we are barely able to manage our own affairs. Add to this, the fact that most parents have no desire to be a burden to their children. Our parents may even tell us that they are doing just fine when they are actually in need of our help. But we must willingly devote the time and resources necessary for the care of our parents.

We can't wait for our parents to communicate their needs before we step in. We must be vigilant just as Jesus was vigilant concerning His mother's needs, even while He was hanging on the cross. Of course, our involvement must be tempered by a genuine respect for our parents wishes, especially their desire for independence.

It is easy for us to neglect our responsibility to our

parents, especially with the busy and complicated lives which we lead. But God is watching. To be pleasing to him, we must avoid the error of the Pharisees. Furthermore, we have been taught through the scriptures by command and by example. To be pleasing to God, we must obey His commandments and imitate the example of Christ and other godly men and women who made it a priority to requite their parents.

## Chapter 17

# What Shall We Leave Our Children?

*Keith A. Mosher, Sr.*



Keith Mosher, Sr., a faithful proclaimer of the gospel of Christ, received his formal education from Cleveland State University, University of Louisville, and Memphis School of Preaching ~ Author of **The Book “God Breathed”** ~ Presently he is an instructor at the Memphis School of Preaching ~ Keith and Dorothy have been married thirty three years and have three children and two grandchildren.

**T**he story is told of a young preacher who had no children, but he knew **how** to rear them and preached very hard on **how** so to do. The preacher then married and, after fathering two children, he decided that he should change the sermon to **suggestions** for rearing children. When the preacher’s children became teen-agers, the preacher changed his lesson to **tips** for rearing one’s offspring. Every thoughtful, God-fearing parent can relate to that preacher’s dilemma and especially can the one penning this essay!

When the assignment was given to me by the wonderful brethren at East Hill, especially by the elders and my good friend Paul Sain, I felt ill-equipped to write on such a vital subject. Actually, I was originally asked to present material on “*Wives...Submit...Reverence,*” but because of schedule conflicts, Curtis A. Cates and I switched subjects. Perhaps (I do not really know) all of this is providential, for I daily think about my children and their eternal destinies; as do all parents who pray

about and are concerned about their beloved sons and daughters. But, I am not expert on what to “leave” children and the things said here are, at best, the results of experiences good and bad over the years.

The elders and members of the East Hill congregation and their wonderful evangelist, Paul Sain, deserve high praise for conducting the annual lectureship and for deciding on these studies of the Christian home for this year’s book. East Hill is a great benefactor and friend to Memphis School of Preaching and deeply loved by a grateful brotherhood.

### **Introduction**

A loving father wrote:

“Wait until you have children; your life will never be the same.” I always assumed those words to be a warning of the predictable price of time and care and attention one must pay for button noses, high white shoes, and round buttons—for the utter pricelessness and loveliness of children. I knew I would have to teach my children a million things—to balance a bike, to tie shoelaces, that the capital of Ohio is Columbus. I guess I assumed no more involvement than these little lessons, and lots of love. I know differently now, because now I have children. I know that when you teach a child to divide five into ten, the lesson has a beginning and an end. But when you try to teach a girl to become a woman, or a boy to become a man, the lesson is as long as your life.<sup>1</sup>

Before the above author ever existed, God instructed the psalmist to write: “*As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth*” (Psm. 127:4).

Children, as arrows in a warrior’s hand, will generally go the way they are aimed. Matthew Henry added the thought, however, that these *“arrows in the hand too often prove arrows in the heart; a constant grief to their godly parents, whose gray hairs they bring with sorrow to the grave.”*<sup>2</sup>

It is sad that not every child who is directed toward a godly life lives that life. Every parent of more than one child knows the multitude of differences in attitudes and aptitudes, even in the characters of close siblings. Yet, godly parents have an overwhelming desire to instruct their offspring so as to ensure that they become Christian men and women. The problem is that even well-aimed arrows can be put off target by a sudden gust of wind or an unobserved twig on a tree. Even so, well-aimed children meet unexpected obstacles and some never overcome such snags and miss the target at which their parents had aimed.

The question that instructs this study of *“what to leave our children”* is: *“Are there any magical words or set curriculums that once taught or placed in motion would protect children from wavering so that they would reach heaven?”* Sadly, no words or courses of study exist. Parents aim, but some children miss the target. (A study among Florida churches did show that when both parents remained faithful to God about ninety-percent of the children also did and even where just one parent was faithful, seventy-percent of those children stayed in church.)<sup>3</sup>

Despite the fact that some children fail, there seem to be two major areas on which Christian parents should concentrate—roots and wings.<sup>4</sup> Some **tips** then on developing roots and growing wings are offered here. Hopefully children with a solid foundation coupled with

the ability to be independent adults (roots and wings) will be so aimed that they will have a chance to live godly lives for Christ.

### **Roots**

The late, beloved, and lamented Joe Gilmore wrote on the same subject as this essay:

Our text is found in (II Cor. 12:14) (SIC.) “...for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children” this is a lesson that applies primarily to parents. When we stop to think about the future we must realize that soon we will be parted from our children.<sup>5</sup>

Brother Joe went on to write:

I want so to live that my daughter will be able to remember my faith in God, love, sincerity, my favorite sermons, etc. Then when my voice is stilled in death, she can't hear her dad anymore, I can still speak to her through the memory of a good home.<sup>6</sup>

Brother Gilmore had suggested that he wanted to leave his daughter a good name; a good memory of a Christian home (from which section the above quote derives); a personal example; a good education; a true faith in God; and an appreciation for the beautiful.<sup>7</sup> Such a wonderful list of things to leave one's children is a list hard to improve. All of the things brother Joe mentioned are roots and wings! Perhaps expanding on his original essay one could leave the following “*roots and wings*” to one's child.

### **Proper Training**

*“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Prov. 22:6).*

Since this is a proverb, the passage must be constrained by the limitations of such a figure of speech. Proverbs are pithy statements applying truth to a certain aspect of wisdom.<sup>8</sup> For example, the English proverb, “*look before you leap*,” does not contradict, “*he who hesitates is lost*.” One understands that the two English proverbs are true, given the constraints of application.

So it is that Proverbs 22:6 does not guarantee that every child trained in church will stay in church. Such a conclusion would imply the impossibility of apostasy. However, the proverb does give parents the idea for a wonderful gift to leave their children—**proper** training.

The term, **train**, (Hebrew **kal imperative: to imbue**, or **chatechise**, usually applied to children)<sup>9</sup> implies a trainer (the parent) and the trainee (the child). A child not willing to be trained was, under Mosaic legislation, a candidate for stoning (Deut. 21:18-21). Therefore, not all children are trainable and yet all children need to realize that loving parents who are attempting to train are doing God’s will and that all children are under obligation to receive the training. The term, **child**, here is **na, ar** which is used both of new-born boys (Exod. 2:6) and of young boys about twenty (Gen. 34:19).<sup>10</sup> All children need training, but in what according to this proverb?

The answer given to the foregoing question is: “*in the way he should go*.” The Hebrew reads something like “*of his way*” (al-pee). The meaning is that a parent’s instruction should be such as is conformable to the nature of youth.<sup>11</sup> Such training, when in conformity with youth’s nature, becomes second-nature to him.

Some Hebrew scholars feel that **al-pee** also contains the idea of instruction that is in keeping with each child’s individual nature.<sup>12</sup> Proper training, then,

would include teaching a child according to its own bent or direction and not forcing a son or daughter into some life the parent wants him or her to live. On a practical level, even religious training would need to be designed for each age and each child's nature.

### **Parental Example**

A further "*root*" that can and must be passed on to children is the example of having faithful parents. In fact, "*for those who are parents, their children are their third priority.*"<sup>13</sup> Parents must put God first. The psalmist wrote that "*children are an heritage of the Lord*" (Psm. 127:3).

I have often remembered my first-born's birth; but the birth of the twins really brought home to me the awesome task of teaching my children about God. The twins (a boy and girl) were tiny enough at birth so that I could hold one in each hand. As I stared at the pink and blue bundles, so fragile and so precious, the thought of what my responsibility was was so powerful that I wept. God had given me two, perfect human beings and God expected me to give them back to him as pure as I had received them!<sup>14</sup>

Children are God's **heritage** (the Hebrew means a blessed, free-will gift; in this case from God)<sup>15</sup> and so must be reared in God's "*nuture and admonition*" (Eph. 6:4).

Absalom, the third son of David, had nearly all a young person could desire. Absalom was handsome, clever, and daring, and the people loved him (II Samuel 14:25ff). Yet, Absalom had his rapist brother, Amnon, slain and later Absalom plotted to kill his father, David (II Samuel 13:29; 15:13ff). In the battle for David's throne



Absalom was killed by Joab, David’s general (II Sam. 18:14). David, not knowing of Absalom’s demise, asking a messenger named Cush: “...*Is the young man Absalom safe...*” (II Sam. 18:29)? Absalom was not safe, and one reading the Bible account is struck by the fact that David had not set a godly example before Absalom.

David had committed grievous sin with Bathsheba and Uriah (II Sam. 11). David had been too busy with court matters, war, and business to nurture his sons. There was little, if any, parental example. Homes of Christians need not be like David’s, but need to be filled with Christian influence, prayer, and Bible study. Parents who lie, drink, gossip, etcetera need not wonder why their children do the same.

One example parents need to leave their children that does not seem to be discussed much is the example of associating, as true friends, only with those who truly live Christian lives (I Cor. 15:33). Children need to **know** godly elders, preachers, and members as friends and, yes, loved ones. Church and home need to be united in love. What kind of example shall be left our children. Are they safe? Are their roots with their friends at church or with those associations in the world?

### **Perceptions Of Role Models**

A young lady was seen wearing a tee-shirt on which was emblazoned: “*Every mom is a working mom.*” So she is! But some seem to have the idea that only those with careers outside the house are “*working.*” Christian moms, however, take their tasks very seriously and are very conscientious, devoted parents. Christian moms are faithful to the following precepts:

The aged women likewise, that they be in  
behaviour as becometh holiness, not false

accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed (Titus 2:3-5).

Children need to be given moms who are role-models. American society, however, places little stress on the proper importance of being a mom. *“If a woman teaches someone else’s children; decorates someone else’s home; or cares for a non-related sick person; she is a professional, a career woman. When she provides the same care for her own flesh and blood, by current standards, she’s just a housewife.”*<sup>16</sup> God’s estimate of mom’s care is that she is keeping Holy Writ from being attacked (Titus 2:5)! More moms are needed who are there for their children.

As for Dad’s gift of role modeling to his children—American society stresses athletic or physical prowess along with financial success. God emphasizes fatherhood as the primary role.

And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph. 6:4).

My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother (Prov. 1:8).

For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth (Prov. 3:12).

Children will imitate mom in many things, but according to the Bible, sons and daughters follow Dad in religion. Is Dad a model of integrity, faithfulness, and

prayerfulness? (Parents can not claim arrogant perfection and children need to know that dads [and moms] are human and err. And children seem to respect dads who admit their mistakes rather than those fathers who say, “*Do as I say, not as I do.*”) The Bible has several accounts of problem children who had problem fathers: Cain (his parents introduced sin); Ham (whose father got drunk; Gen. 9); Jacob (who deceived Isaac). There are others recorded, but fathers need to realize that a student cannot easily rise above the teacher. Children struggle to rise spiritually who have non-spiritual dads.

Dads and moms need to give their children proper perceptions of what it means to be a Christian mother or father. In fact, children need to know that dads lead and moms follow and that men are men and women are women (Eph. 5:22). Otherwise children are not being given proper ideas of the roles God has for them.

### **Personal Discipline**

Parents should consider leaving the child a sense of discipline as a must gift. From the standpoint of the meaning of discipline (standards of right) to the child, parents must begin early and stay late so that all sons and daughters arrive at adulthood with a sense of authority and control. Children can not go through life without restraint. “*Withhold not correction from the child...*” (Prov. 23:13a). “*He that spareth his rod hateth his son...*” (Prov. 13:24). The rod (Hebrew: **shebet**)<sup>17</sup> belonged to the father as a kind of supporting staff (Ezek. 21:15). The father’s “*support*” to a child was to give the rod of discipline.

Discipline is a blessing which should be denied no child. However, compliance in a child does not necessarily mean that the discipline is working. Parents who set

out to be strict with baby may be headed for trouble. Babies get weaned, toilet-trained, stop fussing, etcetera and so parents think that their training “works.” But, the inside of the child can not be seen, and inside there may be hurts. (Adults who live in oppressive societies are compliant, but not happy.) Children can obey, yet be rebelling inside.<sup>18</sup>

The story is told of a little boy who came to dinner with his guns on and wearing his cowboy hat. His father told him to take off his hat and to sit in his chair. The tyke responded by saying that cowboys stand when they eat. The father spanked the boy and made him remove his hat and sit. Through his tears the little boy sobbed: “I may be sitting, but inside I am still standing.” (Anonymous)

Well, from the child’s viewpoint, the best gift from parents concerning discipline is that the child “*gets your friendship in return.*”<sup>19</sup> The apostle told Christians that their love was returned to Christ because he first loved them (I John 4:19). So it is with discipline. The child responds and learns authority only when such control is offered in love. Surely there are other roots, but constraints require here a brief study of “wings.”

## **Wings Precious Faith**

Thompson has written:

The telephone rings in the middle of the night. The caller weeps uncontrollably. A teenager...is dead. Hearts break; words of comfort flee; advice fails. A funeral takes place etc.; final “goodbyes” are whispering in muted tones; classmates mourn; friends grieve. Everyone

wants to know—**why**? The telephone rings in the middle of the night. The caller weeps uncontrollably. A teenager is...dead. Hearts break; words of comfort flee; advice fails. But there will be no funeral, or hushed “goodbyes.” Classmates will not mourn; few friends will grieve. Fewer still will bother to ask “why?” What is the difference in these two scenarios? The first describes the **physical** death of a teenager; the second describes a **spiritual** death.<sup>20</sup>

Is there a greater thing to leave children than to be able to be on their own (“wings”) with a firm grasp on the faith of the New Testament as their own? Must children die spiritually at the terrible rate they are today—eighty percent leaving home and leaving the church! Children need the ability to know **why** they believe what they believe. New Testament Christianity is not learned through a process of osmosis, but is a system which **must be taught**. Parents can not just take their children to church and expect them to become Christians. (If children went to public school for the same amount of time each week that children attend [are supposed to attend] worship and Bible-study, it would take eleven years to finish the first grade!)

Parents must be able to explain, in Bible study—first principles, Christian evidences, and dogma so that their children are rooted and grounded in the faith and able to take wing toward God when on their own (cf. Col. 1:23). Too many parents, thus too many children, can not give the plan of salvation, especially if they must give a Bible verse for each step in the plan!

MacArthur insists that “*Children have a basic problem: they are children, and as such are lacking in four areas...delineated in Luke 2:52.*”<sup>21</sup> Luke 2:52 in the

record that Jesus “...increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” Children are lacking in wisdom (intellectual needs); stature (physical needs); favor with man (social needs); and favor with God (spiritual needs).<sup>22</sup> As Solomon would say, “...*this is the whole duty of man*” (Eccl. 12:13).

As children do not accidentally grow intellectually, physically, and socially; so they do not naturally grow to love God. When they are small they will comprehend facts about God, but unless they incorporate that faith into their heart of hearts they will drift away. Teach them facts, mom and dad, but be ready to answer the “*why*” questions too. A spiritual environment must be provided that will give the child every opportunity to learn to love God. One atheist is reported to have said, while standing at the side of his mother’s casket, “*I could answer every one of her arguments for God, except one—her life!*”

The ancient Hebrews were told just how to instill a like, precious faith in children.

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up (Deut. 6:6-7).

Those ancients could not go to a store and buy a Bible—there were no scroll-marts then. Those ancients could not take their children to Sunday school. How could they teach and from what could they instruct? They had to **memorize** God’s message and relay the divine commands to their children all day long, every day! (Where are the parents today who memorize God’s Word

and who use every opportunity to teach children?) It seems that the ancient faith was for every day and not just something to do on the weekend.

A faith in Christ that actually belongs to the child is the greatest gift a parent can offer his offspring. Such a precious possession, faithfully kept, would ensure that the family would be together forever (cf. I John 3:1-3).

### **Psychological Strength**

One wing for the child is faith, the other is strength to survive. There is a story often told by therapists that a child is crying, *“I could never please my parents. No matter how hard I tried, they always found fault with me. I will always remember the day my dad told me I would never amount to anything and that I was no good and a loser!”*<sup>23</sup> A child who lives with constant disapproval learns to think of himself as a failure. Someone wrote:

- If a child lives with criticism, he learns to condemn.
- If a child lives with hostility, he learns to fight.
- If a child lives with fear, he learns to be afraid.
- If a child lives with pity, he learns to be sorry for himself.
- If a child lives with jealousy, he learns to feel guilty.
- If a child lives with encouragement, he learns to be confident.
- If a child lives with tolerance, he learns to be patient.
- If a child lives with praise, he learns to be appreciative.
- If a child lives with approval, he learns to like himself.
- If a child lives with recognition, he learns what justice is.
- If a child lives with acceptance, he learns to love.
- If a child lives with honesty, he learns what truth is.
- If a child lives with security, he learns to have faith in himself.
- If a child lives with friendliness, he learns that the world is a nice place in which to live.
- If a child lives with a spiritual, he learns to have faith in God.

A well-known psychologist has written that the keys to strength in children and right parent-child relationships are love, discipline, consistency, example, and a man at the head of the home.<sup>24</sup> On the matter of consistency, which the Bible describes as “...*provoke not ...to wrath....*” Meier has also written that if one wishes to develop a drug addict or alcoholic one should give him all he want’s; one should never spank him; one should foster his dependence on one parent, one should protect him from one’s mate or a mean teacher who would spank a child; one should make all decisions for him so that he never gets an opportunity to learn from mistakes; one should criticize one’s mate openly; one should always bail the child out of trouble; one should always step in and solve the child’s problems for him; one (if the mother) should dominate the husband; and just to make sure the child does not survive, take lots of prescription drugs yourself, so that taking non-prescription drugs will not be a big step for the child.<sup>25</sup> If one wishes to develop a homosexual, Meier suggests doing all the things necessary in growing an addict but to add three: Don’t let one’s son play sports, he may get hurt; be sure he spends little time with father or men; and be sure he is never a newspaper boy. He might get pneumonia in the cold!<sup>26</sup> Finally, Meier suggests that if one wishes to develop a psychopathic criminal, one should start with the steps in developing an addict but add not spanking the child; add letting him run the parent’s lives; add the non-enforcement of any household rules; add irresponsibility by never bothering him with chores; add giving in when he throws a temper tantrum; add the believing of all his lies; add the criticizing of all others so that he will realize that he is better than all others; and, finally, give him a huge allowance and do



**not** make him do anything for it.<sup>27</sup>

Much more was said by Meier, and more probably needs saying, but children without psychological strength can not survive. Perhaps in the area of “...*provoke not...to wrath...*” (Eph. 6:4) there is the greatest need for study by and among Christians. Children need to be able to love themselves properly so that they, as Christians, can love God and their neighbors (Matt. 22:37-40).

### Conclusion

There are so many things that have been said and written about what one would leave one’s children. Some would love their spouses more in front of the children. Others would laugh more, listen more, be more honest about weaknesses. Some would pray more for the family and there are multitudes who would have done more things together with the children—if one could do things over.

However, when all is said, there are only two things that can be left a child—roots and wings. A solid foundation in training, parental example and role-modeling along with self-discipline will at least aim children in the right direction. After they leave home, if they have a precious, personal faith and a strong psychological framework; the chances for success are high. May God be the center of the lives of every parent and every child.

### Endnotes

1 Thomas D. Murray, “*What I Want My Children To Know*,” **The Readers Digest**, (Sept. 1979), p. 141.

2 Matthew Henry, “*Job to Song of Solomon*,” in **Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible**, vol. 3, (McClean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Company, rev. ed., n.d.), p. 735.

3 The source of the study was not reported in the bulletin

material available to me.

4 The thought of “*roots and wings*” comes from a wall plaque which reads: “*There are only two things we can leave our children, roots and wings.*”

5 Joe Gilmore, Jr. “*What Shall We Leave Our Children?*” in **The Home As God Would Have It**, ed. Garland Elkins and Thomas B. Warren, (Algood, TN: National Christian Press, 1979), p. 394.

6 Ibid., p. 396.

7 Ibid., pp. 394-399.

8 See Keith A. Mosher, Sr. “*Proverbs-Job-Ecclesiastes: A Brief Excursion into Hebrew Wisdom Literature*,” in **Rightly Dividing the Word Volume II**, ed. Terry Hightower, (Pensacola, FL: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1991), pp. 45-59.

9 William Wilson, “*train*,” in **Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies**, (McClean, VA: MacDonald Publishing Company, n.d.), p. 451.

10 Gesenius, “*na, ar*,” in **Gesenius’ Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures**, Trans. Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), p. 555. One brother wrote that **na’ar** was “*generally used for youth between the ages of 16 and 24*,” for which quote no reference is given. (Tommy J. Hicks, “*The Value of a Good Name*,” in **The Book of Proverbs: The Seventh Annual Southwest Lectures**, ed. Bill Jackson, (Austin, TX: Southwest Publications, 1988), p. 301. According to Gesenius above, **na’ar** had a wider usage including application to babies.

11 So Keil in C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, “*Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*,” in **Commentary on the Old Testament**, vol. 6, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprint 1975), pp. 86-87.

12 Eesenius gives the meaning: “*as the thing was, according to the truth of the matter*,” “*al-pee*,” p. 668. The “*al*” is something like a preposition and the “*pee*” means, in the noun form, mouth (Gesenius, p. 667). Literally the plural is, “*upon the mouth*.”

13 Carl Brecheen and Paul Faulkner, **What Every Family Needs**, (Austin, TX: Brecheen and Faulkner, 1979), p. 128.

14 Keith A. Mosher, Sr. upon the birth of his twins, Karen and Kenyon, in 1967.

15 F. Delitzsch, “*Psalms*” in **Commentary on the Old Testament**, vol. 5, (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, reprint 1975), p. 294.

16 Selected from a bulletin article, “*Being a Parent*,” Wesconnette Church of Christ, Jacksonville, FL; ed. Mark Mosher.

“What Shall We Leave Our Children”

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- 17 Gesenius, “*shebet*,” p. 801.
- 18 James L. Hymes, Jr., **A Child Development Point of View**, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1955), pp. 36-37).
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- 20 Bert Thompson, “*Why Are We Losing Our Children*,” **Reason And Revelation**, vol. XIII, (January, 1993), p. 1.
- 21 John MacArthur, **The Fulfilled Family**, (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1985), p. 114.
- 22 *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.
- 23 Jim Grotts, “*How To Raise A Neurotic Child*,” **Bristol Road Lifeline**, (Nov. 1, 1996), p. 2.
- 24 Paul D. Meir, **Christian Child-Rearing and Personality Development**, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), pp. 81-82.
- 25 *Ibid.*, pp. 49-79.
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 *Ibid.*

# The Christian Home



## **Panel Discussions:**

*Destructive Forces  
Against The Home*



## Chapter 18

# Destructive Forces Against The Home

*David Sain*



David has faithfully preached the gospel for over forty years ~ Presently he preaches for the Wood Avenue Church in Florence, Alabama (since 1977) ~ He has significant experience in radio and television work (since 1967) ~ He has written numerous tracts, books, and has taught thousands via video tape (produced by the Way of Life Studio) ~ David and Phyllis have two children and five grandchildren.

**O**ur federal government periodically publishes an Index Of Economic Indicators to provide a statistical reading of the financial condition of our nation.

In March, 1993, Mr. William J. Bennett, President of The Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C., published "The Index of Leading Cultural Indicators." In this publication, Mr. Bennett, who served as Secretary of Education during President Ronald Regan's administration, revealed eye-opening and sobering data which provide a statistical rading of the cultural conditions of our nation. Here is a summary of the findings published by Mr. Bennett:

Since 1960,

- the population has increased 41%.
- the total social spending by all levels of government (measured in constant 1990 dollars) has risen from \$142.73 billion to \$787 billion, more than a five-fold increase.
- there has been a 560% increase in violent crime.

- the number of illegitimate births has increased 400%.
- the number of divorces has quadrupled.
- the percentage of children living in single-parent homes has tripled.
- teenage suicide rate has risen 200%.
- abortion has been legitimized — with more than 1.5 million being performed each year, and a total of more than 30 million since *Roe v. Wade* in 1973.

As stated above, and as the title of the booklet indicates, these findings are “*indicators*” of cultural conditions. However, I believe they are also indicators of conditions that threaten and, at least indirectly, affect every family in America.

In the same vein, consider other cultural conditions and values that also threaten and affect families:

- In the last few years, we have shifted from intolerance of homosexual behavior to accepting and validating such by granting special rights for the “gay community.”
- Divorce is no longer the spiritual or social taboo it once was, but is now looked upon as a common part of life. The news of another divorce hardly gets our attention anymore.
- In a materialistic society, one’s success is usually measured by the “things” one has. Houses, cars, clothes, etc. are marks of success while character and spirituality are rarely seen as such.
- The phrase, “no-fault” effectively describes the mind-set of our society, because the average person is convinced that he is not to blame when that which he does is inappropriate behavior. Instead, he considers himself to have been “victimized,” i.e., someone else is to blame for his actions.

- Teachers in public schools cannot legally initiate a prayer in the classroom, but the same teachers must teach evolution, not divine creation, as the “scientific” explanation for the “origin” of man.
- Our children are taught to say, “no” to drugs, but they are not told to say, “no” to premarital sex. Instead, they are told to “practice safe sex.”
- We have become the “pro-choice” society, declaring that everyone has the right to decide for himself what is right and wrong. We are quick to condemn anyone who judges the actions or choices of another. The growing attitude in our culture is, “As long as it doesn’t harm anyone else, a person can live and act any way he or she wants.”

This is only a glimpse of some of the conditions in our world which are dangerous and destructive forces which threaten every God-fearing family in this country.

Of the various conditions which threaten our homes, I shall focus attention upon one of the primary dangers — a condition which I believe is the root of many problems, not only in the home, but also in government, schools, and the church. I refer to the growing lack of respect for authority!

### **THE LACK OF RESPECT FOR AUTHORITY**

This is a problem for everyone in any position of authority. Everytime the policeman pins on the badge and goes on patrol, he is at risk because of a lack of respect for authority. Teachers in our schools are at risk because of a lack of respect for authority. Officials of athletic events and coaches are subject to physical and verbal abuse because of the growing disregard for those in authority.

Bible class teachers get discouraged by it. Elders find it necessary to spend time in business meetings



discussing problems that arise because of it. And, in the nineties, many of the issues that have troubled the church of Christ have been the result of a lack of respect for the authority of the Word of God!

And, of course, parents experience many anxious moments because of it. It seems that rare are the homes where mom and dad have the last word, and dad can quiet a room with just “a look.” No, instead, children are allowed to be rebellious and defiant. (I read about one child who sued his parents claiming they had “too much say-so” in his life.)

Our culture has been a breeding ground for the lack of respect for authority. In the throes of humanism, relativism, etc., we are told, “No one has a right to impose his values upon you.” “No one has a right to tell you what to do.”

The lack of respect for authority permeates our society. Starting in the home, where children are allowed to defy the authority of their parents, it continues in all arenas of life — on the street, in the classroom, in the work place, and in government.

This is a serious problem.

### **The Importance Of Authority**

Authority is the great regulator of life. It is the means by which we establish and maintain order. Without authority and the proper respect for authority, society ends up in chaos and anarchy.

No society can survive without it!

### **Divine Authority**

God is the ultimate authority. He made us (1 Cor. 11:12), and all are subject unto him. The apostle Paul declared in his epistle to the Corinthians: “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ;

and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God” (I Cor. 11:3).

However, it is important to understand that divine authority also resides in God, the Son. The scriptures teach that God, the Father, gave authority to Jesus, his Son. “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18).

The apostle Paul wrote that God, the Father, “put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22-23). So, in the church, Jesus is the head, i.e., the one with authority (cf. Col. 1:18).

It is also important to understand that the Bible, being the Word of God (II Tim. 3:16, 17; I Cor. 2:12-13; I Thes. 2:13, et al), is our source of authority in all spiritual matters. Whatever the Bible says to be the case is what God says to be the case, and that makes it authoritative. Therefore, we need to have an attitude of submission and acceptance toward the Bible. James said we ought to receive the word with meekness, i.e., in submission (James 1:21).

### **Authority In The Church**

In the local church, God has made the elders the overseers.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood (Acts 20:28).

This informs us that the elders have authority in the local church, and that such authority is given to them

by divine authorization.

Concerning the authority of the elders, the following point needs to be made: If God has spoken about a matter, the elders have the responsibility to be obedient to God’s instruction, and they are to lead the church to do likewise. If God has given a command, but has not spoken specifically regarding how or when to carry out that command, the elders have authority to decide the “how” or “when” which they judge to be best. Here are three illustrations:

(1) We are commanded to assemble (Heb. 10:25), but God has not specified the time for the assembly. Therefore, the elders have authority to decide the best hour for the church to assemble. (2) God has commanded baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), but the Bible does not specify the location of the water. Therefore, the elders have authority to decide the most expedient place (baptistry, river, etc.) where baptism should take place. (3) The Lord has commanded the preaching of the gospel (Mark 16:15), but he has not specified how often, what method (pulpit, printed page, etc.), or by whom. Therefore, the elders have authority to select the time, method, and preacher.

The writer of the splendid book of Hebrews commanded,

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you (Heb. 13:17).

We may not always agree with or even understand the decisions or judgment of the elders, but we must respect their authority and not rebel. Unless the elders lead in a way that would cause us to violate the will of

God, we must submit to them because their authority is divinely-placed. Any one who rebels against the authority of the elders actually rebels against God who gave them that authority.

### **Authority In The Home Husband/Wife Relationship**

The role of leadership and authority in the home is placed upon the shoulders of the husband and father of the home. Since the time that God pronounced judgment upon man in the garden of Eden, God's will has been for the husband to have authority over the wife (Gen. 3:16). And that is still his will in the Christian age.

The apostle Paul, by the inspiration of God, wrote,

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing (Eph. 5:22-24).

Note that the wife's relationship to her husband is compared to the church's relationship to Christ, with the specific instruction that the wife is to be in subjection to her husband just as the church is subject unto Christ — because the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church (Col. 1:18).

Also, the reader should note the phrase, "as unto the Lord" in the above scripture. That phrase declares that the submission of the wife unto the authority of her husband is actually submission unto the Lord, for it was the Lord who told her to submit unto her husband.

The wife may not always agree with or even understand the decisions or judgment of her husband,

but she should respect his authority. Unless he leads in a way that would cause her to violate the will of God, she must submit to his authority because that authority is divinely-placed. The wife who rebels against the authority of her husband actually rebels against God who gave him that authority.

### **Parent/Child Relationship**

Just as the wife is to be in submission to her husband, children are to be in submission to their parents. God has decreed,

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth (Eph. 6:1-3).

Again, the apostle Paul wrote, “Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord” (Col. 3:20).

Disobedience to parents is a serious matter. Notice the types of sins with which it is listed and the judgment declared against such,

...unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents... (Rom. 1:29-30).

Paul then concluded, “...they which commit such things are worthy of death...” (Rom. 1:32).

Unless parents lead in a way or require something that would cause a child to violate the will of God, that child must submit to the parent’s authority because their authority is by divine authorization. The child who rebels

against the authority of mom and dad actually rebels against God who gave them that authority.

Of course, children do not come into this world naturally respecting the authority of their parents. They must be taught and trained to do so. They must be taught the principle and importance of authority, that everyone is subject unto authority (in the school, in the work place, on the street, in the church, and in the home) and those who respect authority get along better in life.

Children need to be taught that they will not always agree with or understand the decisions, rules, etc. of mom and dad, but that mom and dad still have authority over them, and they must respect that authority.

Parents need to stay in control and exercise the authority that God has given. Parents need to set boundaries and make sure the child knows what the rules are and the consequence of breaking the rules.

Parents also have the responsibility to consistently enforce the rules. They need to recognize and honor the child's proper behavior, and they need to promptly discipline the child for improper behavior, choosing the method of discipline that is appropriate for the offense and the most effective for that child.

Parents need to guard against nagging. They need to set rules with wisdom and consistently and firmly enforce the rules that are set. A rule unenforced is no better than having no rule at all.

Parents will never do anything for a child that is more valuable or important than training that child to respect authority. When the child learns respect for authority, that child will function more successfully in school and throughout life. And the child who is trained to submit to authority will, with that training, know how to submit to God — the ultimate authority!

### **Conclusion**

Many of the problems that plague society, schools, homes, and the church are rooted in a lack of respect for authority. Therefore, if we want to improve the conditions of our world, let us preach, promote, and practice respect for authority!

## Chapter 19

# Crime, Television And Music

*Roger Banks*



Roger is a graduate of Alabama Christian School of Religion (B.A., M.A.) ~ He has been preaching for over 25 years ~ Presently he works for the East Wood congregation in Paris, TN (since 1989) ~ Extensive radio work experience ~ A faithful defender of the faith, he is a frequent speaker on lectureships and in gospel meetings throughout our land ~ Roger and Sue have two sons.

**I**t would probably be very difficult to find anyone in this audience that would seriously argue that our present day society has been, and continues to be, seriously affected by crime, television and music.

In many areas of the United States, even in our larger cities, the homicide rate declined in 1997 from previous years. This, however, is not the case in middle Tennessee. In 1997, Nashville, Tennessee was the only large city in the state of Tennessee that saw dramatic increase in the homicide rate. Approximately 110 people died violent death in Nashville last year. On the average, violent death is reported by the news media two times each week. Now folks, this is not Hollywood, New York or Chicago. It's Nashville, middle Tennessee. It's home!

Things that were never reported a few months ago, never thought about a few months ago are now a large part of our daily dose of local news. Students killing teachers and students in our school systems have been recently reported in this very county; affecting this very



congregation! These horrible stories have been recently repeated in Pearle, Mississippi, Paducah, Kentucky and Jonesboro, Arkansas. The unthinkable is happening on a much too frequent basis.

One of the most often reported violent events of the day is now home invasion. No, not invasion from outer space, nor invasion of the USA by enemies, but home invasion! We are NOT safe in our own homes today. We are the same people that grew up in our own communities never locking the doors, leaving keys in the automobiles and sleeping with windows and doors open. No more! We now live in fortresses! Security systems, closed circuit television, dead bolt locks and now we are armed to the hilt! We are now legally able to carry concealed weapons in the state of Tennessee. Some have suggested that for each legal weapon there are as many as ten illegal weapons on the streets. On the evening news January 6, 1998, WSMV TV channel four reporter Demetria Kalademos reported that every 56 minutes in the city of Nashville, someone falls victim to violent crime.

Homicide has increased in this country 138% from 1985-1992. These figures are even higher today. Teenage murderers have increased alarmingly in the last several years. Today, one third of the students in high school across the country are involved in alcohol consumption. The figures are just as alarming for “hard” drug use. It is projected that 33% of America’s population will be victim of major crimes this year!

## **Television**

Why are the above figures so sadly accurate? What changes have taken place in our society to give us crime rate figures like the ones mentioned above? The answer

is really very simple. Would you believe that the media is in large part responsible for the drastic breakdown in America's morals? It has long been a matter of great concern that television has had an evil effect on society. In 1972 Hal Lindsey wrote in his book, **Satan Is Alive And Well On Planet Earth**: "*Nowhere is the theme of permissiveness more subtly presented than through television.*" This statement is now an understatement! The mind and morals of America have been corrupted by and through television. Solomon in Proverbs 4:23 stated, "*Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.*" And again in 23:7 he said, "*For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he....*"

It is an obvious conclusion; anything that we store in our heart is lived out in our lives. Look at this country and the television we watch. It is no longer the "*Ted Mack Amateur Hour*," or "*I Love Lucy*," or "*Andy of Mayberry*." The television calendar is now filled with some of the most horrid examples of entertainment known in the world. There is no subject too perverse for the many talk shows that people dare not miss. Recently, the Vice President of the United States applauded Ellen for her "*coming out of the closet*." When the leadership of this country not only supports but applauds homosexuality and lesbianism and the networks force feed such as regular programming on a daily basis, what direction can America go?

The family setting of "*Father Knows Best*" is now a thing of the past. You cannot find programming like that even on cable reruns. We are no longer interested in family lifestyle. We have been so completely influenced by television that we have lost our grip on morality.

Our children have learned well the new American lifestyle. If you are interested in how our children are

being influenced and taught, spend a little time watching MTV (Music Television). This programming adequately reflects the thought pattern and attitudes of our young people. M-TV and the music it plays and the programming it presents is clearly reflected in today's youth.

Before we cover them with a blanket of condemnation, let us explore the idea of how they became so influenced by television and music of television. They learned well by the preceding generation. Their parents taught them well. Do you remember the first time you saw Elvis on television? What about the Beatles? Do you remember the English revolution that began when the Beatles invaded America in 1964 by television? Do you remember the first time you saw the Grand Ole Opry on television? Remember the excitement of placing a face on a certain sound? We passed that excitement on to this generation of young people.

We must also look at this point. Today's generation of young people is the first generation to have the television set as a full time babysitter. Working parents feel very much secure knowing that their kids are at home watching television while they wait for their mothers and daddys to come home from work. Today's generation of young people are among the first to have both parents hold full time jobs. It is a very obvious and foregone conclusion that today it is almost essential that each family have at least two sources of income. When mothers across America went to work, children across America sat down in front of the television. Television became their teacher. Television became the most constant influence in their lives. Many of the problems of society that we are facing today are the direct influence of television.

Law enforcement officers and authorities across the country are quick to agree that television and the news media in general are in large part responsible for the increase in the crime rate across the country. The media has done such a superb job of reporting each and every rape, murder, burglary, car jacking and fight that such reporting has become a regular part of our evening. Some have been influenced because news reporters and documentaries have glamorized the individuals that are guilty of heinous crimes to the point that these warped people become the most often seen and heard influences in their lives. Therefore, one of the most puzzling things in our day and time is called “*copycat*” crime. If you were to ask the people of Paducah, Kentucky, Pearle, Mississippi or Jonesboro, Arkansas where their young people got the idea to do what they did, what do you think they would say? Simple. The influence of television!

### **Music**

There is a common denominator across the generations. Music. Each generation is a by-product of music. Nashville and middle Tennessee are known as country music products. While there is some influence of country music in today’s youth; overwhelmingly, the influence is by rock music. Again, Hal Lindsey as far back in time as 1972 warned America about the influence of music. There is no question. Satan works subliminally in the area of music. We have seen our youth constantly bombarded and we have not realized what was hitting them!

The ability of music to excite and incite is nothing new. In many primitive societies music’s chief function is to arouse and contribute to emotions and actions. Music has always been a means of communicating

pleasure or entertainment. Simply stated, today’s music, or at least a large part of today’s music, seems to carry us back to savagery. One of the most popular entertainers of today is a fellow named Marilyn Manson. His very appearance suggest the dark side. His face is white makeup with blackened eyes and highlighted mouth. His music is that of sex, pain, torture, killing and revenge. Young people by multiplied thousands crowd into every concert. They are all sold out well ahead of performance time. He gets his very name from Marilyn Monroe and Charles Manson. You can guess accurately about the remainder of his influence on our young people. This is just one of many examples! Music is filled with violence, hate, blood, screams, torture and anything else that might cross the mind of man. These things have been continually entered into the minds of our young people.

Music is a part of every person. Certainly to differing degrees, but it is still a part! If you are in your 50’s your music was the surfing sounds of the Beach Boys, the English sounds of the Turtles, Paul Revere & The Raiders, The Dave Clark Five, The Beatles and a hundred others! We had OUR music just as THEY had THEIR music! Again, they have learned well the appreciation of music from the preceding generation. Us!

The influence of music can also be seen in the Bible. The children of Israel sang songs of national pride as well as songs to the praise of God. We are commanded as New Testament Christians to sing and make melody in our hearts in worship. Music has a very strong connection with the inner feeling and attitudes of mankind. It has always been so.

I’m not trying to blast all modern music, but I think

we should be very much aware of the fact that the old devil can use the power and influence of music to pull us away from God and to place us into chaotic thinking.

Can there be any real argument that we are greatly influenced by crime, television and music? To get a quick answer, just stop, look, and listen!

## Chapter 20

# Atheism And Humanism

*Kelby Smith*



A native of Tupelo, Mississippi, Kelby received his formal education at Itawamba Junior College, Harding College, and Harding Graduate School of Religion ~ He preached for 24 years at the Florence Blvd. congregation in Florence, AL ~ Presently works with the North Jackson Church in Jackson, TN ~ A frequent lectureship and gospel meeting speaker in many areas ~ Kelby and Martha (Jobe) have two children.

**P**aul Sain and the elders at East Hill are to be commended for planning this series of lectures on the theme: *"The Christian Family."* An ever increasing number of families in America, and even in the church, are disintegrating. There are many contributing factors to this breakdown. In this brief lecture, I am to deal with how Atheism and Humanism contribute to family decline. These are both very broad subjects and somewhat closely related. I make no claim to being an authority on the assigned subjects, but I will endeavor to give a brief definition of both and some obvious conclusions will become readily apparent.

### Atheism

According to **Webster's New International Dictionary**, 2nd edition, Atheism is a *"disbelief in or denial of, the existence of a God or supreme intelligent Being."* The 1994 edition of **Encyclopedia Americana** states that *"...atheism is the denial that there is any being or power deserving the name of God or the reverence according God."* The **Encyclopedia Dictionary Of**

**Religion**, Volume I defines atheism as “(literally, godlessness, the elimination or rejection of God from one’s thoughts and affections and the denial of his existence).” Very simply stated, atheism affirms that there is no God.

When an atheist makes the statement: “*There is no God,*” he cannot be reasonable, and at the same time, be dogmatic in making that affirmation. For a person to take such a position, and speak with authority, he would have to be fully acquainted with the entire universe. Without such knowledge, it would be impossible to know that God does not exist!

If there is no God, then the account of creation in the Bible would be no more than a mere myth! It is obvious to every thinking person that every effect must have an adequate and sufficient cause. A watch (an effect) demands that somewhere there was a watch maker. A building (an effect) implies that there must of necessity be a builder. Our world and universe (an effect) demands a maker or designer. By far the most reasonable and logical explanation is the Biblical account.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth (Gen. 1:1).

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear (Heb. 11:3).

If the Atheistic view is true, and there is no God, then the Bible would be meaningless! Man would have no source of authority to guide and direct his life.

O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23).



Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path (Psm. 119:105).

Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus (Rom. 9:20)?

If the Bible is not authoritative, then man is left without any guide in the area of morality to determine what is right and wrong. There would be no salvation from sin, no necessary obedience, no heaven, no hell, no church, and no real purpose for our existence.

The effects of such a philosophy would have devastating effects on the family! There would be no motivation to keep the family together (Matt. 19:4-9). The father would no longer have any right to be head of the house (Eph. 5:23). Children would have no obligation to obey parents (Eph. 6:1). There would be no moral restraints either for parents or teenagers (I Cor. 6:18). If a human being is no more than an animal, why not act like an animal?

## **Humanism**

A much more powerful influence than atheism is the non-Christian philosophy of humanism. Humanism is a far reaching, appealing, and an ever present danger which threatens to undermine and destroy not only the family, but the principles of morality and belief in God and the Bible as well.

I have in my possession a copy of the Humanism Manifesto I, which was published in 1933 and signed by thirty four well known individuals. I also have a copy of the Humanist Manifesto II published in 1973, and signed by well over two hundred fifty influential individuals. These include college presidents, professors, ministers,

heads of many professional organizations and societies. It is quite a list of well known and influential individuals. My comments will be based on these two documents which serve as a basis of belief and purpose for the humanist.

The basic idea of humanism is the exaltation of the wishes, desires and needs of the individual. The importance of the individual takes precedence over everything else. As stated in the section under "*The Individual*" of the **Humanist Manifesto II**: "*The preciousness and dignity of the individual person is a central humanist value.*" Therefore there would be no set standard of conduct. By this philosophy, how could one say that Hitler was wrong by killing six million Jews? According to humanism, every individual has the right to choose for himself what course in life he will take. After all, that is what humanism is!

Since humanism exalts the individual and his needs as supreme, there are many other things that naturally follow. Briefly stated, **Humanism denies**: the Deity of God, the inspiration of the Bible, the existence of the soul, life after death, the existence of sin, salvation, heaven, hell, and creation. **Humanism affirms** that there are no clear and separate roles for man and woman, sexual freedom for all, homosexuality, incest, mercy killing, abortion and evolution. These ideas are set forth in the **Humanist Manifestos I and II**.

For example, in the **Humanist Manifesto I**, fifteen different things are affirmed on pages 8-10. Under number eight the following affirmation is made: "*religious humanism considers the complete realization of human personality to be the end of man's life and seeks its development and fulfillment in the here and now.*" Evidently the humanist view is that it doesn't matter

what God says or what the Bible teaches on any subject. What is important is the fulfillment of the individual in the here and now!

Look carefully at the following shocking statement in the preface of the **Humanist Manifesto II** which was published in 1973.

As in 1933, humanists still believe that traditional theism, especially faith in the prayer-hearing God, assumed to love and care for persons, to hear and understand their prayers, and to be able to do something about them, is an unproved and outmoded faith. Salvationism, based on mere affirmation, still appears as harmful, diverting people with false hopes of heaven hereafter. Reasonable minds look to other means for survival.

Therefore, according to humanism, the very idea of a God who hears our prayers, the idea of salvation and the hope of heaven is outmoded and unreasonable.

In the **Humanist Manifesto II**, under the section on “*Religion*,” the following statements are made:

While there is much that we do not know, humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity can save us; we must save ourselves. Second: Promises of immortal salvation or fear of eternal damnation are both illusory and harmful...the human species is an emergence from natural evolutionary forces.

In the section entitled “*The Individual*,” the **Humanist Manifesto II** makes the following affirmations:

We reject all religious, ideological, or moral codes that denigrate the individual, suppress freedom, dull intellect, dehumanize

personality....Sixth: in the area of sexuality, we believe that intolerant attitudes, often cultivated by orthodox religions and puritanical cultures, unduly repress sexual conduct. The right to birth control, abortion, and divorce should be recognized. While we do not approve of exploitive, denigrating forms of sexual expression, neither do we wish to prohibit, by law or social sanction, sexual behavior between consenting adults. The many varieties of sexual exploration should not in themselves be considered 'evil.'

Under the section entitled "*Democratic Society*" the rights of the individual is specifically delineated in several areas. The following statement is made:

It also includes the recognition of an individual's right to die with dignity, euthanasia, and the right to suicide.

No wonder there are so many divorces, robberies, murders, thefts, rapes, and so much open homosexual behavior in our nation. Adherence to humanist ideas invariably produce such behavior. Even in religion, humanism has made huge inroads. The market place approach to Christianity serves as an example which many denominational churches, and even some in the Lord's church have embraced. The idea is to find out what individuals want, what they like, when they will worship, etc. and give it to them! In Humanism, the wishes of the individual is always paramount.

### **Conclusion**

The double-pronged attack from atheism and humanism will erode our society and destroy the family as we know it. As Christians, we must alert ourselves

to these forces, and resolve to fight this and all other forms of error.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore... (Eph. 6:13-14).

## Chapter 21

# Women's Movement

*Harrell Davidson*



Harrell has been preaching the gospel for forty years, full-time since 1958 ~ His formal education was received at Freed-Hardeman, Harding Graduate, and Alabama School of Religion ~ He is an Honorary Alumnus of Memphis School of Preaching ~ He presently preaches for the church in Obion, Tennessee (for fourteen years) ~ Harrell and Carrie have four children and one grandchild.

**T**he Equal Rights Amendment is now about a quarter of a century old. During this period of time we have witnessed sweeping changes in our society. In order that our readers may refresh their minds, the Equal Rights Amendment reads this way:

*“Section 1. Equality of Rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex.*

*Section 2. The Congress shall have the power to enforce by appropriate legislation the provision of this article.*

*Section 3. This amendment shall take effect two years after the date of ratification.”*

There were champions for the ERA. They without failure garnered the most of the media hype that went with these laws. It was a sad day in the history of this great nation. We well remember that opening the door for ladies at the Post Office that usually was met with a “thank you” soon hushed. It was replaced immediately by an occasional grunt. We shall never forget the day

that the door was opened for a woman only to have the door jerked out of our hands and slammed in our face. We frankly did not know what action to take. We discussed this around the dinner table and we decided that we would just go on being polite and opening those doors and letting the women go in first. Most appreciated, but others were exercising what they thought to be their Equal Rights. Come to think about it we cannot remember one single woman opening the door for us, but we sometimes forget the good and perhaps some did.

“*Yes maam*” had to be turned into a yes or no. One lady coming out of the assembly where we preached asked why the writer did not stop using that “*old fogey saying*.” We were taught to say yes maam and no maam and yes sir and no sir. Soon the schools wanted everything dropped except a yes or no. Our liberated women had won the battle, or so they claimed. Lawfully they won we admit, but in the sight of God the matter was settled long ago. Liberated women did not want what God’s Word had to say. They would come to listen to Bella Abzug, who openly pushed for Gay Rights Legislation while she was in Congress and as Chair person for the National IWY Commission. Gloria Steinam, editor of **Ms Magazine** (who ever heard of a Ms as opposed to Mrs., Miss, etc.) before? Just the same in outlandish ignorance of women who wanted liberated, she was the champion among them. Steinam said: “*For the sake of those who wish to live in equal partnership we have to **abolish** and reform the institution of marriage.*” This would start the tearing up of the home as God would have it. It would only get worse.

**The Document: A declaration of Feminism:** a book by liberated women said, “*Marriage has existed for the benefit of men and has been a legally sanctioned*

*method of control over women. The end of the institution of marriage is a necessary condition for the liberation of women. Therefore it is important for us to encourage women to love their husbands and not to live individually with men. Now we know that it is the institution of marriage that has failed us and we must work to destroy it.*" Did you notice that they called for an "end" to the marriage institution, and that "we must work to destroy it?" Have they been successful?

Hear Gloria Steinan again: "By the year 2,000 we will, I hope, raise our children to believe in human potential, not God." WHAT? Dr. May Jo Bane said; "The fact that children are raised in families means there's no equality...In order to raise children with equality we must take them away from families and communally raise them...." These women viewed pregnancy as the "greatest oppression" of women. The second highest drudgery is "that women must take care of their babies." Say it isn't so! Ah my friends this is exactly what their mission was and is. The home is in shambles due in part to this insidious movement.

Fashion and design began to change. The unisex style was issued in and was designed to be suitable for both sexes, not distinguishing or discriminating between males and females, integration or equalization of sexes in works, sports, fashions, etc. "Charlie," the perfume, was designed for the woman who wished to be less feminine. Men, at this point, were seemingly willing to give in to the movement. Men now advertise cosmetics, jewelry, and some get perms in their hair. People wanted to change our language so that we would say "Fisherperson's Warf" instead of "Fisherman's Warf." Manholes would become personholes! The libbers demanded men's jobs. One factory of our acquaintance



had to hire women to stack cow hides. A tanned hide weighed about one hundred twenty pounds on the average. Factory people tried to warn and plead with the women, but nothing would do other than put them to work doing man’s work. Soon the women were broken down in their backs and their health in general was broken. The whole factory had to close and move out of Tennessee. Our society has had far reaching changes in all these years.

In **Harpers Magazine**, an article entitled “*Suicide of the Sexes*” by George Gilder said: “*The differences between men and women are the single most important factors of human society. The drive to deny them in the name of women’s liberation, marital openness, sexual equality, and erotic consumption threatens society as never before.*” Gilder again: “*The differences between the sexes are embodied in a number of roles but the central ones are husband-wife, mother-father. The maternal feeling, which the feminist strongly denies having, is the root of human sexuality. Always the focus of female identification is clear and stable. Even if the woman does not bear a child she is continually reminded that she can, that she is capable of performing the act for the perpetuation of her family and the species. The man is deeply dependent upon the structure of society to find his role in it. Of all society’s institutions which work this civilizing affect, marriage is perhaps the most important and the male as provider is crucial to the family. More and more women are working, and day care is becoming more available for their children. It will be possible for a matriarchal social pattern to emerge.*”

Gilder again: “*What is happening in the United States today is a steady undermining of the key conditions of male socialization. In the end, his opportunity to*

*qualify for a family, to validate in society his love and sex through becoming husband and provider may be jeopardized. The man discovers that manhood affords few wholly distinctive roles. The society prohibits, constricts, and feminizes his purely male activities. Without a confident manhood he feels a compulsive need to prove it sexually in those ways that feminists fear and despise.”*

### **A Pouring Over**

Having preached the Gospel for over forty years, we have observed that whatever goes on in society and politics finally gets in the church. The Lord never placed it there, but nonetheless it gets in just the same. Some twenty five years ago we were appalled when a preacher friend walked in on a youth gathering where he was preaching only to find the boys and girls sitting down crossed legged on the floor all around the walls of the auditorium and there was a chain prayer in progress. The lights were dimmed so there would be better “*effects.*” A mood swing was wanted and dear friend that is what happened. When on Lord’s Day he preached against what he had walked in on, he was asked to leave and was beaten down with tactics that only the infamous “*Night Riders*” of early West Tennessee history used. Stanley Shipp of St. Louis, Missouri was telling young people out in his mansion where they met, as some sat and smoked pot who were unmarried expectant mothers, “*listen and be kind to your parents, but remember they do not know what you are going through.*” Our young were taught to rebel and rebel they did at least in part. We still have the finest young men and women anywhere in the world that would never be spoiled by the tomfoolery of such. We now have women teaching men as transpired at the infamous Nashville Jubilee a few

years ago. There are women deacons and some are striving toward women preachers for the Lord’s church. This is totally out of control. In our humble estimation it’s roots are far deeper than arguing whether a woman can or cannot sign or interpret for a man. This is all tied together and until we attack the tap root of the problem there will be no solving of the problem.

### **There Is A Remedy**

A complete return to respect for God’s Word as the complete standard of authority will do the job up right. From time immortal God intended that man be the head of the house, and the leader of the home. Anytime women try to effect an undermining of God’s pattern they are losers. The late brother Franklin Camp said: *“Women who seek to ignore the difference between the sexes defy God, multiply their frustrations and bring about the destruction of the home, the basic unit of society and contribute to the moral decline that is corrupting both the church and this nation.”* Brother Camp was right! Women were not made to be trampled upon by man, but to be loved and cherished and treated as an equal. Every case in the scripture that prohibits women from leading the church in worship is tied right back to the beginning. God made woman for man. He intended that men lead the church. That was not and is not a slap against women. There are many things in the church that a woman can do that a man can’t do. It is not a question in the mind of the faithful about the role each plays for we all realize that respect for God and His authority over us is what is at stake. The women that would want to take that from man is wrong, wrong, wrong. The man that would try to keep his wife from serving where she scripturally can is wrong, wrong, wrong. Look what problems this insidious movement has

caused now in a quarter century in the Lord's church. Truth will win out in the end we know, but it hurts that the multitudes are going to be lost.

The Woman's Movement has been an effective tool for Satan. However, as this is being written, the President of the United States is being charged with various sexual confrontations. It seems very strange that the woman's advocacy groups are as silent as the tomb on his alleged behavior. Consistency thou art a jewel!!

## Chapter 22

# Homosexuality Agenda

*Dave Miller*



Dave has been faithfully preaching the gospel over thirty years ~ He is the holder of various degrees (B.A., M.A., and Ph.D) from Texas Tech, Harding Graduate and Southern Illinois Universities ~ He serves as director of the Brown Trail School of Preaching in the Ft. Worth, Texas area ~ Author of **Singing and New Testament Worship** and **Piloting The Strait** ~ Deborah and Dave have four children.

**W**e Americans are certainly living in changing times. More than ever before in the history of our nation, we are facing a multiplicity of destructive forces that threaten to undermine and erode the very foundations of the home and society. Evolution has now been taught as fact in the public school system for at least forty years. It has been taught in such a way that God has been supplanted and, for all practical purposes, eliminated from any role in the universe. Since several generations have been thoroughly indoctrinated with the idea that humans have come from animals, people are now behaving like animals.

Sexual perversion is rampant in our society. The homosexual movement is on the verge of achieving complete social, legal and political sanction. Pornography has flooded the country—from grocery stores to television and the cinema screen to the internet. For twenty-five years now, women have received judicial permission to abort their babies on demand and are responsible for

killing countless millions of babies.

Christians must inform themselves as to the facts. They must then be about the business of insulating their own families from these destructive forces. They must then do everything possible to warn others of these spiritually lethal influences.

**M**ore than a quarter of a century ago, homosexual activists set forth the following planks in a 1972 agenda:

1. Amend all federal civil rights laws to prohibit discrimination against homosexuals in employment, housing, public accommodations and public services.
2. Prohibit the military from excluding anyone on the basis of sexual orientation.
3. Repeal all state laws that ban sodomy and prostitution and those that govern age of consent. (As of January 1997, sodomy laws were removed in at least 30 states).
4. Repeal all state laws that restrict the sex or number of persons entering into marriage.
5. Repeal all state laws that restrict legal benefits to all persons who cohabit regardless of sex or number of persons.
6. Federal backing for sex education courses (prepared and taught by homosexuals and lesbians) that present homosexuality as a valid, healthy lifestyle and viable alternative to heterosexuality.

The 1993 homosexual March on Washington presented an updated agenda which included additional planks:

1. Free substance abuse treatment on demand.
2. Massive increases in funding for AIDS research and treatment.
3. Culturally inclusive lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender studies program and information on abortion, AIDS/HIV, child care, and sexuality at all levels of education.
4. Access to safe and affordable abortion and contraception on demand regardless of age.
5. Unbiased and complete information about the full range of reproductive options available to all people regardless of age.
6. An end to discrimination based on sexual orientation in the Boy Scouts of America.

The homosexual agenda for schools and public education entails at least the following planks:

1. Treat heterosexuality and homosexuality as equally plausible and legitimate. To fail to do so is treated as bigotry and discrimination.
2. All sexual behavior between consenting people is a right that must not be restricted.
3. Curriculum materials should portray homosexuals as happy and well-adjusted.

4. Curriculum materials should be erotic, explicit and stimulating.
5. Sex education should stress the twin myths that 10% of the population is homosexual and that homosexuality is the result of genetics.
6. Religion should be treated as irrelevant and evil.
7. Homosexuals are not responsible for AIDS.
8. Pity for AIDS victims should be promoted to divert attention away from the conduct that causes AIDS.
9. Actively promote homosexual behavior among children.
10. Promote political and social activism.

These primary planks of the homosexual agenda demonstrate that homosexual activists are not merely attempting to gain toleration. They are militantly attempting to force the American public to accept homosexuality (as well as other deviant sexual behaviors) as an equally legitimate lifestyle that ought to be promoted as a valid approach to life. One underlying strategy has been extremely effective in advancing acceptance of the homosexual agenda. Emphasis has been given to convincing Americans that homosexuals are victims of discrimination and civil rights violations on a par with genuine minorities (e.g., African Americans, women, etc.). This strategy has drawn attention away from the fact that homosexuality is a **choice** and a **behavior**. It perpetuates the myth that homosexuals are “born that way.”

Homosexuals have become perhaps the most



powerful political and social force per capita in the country. Consider for a moment what the homosexual movement has already accomplished in this country for its constituency—though comprising only one to two percent of the population:

(1) They have succeeded in forcing a national debate over the meaning of marriage.

(2) They have removed sodomy laws in more than half the states.

(3) Where once the American Psychiatric Association designated homosexuality as a pathology—abnormal and a mental illness, the homosexual community persuaded the association to reconfigure the psycho-analytic profession’s understanding of sexuality to view homosexuality as normal.

(4) They have challenged the military’s ban on homosexuality.

(5) They have secured “gay rights” laws in nine states and more than one hundred cities and counties.

(6) They have received corporate backing for “diversity training” and “sensitivity training,” forcing employees to accept their homosexual co-workers as normal.

(7) Corporations have also provided funding for large-scale events like the Gay Games (a homosexual version of the Olympics) and “gay pride” festivals.

(8) They have introduced children to homosexuality through sex and AIDS education courses.

(9) They have won many court victories involving custody of children.

(10) They have achieved high visibility on prime-time television shows like *Friends*, *Frazier*, *Roseanne*, *Melrose Place*, *Birdland*, *Roc*, *Northern Exposure*, and *Sisters* and in successful movies like *Philadelphia* and

*The Birdcage*. A recent episode of *Ellen* carried a “parental advisory” because it featured a woman-on-woman open-mouthed kiss. Al Gore praised the program because it “forced” millions of Americans “to look at sexual orientation in a more open light.” Few communities in America, said Gore, “care as deeply about ethical and moral issues” as Hollywood! But he cautioned the entertainment industry against glamorizing smoking!

(11) Numerous homosexual organizations and activists groups have sprung up across the country to promote the homosexual agenda in various professions and throughout American society, including the National Lesbian and Gay Journalists Association, the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Teachers Network, the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, and the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. These outright homosexual organizations are supported and defended by a host of additional organizations, including the National Education Association, the National Organization of Women, the ACLU, the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, the Human Rights Campaign, and even numerous mainline denominational church groups that have altered their doctrinal beliefs to accept homosexuality (e.g., Presbyterian Church USA).

Brethren, it is later than we think. We are witnessing the disintegration of an entire civilization. Homosexuality is just one more destructive force that is wreaking havoc upon the fundamental building block of the human race—the home. In his insightful examination of the decline of America, Robert Bork pinpointed the frightful plight of the family:

So much for the family as the basic unit of society. The family’s value is measured by its

contribution to individual gratification. That is a major theme of modern liberalism, particularly of its feminist component, which views the family as oppressive to individuals (p. 104—**Slouching Towards Gomorrah**).

The title of Bork’s book is a sad but accurate commentary on our times and the influence of homosexuality. We are, indeed, slouching towards Gomorrah.

### **Suggested Reading**

Richard G. Howe, **Homosexuality in America: Exposing the Myths** [http://www.afa.net/pt1\\_4.htm](http://www.afa.net/pt1_4.htm)

American Family Association (P.O. Drawer 2440;  
Tupelo, MS 38803)

“Clinton’s Homosexual Agenda”

[http://www2.southwind.net/~jeremiah/clint\\_homo.html](http://www2.southwind.net/~jeremiah/clint_homo.html)

Robert H. Knight, “The Homosexual Agenda in Schools,” A Speech Delivered at the May 17, 1993 Conference on Homosexual Disinformation. Family Research Council (801 G. Street, NW; Washington, DC 20001).

Gary L. Baur, “Beware Hidden Gay Agenda” **USA Today** (April 26, 1993):12.

Trevor Major and Tim Nichols, “Can We Blame Our Genes?” **Reason & Revelation** 12 (April 1992).

**Official 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay, and Bi-Equal Rights and Liberation Program Guide.** The Committee for the March on Washington, Inc. (P.O. Box 34607 Washington, D.C. 20005-3406)

Various issues of the American Family Association Journal (P.O. Drawer 2440 Tupelo, MS 38803).

## Chapter 23

# Sexual Revolution (Pornography)

*Jim Laws*



Jim was raised in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and has been preaching for several years ~ He is the Associate Editor of the *Spiritual Sword* journal, and directs the annual *Spiritual Sword* lectureship ~ An excellent writer ~ Has taught in public schools in Tennessee and at the Christian college level ~ Presently he is working with the Getwell congregation in Memphis, Tennessee ~ Jim has two children.

The term “pornography” has become a household word in our modern culture. Originally the term came to us from two Greek terms, both of which are found in the Greek New Testament. The first half of “pornography” is from **porneia** and refers to those guilty of illicit sexual behavior (see I Cor. 5:9-10; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 21:8). The second half of “pornography” is from **graphein** which means “to write.” Pornography, therefore, has come to mean the depiction of erotic behavior in words or pictures in such a way as to cause sexual excitement or encourage sexual immorality. This brief research will use this as a working definition of the term. Such materials today, however, are not limited to written form but have been expanded to encourage indecent, lewd behavior in a variety of ways. Pornographic material may be in written form such as magazines, books, or tabloid-type materials, and they are visually presented by means of television, movies, or heard audibly. Consequently, any type of material that is sexually explicit and fosters desires which

cannot lawfully be fulfilled is to be considered pornographic. It is virtually impossible for anyone living in this modern day and time to escape the appearance of such sinful materials and their influence. It is obvious that such constitutes a challenge to the Christian who desires to live the life set forth by Christ, the inspired apostles, and the other writers of the New Testament. What is the Christian response to be in light of the present flood of pornographic material all around us?

First, the research will present the biblical view pertaining to such material. Second, it will give and briefly expose the popular arguments being offered in behalf of such material. Third, in light of the findings of the research, it will suggest what the faithful Christian's response should be. Obviously, with the limited nature of the size of this assignment only a brief analysis of these matters can be given.

There are a number of important Bible principles that need to be set forth and understood when discussing such a topic as this one. **First**, since it is the case that God created man free to make moral and ethical decisions, it also follows that God holds man morally and ethically responsible for the decisions that he makes.

**Second**, God holds man morally responsible not only for what he does but for what he thinks. God has always been concerned about the heart of man. This is true both for the individual living under the Old Testament law (Psm. 9:1; 19:14; 24:4; 36:10) as well as the individual living under the New Testament law. For instance, man is to “trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding” (Prov. 3:5). “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (Prov. 4:23). On the other hand God condemns the one who fails to keep his heart pure. One

of the very things God hates is a “heart that deviseth wicked imaginations” (Prov. 6:18). So crucial is the matter of having and maintaining a pure heart and mind that God explains that the heart of man, the seat of his emotions, is what he is spiritually, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” (Prov. 23:7). The New Testament is also equally clear in this matter of having and maintaining a pure heart before God. Philippians 4:8 states, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

Consider I Timothy 6:11, “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.” Titus 2:12 states, “Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” God truly knows our hearts (Luke 16:15; Acts 1:24). In addition to this, the importance of keeping one’s heart pure is seen from the fact that the Bible explicitly condemns sins relating to the heart. For instance, the sin of lust is an unlawful desire for anything, but particularly unlawful sexual desire. Jesus said, “Whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt. 5:28). The wise man, Solomon, instructed his son not to lust after the beauty of an evil woman in his heart” (Prov. 6:25).

**Third**, one must always remember that the Bible teaches the principle of sowing and reaping, that is, one will reap what he sows (Gal. 6:7-8). If one lives a life of sin, which would include thinking that which is impure and unbecoming a Christian, he naturally will reap such

a harvest due to his sin. “Can a man take fire to his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on coals and his feet not be seared?” (Prov. 6:27-28). One cannot be guilty of the sin of lust, that is, failing to control his heart and his mind without suffering both in this life as well as in the life to come. To view that which is sexually explicit, that is, pornographic material, is to be guilty of the sin of lust, which the child of God is expressly forbidden to do; “Make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts” (Rom. 13:14).

However, even though this may be the biblical view toward such material and the personal viewing of it, there are arguments offered by its advocates in the defense of pornography. One of the arguments used in the defense of pornographic materials, either by the printed page or the television or movie screen, is the argument which says, “If you have an objection at looking or watching such, then just don’t watch it.” Sometimes the argument goes this way: “If it offends you, don’t buy it.” However, this “just turn the knob” argument fails in that it does not take into account the fact, even though I turn the knob off or refuse to buy pornographic material, that does not mean my neighbor refused to do so. It does not mean many others in the community refused to do so either. Whether you buy it or not, you will be greatly affected by those who do. The advocates of pornographic material fail to take into consideration the fact that those who do buy such materials contribute to the degradation of the moral environment in which you and your family live. Everyone understands that, even if I decide not to run a smelter, I am still affected if someone else decides to run one nearby. When the Christian complains about the violence and pornography that is to be found in our culture today, he hears the response, “Just hit the remote

control and change channels on your TV set.” However, my family and I are affected by those who do not “change the channel.” What they are saying is, “If you don’t like the popular culture, then turn it off,” but that is like saying, “If you don’t like the smog, then just stop breathing the air.” The pornography around us affects our environment whether we like it or not. Our kids know who and what Madonna is, and there is nothing we can do to stop that. Yes, we must teach our children God’s Word and prepare them to make the right decisions in life, but that is another issue. The point at the present is the effect that sin has on our nation. Can there be any doubt that, as the culture continues to ingest a steady diet of pornographic material coming from a variety of sources, it will only naturally affect attitudes about marriage, fidelity, divorce, obligations to children, the use of force, and permissible public behavior and language? Naturally, these elements will change. With the changes in attitude there will come changes in behavior, both public and private. We have seen these changes already in our culture, and changes will continue. Sin is a moral sickness to any nation; it has its degenerative effect on the land. Indeed, sin is a reproach to any people (Prov. 14:34).

A second argument which is used to promote pornographic materials is the appeal to personal rights. Modern liberals employ great articulation regarding “rights” endlessly. The effect of this is twofold: First, it further reduces any restraints upon the individual to clamor about “rights” being violated, and second, it generally brings to an end any further discussion to the subject of what the moral and ethical behavior of the community ought to be, as individual “rights” have somehow taken on a degree of sacredness. This means



that the community has grown to hold individual rights to such a high degree that they are not to be violated no matter what. Therefore, they reason that it is the individual's right to view whatever he wants, say whatever he wants, and just about do whatever he wants. Modernism argues that one should be able to see whatever one wants to see, but by that same logic could we not say that one should be able to do whatever one sees? That is not far from what is happening in our culture today. No one is suggesting that everyone who views or hears pornography is going to act out their fantasies, but it is being blind to say that no one will. One rape, one child molestation, one child kidnapping is one too many and is not worth the thousands of such scenes being watched on the screen. This sin of pornography is a sickness to the land, that is to say, it pollutes and degrades the moral climate in which we must live.

The truth of the matter is no one has the right to do what is wrong. The rights of the individual are not absolute if we are to have anything that resembles an orderly and meaningful community in which to live. To fail to recognize this necessarily leads one down the path to hedonism where there is no control whatsoever. The lowest ebb in Israel's history was during the days of the Judges when each man did what was right in his own eyes (Judges 27:6). Human nature being as it is (free to choose between good and evil), man will always seek a path that leads downward morally. He must be guided by an objective standard of authority. The only true objective standard for man to follow is the Word of God, the Bible. For our society to fail to follow God's Word will inevitably lead to a disorderly, hedonistic and dangerous society. When man legislates and protects the individual to do wickedly, society as a whole will suffer.

The faithful Christian response to pornography is plainly set forth in the Scripture. Paul instructed the Romans to “make no provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts” (Rom. 13:14). He told Timothy to “flee youthful lusts” (II Tim. 2:22), and he told Titus that God’s grace teaches us to deny “ungodliness and worldly lusts which war against the soul” (I Peter 2:11). Therefore, the proper Christian response to pornography is to “abstain from,” “flee,” “deny,” and “make no provision to fulfill” lust. What this means is that God expects His people to refuse to view movies, whether they be in the theater or on the television screen, which are pornographic in nature. This would include refusing to watch the VCR tape that is unfit to watch. We will censor the material our children watch, listen to, and read. However, in addition to monitoring what we view and read, we will actively stand up for what is morally good and refuse to be silent. We cannot afford to remain silent about such moral and ethical issues just such as this is. We must continue to press and challenge the liberal, worldly mind-set which wants to deify human rights at the expense of human souls. May our voices be heard in the pulpits, over such mediums as radio and television, as well as the printed page, that God does exist, that he has communicated his divine will to man, and that will is the Bible. May we continue to challenge the worldly mind-set that there is an objective standard of right and wrong and that any view which would fail to recognize such is but pure subjectivism; a false philosophical view. We have the truth; let us not be afraid to use it in refuting every false way of man.

## Chapter 24

# Abortion

*James Meadows*

James Meadows is an excellent speaker, writer, and widely known throughout the brotherhood for his excellent classroom and private study books (almost forty) ~ He has written many articles for several different religious papers ~ James is presently working with the East Tennessee School of Preaching in Knoxville, TN.



One of the greatest moral questions of our day is the question of abortion. Why do we have the problem? We have turned away from God, the Bible and any authoritative standard of right and wrong. We have “*defied man, humanized God, air-conditioned hell, and made heaven the welfare state in our brave, new world.*”

In this study I propose to observe some thoughts on the following: (1) What is the meaning of abortion?; (2) What are the reasons why a woman might want an abortion? (3) What are some arguments for abortion?; (4) Why is abortion contrary to God’s will?; (5) Some consequences of abortion on demand; and (6) Conclusion.

### **What Is The Meaning Of Abortion?**

Abort means “*to bring forth premature or still-born offspring*”<sup>1</sup> “*The termination of a pregnancy at any time before the fetus has gained viability.*”<sup>2</sup>

There are two kinds of abortion. **First**, there is spontaneous abortion which is “*an abortion occurring naturally.*” **Second**, there is induced abortion which is “*an abortion which is precipitated artificially and*

*purposely.*” There are two kinds of induced abortion. There is therapeutic abortion which is *“an abortion induced artificially and purposely in order to save the life of the mother or in the interest of maternal health.”* Non-therapeutic abortion is *“an abortion performed for reasons other than to save the life or preserve the health of the mother.”*

### **What Are Some Reasons Why A Woman Might Want An Abortion?**

Bernard Ramm<sup>3</sup> contends that the real issue is not *“when is a person a person”* or *“when does a fetus cease to be a tissue and become a person,”* but *“why should any Christian girl want an abortion?”* Or why *“should any woman in the 20th Century want an abortion?”*

The reasons why people seek abortions can be divided into four categories. **First**, those who are legitimately pregnant, but because of weariness, illness, overcrowding, poverty, etc. feel they cannot face another pregnancy. **Second**, the single, separated, divorced, or widowed, for whom this illegitimate pregnancy spells shame and degradation. **Third**, the Roman matron afraid for her figure, the unmarried woman unprepared to settle down, and the professional woman whose career is in jeopardy. **Fourth**, the ill and dying for whom abortion can offer life. There are many reasons given for abortion, but *“they boil down to the fact for the most part that the child is simply not wanted.”*

### **What Are Some Arguments Given In Favor Of Abortion?**

**First**, there are so *“many children born deformed or mentally incompetent.”* Only about one in ten pregnancies will have babies with serious impairments.

Who has the right to decide the sickly will not live? Since about half such cases can be corrected, how will one decide which ones cannot? But, granting that defective babies should be destroyed, does it follow that nine normal pregnancies should be aborted along with one abnormal? Wouldn't it be 90% more humane to wait until all ten are born and then kill the bad one?

**Second**, *“abortions are performed anyway so it's preferable that they be legal.”* Deformed children are sometimes killed anyway, so why not make that legal?

**Third**, *“abortion should be beyond law—it should be a matter of individual conscience.”* Where is the stopping point in the application of this principle?

**Fourth**, abortion was permissible in the Old Testament. The verses often used to try to prove this point are Exodus 21:22-24:

If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her, and yet no mischief follow: he shall be surely punished, according as the woman's husband will lay upon him; and he shall pay as the judges determine. And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life, Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Note some of the arguments made by those who believe the Old Testament supports abortion.

A second factor suggesting that abortion was permissible is that God does not regard the fetus as a soul, no matter how far gestation has progressed. The law plainly exacts: ‘If a man kills any human life he will be put to death’ (Lev. 24:17). But according to Exodus 21:22-24 the destruction of a fetus is not a capital offense. The divine law reads: ‘when men struggle together and one of them pushes

a pregnant woman and she suffers a miscarriage but no other harm happens, he shall be fined according as the woman's husband may exact from him...but if harm does ensue, then you shall impose soul for soul....' Clearly then, in contrast to the mother, the fetus is not reckoned as a soul. The money compensation seems to have been imposed not to protect the fetus but rather to compensate the father for his loss.<sup>4</sup>

*"It can be inferred here, that the fetus was not considered a human life or 'life for life' would have been demanded as it was for the mother's life or at least a 'fetus for fetus' as was done under Assyrian law."*<sup>5</sup>

These statements either state or imply three things (we are told): (1) that verse 22 refers to a miscarriage, the death of the unborn child; (2) that this supposed death of the fetus is the injury for which the guilty party is only fined; (3) while injury to the mother is considered to be further harm serious enough to invoke the *lex tallonis* (eye for eye, etc.).

There are some serious objections to using Exodus 21:22-24 to prove that abortion was permissible in the Old Testament. **First**, there is "*absolutely no linguistic justification for translating verse 22 to refer to a miscarriage.*"<sup>6</sup> The clause "*so that her fruit depart*" in both KJV and ASV literally reads "*and her children come out.*" The verb is **yatza** which has the common meaning "*to go out, to go forth, to come forth.*" It is often used to refer to the ordinary birth of children either as coming forth from the loins of the father (Gen. 15:4; 46:26; I Kings 8:19; Isa. 39:7), or as coming forth from the womb of the mother (Gen. 25:24-25; 38:28-29; Job 1:21; Eccl. 5:15; Jer. 1:5; 20:18). In no case is the word used to indicate a miscarriage. In Numbers 12:12 it refers to a

still-born child but a still-born child is not a miscarriage.

**Second**, these verses refer to a premature birth and not to a miscarriage. There is a Hebrew word, **shachol**, that specifically refers to the event of miscarriage. The word **shachol** is used in Exodus 23:26 and Hosea to refer to a miscarriage among human beings. It is used in Genesis 31:38 and Job 21:10 to refer to miscarriage among animals. The expression “*so that her fruit depart from her*” (Exod. 21:22) means nothing more than a birth of a child. The irregularity of the situation is the fact that the birth is prematurely and maliciously induced. The contrast here is not between any harm done to the child and any harm done to the mother, but “*a situation in which harm comes neither to the mother nor the child.*” The premature birth of a child is not considered harm. A fine is levied possibly because of danger to which both are exposed. The child is born prematurely, but unharmed, and no harm comes to the mother either. Those who use this text to prove abortion add the word “*other*” or “*further.*” There is absolutely no authority for adding the words “*other*” or “*further*” in verse 22. The word “*other*” or “*further*” makes the verse say that the fetus is killed, but no “*other mischief*” follows—that is the mother is not harmed. But the “*life for life*” applies if either the mother or the premature child dies.

### **Some Reasons Why Abortion Is Contrary To God’s Will**

**First**, there is life and a person before birth. “*The heartbeat of the unborn fetus begins between the 18th and 25th day.*”<sup>7</sup> “*Electric brain waves {electroencephalograph} have been recorded as early as*

43 days.”<sup>9</sup> “Actual skeletal movements of the unknown baby begin at six weeks. The mother cannot feel them, however, at this time.”<sup>10</sup> “At nine or ten weeks he squints, swallows, moves his tongue, and if you stroke his palm he will make a tight fist. At eleven to twelve weeks, he is sucking his thumb vigorously.”<sup>11</sup>

**Second**, life begins at conception. Dr. Heather Morris, Canadian obstetrician and gynecologist, who practices at Women’s College Hospital in Toronto said: “Abortion is a situation in which life is taken. Human life starts at conception.”<sup>12</sup> “The result has been a curious avoidance of the scientific fact, which everyone knows, that human life begins at conception.”<sup>13</sup> In 1967 the First International Congress on Abortion was held in Washington, D.C. There were authorities in the fields of medicine, law, ethics, and the social sciences. Their unanimous conclusion (19-1): “The majority of our group could find no point in time between the union of sperm and egg, or at least the blastocyst state (this is shortly after fertilization), and the birth of the infant at which point we could say that this was no human life.”

**Third**, the scriptures show there is life and a person before birth.

And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus... (Gen. 25:21-22)?

These unborn children (Heb. **ben**) merited the same designation as the “born” children of Keturah in Genesis 25:2. To have terminated her pregnancy by abortion would have been tantamount to genocide.



For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth (Psm. 139:13-15).

*“Lowest part of the earth”* here is a Hebrew expression to describe the dark interior of the womb. He regards himself as having been a self even before he was conscious of himself.

I, the person, was covered by thy hand, oh, Lord, in my mother's womb; I was made in secret and curiously wrought in the inner recesses of my mother's body.

It seems that the Psalmist did not think of his humanity as uniquely tied to the moment of birth. The events leading up to birth are a kind of primal history of the self.

Luke 1:36 through 44 reveals Mary's visit to Elizabeth when she was six months pregnant. Notice some statements that are made in this connection that bear heavily on life before birth. (1) *“This is the sixth month with her”* (v. 36); (2) *“The babe leaped in her womb”* (v. 41); *“The babe leaped in her womb”* (v. 44). He leaped (movement indicates life). He was called a babe (Greek, **Brephose**). **Brephos** (Greek) is used in the New Testament to identify a human infant either born or unborn. *“...Ye shall find the babe...”* (born, Luke 2:12). *“And they brought unto him also infants...”* (born, Luke 2:16). Luke, a physician and an inspired man, used this same word, **brephos**, to describe the infants put to death in Egypt by Pharaoh, *“...they cast out their young*

*children, to the end they might not live” (Acts 7:19).*

If the parents of John the baptizer had secured the services of an abortionist during the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, they would have been doing the same thing that was done by Pharaoh recorded in Exodus 1:15ff, they would have been casting out their babe (Greek, **brephos**) to the end that he might not live.<sup>14</sup>

### **The Consequences Of “Abortion On Demand” Are Tremendous**

**First**, there is much evidence to show that some people prefer an abortion every year to a pill every day. **Second**, promiscuity is another consequence. **Third**, experiments are run “*on live-born fetus*” taken by hysterectomy in many cases. **Fourth**, it forces doctors to violate their Hippocratic Oath. **Fifth**, the psychological effects of an abortion are frequently more severe than those that accompany an unwanted pregnancy. **Sixth**, abortion is the taking of an innocent human life.

### **Conclusion**

Tom Brown once stated: “*Abortion on demand is an assault on Biblical morality which every Christian must abhor and reject.*”

Abortion, in the main, is the logical consequence of a far greater problem—the permissive nature of man—in our society, at least, the natural has gained ascendancy over the once held spiritual values of Biblical morality—outlawing prayer and Bible reading, capital punishment, and endorsing abortion are stark evidences that the body politic is embracing the humanistic creed.<sup>15</sup>

Medicine without an ethic, the law with a norm; and the religious community without a theology of life and death, man and nature; will leave people without a defense. This is particularly true in a world in which so many are willing to sacrifice the other, rather than sacrifice **for** the other.<sup>16</sup>

Abortion does not solve the problem. God’s word, not emotions, must be the standard in all decisions. God’s word condemns abortion in no uncertain terms.

### Endnotes

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- 2 Thomas J. O’Donnell, S.J., **Morals In Medicine**, (Westminister: The New Press, 1960), p. 155.
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- 15 David A. Noebel, “*Slaughter of The Innocent*,” **Chrisitan Crusade**, Tulsa, OK: May 21, 1972.
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## Chapter 25

# Evolution

*Kevin Beard*



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**T**he theory of Evolution poses a threat to the family by attacking the spiritual foundation upon which every family ought to be built. Evolution plainly states, “*there is no God.*” And if there is no God, then the Bible’s teachings are irrelevant. Gone are the admonitions for husbands to love their wives. Gone are the instructions to bring up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Gone are the prohibitions against adultery. Gone is the principle of “*till death do us part.*” If Evolution succeeds, the family will fail.

### **The Subtle Threat Of Evolution**

Rarely does Satan attack children of God with full disclosure. That action would prove disastrous for him. Who would be deceived by an attack presented as something designed to destroy the soul? Rather, his attacks are disguised in things which deceive and confuse. False doctrine contains enough truth to make it sound good, but enough error to make it deadly. The sins of the flesh are dressed up with enough glamour to

make them appealing, yet their danger is concealed. The threat of Evolution to the home works in much the same way.

How does Satan seek to infiltrate homes with the venom of the evolutionary theory? More often than not, he uses children. Children are very impressionable. They are easily deceived. If something is presented to them with bright colors or exciting stories they will probably believe it. If they see it on television or read it in a book, they accept it as truth. Satan knows this and has utilized all of these means for years to influence the thinking of children, and thus to influence the thinking of multitudes of adults. Parents need to be aware of the pipelines through which Satan pumps the atheists' philosophy of evolution into the home.

Books are a major source of propaganda for the evolutionists. Some may argue, “*But my children aren't old enough to understand all of those big words and difficult concepts.*” But are those children old enough to be fascinated by dinosaurs? Children's books about dinosaurs fill the book stores and libraries. Those children may not be old enough to understand a university professor's lecture on the theory of evolution, but they certainly can read statements like “*no human being has ever seen a dinosaur. Dinosaurs lived long before there were any men on earth.*”<sup>1</sup> Children are smart enough to understand that these kinds of statements cannot harmonize with the biblical account of Creation. Television provides another medium for the evolutionists to push their ideas. Shows about nature and wildlife are popular with many kids and adults. And with cable channels like The Discovery Channel, Animal Planet, The Learning Channel, and so on, these shows are growing ever more common. Now these kinds of

programs and these networks can be very educational, as well as providing a good alternative to the filth presented on much of the television programs today. But the problem with many of these kinds of shows is that they will insert some kind of reference to evolution, either directly or indirectly, often by referring to how many millions of years ago something happened. School textbooks also are often a source of influence for children. They begin at the earliest ages and present evolution as fact. The threat is widespread, and it has been carefully disguised many times, so that the unsuspecting may be caught off guard.

### **The Consequences Of The Theory Of Evolution**

Just how dangerous a threat is evolution to the home? Belief in evolution cannot coexist with faith in God. If the Bible is true, then evolution is false. If evolution is true then the Bible is false. And if the Bible is false, then there is no God. That is a serious and threatening proposition.

If children accept evolution's proposition that God does not exist, they will reject the teachings of the Bible. Bert Thompson has said, "*Evolution being true, and God by necessity being ruled out, young people are smart enough to figure out exactly what that means. NO GOD, NO LAW!!*"<sup>2</sup> The only other option is to take the humanist view, which says that there is no authority higher than man. If that view is adopted, then the logical result is that everything is subjective. Religion, morality, law, everything becomes subject to the whims of self.

Is it any wonder that in American society in 1998 there is such an apparent apathy for moral standards? Look at how long evolution has been attacking the moral and spiritual foundation of this land! And if God does

not exist, as evolution demands, then why should people remain faithful to their mates? Why should people think of marriage as a life-long commitment? Why shouldn't women murder their unborn babies? If there is no ultimate lawgiver, then there are no ultimate consequences to violating any law. If there are no ultimate consequences, then man is free to do as he chooses. These are the consequences of evolution.

### **How To Combat Evolution**

In order to combat evolution, families must take it seriously. As with any enemy, if it is underestimated, it will win. Parents need to understand how dangerous evolution is to their children and to their entire families. They must determine to fight this adversary with all their might. Suppose a family wants to hire a babysitter. Suppose a convicted child molester wanted to take the job. Would those parents allow him to come into their home to be alone with their children? Certainly not! They know how dangerous that would be. Parents ought to be as diligent regarding evolution as they would be about a babysitter for their children. So what can be done?

First, parents need to teach God's Word to their children. They must take this responsibility themselves; they cannot let it fall to the church Bible Class program. Their children need to be taught from the very beginning. Evolution definitely will be thrust upon them at a very early age, so parents must get a head start. Children need to know that life did not begin billions of years ago as a result of some accident, but that life began with God, and that He created the world and everything in it in six days, just like the Bible says (Exod. 20:11).

Second, parents need to demonstrate to their children that faith in God is not a sign of being unenlightened and uneducated. They need to show their

children what it means to be a follower of Christ, because if they are lukewarm, or hypocritical about their faith, the children will see that. And if they see that faith in God is not really all that important to their parents, then they will conclude that it is not really all that important for themselves either. Regardless of how many Bible classes, worship assemblies, gospel meetings, and youth activities the parents take their children to, if those children do not see their parents really living what they claim, they will not be as likely to develop a strong faith themselves. And without a strong faith, children become prime candidates for evolution's propaganda.

Third, parents ought to inform themselves about the folly of evolution. Abundant evidence exists which contradicts evolution. Apologetics Press, in Montgomery, AL, has done the brotherhood a great service by providing outstanding material relating to these matters. If parents are aware of the basic points of evolution, they will be more likely to notice the subtle, and even disguised attempts at indoctrination that exist nearly everywhere today. A victory over such an enemy as evolution cannot be won if parents do not know the enemy.

Fourth, parents need to be on the lookout for sources of evolutionary teaching in their children's lives. They cannot buy just any book about dinosaurs, or nature, or animals for their children. They need to inspect it first. School textbooks are another source of evolutionary indoctrination. At the very least, moms and dads need to know what is in those books and discuss these things with their children in light of the Bible. A greater step would be to discuss the objectionable content with the school board, or superintendent, or whoever is responsible for purchasing textbooks. Television and



movies also need to be monitored. The day of allowing kids to turn on the TV without supervision have passed. The teaching of evolution can be found on everything from shows on PBS aimed at preschool kids to documentaries designed for adults on The Discovery Channel. And they don't have to be shows about science or nature either. Evolution is taught in cartoons, educational shows, sitcoms, and movies. It can be found in textbooks, picture books, and coloring books. Parents must be aware of what their children read, see, and listen to.

Evolution is a great danger to the home. The consequences of accepting it as true are grave. Because of this, the home must be protected from it. Parents must take this responsibility seriously. The souls of their children, and even their own souls are at stake.

### **Endnotes**

1 **Great Dinosaurs**, (Cali, Columbia: Hallmark Cards, 1987).

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The  
Christian Home  
~~~~~  
**Women’s Class**



## Chapter 26

# What Wives Need To Know About Husbands

*Irene C. Taylor*

Irene is a graduate of Freed-Hardeman University, and has been named Outstanding Alumnus of that institution ~ An excellent teacher and writer ~ A regular writer for the **Firm Foundation** ~ Wife of Robert R. Taylor, Jr. whom she married in 1952 ~ They have worked with the Ripley, TN congregation for over twenty years ~ Robert and Irene have two children.



**I**n an age when the sanctity of marriage and the home is held in low esteem by many, any study of the home and its relationships as God would approve is more than timely—it is needed. It is an honor to have the opportunity to discuss the topic assigned for this study. My appreciation is hereby expressed to the elders of East Hill, Pulaski, and their preacher, for the wisdom shown in selecting such a vital theme.

### **Wives Need To Understand His Headship**

From the beginning of time when **God** ordained marriage, it was His design that one man and one woman be united for life (Gen. 2:24; Rom. 7:1-3). In the dawn of creation God viewed His handiwork and observed the loneliness of man. In the animal world the male had a mate but no help meet was found for Adam (Gen. 2:20). (Let it here be noted that man is NOT an animal, evolutionists notwithstanding.) Knowing that it was not good for man to be alone, God performed the

first operation and from Adam’s side removed a rib. From it He formed (buildd—ASV) woman (Gen. 2:21-22). An observation often made by preachers seems appropriate here. It was from Adam’s side that God chose a bone, from under his arm and near his heart that man would love and protect his mate. He did not remove a bone from man’s head lest man feel the need to dominate, dictate and feel superior—a lesson some need to remember. Nor did he remove a part of the foot lest man feel justified in trampling upon his mate, treating her as a door mat.

God declared of that first union the oneness which was to govern approved marriages for all time. The marriage mate is to come first before all other humanity. Only God comes before one’s mate.

Therefore shall a man **leave** his father and his mother, and shall **cleave** unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh (Gen. 2:24—emphasis mine).

Paul reveals further,

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body (Eph. 5:23).

This headship in no way intimates that woman is inferior, feminists to the contrary notwithstanding. God has never intended that she be so. It is only man’s **abuse** of His arrangement that has made her feel such. No man has mistreated his wife by following God’s pattern. Rather, he treats her with tenderness and protects her. Note the standard whereby he is to govern treatment of his wife. “*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it*” (Eph. 5:25). The wife needs to know that she will receive such treatment in their marriage. Note that Christ gave

himself for the church; His was a sacrificial love. The husband who truly loves his wife will place her needs and welfare above his own. The flip side will be that she, too, will deal as unselfishly toward him. Respect begets respect! No longer is it what “*I*” like and/or want; it is now what “*we*” need. It is not what he/she can do for me but what can I do to make life more pleasant for my mate.

Wives today need to recognize that rebellion against God’s arrangement with man as head of the home is not negotiable. When we wives argue against the husband’s headship we are, in reality, arguing against God. Sad indeed is the home where husband refuses to fill his God-ordained role with love. Sad, also, is the home where wife refuses to recognize his headship and seeks to usurp that role for herself. Neither position meets with God’s approval.

### **His Need For A Help Meet**

Remember that God declared that man needed a help meet for him (Gen. 2:18). He did not say **help mate** but **help meet**, one suitable for his needs. Man does not need a wife to fill the role which can be filled by those in the animal world. And being a **help meet** means more than supplying sexual satisfaction. God saw man’s need for companionship; it was not good for him to be alone (v. 18). It is a mistake for couples to have totally separate interests with nothing shared jointly. Modern couples often have not only separate **vocations** but separate **vacations** as well. They frequently have a totally separate set of friends and social activities. About the only togetherness some seem to have is in the bedroom and, without sharing in other areas, that becomes shallow and can easily dive downward to total emptiness.

The wife needs to be willing to share in her husband's life by supporting his efforts in his work without resentment. She needs to know that he will reciprocate with genuine interest in her endeavors. The husband of the worthy woman was “...*known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land*” (Prov. 31:23). A careful reading of her portrait fails to reveal the slightest hint of jealousy on her part. She is proud and supportive of his accomplishments. He, in turn, rises up and “...*praiseth her*” (Prov. 31:28). Instead of wasting precious time and energy on petty jealousy because he is in the limelight more than she, her life is filled with worthy endeavors of her own. How much more harmonious would many marriages be if wives would follow this fine example. While sharing of interests is a vital ingredient for a solid marriage, it does not preclude having some special activities separately. Everyone needs a bit of time for self. Being a preacher's wife myself, it is difficult to understand the jealousy expressed by other preachers' wives. There are many, many areas of Christian service crying for workers that it seems a shame for anyone to feel unnecessary. Could it be that we have allowed ourselves to buy into the feminist viewpoint that, unless it places us in the limelight with him, a task is beneath our dignity? The preacher's wife is not the only wife who must learn graciously to share her husband. Many occupations require the husband to be away—even for special occasions. Is it not time we ceased feeling sorry for ourselves? Learn to make a fulfilling place for your abilities and be contented in your role. You are important!

Be an encourager rather than a discourager. The wise man must have had experience with a nagging wife for he graphically depicts how unpleasant one can make

life for those around her.

...[T]he contentions of a wife are a continual dropping....It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house (Proverbs 19:13b; 21:9; 25:24).

Like the worthy woman, let us “...*do him good and not evil all the days of her life*” (Prov. 31:12).

### **The Need To Know He Will Provide Security**

Before entering marriage, every couple needs to know that **both** parties recognize the longevity of marriage and are committed to it for life. She has every right to know he will be there for her through thick and thin, sickness and health, trials and good times. After all, does he not rightfully expect such from her? Remember those sacred marriage vows made before God? No real man will desert his wife when her health fails nor will she desert him if the tables are turned. The husband who complains that his disabled wife means more work for him has forgotten both his marriage vows and the Golden Rule (Matt. 7:12; Luke 6:31).

A wife needs to know that her husband will be industrious and willing to work in order to provide for the needs of the family. Remember that the young lady usually leaves a parental home where her needs were provided unconditionally. Even upon working to provide her own support before marriage, she knew that, all things being equal, her financial needs would be stable. She has every right to expect that they will be met in marriage. The Bible declares this is a God-ordained security.

But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath



denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel  
(I Tim. 5:8).

Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide  
things honest in the sight of all men (Rom.  
12:17).

Something is lacking in the character of an able-bodied man who is content to do nothing while his wife provides the financial support for the family. Either he is sinfully lazy or has subscribed to the sinful philosophy of the feminists who would make of him a househusband.

Every wife needs to know of the unconditional love of her husband. Love should not be predicated upon whether or not things go smoothly and the sun shines brightly. She needs to know it will remain when the clouds hover and the rains descend. When the inevitable problems of marriage arise, she needs to be able to trust that he will be constant in his love and support. Such love and support must travel a two-way street; it cannot always go just one way. She needs to extend the same love and loyalty to him.

### **The Need To Be Secure In His Loyalty**

Recall that the original pattern for marriage as God designed it required that man **leave** father and mother and **cleave** to his wife (Gen. 2:24). Jesus reiterated this concept while on earth (Matt. 19:5). The husband/wife relationship is designed to be the closest-knit relationship known to mankind. Regarding no other relationship has God decreed that one leave father and mother and cleave until death severs the tie that binds. The parent/child relationship, dear though it is, is destined for change as each child leaves home to launch out into a life independent of parents. Nowhere are we commanded to leave our mate and cleave to our children

*“till death do us part.”* Sometimes a parent (usually mother) is heard to say that love for the child comes first. This is wrong. While there should be no conflict between marital love and parental love, God intends that marital loyalty be first after our love for Him.

Just as the wife is to place her loyalty to husband first before children, so she needs to know that the husband places her in position number one over all others. Many have been the jokes indicating that the daughter cannot leave Mama and cut the apron strings. Truth be known, some sons are tied more tightly to Mama than are the daughters. The relationship between husband and wife should not conflict with that between parent and child. They are designed to be different. However, honesty must admit that often the conflict exists. And it is sometimes the husband who insists on giving Mama first consideration and staying close to her home. Maturity keeps each relationship in its proper place. The wife has the right to expect her husband's loyalty to her will be **first** before Mama or any other outside influence. She needs to feel secure in her position but she must never descend to the pit of petty jealousy because of her husband's close, but proper, relationship to his birth family. Sometimes one's mate resents the closeness of the birth family especially when his own is not close. The same truth applies to the husband with regard to the wife's birth family. No competition should exist between two distinctively different relationships. None will arise when both parties adhere to God's pattern.

### **Marriage Is A Full Partnership**

The marriage bond is, in actuality, a full partnership with its respective responsibilities. It is an equal partnership. The fact that husband is the head

and wife is a homemaker does not negate that equal nature of the partnership. In the business world equal partners may have different offices yet still be equal. So it is in marriage. She needs to know that her input is valued and given fair consideration. The husband who views his headship role as license to be a ruthless dictator has missed the import of his position. It is, rather, a position of protection. He has been placed there for two reasons: (1) Adam was first formed and (2) the woman was deceived (I Tim. 2:13-14). And let it be realized that this does not erase Adam's part in the sin. Both partners are to function with dignity. When either partner strips the other of that dignity the marriage relationship suffers. Read it and take heed.

When children join the family circle each parent needs to realize the value of uniform discipline. The wife who helps a child by-pass Dad's instructions or restrictions is sowing the seeds of disrespect for authority. She likely will reap a heartbreaking harvest when the child becomes an adult. No quest for popularity is worth the cost! Likewise, the husband who feels he must take over in the midst of the wife's disciplinary action is teaching a dangerous concept. He is saying, whether intentional or not, that discipline is not really discipline until it comes from ME! Look at the position in which that places Mother. It severely handicaps her when, under normal circumstances, it is she who is alone with the children most of the time. It is not fair to either father, mother or child consistently to postpone discipline until Dad comes home. Great care should be taken not to undermine the disciplinary authority of Mother. I am most grateful that I had a husband who let me complete disciplinary action without interference. He was always ready to help and reinforce when needed but my action

was never undermined. Consistent discipline of children is a vital ingredient else a confused child results. Discipline must be administered if a well adjusted adult is desired and parents need to agree upon the type to be administered (Prov. 13:24; 19:18). When a difference of opinion exists it should be settled in private away from the child. Today's children are crying for standards; they just do not always realize it (Prov. 20:11). Permissive parents are a child's enemy. Children test us. We fail the test miserably when we allow them to maneuver us into giving in to their demands through tears and tantrums. In life they will discover they are not viewed as our precious darlings. Love them enough to care what they become!

### **The Need To Know He Has Time For Her**

Is it not amazing that the young man who had plenty of time to woo and win the hand of fair maiden suddenly has little time for her now? It is readily recognized that providing a livelihood for home and family of necessity consumes much time. However, courtship need not die with the marriage vows. It is the height of selfishness to consume all free time on self interests and ignore one's mate. It is likewise not wise to allow one's children to consume free time to the exclusion of one's mate. A fair amount of free time should be spent with family activities with some reserved for one's mate. All of a couple's time together should not be spent pursuing the interest of only one party. Most men love sports. Is it really fair that all shared time be spent attending sports events unless she really enjoys them, also? Would he enjoy spending all free time attending theater, opera, sight seeing and shopping unless he, too, found such relaxing?

Couples who fail equitably to share free time may one day find themselves living with a near stranger when children are gone. Admittedly, many of the outings will be geared toward the children when they are part of the family unit, but not all should be. Couples need to find time for each other and some of it should be outside the bedroom! The Lord recognized the need for “*together time*” in the early months of marriage (Deut. 24:5). Wisdom suggests that time for each other is vital to the maintenance of marriage. Time is needed to discuss privately matters germane to the operation of the home. Fun times are necessary as well. Jesus knew the value of occasionally “*getting away from it all*” and escaping from the crowds from time to time. Paul declared that “*...bodily exercise profiteth little...*” (I Tim. 4:8). Fun and relaxation must be kept in perspective but an occasional break from life’s routine is refreshing to both mind and body.

### **His Need To Feel Appreciated**

Does it surprise you to learn that husbands are human, too? When was the last time you thanked your husband for a good job in providing a house in which to live, food for the table and clothes for the family in addition to the extras you enjoy? Do you just take for granted that you should have these readily available? Someone had to work to provide them! How about expressing those magic words, “*Thank you?*” Will someone explain why we practice less thankfulness and courtesy in the home than we do to guests? We parents are neglecting a needed part of training in courtesy and manners when we fail to teach our children to say “*thank you*” and be grateful for gifts and kindnesses shown them. Have you observed how difficult it is to receive even a half-hearted mumbled expression of thanks from

some adults who have never learned how graciously to appreciate a gift? It almost seems they feel it is owed them. Somewhere down the line we parents failed adequately to teach proper thankfulness. Appreciation should be forthcoming even if the gift is not our heart's desire. The fact that one thought enough of us to spend the time and energy and money in its selection warrants an expression of thanks.

More appreciation between mates should be common without needing encouragement to deliver. Regular meditation on Inspiration's description of love might inspire more frequent expressions of love between mates both by word and deed. There is more than one way to say "*I love you*" but none finer than to speak those three magic words enforced by loving deeds. No day should pass without expressing them—in both ways—to our mate.

Appreciation for one's mate is made easier when preceded by respect. Sara called Abraham "*lord*," a term of respect and devotion. Did he have any faults? We know that he did (Gen. 12:11f; 20:2). Since our husbands did not marry a perfect wife can we not be more charitable toward their faults? In order to receive respect we must make ourselves worthy of respect.

### **Her Need For Appreciation From Him**

Just as the husband needs to know he is appreciated by his wife and family, so does the wife need to know of his appreciation of her. Would it shock you to hear your husband compliment a meal you had prepared? It takes time and thought to prepare a nourishing meal and such is as worthy of appreciation as is the appreciation deserved toward the one who provided for it. When a wife has spent the time to prepare the meal it is gratifying when the husband

appreciates it enough to appear in time to partake with the family while it is hot. The husband who fails to see the importance in the family meal misses a golden opportunity to enhance his marital relationship. Try hard as I may, I cannot recall a single meal in our marriage for which my husband did not express his appreciation. That is not to say they all deserved it! That is to say that he is a most thoughtful, gracious and appreciative husband and this trait has not gone unnoticed.

The wife deserves to know her husband appreciates her homemaking efforts. The Holy Spirit had Paul record the following directive to women. We are **commanded**, among other things, to be “*keepers*” (workers—ASV) at home; homemakers. Have you ever reflected on how difficult it is to obey this command when a husband will not let his wife? Some husbands have deprived the wife of the opportunity to obey by usurping homemaking skills for themselves. Sometimes the wife prefers this but often it is the source of conflict. One of the most fun, rewarding aspects of homemaking is that of making pretty and inviting the atmosphere of the home. The wise wife takes into consideration the taste and compatibility here decorating will have on family usage but the pride and joy she feels in accomplishing the task is a special reward for her. We have seen many wives leave full time home life to help provide financial security for the family. When such occurs it is only fair that the husband share home duties. It seems lately that there is a slow move toward getting mother back in the home. If she is deprived of her right to function fully as homemaker and express herself in that function, husband may find her not content to remain there. Allow her to use her skills and you will likely notice an increased pride in keeping home neat.

## Understanding Sexual Differences

Inherent in the husband/wife relationship is the physical, sexual relationship which belongs in marriage and only in marriage. No one, man or woman, should contemplate entering the marriage union with an unwillingness to observe this special relationship. This is a special language of love and is undergirded by a special bond of trust in the purity and loyalty of one's mate. Every prospective bride ought to go to the marriage altar as a virgin; every groom should do likewise. Once the trust of this special bond is broken it is most difficult, if not impossible, to mend it. This is a mutual relationship which must be honed to the satisfaction of both parties. It is not meant to be the fulfillment of the desires of only one of the mates. Perhaps an in-depth study of I Corinthians 7 would be in order for every married couple. The institution of marriage, with its physical union, is the only God-approved avenue of avoiding fornication. The "*due benevolence*" is to be rendered the wife as well as the husband. Webster's New World College Dictionary defines benevolence as, "*inclination to do good, kindness; a kindly, charitable act or gift.*" A kindly, charitable act is not compatible with a forced, demanded union. God placed within the marital relationship a check and balance. Each must be sensitive to the need and desire of the marriage partner. The sexual appetite of man and woman is not identical and foolish indeed is the man or woman who expects to make them so. This writer has talked to wives who were greatly distressed due to the demand of a husband who insisted her appetite and performance identically match his. We do not demand this same equal response in other areas—why here? Likewise, I have counseled some wives who felt no compunction to respond to the husband's



sexual overture at all. Neither attitude is pleasing to God.

Couples need to remember that the sexual exchange is a **part**—important though it is—and not the sum total of the marriage union. It takes understanding from both parties to reach compatibility in this arena. It is a sensitive arena and one of the basic problems in marriage. A lesson most couples are slow to learn in this. The treatment and speech exchanged in the day-to-day routine of life together directly affects what occurs in the bedroom. Harsh words, picky criticism, sullen, silent sulking and unkind treatment do little to pave the way for a romantic evening! The little “*niceties*” do count. Try a little tenderness along the way with no thought of a specific reward. And, fathers, when children are little and demanding and her day has been filled with the frustration of coping with their unique needs, why not pitch in and give mother a hand occasionally?

### **Husband As Spiritual Leadership**

God said of Abraham,

For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment... (Gen. 18:19).

Joshua declared, “...choose you this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Josh. 24:15). As head of the home, husband/father should be leader in things spiritual. This highlights the importance of marrying a Christian. How can a Christian wife be under the spiritual leadership of a non-Christian? How can she allow him free influence in the spiritual training of their children?

Parents are known for promoting dedicated secular

education for their children. We are diligent in assuring that our children are equipped to follow a vocation which will provide financial security. Why are we not as diligent in the education which will provide spiritual security? The wise man admonishes, "*Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it*" (Prov. 22:6).

Christian husbands will **take** the family to public worship assemblies regularly—and **stay** with them. What happened to the concept that the "*family who worships together stays together?*" It should be understood where the family will be at worship time!

Home devotionals will be led by a father determined to teach reverence for reading God's word and prayer. Secular conversation and activities will be set aside during devotional periods and children will learn to concentrate on things spiritual. When one sees worshippers at church busily engaged in matters which divert concentration on the words of the songs, the prayers and the lessons presented, one is made aware of the need for such training in home devotionals. How the Lord must shudder as He views our worship IQ. Home devotionals and meal time thanksgiving give a marvelous opportunity to teach our young boys to lead prayers, read scriptures, etc. However, let us not forget that our children need to grow up (and make precious memories) of hearing Dad take the lead in devotional readings and family prayers, also.

Knowing that the world of education, as well as the world in general, is fraught with pitfalls which can weaken the faith of our young, it becomes imperative that we seize every opportunity to build and fortify their faith in God. Fortunate is the wife who can **know** that her husband will be a true spiritual leader.

## **Hand In Hand Toward Heaven**

The partnership of a Christian couple as they begin the walk through life together is a beautiful picture to behold. Sweeter still is the portrait of a Christian couple still walking hand in hand toward heaven in their golden years. The Bible mentions several couples who together worked for the Lord but none serves as a finer example than Priscilla and Aquilla. Each time they are mentioned they are together doing what is right working for the Lord. It is in this sharing that the sweetest hours are spent and the greatest satisfaction received. It is for this phase of life together that the greatest reward will be granted.

Rich indeed is the couple who work together toward helping each other reach the destination of heaven in tomorrow's world. When marital problems, infidelity or otherwise, result in a permanent rift in the relationship this hope is dimmed. It matters how we treat each other. And the main reason is because of its effect on our spiritual health.

Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered (I Peter 3:7).

## **Conclusion**

Wives need to know that love will last for all time. Unlike one ceremony which stated “*as long as love shall last,*” Christian couples need the assurance that the commitment is “*till death do us part.*” Wives need to know that husbands have feelings, too. They need to know that love given brings back love in extra measure. Above all, they need to know that sharing faith in God

throughout their walk together is the strongest foundation upon which to build and the cement which can hold together a marvelous marriage.

*“O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together”* (Psm. 34:3).