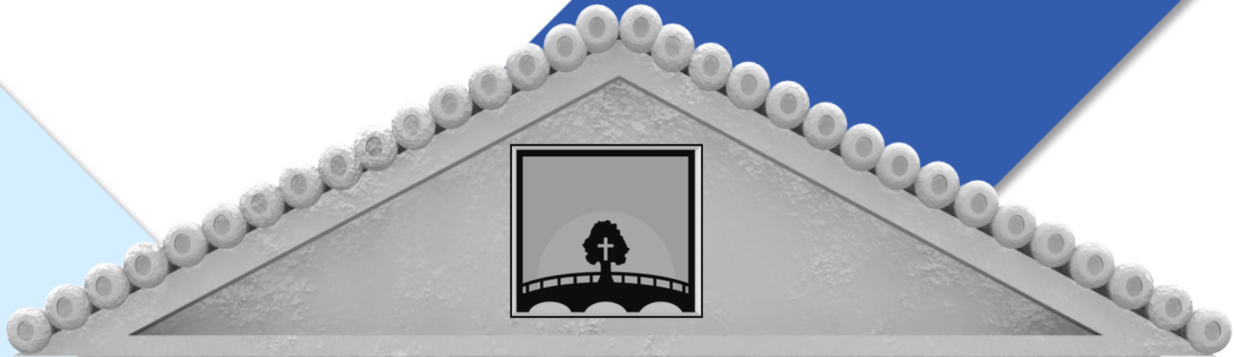


THE FAMILY



FOUNDATIONS FOR LIVING

Hope Christian Fellowship

"Making disciples who live & love like Jesus"

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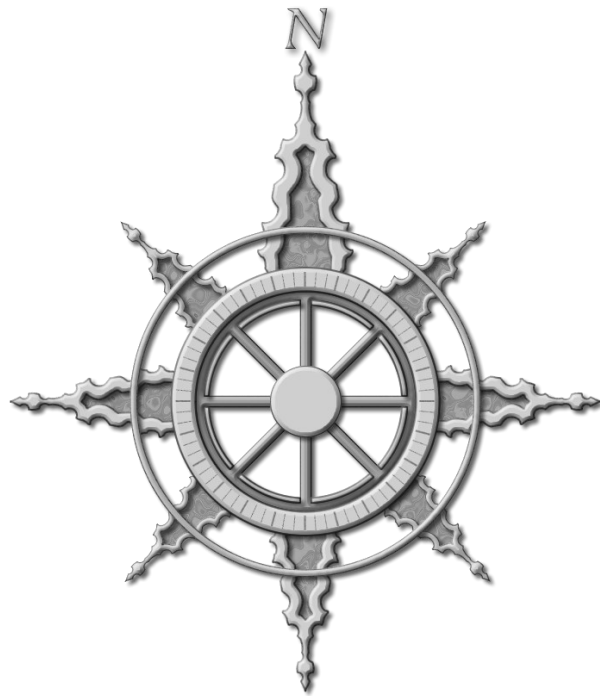
FEATURES OF THIS WORKBOOK

As you begin this study, you are taking another step on your discipleship journey. We have prepared this workbook for you to help you along the way. There are several features built into this workbook you should be aware of.

1. It is designed for self-study. Although someone may help you through it, or you may attend a group going through it together, you will be doing most of the work yourself. The material is arranged so you will cover one topic each week. You may either complete all five pages of this weekly material at one time or you may easily break it up and complete a page on five separate days.
2. We cite most of the Bible verses for you to look up rather than being quoted in the text for you. This is intentional, and we in order to help you learn how to find your way around the Bible for yourself. At first you may need to look up each book of the Bible in the table of contents of your Bible. But as time goes on, you will find yourself becoming more and more familiar with the Scriptures and easily turn to any book of the Bible.
3. The workbook is based on the New Living Translation, Edition 2 (NLT2) of the Bible. There are several good translations of the Bible available, but we chose to use the NLT because of its contemporary wording. If you do not already have an NLT2 Bible you should get one to make your studies more smoothly.
4. When you have completed the material for a topic, it is a good practice to go over it with a mentor, perhaps someone in your home group (who has already gone through it). They will be available to answer questions you may have. Their main purpose will be to help you see the importance of what you learned for being a more effective disciple of Jesus Christ. You can also complete the test in the back, turn it in to the office & receive a certificate of completion.
5. Don't be alarmed at the length of time involved. You can go through it one step at a time and at your own pace so you will not be overwhelmed. And remember, you have a lot of ideas, desires, and habits left over from your old life that must be overcome if you are to be an effective follower of Jesus Christ.

ALSO – remember to begin each chapter with prayer. Ask the Lord for His guidance, understanding and wisdom as you continue to learn more and more about Him and His Kingdom.

Heaven to Earth



In the Beginning

God is the creator of all that is. We see man and woman as the pinnacle of His creation. He commanded them to multiply, which formed a family. The concept of the family is to be an earthly expression of the Kingdom of God.

Modern society attempts to change the nature of the family, but it cannot. God is the creator of the family, therefore He has already determined its nature and purpose.

The family is the basic social unit created by God, and it has a purpose – to be a reflection of the love of God and an example of a covenant relationship.

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning _____
_____ the heavens and the earth.

When Scripture says, “In the beginning . . .” this was the start of all natural and biblical history. God alone existed, but He was not alone! He is a trinity. The structure of the human family has its model in the Triune God. It was perfect fellowship and communion, harmony and compatibility to be continued in righteousness for all time.

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, “Let _____ make human beings in _____ image, to be like _____. They will reign over the . . .”

Notice the plural pronouns used in Genesis 1:26, confirming that there is more than one in the Godhead. The Godhead said, Let “us” make mankind in “our” image.

He created us in His image. He created us to rule, to have dominion over the earth He created.

Genesis 1:27-28

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.²⁸ Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and _____. Fill the earth and govern it. _____ over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

God Gave Us Dominion

Almighty God has given mankind a rulership over the earth, with instructions to subdue it. In the King James version, verse 28 reads like this, “. . . replenish the earth and subdue it: and have dominion . . . over the fish . . . the fowl . . . and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”

“Dominion” means “the power or right of governing and controlling; sovereign authority.”

Genesis 1:29-30

Then God said, “Look! I have given you every seed-bearing _____ throughout the earth and all the _____ trees for your food.³⁰ And I have given every green plant as food for all the wild animals, the birds in the sky, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—everything that has life.” And that is what happened.

Starting with Adam and his family, mankind was to govern or rule over both the animal and vegetable kingdoms of the earth.

Adam & Eve’s son, Abel, was the first rancher; caring for flocks and herds. Their other son, Cain, became the first farmer.

The Family as a Model

Guardians of Truth

The family is to be the guardian of truth for the generations. That means we are to defend it, protect it, and keep it. When we fail to do so, the effect reaches out beyond our own nuclear families into our culture. It affects generations!

God clearly instructs his people to pass on the **truth** from generation to generation:

Deuteronomy 11:18-21

So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine . . . Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so that as long as the sky remains above the earth, you and your children may flourish . . .

Sin distorts and perverts the truth, corrupting what is right. We can see this clearly in our culture, and even within the church. This spoils the example we were intended to display. When we do not “practice what we preach,” others look upon us with disdain, calling out our hypocrisy. Worse than that, we pass our failings on to future generations!

Exodus 34:7

I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I _____ excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected— even children in the third and fourth generations.

While God is merciful, the patterns and consequences of sin are often evident in the lives of future generations. Too often, we live our lives without consideration of the kind of legacy we will pass on to our children and grandchildren.

The Family as an Example

God created the pattern of the family at the beginning of creation as the model for all social relationships. All social principles that govern all people, cultures, and societies have their roots in the family.

Genesis 1:27-28

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.²⁸ Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and govern it. Reign over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground.”

This is what the LORD Almighty says: “Give careful thought to your ways.”

Haggai 1:7

Here, in God’s instructions to that first family, we find several principles that govern life on earth.

- **Producing & Reproducing** ~ God instructed mankind to be “fruitful,” to reproduce their own kind.
- **Expanding & Growing** ~ He instructed them to “multiply,” to grow their numbers and expand throughout the earth.
- **Occupying** ~ They were to “fill” the earth with the righteous seed of the family, to occupy the earth.
- **Subduing** ~ They were given responsibility to “subdue” (tame) the earth – to master and train animals and cultivate plants.
- **Ruling** ~ God gave them and all future generations dominion and authority over it all.

We, who call ourselves by the name, “Christian,” are the “image-bearers” of Christ on the earth. We have a responsibility to not just hear the word of God, but to **do** it, to **live** it. Metaphorically, if we don’t shine that light, the world only sees darkness and perceives no other option but darkness.

God's Covenant Manifested

The faithfulness of God and His covenant is demonstrated toward families, especially with his chosen people, Israel.

God demonstrated His faithfulness to Noah and his family as he prepared to mete out judgment upon the earth. God expressed his grief and love for all families by giving them a generous amount of time and plenty of warning before He sent the flood. He gave them a “way to escape” judgment. Noah’s family was the only family to enter the ark (the way of escape) together. No one else heeded the warnings.

Genesis 7:1

When everything was ready, the LORD said to Noah, “Go into the boat with _____ your _____, for among all the people of the earth, I can see that you alone are righteous.

Then to Abraham, he makes a covenant promise to make them into a great nation and through them, to bless all the families on the earth.

Genesis 12:3

I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. All the families on earth will be _____ through you.”

God confirmed His covenant through the descendants of Abraham: Isaac and Jacob. He made Himself known to them, personally, to assure them of His faithfulness to their family line. (Genesis 12:1-11, 26:1-5, 24-25; 28:10-15)

Genesis 18:19

I have singled him out so that he will _____ his _____ and their families to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is right and just. Then I will do for Abraham all that I have promised.”

Genesis 12:1

The LORD had said to Abram, “_____ your native country, your relatives, and your father’s family, and _____ to the land that I will show you.

Exodus 19:5-6

Now _____ you will _____ me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me. ⁶ And you will be my _____ of priests, my holy _____.’ This is the message you must give to the people of Israel.”

The nation of Israel was developed from a family. Of the seventy leaders who went into Egypt with their families, God produced 600,000 men with families. This covenant relationship continues to this day, now including those of us who have received Jesus Christ as our Lord.

Galatians 3:14

Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to _____, so that we who are _____ might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith.

God extended His covenant promise to all the Gentile nations of the world through Abraham’s descendants. To belong to Abraham’s family means that we belong to Christ. To belong to Christ means that we are attached (or adopted in) to Abraham’s family.

The New Covenant & Family

God re-affirmed and fulfilled His original purpose for the family in the new covenant. What is this *new covenant*? God sent His son, Jesus Christ, who paid for the sin of Adam's race and made a way for them to be reconciled to God.

Romans 5:17-18

For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ Yes, Adam's one sin brings _____ for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right _____ with God and new life for everyone.

2 Corinthians 5:17

This means that anyone who _____ to Christ has become a new person. The _____ life is gone; a _____ life has begun!

All that God promised to Abraham and his descendants have come to completion in God's family of believers. The entire earth has truly been blessed through Abraham and his family!

Through Christ's sacrifice, God not only made a way to reconcile all people to Himself, but He also restored the "image" of God to any who will receive Him and the new covenant bought by the shedding of His blood.

The Original Pattern Continues

Jesus reasserted that the original pattern for the family would continue under the new covenant.

Matthew 19:4-6

"Haven't you read the Scriptures?" Jesus replied. "They record that from the beginning 'God made them _____ and _____.' ⁵ And he said, 'This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.' ⁶ Since they are

_____ longer _____ but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together."

The Apostle Paul Affirms

Then the Apostle Paul also reaffirmed and expounded upon God's original pattern for the family, showing the full range of God's intention for the purpose and function of the family within His church.

Ephesians 5:21-32

And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. ²⁴ As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

²⁵ For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her ²⁶ to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. ²⁷ He did this to present her to himself as a glorious church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault. ²⁸ In the same way, husbands ought to love their wives as they love their own bodies. For a man who loves his wife actually shows love for himself. ²⁹ No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church. ³⁰ And we are members of his body.

³¹ As the Scriptures say, "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one." ³² This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.

The Family – redeemed and yielded to Christ and obedient to His ways – demonstrates God's original intention for the family. The family is God's model for the redeemed families of the earth.

Conclusions

No aspect of contemporary life will have a more dramatic effect on our culture than the condition of the family. The most critical issues of our day and the future will revolve around the difference between families shaped by current ideas and those formed by the foundation of God's Word.

His Word clearly outlines the nature and purpose of His design — built by the Creator into the respective roles for men and women. Following His guidelines leads God's people to experience life as He intended it.

God's design is for our good. He intended us to have loving, happy, thriving marriages that fulfill both husband and wife and provides a culture for children to learn, grow, and flourish under the direction of God-loving parents. It sounds wonderful, doesn't it??

When we pursue and practice biblical standards for our families, God's people demonstrate the heavenly design of God's Kingdom on earth.

This design is not merely for ourselves.

Beyond the nuclear family, the world is able to view God's heavenly design.

We have the ability to arouse in others a desire to have what we have, because of the Lord's design at work in our lives.

The apostle Paul wrote about this in his letter to the Romans:

Romans 11:14

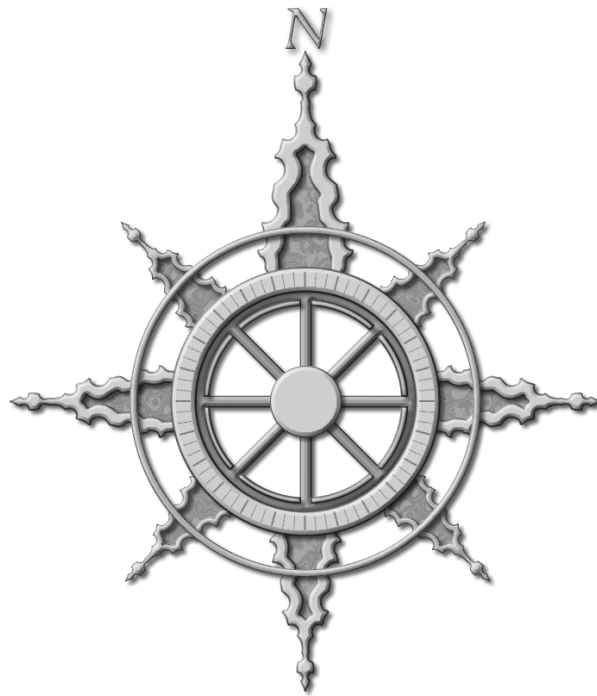
... for I want somehow to make the people of Israel jealous of what you Gentiles have, so I might save some of them.

We will delve into all these things in more detail later in upcoming chapters.

We will discuss God's grace and redemption for families who have experienced brokenness.

We will also learn what it means to be a part of God's spiritual family.

God-Designed Manhood



The Nature of Manhood

God created people, both male, and female. From the outset of creation, He called us to rule over all of His works and to be His representative in creation. He designed us to be stewards of and in God's Kingdom.

Modern culture, from a variety of perspectives, attempts to re-define what makes a person either male or female. However, God has clearly set forth in scripture the purpose of manhood and womanhood. Our understanding of God's design and purpose for man is critical.

God Defines Manhood

From the beginning of creation, God determined the nature of manhood. He creates us in His own image.

Genesis 1:27

So God created human beings in _____ own _____, in the image of God he created _____; male and female he created them.

Mankind (male & female) is created in the image of God and therefore we derive our identity from God, who is Spirit.

John 4:24

for God is _____, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

Coming in to a right relationship with God re-establishes the foundation for developing and maintaining manhood as God designed it to be. From the Garden of Eden to this very day, Satan challenges and seeks to destroy or distort God's creation and relationships. We must vigorously defend and protect our relationship with God, developing a lifestyle that is pleasing to Him.

Satan Distorts God's Design

Satan deliberately spurned the order that God had established. He simply ignored the man and went after the woman. He attempts to make the man silent, withdrawn, weak, fearful, passive, and cowardly. A man like this has many negative characteristics and is led by the emotion of the moment. He may be passive one moment and follow his woman. The next moment he could become angry and blame her for all of his problems!

Therefore, men tend to fluctuate between two extremes. They have the tendency to become wimps or they go the opposite direction and become 'macho.' As wimps, they reject their basic masculine nature. This type of man is conflicted about how to live. He is indecisive, unreliable, unmotivated, dependent and childlike. On the opposite extreme, the macho man maintains his masculine characteristics, but he does not care much for others. He devotes his energy, strength, and intelligence to his own well-being. He is arrogant, dominant and exploitative.

Satan enjoys this because he has distorted the roles of both men and women. Men are encouraged to be passive, nice guys. Women are encouraged to be more assertive. However, God is not confused about the roles of men and women. In the garden, God first confronted the man and held him accountable.

Genesis 3:17

And to the man he said, "Since _____ listened to your wife and _____ from the tree whose _____ I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed because of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

In other words, God is saying, "Adam, you were **listening** when you should have been **leading**." God is not confused about what Satan did and He does not want us to be confused either.

God's Design

Jesus, while on earth, was the perfect example of God's design for manhood. He was a tough man, living in a rough world. All his divine authority, his miraculous power, his "all-knowing" intellectual capacity was put into the service of His Father and others. He did not come to do His own will. He exemplified what we call "servant leadership." He embodies what we think of as a "hero," laying his own life down to save those who cannot save themselves.

God created the man before the woman in the order of creation. This does not mean he is of more importance. God created animals before men, neither does that indicate that animals are more important! God created both man and woman uniquely in His own image, for His own unique purposes.

Genesis 2:15

The LORD God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to _____ and _____ over it.

Genesis 1:28

Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and _____ the earth and _____ it. _____ over the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, and all the animals that scurry along the ground."

God gave man **work** to do. He gave Adam and his descendants dominion over the earth. He placed Adam in the Garden of Eden with instructions to 'work it and take care of it.' He made man to be His governmental representative over His Kingdom on earth.

God Designed Man to serve Him and His Kingdom

God fashioned man to fulfill certain functions in God's Kingdom, as well as in God's family.

- God designed man to govern for Him.

God gave man stewardship over the garden, and indeed over the entire earth. Adam expressed his stewardship role by working and cultivating the garden. God brought all the animals to Adam, and Adam named all the animals.

Genesis 2:19

So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them _____ the man to see what he would _____ them, and the man chose a _____ for each one.

- God designed man to initiate.

God gave man a sphere of responsibility and expected him to carry out the work within the limits set by God. God rewards man for the initiative he takes.

Luke 12:48

But someone who does not know, and then does something wrong, will be punished only lightly. When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been _____ with much, even more will be _____.

- God designed man to render decisions

As we carry out God's purposes, decisions must be made. Whether in his home, at work, or at leisure, man's capacity and willingness to make decisions reflect God's image in him. He began by deciding upon names for all the animals.

Genesis 2:20a

He _____ to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals . . .

God's Design

- **God designed man to provide**

Just as God is provider for all, as God's representative, man is to provide for his family and for others under his care. God gives both the ability and the resources for man to engage his sphere productively.

Deuteronomy 8:18

Remember the LORD your God. He is the one who gives you _____ to be _____, in order to fulfill the covenant he confirmed to your ancestors with an oath.

In the New International Version, it is translated in this way, "... it is He who gives you the *ability* to *produce* wealth. . . ."

1 Timothy 5:8

But those who won't care for their relatives, especially those in their _____, have denied the true faith. Such people are worse than unbelievers.

- **God designed man to protect**

Man protects that which is his responsibility to protect: his family, his property, his business interests, etc. God sets the limits of protection within the rest of His revealed Word.

- **God designed man to be accountable**

Man is accountable for his family and other responsibilities. God created and entrusted man with these spheres, therefore he is primarily responsible to God. However, God also provides earthly leadership within the church and society to whom man must give account.

Hebrews 13:17

Obeys your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to _____ your souls, and they are _____ to God. Give them reason to do this with

joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.

- **God designed man to train and equip others.**

Under the old covenant, God instructed man to train and equip his own children and those of his household. In the new covenant, a man's success in training his children qualifies him for serving within the household of God.

Deuteronomy 6:1-2

These are the commands, decrees, and regulations that the LORD your God commanded me to _____ you. You must obey them . . . ² and you and your _____ and _____ must fear the LORD your God as long as you live . . .

1 Timothy 3:12

A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must _____ his _____ and household _____.

- **God designed man to be productive – to bear fruit**

When a man carries out his responsibilities with godly motives and methods, God Himself intervenes to bless his work.

Psalms 90:17

And may the Lord our God show us his _____ and make our _____ successful. Yes, make our efforts successful!

John 15:16

You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and _____ lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.

God Reveals Himself through Man

God created the nature of man so that His own image would be on display in man's attitudes and actions, revealing His own nature. Man's capacity to be productive, teach, protect, provide, decide, initiate, and govern all reflect facets of God's own nature.

As man fulfills his appointed role within his sphere of God's kingdom, then his family and society see the display of God's nature. Through the lifestyle and attitudes of a Godly man, people are drawn to praise and glorify God.

Matthew 5:14-16

"You are the light of the world . . . ¹⁶ . . .
let your good deeds _____
out for all to see, so that everyone will
praise your heavenly Father.

If man abdicates his appointed role within the kingdom of God, his family struggles under the lack of grace – the vital example of God's nature and role in their lives is missing or defaced. Society also suffers from the lack of a living illustration of God's grace and provision. The fate of Eli's sons demonstrates the result of a father honoring his sons above honoring God. (I Samuel 2:22-36)

Proverbs 25:26

If the godly give in to the wicked, it's like
_____ a fountain or muddying a spring.

God's plan of salvation is not only for the forgiveness of sin. God intends to restore man's ability to reveal His Person and nature in the midst of his family and society.

Colossians 3:12-17

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³ Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect

harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

¹⁶ Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

The Sons of Eli

Eli's sons, Hophni and Phineas, were priests who officiated in the Tabernacle, under Eli's leadership. They saved the best portions of the sacrifices for themselves instead of giving them to the Lord. They were seducing the young women who were serving at the entrance to the sanctuary. They behaved wickedly toward the people, who were affected by their behavior.

The Bible says that Eli was aware of these things, and tried to correct their behavior, warning them. But they would not listen to him as their father and high priest. Eli took it no further. He failed to follow through.

And so, a warning came through another man of God, "Why do you give your sons more honor than you give me . . . I will honor those who honor me . . . I will put an end to your family, they will die before their time. None will reach old age. . ."

Hophni and Phineas died on the same day. When news of their death reached Eli, he was overcome and fell backward from his seat, breaking his neck and dying.

Read the entire account in I Samuel 2:12 through chapter 4:18

The New Covenant fulfills the Old Covenant

In the new covenant, God subordinates man to Jesus Christ as his head. The 'yoke' of submission to Christ releases in man the grace and purpose of God, as well as protecting him from Satan's deception.

Matthew 11:30

"... For my yoke is _____ to
bear, and the burden I give you is
_____."

In the new covenant, God places the man as the one responsible for decisions made within and on behalf of his household.

In the new covenant, God gives the man grace to be both the natural and spiritual provider for his family unity. Success within his family and business qualifies man for responsibility within the local church.

Later in this book, we will discuss those men who are called to a single lifestyle.

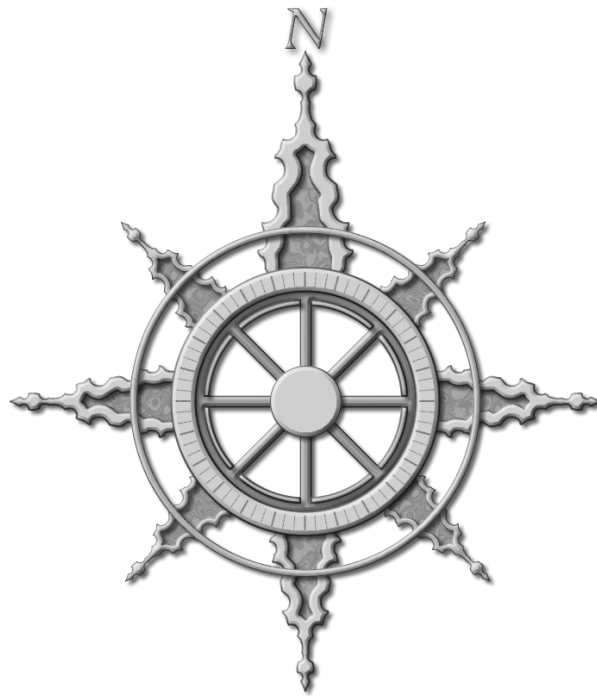
In the new covenant, God calls man to account for the grace, direction and provision given to him for use within his family, business, and society. Further, the man gives account to his church leaders in reference to his doctrine and lifestyle.

Conclusion

A successful society depends upon its understanding of the roles of man and woman as well as how those roles work within the family unit. What a nation becomes is determined by the health of its families and their descendants.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we must commit ourselves to biblical patterns and role models. This brings us more success in our own families and helps us to be light in the midst of the world's darkness.

God-Designed Womanhood



The Nature of Womanhood

The role and identity of women in our modern Western culture has been the subject of significant controversy. Our culture has twisted the meaning of womanhood. As we come in to Christ and call ourselves by His Name, we recognize that God is our Creator. He designed us and knows us. Let us allow God to reveal and teach us our true identity and purpose.

We will consider some of the distinctions, designed by God for women to enjoy, and the importance of the woman's function as it relates to the family in God's Kingdom. Another lesson will be devoted to those women who may be called to remain single.

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, "Let _____ make mankind in _____ image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Woman, along with man, was created in the image of God and gets her identity from God. The basis for understanding and experiencing true, godly womanhood is a right relationship with God. God in Christ determined the nature of womanhood at the beginning of creation. She enjoys a uniqueness from God, as does man.

Genesis 5:2

He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them "Mankind" when they were created.

Woman followed man in the order of creation. God took a rib from the man's side and from it, created the woman.

Genesis 2:18

The LORD God said, "It is _____ good for the man to be _____. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Genesis 2:21-22

So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh.²² Then the LORD God made a woman _____ the _____ he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

Woman was "one" with man in substance, created from the same "stuff." She was made to be fitted to man so that together they formed a completed work. Man was no longer alone. God had created a suitable helper. No other creation on the face of the earth has this role or distinction.

Genesis 2:23

The man said, "This is now bone _____ my bones and flesh _____ my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

The differences between men and women are not matters of inferiority or superiority – but they are designed to equip us for important family and social roles.

Our relationship with God depends upon a heart that is yielded to God's Person and ways.

Satan, in the Garden of Eden, moved aggressively against woman in her identity and purpose. We see that played out in Chapter 3.

Genesis 3:1

The serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild animals the LORD God had made. One day he asked the _____, "Did God really say . . ."

This verse says that the serpent was the "shrewdest" of all other animals. Notice that the serpent did NOT go to the man! This was just the beginning of Satan's premeditated and calculated attack against the design of God!

God's Design

God designed the very nature of woman to fulfill specific roles and functions within His Kingdom and His family.

Helper, or Wife

As a helper, companion and wife, the woman fulfills particular facets of God's nature, which are not present in man.

Genesis 2:18

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a _____ suitable for him."

Proverbs 31:12

She brings him _____, not harm, all the days of her life.

Nurturer, or Mother

God placed within woman the characteristics necessary for her to be a nurturer. He made woman to be the gender which would bear children and nurture them through to adulthood.

Genesis 3:20

Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the _____ of all the living.

Manager

God designed the woman with management capabilities. He had more in mind than the training of her children and managing her home. The book of Proverbs mentions the abilities of a "noble" woman. They include areas of real estate, fabrics, trading, adorning her household, helping the poor, among other things! (Proverbs 31:10-31)

Supporter

God created the woman with the capacity to be a supporter. That word may not sound very interesting, but consider what that means: one who comes alongside and enables another, an enthusiast, and advocate, a defender. What an encouraging role women have!

Proverbs 31:26

She speaks with _____, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

Proverbs 31:11

Her husband has full confidence in her and _____ of value.

Spirit-Led

God fashioned the woman to walk in His Spirit and exercise the gifts of the Spirit given to her. A woman named Priscilla worked alongside her husband, Aquila, helping the Apostle Paul, spreading the Gospel and having church meetings in their own home.

Acts 18:26

He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and _____ to him the way of God more adequately.

1 Corinthians 16:19

The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla greet you warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets _____.

Acts 2:17

" 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and _____ will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.

God's Design

Ministers of Good

God formed the woman to minister good deeds. Some women travelled with Jesus and helped support Him. God used others in miraculous ways to witness to His power and to help establish new churches.

1 Timothy 5:10

. . . and is well known for her _____, such as bringing up children, showing hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord's people, helping those in trouble and devoting herself to all kinds of good deeds.

Acts 9:36

In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha . . . ; she was always _____ and helping the poor.

Training Other Women

God gave woman a special capacity for wisdom and instruction, to be a sensitive and loving counselor.

Her teaching focuses on detailed application and principled character.

Titus 2:3-5

Likewise, teach the older women to . . . _____ what is good.⁴ Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children,⁵ to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

A Godly Example

God has given women the grace to give godly respect to worthy leadership. Women of God are to be godly examples of the Church's relationship to Jesus Christ Himself. Women are to be dignified and respectful, mirroring the attitude of the Church to Her Lord, Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 3:16

. . . having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your _____ in Christ may be ashamed.

Husbands, then, are exhorted to live with them in a loving way so that nothing will hinder their prayer life (1 Peter 3:7). Similarly, other leaders are exhorted not to "Lord it over" their followers, but to serve them in love (Mark 10:42-43).

Celebrate the Differences!

Modern science has put a lot of study into the differences between men and women. Differences do not equal superiority or inferiority, but they sure are interesting!

Did you know that genetically, men and women's DNA is 98.5% identical? They even have the same hormones. But the ratios of those hormones explain some of the differences between men and women.

Fun facts:

- Men typically have thicker skin—by about 25 percent.
- On average, men typically have more muscle mass than women. Men's muscles are faster and more powerful. Women's muscles resist fatigue better and are faster to recover.
- Men have more information-containing gray matter in their brains. Women have more white matter, which connects different parts of the brain, and helps with memory.
- Men are less sensitive to cold temperatures.
- Women have better senses of smell and taste.
- Men's eyes sense movement better, but women are better able to distinguish small variances in color.

<https://askthescientists.com/men-women/different/#toggle-id-1>

Male & Female, Complementary Relationships

God created the nature of woman to complete all that He invested in man. Without the woman, man remains incomplete. She is uniquely gifted by God to provide the complementary qualities lacking in man's nature.

From the beginning of biblical history in Eden through the New Testament, the Scriptures exhort wives to be accountable to their husbands' leadership. This grace of deference reflects the heart attitude of the Church to Christ.

Christ then exhorts the husbands to love their own wives as they would love their own bodies. This relational bond forms the basis for establishing and maintaining all ties, family and social, within local cultures.

Christ and His relationship to His Church is most clearly displayed in the husband-wife relationship. When this bond weakens, all other social ties begin to unravel and collapse.

Ephesians 5:25-32

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her . . . ³¹ the two will become one flesh."

³² This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about _____ and the _____.

Therefore, God has designed women to model the Church itself, to display the true condition and attitudes of the body of Christ. This is a great responsibility and a great honor. Therefore, consider that women can be a kind of barometer for:

- The condition of any culture on earth.
- A society's attitudes toward God, the Church, and spiritual leadership.
- A society's choice to be selfless or selfish; unified or disjointed.

When we look at our modern-day culture in the United States of America, we can easily see the break-down caused by moving away from God and the necessity to return to Him and His ways. This requires a deliberate decision to put on the mind, attitude, and actions of Christ in our culture. Otherwise, we will reap destruction.

Romans 1:28-32

Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind so that they do what ought not to be done. ²⁹ They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed, and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, and malice. They are gossips, ³⁰ slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; ³¹ they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. ³² Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Romans 2:6

God "will _____ each person according to what they have done."

The Holy Spirit exhorts wives, because of the unique significance of the female role, to honor their husbands' leadership role. God exhorts the husband to love, cherish, and lay down his life for his wife. The future of any society depends upon women receiving this grace to give themselves to their husbands and children. Respect for and deference to husbands, family needs, and a larger social purpose displays to the world the Church's submission to Her Lord and His covenant.

Unconditional

Our culture views men and women as competitive and adversarial in nature and activity. It does not promote love, honor, and respect toward one another. Women are encouraged to disdain their husbands. We even promote disdain and selfishness through television situation comedies. However, the result of what we are sowing is not funny. Dysfunctional families and divorce run rampant.

The Scriptures portray men and women as unique, but complementary to one another. This truth is revealed from only one source ~ God. Therefore, this becomes a most relevant and crucial area for ministry within the Church. The example of living out this truth is also crucial in society, so men and women and children can see examples of successful marriages and families.

In the church, we hear a lot about the unconditional love of God. We are often encouraged to love others unconditionally, so we can be like God. Men are encouraged to love their wives unconditionally.

However, we do not hear much about *unconditional respect*. Our modern culture has rejected respect and honor in favor of rebellion and arrogance.

1 Samuel 15:23

For rebellion is like the _____ of divination, and arrogance like the _____ of idolatry. . .

We are warned in scripture again and again the judgment we will reap if we do not return to the Lord and His ways.

Proverbs 14:12

There is a way that _____ to be right, but in the end it leads to death.

We can follow the ways promoted by our culture,

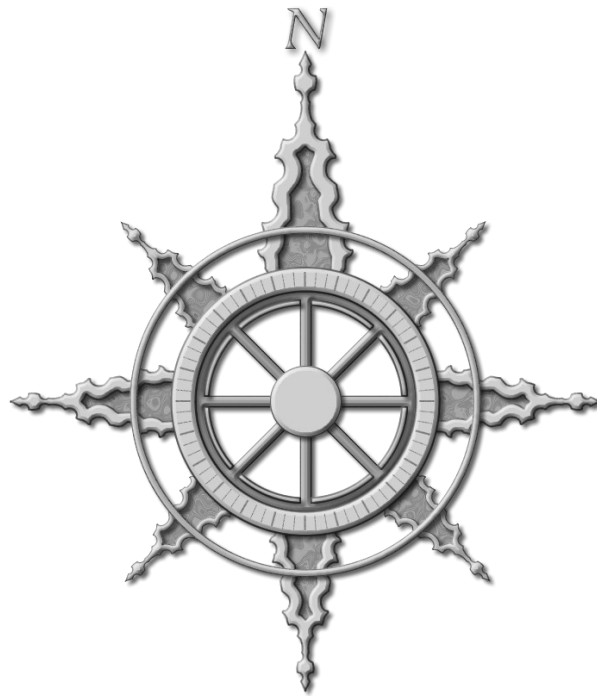
or we can turn to the Lord's ways. The Lord does not command us to follow his ways for his own benefit! He knows that when we follow His ways we will have a better life. He desires us to obey Him for our own good!

Isaiah 55:8-9

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD.⁹ "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways _____ than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

We must turn to the Lord. We begin by honoring and respecting Him unconditionally. We continue to love, honor and respect others, including our own husbands, our leaders in the church, and our government officials. We are not accustomed to behaving honorably and respectfully, but we can practice and we can get better at it. Then we can truly be a good example to the world and a light that draws others to Christ.

Single in God's Kingdom



Singleness in the Kingdom of God

Throughout biblical history and tradition, the single life occupies a place of godly respect, based on God's purpose and calling in a person's life.

Whether it is a temporary state or a life-long vocation, the single person's role in Christ's Kingdom has special significance in contemporary society. Single people should never be thought of as 'second-class citizens' in the Kingdom of God.

In this chapter, we will look at what the Bible has to say about a single person's lifestyle.

The longest passage devoted to this subject is found in the book of *I Corinthians*. Please take a few minutes and read through this passage.

1 Corinthians 7:32-40

I want you to be free from the concerns of this life. An unmarried man can spend his time doing the Lord's work and thinking how to please him.³³ But a married man has to think about his earthly responsibilities and how to please his wife.³⁴ His interests are _____. In the same way, a woman who is no longer married or has never been married can be devoted to the Lord and holy in body and in spirit. But a married woman has to think about her earthly responsibilities and how to please her husband.³⁵ I am saying this for your benefit, not to place restrictions on you. I want you to do whatever will help you serve the Lord best, with as _____ as possible.³⁶ But if a man thinks that he's treating his fiancée improperly and will inevitably give in to his passion, let him marry her as he wishes. It is not a sin.³⁷ But if he has decided firmly not to marry and there is no urgency and he can control his passion, he does well not to marry.³⁸ So the person who marries his fiancée does well, and the person who doesn't marry does even better.³⁹ A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but only if he loves the Lord.⁴⁰ But in my opinion it would be better for her to stay single, and I think I am giving you counsel from God's Spirit when I say this.

As you ponder the words and phrases of this passage, you will begin to see that a single person is actually more free than a married person. Singles are free from having to serve or even consider a spouse. It's not that is wrong to marry, it is simply easier to remain single.

Sometimes a person will choose to remain single. Sometimes we don't have a choice, our circumstances dictate our singleness. Either way, the Lord is concerned about our purity — specifically

sexual purity. So it is important to know and understand yourself.

1 Corinthians 7:8-9

So I say to those who aren't married and to widows—it's _____ to stay unmarried, just as I am.⁹ But if they can't control themselves, they should go ahead and marry. It's _____ to marry than to burn with lust.

The Single Life as a Calling from God

God *calls* some of His followers to the single life. He summons them to His purposes, to accomplish those good works for which they were created in Christ Jesus. His grace, specifically matched to the single life, enables such a believer to live productively in Christ's Kingdom, without a spouse or children.

When God calls one of His followers to live the single life, He usually has a particular career or vocation in mind. It may be a call to government (Daniel). It may be a call to ministry (Paul). The focus is on God's eternal Kingdom and the individual's investment of his life and energy into it.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he _____ for us long ago.

The scriptures have many examples of godly, productive persons who were called to serve God in the midst of the single life:

- **Elijah and Elisha** apparently lived and worked throughout Israel as single men.
- God instructed **Jeremiah** to remain single because of His purposes for him and because of the devastation of war which was about to overwhelm Israel.
- **Daniel** and his friends, when taken into the service of the ruler of Babylon, may have been made eunuchs.
- **John the Baptist**, with his itinerant lifestyle, his dwelling in uninhabited places, and shortened ministry, was probably a single man.

Matthew 3:4

John's clothes were woven from coarse camel hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. For food he ate locusts and wild honey.

- The apostle **Paul** lived and ministered either as a single man or a widower. His missionary trips and imprisonments left no room for maintaining the married life.

1 Corinthians 7:8-9

So I say to those who aren't married and to widows—it's better to stay unmarried, just as _____. (Paul wrote this)

- Philip the Evangelist maintained his own household with **four single daughters**, all of whom functioned in the gift of prophecy.

Acts 21:8-9

The next day we went on to Caesarea and stayed at the home of Philip the Evangelist, one of the seven men who had been chosen to distribute food. ⁹He had four _____ daughters who had the gift of prophecy.

- **Jesus of Nazareth** remained a single man during His days as a carpenter and during His three-and-a-half years of ministry in Galilee and Judah. By later revelation, we come to understand His position . . . He is the Bridegroom to His Church.

Most people think of the single life as being difficult, and that may be true for some. Some are single by choice, others by circumstance. It seems that God may even give to some a "gift" of being single!



God's Calling or God's Grace

The single life can be lived either by God's calling or by His grace. Given the tone of present-day society, with its demand for unrestrained self-fulfillment, God's gifting must take hold in the single person's life to train and enable him. The single life cannot be viewed as an expression of personal ego, or the desire to avoid the responsibilities of married life.

Matthew 19:10-12

Jesus' disciples then said to him, "If this is the case, it is better not to marry!"¹¹ "_____ can accept this statement," Jesus said. "Only those whom God _____.¹² Some are born as eunuchs, some have been made eunuchs by others, and some choose not to marry for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let anyone _____ this who can."

God calls all those in the single life to live within His household, His family. And within the Church, Jesus makes provision for the single or widow by joining them in faith and lifestyle with the rest of His congregation. This grace flows especially well to the single person when they join with a small group of believers within the Church for worship, teaching, counsel, and service.

Ephesians 2:11-13

Don't forget that you Gentiles used to be outsiders. . . .¹² In those days you were living apart from Christ. You were excluded from citizenship among the people of Israel, and you did not know the covenant promises God had made to them. You lived in this world without God and without hope.¹³ But now you have been _____ with Christ Jesus. Once you were far away from God, but now you have been brought _____ near to him through the blood of Christ.

Ephesians 2:19

So now you Gentiles are _____ strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family.

The issue is to give one's self completely to God, unrestricted by the responsibilities and opportunities inherent in marriage. The sexual act is laid on God's altar as a sacrifice to Him. Reckless, lustful living as heterosexual or homosexual has no place in God's Kingdom and will only draw God's displeasure in a person's life.

God gives special blessings to those who live the single life honorably before Him. The promises found in Isaiah find their fulfillment through Christ and His Church, in the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 56:4

For this is what the LORD says: I will bless those eunuchs who keep my Sabbath days holy and who choose to do what pleases me and commit their lives to me.

"Eunuchs" are those who have been physically altered and cannot have sex. But the term can also be used to describe those who have made a decision to remain celibate for the purpose of separating themselves to God's service.

Special conditions:

- Bind themselves to God
- Love the name of the Lord
- Worship before God
- A lifestyle of obedience to God
- Bind themselves to the new covenant in Christ

Special blessings:

- A place within the household of God
- A name and a memorial
- Access to God's holy mountain
- Joy in the house of prayer

The Single Life as Devotion to God

A follower of Jesus may choose, within God's will, to live the single life for a season of undistracted devotion to God. David, the Psalmist, cried out to God to be able to spend his life and energies in devotion to Him.

Psalm 27:4

The _____ thing I ask of the LORD—the thing I seek _____— is to live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, delighting in the LORD's perfections and meditating in his Temple.

The single life gives the opportunity to devote one's self to the Word of God. The time that would normally be given to responsibilities within married life, or the time used in pursuing the affairs of business or the world system. All this time becomes a sacrifice of devotion to God.

2 Timothy 2:15

Work hard so you can _____ yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the _____ of truth.

This unrestricted commitment to the Spirit and contents of the Scriptures prepares the person for future stages in God's purpose.

The single life allows one's time to be filled with service to God, His people, and the needy. The entire Missionary Movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries would have floundered were it not for the sixty-percent membership rate of non-married personnel.

The single life allows more time to be given to prayer and intercession. It is time-consuming to endeavor to enter into the lives and needs of the poor and afflicted and so bear them in the name and situation before the throne of grace.

The single life, in God's timing and purposes, may result in a lifelong commitment to God's service. Ruth's lifetime commitment to God was restruc-

tured for her to serve Boaz (Ruth 1-4). Lydia, the businesswoman, devoted her time and her home to the apostles and the Church. (Acts 16:14) And then there is Phoebe:

Romans 16:1-2

I commend to you our sister Phoebe, . . . ² Welcome her in the Lord as one who is worthy of honor among God's people. _____ her in whatever she needs, for she has been _____ to many, and especially to me.

The Single Life, Biblical Advantages

The Scriptures point out three main advantages to the single life:

- The single person has undistracted or prolonged time available in the worship and service to God
- The single person has mobility concerning residence, work, or country. God can take freely of their time, energies, and resources
- The single person has a financial simplicity, unencumbered by the responsibilities of spouses and children

Acts 9:36

There was a believer in Joppa named Tabitha (which in Greek is Dorcas). She was always doing _____ things for others and _____ the poor.

Application

What provision can be made for the single adult in the contemporary church life other than matchmaking? Review your personal attitudes towards those who believe that God has called them to a single lifestyle. What are some of the special needs of those who are single either by choice or by circumstance? How may the local church supply those needs? If you are single, what are some of the ways that you believe God is calling you in service?

Suddenly Single

We may reach a time in life when we suddenly find ourselves single, either by death or by divorce. When those things happen to us, our life is not over. We are still of use to the Lord and can have very fulfilling and happy lives. I know of at least two women and one man who found themselves suddenly single.

- A woman who was widowed became a missionary, and is successfully ministering in serving in Budapest, Hungary.
- A retired pilot, whose wife had died, utilized his skills for the purpose of flying missionaries to specific locations.
- A woman whose husband abandoned and divorced her was powerfully used in the gift of prophecy. She began to travel all over the world with an apostolic team, using her gift to minister wherever she found herself.

These individuals did not give up on life, instead, they found new purpose and vision in God.

Christian Widowhood as Servanthood

God's special call and protection of widows in the Old Testament and in the Early Church shows the esteem He places on them, especially as examples of servanthood:

- A reputation for good works
- A hope fixed on God alone
- A life given to prayer
- A commitment to hospitality
- A servant of the believers
- A friend to the afflicted and distressed
- A life above reproach, not given to self-gratification

Anna was a woman who found herself widowed after only 7 years of marriage.

Luke 2:36-38

Anna, a prophet, was also there in the Temple. . . . Her husband died when they had been married only seven years.³⁷ Then

she lived as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the Temple but stayed there day and night, worshiping God with fasting and prayer.

Anna was blessed by God and lived to see the birth of her beloved Savior!

The “List of Widows”

1 Timothy 5:3-5

Take care of any widow who has _____
_____ to care for her.
⁴ But if she has children or grandchildren, their first responsibility is to show godliness at home and repay their parents by taking care of them. This is something that pleases God. ⁵ Now a true widow, a woman who is _____
_____ in this world, has placed her hope in God. She prays night and day, asking God for his help.

The Apostle Paul gives special instructions for a “List of Widows,” who must meet certain qualifications:

1 Timothy 5:9-10

A widow who is put on the list for support must be a woman who is at least sixty years old and was faithful to her husband. ¹⁰ She must be well respected by everyone because of the good she has done. Has she brought up her children well? Has she been kind to strangers and served other believers humbly? Has she helped those who are in trouble? Has she always been ready to do good?

We are blessed to live in a culture where most widows receive an income. However, if they do not, it is our responsibility as the Church to care for them!

Marriage by Design



God's Design for Family Stability

The stability of the family unit is dependent upon the solid foundations of the marriage covenant. This covenant provides the moral and social fiber in terms of which the Church of Jesus Christ and His Kingdom will grow and mature. It not only affects the family unit, but it also affects churches, neighborhoods, cities, governments, nations and the world. When the stability of a family unit breaks down, it affects other families. Multiple families begin to break down, and before you know it, broken families are epidemic. It's as though we give one another permission to allow our families to break down instead of doing what needs to be done to stabilize our families. And the ripple effect continues outward. We see this in our own culture here in the United States and all around the globe.

In this chapter, we will look to God, the creator of marriage and family. He created it, therefore He knows best how it is to function. We will examine God's covenantal nature as it applies to the marriage relationship and how its structure provides permanence in this age of growing instability.

Marriage is a central part of the creation story. The Lord didn't just create marriage; he wove it into the very fabric of our existence, right from the very beginning. God created the world and everything in it. He created Adam and put him in a place of incredible beauty and abundance. Adam is given everything he needs for a long and happy existence. God himself pronounced his creation as "very good." And yet, let's see what He says in Genesis 2:18

Genesis 2:18

Then the LORD God said, "It is _____ for the man to be _____. I will make a helper who is _____ for him."

God Himself had fellowship with man. Genesis tells us that He walked with Adam in the Garden in the evenings. Can you imagine the conversations they must have had? But still, He did not

want Adam to be alone in his humanness. So God put Adam to sleep, removed a rib from his side, and used it to form Eve.

Every other creature God made was created from dust – even Adam. But Eve is more than just another creation. She is the *completion* of a creation already in progress. Adam must have been thrilled by this new creation, because he said . . .

Genesis 2:23

"At last!" the man exclaimed. "This one is bone from my bone, and

_____ my _____! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken from 'man.'"

Adam and Eve, two separate individuals, two unique creations, are bound together by God with a common identity. They are unlike anything else in all His creation. They are created for fellowship, with God, and with each other. They are two separate individuals, with different needs, different appearances, and different personalities. Yet, God declares them "one."

Genesis 2:24

This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the _____ are _____ into _____.

In a sense, God was performing the first marriage ceremony. He was the first "father of the bride," and the first presiding minister. When He said, "And the two are united into one," He is revealed His design for marriage.

Because Adam needed a partner, God formed Eve with Adam in mind. He created Eve with all the special characteristics and qualities that make her a "fitting" mate for Adam. She is exactly what Adam needed, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

The Nature of Biblical Covenant

The original covenant God made concerning man was made by the Godhead in Genesis 1:

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, "Let us make human beings in _____ image, to be like _____"

Notice the plural forms. God did not say, "*I* will make man in *my* image," He said, "Let *us* make man in *our* image . . ." That means that there was more than one entity involved in creation. From our study of the Bible, we take that to mean the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All three were present and took part in creation.

All three have a covenant love for each other. God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son are clearly of one mind and purpose. Describing their relationship, Jesus said, "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30) The Son came to earth not just for mankind, but also for the Father. The Holy Spirit, although He is God, does not glorify Himself, He glorifies Christ. The Father shares everything with the Son and the Spirit.

John 16:13-15

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future.¹⁴ He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me.¹⁵ All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, 'The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.'

Jesus prayed for all of His followers, that we would be unified in mind and purpose, just as He and the Father were. Take some time to meditate on Jesus's prayer, recorded in John 17:

John 17:20-25

"I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message.²¹ I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you.

And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.²² "I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one.²³ I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me.²⁴ Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!

²⁵ "O righteous Father, the world doesn't know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me.

The essence of covenant relationship is God Himself ~ His immense love and goodness. His purpose is to create, nurture, and guide man into a mature relationship with Himself. In this way, man inherits all of God's creation and rules over it with God's provision and direction. What a blessing and responsibility we have! We were created in the image of God and we carry the image of God with us wherever we go. We were created to be *like* Him.

All of God's dealings with man are based upon covenant relationship. God is a covenant maker and a covenant keeper. He is the ultimate keeper of promises. Mankind actually has very little to offer God except for love and service. So if we are to be like God, we must also be covenant keepers, promise keepers. We must not take our commitments lightly. If we make a promise, or an agreement, we must keep it.

As we will explore in up-coming chapters, this covenant commitment is not to be merely a legalistic, forced thing. It is to be a strengthening, binding, joyous, overcoming partnership entered into with serious intent.

Ecclesiastes 4:9

Two people are _____ off than one . . .

Marriage as Covenant, not Contract

Mark 10:6-9

But 'God made them male and female' from the beginning of creation. ⁷ 'This explains why a man _____ his father and mother and is joined to his wife, ⁸ and the two are _____ into one.' Since they are no longer two but one, ⁹ **let no one split apart what God has joined together.**"

Marriage is a **biblical covenant**, designed by God Himself. God brings together two parties as husband and wife and joins them for life as one person. This divine arrangement reflects God's purposes in the couple's life and work. Through this commitment structure, God pours out His blessings, as given in the new covenant.

We see, in this passage, the important concept of **leaving and cleaving**. "A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife." This is now their priority relationship. A man should not be running back to mom and dad to solve his problems. A woman shouldn't go running to her parents when she's upset. The two are now united into one unit, a new family. They need to blend their lives together, turning to one another in times of trouble or conflict.

If they allow it, God works *with* them. In this union of a man and woman, He creates and sustains a mystery – a revelation of Himself. God **reveals** His own character, works, and purposes on earth through this union. In the midst of this biblical marriage, God discloses His very nature and attitudes for all people on earth to see.

Through the biblical nature of earthly marriage, God symbolizes the covenant relationship between Christ and His church. Christ's Headship, His love, and His lifestyle of laying down His life for others - all this God builds into the committed relationship that binds the husband and wife.

People make contracts because of mutual **distrust**. They make provision for legal security.

A biblical covenant reflects a divine arrangement which ensures mutual **trust and commitment**. The bonding that is inherent in covenant leads the parties to **mutual personal sacrifice** for its fulfillment.

John 15:12-14

This is my commandment: Love each other in the _____. I have loved you. ¹³ There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command.

God created the **covenant** of marriage. He never intended it to become a contractual agreement between two people. The contract binds two, the covenant binds three. Three? Yes! The husband, the wife, and God Himself.

Matthew 19:8-9

Jesus replied, "Moses permitted divorce only as a concession to your hard hearts, but it was _____ **what God had originally intended.** . . ."

Let's examine the differences between earthly contracts and Biblical covenants, continuing on the next page.

Contracts vs. Covenants

While a contract is legally binding, a covenant is a spiritual agreement. A contract is an agreement between parties while a covenant is a pledge. A contract is an agreement you can break, while a covenant is a perpetual promise. You sign a contract, but you seal a covenant.

If a person violates the terms of a contract, the whole contract becomes null and void. The signers of a contract agree to hold up their ends as long as the other signatories hold up theirs as well. With a covenant, both parties agree to hold up their ends regardless of whether the other party keeps their part of the agreement.

Earthly contracts may be altered, if the circumstances surrounding the contract become changed. Biblical covenants endure in the face of altered events and situations. They are unconditional; that is, God fulfills His promises irrespective of human failings or earthly conditions.

Contracts focus on the 'rights' of parties in an effort to forestall or circumvent potential hurt or loss. Biblical covenants focus on the commitment, loyalty, fidelity, and responsibility inherent in the divine arrangement.

Lawyers structure earthly contracts to be impersonal, such that the terms and fulfillment do not depend on momentary, emotional whims. Biblical covenants, by contrast, depend on the functional reality of personal relationship between the two parties.

Contracts reflect the 'meeting of minds' worked out through mutual dialogue in the face of anticipated difficulties. Biblical covenants always involve the joining of lives in a specified lifestyle. The bond established by 'cutting covenant' emerges clearly as the most important aspect of the agreement.

Contracts seek cooperation in the face of self-seeking parties. The details of the contract must protect the alleged 'rights' of each one.

Biblical covenants join two parties in terms of self-sacrifice. That is, each party agrees to lay down his life for the other to ensure that the covenant will be fulfilled.

Earthly contracts are always open for renegotiation. By contrast, biblical covenants have their source in God Himself Who structures terms of the covenant He has offered. In Christ, the marriage covenant is not only made between husband and wife, but also between them and God.

<u>Earthly Contracts</u>	<u>Biblical Covenants</u>
Because of distrust	Fosters trust and commitment
Legal security	Mutual personal sacrifice
May be altered	Endure through altered situations
Focus on the "rights" of parties to prevent hurt or loss	Focus on commitment, loyalty, fidelity, and responsibility
Impersonal	Depend on the reality of personal relationship
Meeting of minds	Joining of lives
Seek cooperation in the face of self-seeking parties	Join two parties in terms of self-sacrifice
Open for re-negotiation	Source is God Himself, who does not change.
Made between men	Made between God and man

Biblical Marriage Endures for Life

God designed marriage to endure **as long as the other partner is alive**. In the structure of marriage, God set forth fundamental aspects of Christ's relationship to His Church — covenant, loyalty, and faithfulness. His design includes all the grace, the resources, and the appropriate Word to handle any situation.

Jesus referred to the beginning of creation as the time when God established the guiding rule for marriage bonds (Matthew 19:4-8). The creation ordinance did not anticipate or provide for the divorce, or the breakdown sin causes through self-seeking instead of self-giving.

How Your Marriage can Endure for Life

It is important to stress the concepts of **self-giving rather than self-seeking**, because that has always been the crux of the matter. Humans are self-seeking. God is self-giving.

All through the scriptures, we are taught to be less self-seeking and more humble, gracious, and generous. We are exhorted to be more like God.

Acts 20:35

... remember the words of the Lord Jesus:
"It is _____ blessed to
_____ than to receive."

God is exhorting us against selfishness, helping us to understand how much better it is to be selfless! It is not just about money or material possessions, it is also about our individual **self**.

Luke 6:38

Give, and you will receive. Your gift will
_____ to you in full—
pressed down, shaken together to make
room for more, running over, and poured
into your lap. The amount you give will
determine the amount you get back."

Notice how God promises to over-deliver. We give out of our meager portion, and He pours out His blessing! We can never out-give our God! He

promises, not just that we will reap what we sow, but that we will reap abundantly!

Malachi 3:10

Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies, "I will _____ the windows of heaven for you. I will _____ out a blessing _____ you won't have enough room to take it in! **Try it! Put me to the test!**

Yes, the Lord is speaking about tithing here. But the principle of self-giving holds for more than just money or material possessions.

If husbands and wives make effort to put these principles of self-giving into practice in our marriages, there is absolutely no reason why we cannot have thriving and happy marriages!

If you are struggling in your marriage, don't wait for your spouse to change. Take the initiative to practice self-giving. Make an effort to break the habits of selfishness.

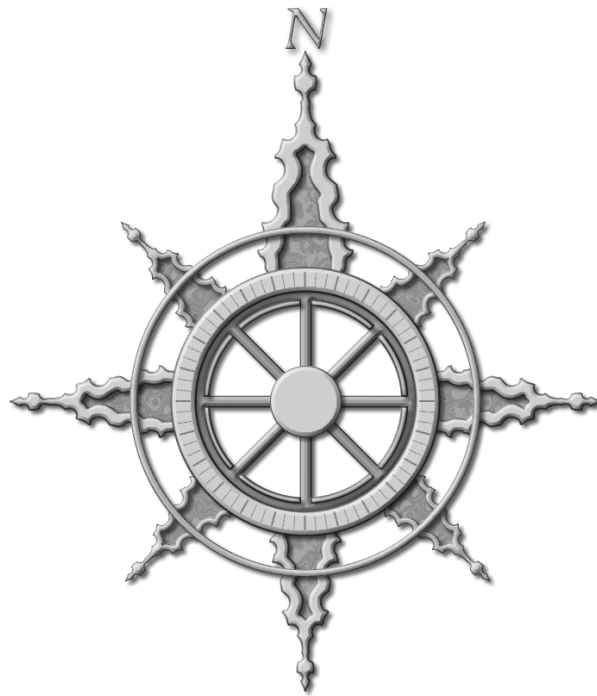
Proverbs 11:25b

... those who _____ others
will themselves be refreshed.

Galatians 6:7-10

Don't be misled—you cannot mock the justice of God. You will always harvest what you plant. ⁸ Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. ⁹ So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we **don't** _____. ¹⁰ Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to everyone—especially to those in the family of faith.

The Marriage Relationship



The Marriage Relationship—The Nature of Love

The love relationship between husband and wife is the life of a marriage covenant. The bond of affection enables the marriage covenant to mature and more clearly exemplify the relationship between Christ and His Church. We will continue exploring how this relationship functions and what makes it successful.

COMPLETENESS IN MARRIAGE

God designed the marriage union to provide wholeness and completeness for husband and wife. At creation, God said that “it is not good for man to live alone.” He had fashioned man in such a way that he was incomplete apart from the woman. From that time until now, neither the man nor the woman are complete simply in themselves.

Genesis 2:21-22

So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man’s ribs and closed up the opening. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

1 Corinthians 11:11-12

But among the Lord’s people, women are not independent of men, and men are not independent of women. For although the first woman came from man, every other man was born from a woman, and everything comes from God.

(As Christians, we also affirm that God calls some to carry the grace of the single life. For them, fulfillment or completeness is found in Christ Himself.)

God designed the marriage union to create ‘one flesh’, or one person. That is, the two when joined in covenant become a completed person. Each one brings to the marriage union the uniqueness that the other lacks.

Ephesians 5:31

As the Scriptures say, “A man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are _____ into _____.”

This oneness can only be achieved through the union of complementary parts. Ideally, both the man and the woman are complete individuals in themselves and in their individual relationships with Christ before entering into the covenant relationship of marriage.

Completeness depends upon the grace each one carries for fulfilling God’s design in the other partner. The ability to provide a complementary nature depends upon how the partners yield to Christ and how much they are willing to find fulfillment in the other person.

Romans 12:5

. . . so it is with Christ’s body. We are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each other.

God provides the biblical pattern for marriage as a complementary union for fulfilling His own purposes in the couple’s lives.

Unfortunately, in our culture, most people do not think about these principles enough to realize their value. The principles that God has built into His Word are not to be ignored, but to be put into practice in our lives. They have great value to set our lives in order, to help us to be more happy and productive.

As sinful people, we often struggle with our desire to be pleasing to God and practice principles like the one in the following verse:

Ephesians 5:21 & 25

And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. .

The Design of God

CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH: HUSBAND AND WIFE

God has modeled the relationship of a husband to his wife on Christ's relationship to His Church. In the same way that Christ provides Headship for His Church, the husband carries the task of providing leadership for his wife.

Ephesians 5:25

For husbands, this means love your wives,
_____ Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her . . .

In the same way that Christ loves His Bride and lays down His life for Her, so also the husband learns to give himself to his wife to meet her needs. **Sacrificial love means using one's own time, resources, and energies to meet the needs of another.**

John 15:9-14

"I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love.

When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!

This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you.

There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.

You are my friends if you do what I command.

Christ 'washes' His Bride with His Words with the intent of making Her radiant. In the same way, the husband learns to use his own words and the Word of God to bring his wife to her own radiance.

Ephesians 5:26-27

. . . to make her holy and clean, washed by the cleansing of God's word. He did this to present her to himself as a glorious

church without a spot or wrinkle or any other blemish. Instead, she will be holy and without fault.

Christ nurtures and cares for His Bride, the Church, as He would His own body. So also the husband learns to cultivate and sustain his bride as he would his own body.

Ephesians 5:29

No one hates his own body but feeds and cares for it, just as Christ cares for the church.

Christ demonstrates His own covenant faithfulness to His Bride, the Church, through loyal commitment and enduring, loving devotion. A husband learns to give his trust and loyalty to his wife, resisting all efforts by the world system to deceive him into unfaithfulness.

1 John 2:15-17

Do not love this world . . . For the world offers only a _____ for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. . . And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

Proverbs 2:16

_____ will save you from the immoral woman, from the seductive words of the promiscuous woman.

Christ's compassion and insight draws His Bride to Himself, allowing the Holy Spirit to work in Her heart. In the same way, the husband learns to live a lifestyle of insightful compassion for his wife, and so he draws her to himself and to the work that God's Spirit would accomplish in her.

Ephesians 5:32

This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ and the church are one.

God's Design

THE CHURCH WITH CHRIST: THE WIFE WITH HER HUSBAND

God designed the relationship of a wife towards her husband to match that of the Bride, the Church, towards the Bridegroom, Jesus Christ. Even as the Church yields to the Lordship and leadership of Her Lord, so also the wife acknowledges and yields to the leadership her husband provides.

Ephesians 5:22

For wives, this means submit to your husbands _____ the Lord.

As the Church trusts God's leadership as provided through Jesus Christ and His Word, so the wife trusts God's leadership as furnished through her husband. And even as the Lord listens with insight and compassion to the members of His Body and Bride, so the husband learns to listen, with a hearing heart, to the insights and concerns of his bride.

2 Corinthians 1:4

He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.

Colossians 3:18-19

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is _____ for those who belong to the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.

As the Church relies upon the covenantal provision that Christ makes for His Bride, so also the wife learns to rest in the covenant that binds her husband to her. For in and through that bond, God supplies the provision she needs and cannot produce for herself.

Philippians 4:19

And this same God who takes care of me will _____ all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.

As the Church serves Jesus Christ to fulfill His God-given mission of a worldwide evangelization, so also the wife assists and facilitates her husband in the fulfillment of the calling God has placed upon their lives together. As the Church is suited, or gifted, to assist in Christ's mission, so also the wife receives God's gifting to fulfill her mission as joined to her husband.

Genesis 2:20

He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was _____ just right for him.

Matthew 28:19

Therefore, _____ and make _____ of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

As the Church honors Her Lord and Master in attitude and conduct, so also the wife learns to respect her own husband in her attitudes and lifestyle. The godly lifestyle of the wife exemplifies the wisdom of God released into the ordinary events of life.

Ephesians 5:33

So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must _____ her husband.

1 Peter 3:1-6

In the same way, you wives must accept the _____ of your husbands. Then, even if some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words. They will be won over by observing your pure and reverent lives.

... This is how the holy women of old made themselves beautiful. They trusted God and accepted the authority of their husbands.

Love as the Life of Marriage

'Agape' love attracts one person towards another and motivates them to promote the other's welfare at their own expense. Further, the quality inherent in this love leads to sharing lives, resources, energies, and time.

John 13:34

So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. _____
_____ I have loved you, you should love each other.

God designed the Church to respond to Christ's love-initiative. So also, in the marriage bond, God equips the wife to respond to her husband's initiative in love.

1 Peter 3:7

In the same way, you husbands must give honor to your wives. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. She may be weaker than you are, but she is your _____ partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should so your prayers will not be hindered.

Also read **Song of Songs 2:8-13**

The insight and tenderness of Christ's love for us releases us to mature and grow in love for God. In the same way, as the husband learns to love his wife with tender insight, he releases her to growth in her own maturity in the image of God.

1 John 4:19

We love each other _____
he loved us first.

As Jesus Christ demonstrates His love for His Church through godly leadership, love, and care, we respond to that kind of love. In the same way, the godly wife responds to her husband's prudent leadership and insightful, loving care.

God has filled His Scriptures with instruction in lifestyle through the lives of His children. Their obedience, or lack of it, leads us in the establishing and maintaining of a godly marriage relationship.

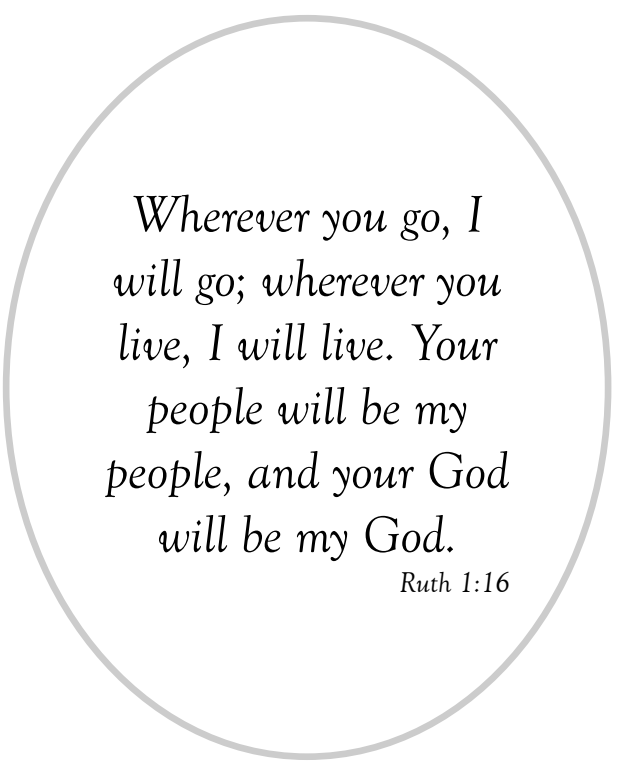
Read the story of Ruth and Naomi—
Ruth 1:1-18

By walking in the biblical pattern of mutual giving and support, we engender, cultivate, and enhance tender feelings for one another. The love relationship flourishes in this climate.

Christ commands the husband to love his wife. The Greek word is 'agape', and characterizes the marital love as self-giving. Divine, sacrificial love always draws the husband to give of himself to meet the needs of his wife. 'As God loved the world' ... 'as Christ loves the Church' ... this is the pathway the husband learns to walk in loving his own wife.

Ephesians 5:25

For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her



*Wherever you go, I
will go; wherever you
live, I will live. Your
people will be my
people, and your God
will be my God.*

Ruth 1:16

Self-Evaluation

APPLICATION

Contrast the biblical picture of marriage as reflected in Scripture with the contemporary ideals of love and marriage.

Identify those areas of your life and attitudes that have been influenced by the ideals of contemporary love and marriage.

Describe the place of romantic feelings as they relate to the bonds of marriage. What are the causes of romantic feelings or the lack of them?

How does understanding marriage as a covenant affect your confidence in the durability of your marriage relationship?

CONCLUSION

Current attitudes of romance and marriage are usually understood only in terms of physical desires and superficial attractions. Contemporary marriages rise and fall in direct relationship to the changes, fluctuations, and whims inherent in human emotions and self-serving desires. God builds biblical marriages upon the covenantal reality of commitment, faithfulness, and trust.

The romance of marriage will experience challenges and testings. But when based on biblical covenant, the bonds hold, even when momentary emotions and circumstances prove very trying.

Sowing and Reaping

We had finished our Bible study for the afternoon and had moved into the kitchen for coffee, snacks, and more fellowship.

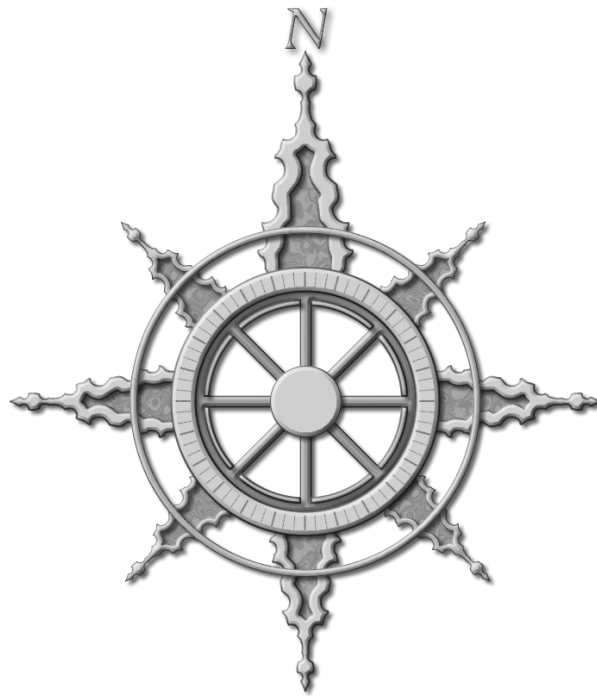
I was talking to some ladies about how fun it was to be married to my husband. A gentleman, standing near, heard what I had said and with a shocked expression exclaimed, "I have NEVER heard a woman say her husband was fun to be married to!"

"Interesting," I asked him, "are YOU fun to be married to?"

So often, we think only of what we are receiving in our relationships. Instead, we need to think of what we are giving! If we want to be loved, we need to ask ourselves the corresponding question, "Am I lovable?" If we want to be respected, "Am I respectable?" If I want to have friends, "Am I friendly?"

Karen A. Ross

God's Plan for Fatherhood



God is the Pattern for Fatherhood

God the Father is the Source, the ultimate Provider of all life and resources throughout the universe He created. The universe is not in a self-developing mode; it starts and stops at our Father's word.

Ephesians 3:14-15

When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the _____ of everything in heaven and on earth.

Since God is the Source, the ultimate Provider of life and resources, then all accountability ultimately belongs to Him. He rules His creation on His own terms and calls all people to give an account to Him in His own timing.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we _____ for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body.

In the same way that God provides for His children, so also earthly fathers should make provision for their families. And as God calls all things to account to Him, in the same way He calls fathers to account. He holds them accountable for their family provision, even if the wife works to help pay the bills.

1 Timothy 5:8

But those who won't _____ for their relatives, especially those in their _____ household, have _____ the true faith. Such people are worse than unbelievers.

God manages His universe in such a way that fathers must give account to Him for their leadership and provision. Therefore, in an ideal situation, family members give account to the father of the family.

Ephesians 6:4

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and

that comes from the Lord.

Even as God disciplines and trains His own children to bring them to maturity, so He calls fathers to take the responsibility for training and forming their own children.

Hebrews 12:5-11

And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said, "My child, don't make light of the LORD's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you. For the LORD disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child." As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all. Since we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us, shouldn't we submit even more to the discipline of the Father of our spirits, and live forever? For our

_____ fathers disciplined us for a few years, doing the best they knew how. But God's discipline is always good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it's painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful harvest of right living for those who are trained in this way.

For Leadership

God designed fatherhood to be a fundamental and essential component of society. This truth has been under severe attack for many years. As our society has grown increasingly secular, it has distorted and confused the biblical role of fatherhood. This thinking has also infiltrated the church!

Situation comedies on film and television often portray fathers as buffoons who are clueless about what is happening around them. The wife or the children are then portrayed as more wise and capable! The strength and productivity of the biblical role is nearly forgotten. Here, we will examine the Scriptural model for fatherhood and some biblical patterns which exemplify godly leadership and responsibility.

GOD IS OUR FATHER AND THE ORIGINATOR OF FATHERHOOD

Psalm 2:7

The king proclaims the LORD's decree:
"The LORD said to me, 'You are my son.
Today I have become your _____."

Isaiah 9:6

... And he will be called: Wonderful
Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting
_____, Prince of Peace.

According to the biblical revelation, God is a Father and the One from whom all fatherhood arises. God is eternally Father. Therefore, the Son is eternal, like His Father.

Deuteronomy 32:6

... Isn't he your _____
who created you? Has he not made you
and established you?

Moses speaks of God as the Father Who formed us. God's role in reference to creation is that of Builder, the One Who fashions. In reference to people, He is Father. Isaiah reveals God as 'our Father' and the One Who fashions us.

Psalm 68:5

_____ to the fatherless,
defender of widows— this is God, whose
dwelling is holy.

David declares God to be the Father to the fatherless. He Fathers those who have come into a place of having no resources and no hope.

Malachi acknowledges God as the one and only Father of all covenant people. Paul proclaims to the Athenians God's creatorship and that He gives all people their life and breath. Paul represents the Holy Spirit as enabling us to call upon God as 'Abba,' which is a term that speaks of an intimate relationship with a father, like 'Daddy.'

Romans 8:14-15

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. . . . you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as _____ children. Now we call him, "_____, Father."

Ephesians 1:5

God decided in advance to _____ us into his _____ family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.

Paul tells the Ephesians that God predestined us to be adopted as His own children. For Paul perceives God as Father, the One upon Whom we totally depend for all things. From one person, God has made all people on earth. (I Corinthians 8:6)

God's call comes to us to enter into fellowship with Him as Father, through faith in Jesus Christ. Since He is eternally Father, we can learn from Him what it means to be earthly fathers. God warns us all about the curse that arises from broken father-children relationships. He also tells us of His wonderful provision to rescue societies from impending curses by the restoration of father-child relationships.

God Gives Leadership to Fathers

God calls fathers to represent godly leadership before their wives and children. He delegates them as family leaders in the kingdom of God. God appoints the father, along with his wife and children, to a place of representing Christ's interests before the people of the world system.

Ephesians 5:21-24

And further, submit to _____ out of reverence for Christ. For wives, this means submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For a husband is the _____ of his wife as Christ is the head of the church. He is the Savior of his body, the church. As the church submits to Christ, so you wives should submit to your husbands in everything.

The basis of authority for the father lies in the authority that God has granted His Son, Jesus Christ. And as the Father sets the parameters for instruction and discipline with His children, so also earthly fathers define the structure within which they form the maturation process of their children.

Proverbs 22:6

_____ your children onto the _____ path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.

Successful family leadership prepares fathers to participate in the leadership for the Church. The father learns leadership skills within his own family structure. He practices leadership by delegating responsibilities within his family and calling each one to account for his work.

1 Timothy 3:1-5

. . . an elder must be a man whose life is above reproach . . . faithful to his wife . . . exercise self-control . . . live wisely . . . have a good reputation . . . enjoy having guests in his home . . . be able to teach . . . be gentle, not quarrelsome, and not love money. He must manage his own family

well, . . . For if a man cannot manage his _____ household, how can he take care of God's _____?

Biblical Examples of Poor Fatherhood

The Bible does not hide the failures of the men and women who took part in the drama of redemption over the ages. God held Adam responsible for the sin of listening to Satan. And the effect of that sin still touches all of us.

Genesis 3:17

And to the man he said, "Since you listened to your wife and ate from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat, the ground is cursed _____ of you. All your life you will struggle to scratch a living from it.

Romans 5:12

When Adam sinned, sin _____ the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.

Aaron's sons rejected their father's leadership by ignoring his instructions to follow the Word of God (Leviticus 10:10-11). They offered 'strange fire' before the Lord and thereby forfeited their lives. Eli also failed with his sons. Eli refused to restrain his sons when they made themselves contemptible before the Lord. They also paid with their lives.

David's son, Adonijah, led rebellion against his father to take the throne of Jerusalem. (1 Kings 1:5-6) Another son of David, Absalom, also led rebellion against his father. (2 Samuel 15-18) Both were killed by troops loyal to David.

A Husband & His Wife

Let's face it, after years of marriage, and having children, we tend to take our spousal relationship for granted. The passion in a marriage can begin to fade. A man will tend to blame his wife for this. And a woman will tend to blame her husband.

In this chapter, we are addressing fatherhood. We truly believe that the best thing a father can do for his children (and for himself) is to love their mother. So, we offer some suggestions for fathers to put into practice.

Learn your wife's love language, and then use it every day.

Gary Chapman has written a great book called *The 5 Love Languages: the Secret to Love that Lasts*. If you're not a good reader, find it and listen to it in an audio format. Find out what you can do to love your wife better. Put what you learn into practice, and see what happens!

Date your wife.

What kind of effort did you put into the relationship when you were getting to know your wife? If you asked her out again today, would she still be excited to say yes? We suggest one date per month – at a minimum! Don't make her do all the work of getting a babysitter – you set it all up. Use your imagination. Get Creative. Make it special. Maybe even surprise her.

Make her feel special

This is not a high-budget item; it's a high consideration item! You can't take it for granted that she knows how special she is to you. She cannot read your mind. How about an, "I love you." phone call? Or a simple card slipped into her purse? Or flowers delivered to her (even ONE flower is special)? Do you still open the car door? Serve her hot tea, wash her car, give her an unexpected hug, a foot rub, do a quick dance together in the kitchen, or light candles for dinner?

Use some imagination.

Plan events, dates, evenings at home, vacations – even stolen moments – with the kind of creative thinking that motivated you when you first asked her out. There's a psychological concept known as the "self-fulfilling prophecy." Simply put: If you believe she's worth the trouble, she will be! If you stop trying hard, she will too. If you bring some intentional creativity to your relationship as if she still knocks your socks off, she will!

Take care of yourself.

Check the scales, think about how you dress around your wife, throw away the cigarettes, don't be a slob. When she sees you, does she take a second look – or does she look away? Does the way you present yourself tell your wife you want her to be attracted to you?

Say, "I love you," and say it often.

The famous cliché used by unromantic men is this, "I shouldn't have to say it, she should know." No, gentlemen – she cannot read your mind. It is amazing how many wives live their lives feeling like their husbands don't love them anymore. If you feel uncomfortable doing this, try finding a cute way to say it, and practice it until you feel comfortable.

Be kind.

The Bible teaches that if a man wants to have friends, he must be *friendly*. A friendship with your wife is a *minimum* relationship. Simply being kind is underplayed, undervalued, underrated, and certainly underutilized. Do you want romance? Do you want sex? Being Mr. Nasty in the kitchen and then Mr. Romance in the bedroom does not work! Learn to make thoughtfulness and consideration your second nature. Nice guys really do finish first and she'll fall for you all over again.

Continued on the next page . . .

"One of the greatest things a father can do for his children is to love their mother.
Howard W. Hunter

Self-Evaluation

Be a gentleman.

Control your bodily noises and potty-talk, it's really not that funny, it's juvenile. Try standing up when she leaves the table, opening her car door, walking on the street side of the walkway, helping her on with her jacket, running to the car for her umbrella... you get the picture. This shows that you value your relationship and do not take it for granted.

Tell her she's beautiful.

Women who hear their husband tell them they're beautiful become more beautiful. Men who tell their wives they're beautiful believe it with more conviction every time the words leave their lips. Love expressed = beauty; beauty = romance. It's win-win. It doesn't hurt to back up your words with a thoughtful text either. If you feel uncomfortable doing this, find a way to start - and then practice until you do feel comfortable.

Spend uninterrupted time together.

There are only 168 hours in each week - the number never varies. The amount of time we offer our relationships shows how much we value the people we say we love. Romance, like anything else worthwhile, is worth the investment of time and attention. Try playing a game together, or just sitting and talking instead of watching TV. If you do watch TV, try kissing and cuddling while watching, without expecting anything else - you might just get something else!

Don't worry - your wife has a list of her own to practice in the chapter about mothers!



WHOSE EXAMPLE WILL WE FOLLOW?

In recent history, we find many examples of leaders who rejected the ways of their earthly fathers and brought disaster upon their cultures and populations: Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Charles Darwin, to name a few.

There are other "lesser leaders" like actors, musicians, etc. We admire them for their talent, but their character is not always so good.

APPLICATION

What has most influenced you in your thoughts regarding what it means to be a father?

What observations can you make regarding the examples of fatherhood as portrayed through the media?

State the relevance of Scriptures which are thousands of years old regarding fatherhood to the conditions of contemporary society.

What would you say is most needed in the area of fatherhood within the Church today?

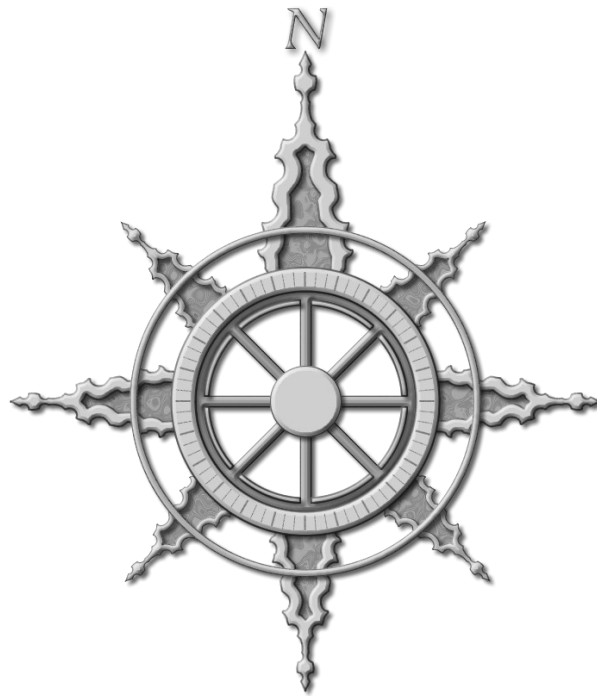
Some adults today suffered under poor fathers when they were young. If you are in that condition, how can a godly understanding of true fatherhood bring healing into your life and hope for your own children?

CONCLUSION

No society is any stronger than the families that comprise that society.

Few families can be stronger than the quality of fatherhood demonstrated in that family. The confusion which surrounds male and female roles in contemporary society can only be remedied by reaffirming the essential role served by fathers in God's Kingdom. The strength of the Church of Jesus Christ and the hope for current society depends upon righteous men who will commit to Jesus Christ and to assume their roles before God as leaders in their homes and productive contributors within Christ's Kingdom.

God's Plan for Motherhood



The Helper

During the 20th Century, there have been some interesting and profound changes concerning the role of motherhood.

The Agricultural Era — Mothers were seen as an integral part of family life. She cared for her home and trained her children alongside her husband. The family may have had a farm or a family business, and she would be involved in the process of that concern. Children, as they grew, were trained by both the mother and the father and would also be involved in the farm or family business in order for the family to succeed in providing for itself and contributing to meet a need in a larger community.

The Industrial Era replaced the more agricultural society. That change moved most men away from their home-based businesses and into industrial factories and office settings. With that change, the training of children became more of the mothers' role in the home because the father would be away for 8 or more hours of the day. Also, newer roles for women began to form in the marketplace. Eventually, those roles displaced the previous role of the wife and mother at home.

Current Western Culture — We now continue to devalue the biblical role of women as wives and mothers. More and more women are career oriented rather than family oriented. In most households, both parents may be away from the home for 40 or more hours per week working to make money for the family. Young pre-school aged children are then placed in day care centers or other facilities, and we have to wonder who is actually training them to have good character as they grow.

1 Timothy 5:10

She must be well respected by everyone because of the good she has done. Has she _____ her _____ well?

Attitudes toward the roles of women have also changed. Once, a woman's role of caring for a hus-

band and children was valued and even honored. While there is nothing inherently evil about a woman having a career, our culture seems to disdain women who choose to stay at home and nurture their families.

Scripture speaks of God's call for some women to the single life and service. Most women will, however, marry and have children. Here, we will examine the portions of scripture that discuss the vital and revered place of a mother with her family.

Solomon's mother, Bathsheba, endeavored to teach him wisdom from God and His Word. She warned him . . .

Proverbs 19:27

If you stop listening to instruction, my child, you will turn your back on knowledge.

According to Scripture, God created man and pronounced his creation, "Good."

Genesis 1:31

Then God looked over all he had made, and he saw that it was _____ !

Soon after God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone." And so . . . He made the woman.

Genesis 2:18

Then the LORD God said, "It is _____ for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him."

He made the woman to be a helper to the man. He didn't just make an ordinary helper, He created a helper who was "just right" for Adam. What an amazing creation she must have been!

In our culture, women disdain the thought of being of help to men. They prefer that men worship them, giving them a place that is not fitting for them. **None of us are worthy to be worshipped!**

The Wife & Her Husband

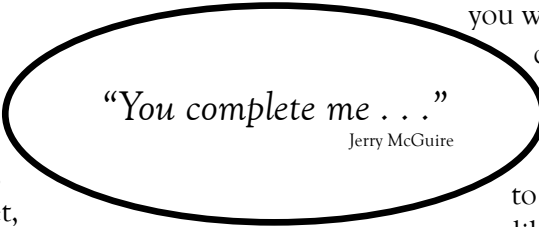
God did not create Eve to be Adam's mother or his maid, his superior, or his doormat. Men want connection as much as women do. They want a partnership, a teammate, a helper to come alongside them and enhance their lives.

Ways to be Your Husband's #1 Helper

1. **Be his teammate.** Let him know you're on his team, that you pray for him and support him.
2. **Husbands often need "wife-support."** Trust his male instinct at times. And if he fails, don't berate him, encourage him. How would you want to be treated if you fail at something?
3. **Help him with your strengths.** Every couple is a different mixture of strengths and weaknesses. Let go of the trap that you must function exactly like other couples. If you are better at doing the finances, set up a budget together (come to agreement) and then help your husband by carrying out what you have planned, overseeing the family budget, paying bills, etc.
4. **Anticipate his needs.** Learn about him. Know him well enough to be aware of his likes and dislikes. Every once in a while, it's even nice to surprise him by doing something special for him. I truly consider this a lost art in our culture. It's not about being his "servant." It's about just wanting to bring a smile to the face of someone we love.
5. **Be his protection.** Watch his back. Be his eyes and ears and give him your insights that only you can give him. You can help him smooth over awkward moments. You can speak well of him to others. Honestly, I can't believe how often I hear wives tear their husbands to shreds verbally, both behind his back and even to his face.
6. **Help him "date" you.** If you are sitting around waiting for your husband to be the one to initiate a date night, stop it! Perhaps he

may need to be reminded that he has a wife who still *wants* to date him! Ask him out! Plan a special evening. Be creative.

7. **Practice random acts of kindness.** (Philippians 2:4) Even sitting and listening to him vent after a hard day is an act of kindness! And, you reap what you sow – by sowing some acts of kindness toward your husband, you may reap some acts of kindness from your husband.
8. **Help him spiritually.** Your discernment (dare we call it 'women's intuition?') – that feeling you get when you feel like something is wrong, but you don't really know what it is? It could be a caution or practical advice about something in your strength zone that he doesn't see yet. And it could all be attributed to the way you were wired by God that is just a bit different than your husband.
9. **Express your heart.** If you are not doing this already, find ways to show that you appreciate him. He may act like he doesn't need admiration, but he does. There are so many ways to do this – write him little notes. Get him a card. Call him a name like, "My hero!"
10. **Remove expectations.** Most people have expectations when they get married. Often they are unrealistic expectations. Your husband is a man, he has faults and struggles just like you do. He will never love you perfectly, only God can do that—and often we aren't even pleased with how God loves us! Do not expect your husband to worship you. The only one worthy of worship is God Himself. No husband wants to disappoint his wife. So check yourself, "Who is the one I am depending on?" If the answer to that is anyone other than God, confess your fault and invite God to return to the throne of your life. When you lessen your husband's load of expectations, you free him up to love you in the best way he can as a human man.



"You complete me . . ."
Jerry McGuire

The Mother and Her Children

The Bible teaches that God created mankind in His own image – therefore, we are His image bearers. He then gave us the task, starting with Adam & Eve, of filling the earth with more of His image-bearers.

Genesis 1:28

Then God blessed them and said, “Be fruitful and _____.
Fill the earth and govern it . . . ”

God’s design includes more than filling the earth with babies. It includes multiplying faithful image bearers through discipleship—to make disciples of the nations starting with our own children. (Matthew 28:19-20)

Through love, we live out our mission, imploring our children and others to repent of their sin and worship the Lamb who was slain for them. The message of the gospel burns in our hearts.

When our first parents disobeyed God in the garden of Eden, all of their descendants fell into sin along with them. Because of our sin, we all deserve God’s just wrath. Life, therefore, is an undeserved gift from God, never to be presumed or rejected. **Motherhood is evidence that God is patient toward us**, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

2 Peter 3:9

The Lord . . . does not want _____
to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.

The opportunities to nurture others and “mother” others in the faith are tremendous. It matters very little whether those we “mother” are born to us biologically. Adoptive mothers mother. Fostering mothers mother. Biological mothers mother. Disciple-making women mother.

We have all heard the phrase, “God won’t give you more than you can handle.” But, as mothers, we learn very quickly that raising children for the

glory of God is always more than we can handle. That is why we need the Lord! Our prayers and our reliance on Christ shows the world that He is the One doing the work, both in and through us.

Philippians 2:13

For God is working in you, giving you the _____ and the _____
_____ to do what pleases him.

Mothering often involves laying down our own wants and desires for the sake of others. We may lose sleep, time, strength, money, etc. for the sake of our families. And all of that brings glory to God, who turns around and uses our motherhood to make us more like His Son.

*“There is no way to
be a perfect mother
and a millions ways
to be a great one.”*

Jill Churchill

The world we live in has many things to fear. No matter what we see or hear on the news, motherhood is not about sheltering our children. Motherhood is about pointing our children to Christ, their shelter in the storm. Jesus died and was raised, and has freed us from the bondage of sin and guaranteed our resurrection. That means that we are free to follow Him fearlessly! Mothers can follow Jesus wherever he leads, doing what he does: nurturing life in the face of death!

The responsibility of shaping a child for their future can feel overwhelming. But, when we see how weak and sinful we are, we remember that we need grace. When we see how weak and sinful our children are, we remember that they need that same grace. Though it might seem that parents and children have different needs, the gospel reminds us that our greatest need is actually the same. We are all sinners in need of grace.

The time of motherhood can seem like an eternity. But the truth is, it is only for a season. One day our children will be grown and gone from our home. So cherish the moments, days, months, and years with your children, and use every opportunity to point to Christ.

The Virtuous Woman—Proverbs 31

The godly woman focuses her insight and concerns on her household, for which God has graced her with appropriate abilities. Her capacity to care overflows in hospitality for guests and the needy.

The role of the godly woman within the home extends her husband's authority into each sphere of child care and home arrangement. The town leaders respect her husband when he takes his place among them, due to his wife's grace and diligence. Her relationship with her husband speaks broadly into the marketplace of non-believers. She yields to her husband, not because he forces her. She honors him because he has earned her respect and love and she actually *likes* him and *wants* to please him!

A woman's call to care for her family does not need to inhibit her involvement in other productive activities. The "Proverbs 31 woman" has stood for some 3,000 years in testimony to the extensive gifts God bestows upon His daughters. The passage describes her abilities -in real estate, fabrics, training, and home decoration, and in many other areas.

The Scriptures call women to good works as one of the best demonstrations of their relationship to God and their husbands. Their God-given sensitivity to details and situations permits them to hear the voice of the Lord in meeting the needs of others. Their benevolence and compassion to others outside their own household exemplifies the mercy of God at its finest.

God gives to the wife responsibility and accountability as an extension of that which He gives to the husband. Her managerial role within the household expresses her husband's authority. The Greek word *oidodespotein* literally means 'house-rule'. She applies the Word of God in practical ways, with sensitivity to detail and situation, such that her household reflects the grace and peace of God.

The wife's role is a governmental one with her husband's headship in focus. Chrysostom, one of the early Church Fathers, describes the wife's role as that of a 'second authority'. Her yieldedness to her husband enables her to transmit the authority of Christ as represented in her husband. In this way, she also exemplifies the nature of submission in the body of Christ.

Proverbs 31:10-31

Who can find a virtuous and capable wife? She is more precious than rubies. Her husband can trust her, and she will greatly enrich his life. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life. She finds wool and flax and busily spins it. She is like a merchant's ship, bringing her food from afar. She gets up before dawn to prepare breakfast for her household and plan the day's work for her servant girls. She goes to inspect a field and buys it; with her earnings she plants a vineyard. She is energetic and strong, a hard worker. She makes sure her dealings are profitable; her lamp burns late into the night. Her hands are busy spinning thread, her fingers twisting fiber. She extends a helping hand to the poor and opens her arms to the needy. She has no fear of winter for her household, for everyone has warm clothes. She makes her own bedspreads. She dresses in fine linen and purple gowns. Her husband is well known at the city gates, where he sits with the other civic leaders. She makes belted linen garments and sashes to sell to the merchants. She is clothed with strength and dignity, and she laughs without fear of the future. When she speaks, her words are wise, and she gives instructions with kindness. She carefully watches everything in her household and suffers nothing from laziness. Her children stand and bless her. Her husband praises her: "There are many virtuous and capable women in the world, but you surpass them all!" Charm is deceptive, and beauty does not last; but a woman who fears the LORD will be greatly praised. Reward her for all she has done. Let her deeds publicly declare her praise.

An Example of the Love of God

A mother's care for her family exemplifies that of God's love and care for His children. 'Agape' love focuses on sacrificial, protective care. God demonstrated this supremely in and through His own Son, Jesus of Nazareth. God continues to express His unique love for us within the context of our daily lifestyle. He protects our pathway and affairs; His sacrificial love pours out His own resources in our behalf.

The Scriptures show us various godly women who sacrificed for and protected their families. Moses' mother released him to God's keeping through a simple basket in the river Nile. She abandoned all hope of ever seeing him again. Abraham's wife, Sarah, perceived the awkward situation of her own doing, between Isaac and Ishmael. Her husband heard her advice as a word of God and sent Ishmael and his mother away.

Solomon used the quality of a mother's love and willingness to sacrifice personal rights to discern the true mother from the imposter. Mary, the mother of our Lord, constantly expressed her concern for Jesus' welfare right up to the very hour of His Crucifixion.

Luke 1:38

Mary responded, "I am the _____ servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

As a wife yields to and obeys God, He then uses her as a vessel for His own purposes. Her obedience enables her husband in his sphere and releases her children to the grace of God in their lives. Her godly example draws praise and esteem from her family as well as the society where she lives.

A godly mother expresses her commitment to God by dedicating her own children to Him and His plans for their lives. She uses all her God-given abilities and talents to train and prepare them to honor God in their lives. As women of faith approached Jesus of Nazareth and He honored their requests, so faithful wives and others, through in-

tercession, have influence with God in the lives of their husbands and children.

Psalm 112:1-2

Praise the LORD! How _____ are those who fear the LORD and delight in obeying his commands. Their children will be _____ everywhere; an entire generation of godly people will be blessed.

Application

Think about particular areas where you were especially blessed by your own mother. Make a special effort to thank her for her role in your life.

Think about how the role of motherhood could be more appreciated and honored in our culture today. What specific areas of education do you see as tied to the mother's role during the formative years of child development? If you are a mother, what do you believe should be your primary guide or resource in raising your children?

Conclusion

Current social and economic pressures devalue the godly role of mothers at home with their children. Alternate child care structures have been developed outside the home environment—day care facilities, pre-schools, etc. Families need to carefully evaluate the impact of giving the mother's role to others during the children's formative years. We in the Christian community need to embrace the challenge of supporting the entire family and specifically the role of the mothers. When mothers must be absent from their own children, the community needs to learn how to become a resource for mothers in the care and training of their children.

Proverbs 22:6

_____ your children onto the right path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.

Parenthood



Children, a Gift from God

God has designed the blended roles of the father and mother to provide the balanced dynamic for parenting within the family environment. Many options are offered in our culture, we read about them in magazines and hear about them on talk shows. But only the Scriptures actually present God's design for parenting skills. So, we will study parenting skills based on covenantal relationships and Kingdom authority and goals.

Parents are Stewards of their Children

Children first belong to God. He grants children to couples and asks parents to train their children in His ways. Parents, then, are stewards of the children God has placed in their care. So children represent both a gift and a heritage from the Lord.

Psalm 127:3

Children are a gift from the LORD; they are a _____ from him.

Children express the blessing of God, which He chooses to bestow for His purposes. God withholds or releases children to parents depending upon His immediate plans for them as they serve Him in His Kingdom.

God intends that the children of covenant families become mighty in His ways and purposes. Their 'might' results from parental training in the ways of God. God's on-going blessing on Dad's and Mom's parenting skills produces young people who are mighty before God, effective in character, and productive in society.

Psalm 112:1-2

Praise the LORD! How joyful are those who fear the LORD and delight in obeying his commands. Their children will be _____ everywhere; an entire generation of godly people will be blessed.

God imparts to the children of covenant parents a variety of talents and abilities (giftings). He then enables the parents to recognize and develop these

giftings. God anoints the parents to start their children in the skills and pathways which find their greatest fulfillment in God's own Kingdom.

Proverbs 22:6

Direct your children onto the _____, and when they are older, they will not leave it.

God's Choice for Children

God's original plan shows that children are born out of the covenant love of their parents. Covenant love represents not simply human desire, but a commitment from the parents to receive and be good stewards of the children God has blessed them with.

Covenant love involves discipline. This training of children to walk in God's ways is contrary to the natural desire of human beings. It also goes against many cultural pressures. God designed His path of discipline to give a child a good sense of self-identity and to release him from the tyranny of living only for himself, to deny his own selfish cravings. Maturity means to live relationally by the Scriptures for the good of the whole community or society.

The word "discipline" comes from the same root word as the word "disciple." Discipline is for training purposes, not a release for parental frustration. Discipline is something you do *for* a child, not something you do *to* a child.

Hebrews 12:6-9

For the LORD _____ those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child." As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. . .

Discipline is something you do *for* a child, not something you do *to* a child.

Training Children

God anoints parents with unity of purpose and methods for the maturation process. It is good to have, between the husband and his wife, a vision for the person you'd like your child to grow up to be. We are not talking about the development of talents or specific careers. We are talking about character development. If you want your child to grow up to be a person with good character, you must **train** him to have good character. We are all born with a sinful nature, and if we are not trained to do good, we will naturally default to doing what comes naturally.

Disunity and disagreement between parents produces double-mindedness in the discipline process. This robs the child of security of relationship and his own self-identity. He encounters the persistent temptation to manipulate his parents, one against the other, to obtain his own way.

Proverbs 13:24

Those who _____ the rod of discipline hate their children. Those who _____ their children care enough to discipline them.

The unity between parents is so important, that if a husband and wife have difficulty coming to agreement concerning the goals or methods to be used in training their children, they should consider a time of prayer and fasting to seek the Lord for a "right way for our family and children."

Every Day Life

Training children takes place during everyday life. It is not like a school, where classes are scheduled for certain days and times. God places individuals within the family context because issues encountered there provide the very training that best prepares children for life. When God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world, He placed him within a family context so that he could grow there.

Luke 2:52

Jesus grew in _____ and in _____ and in favor with God and all the people.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7

And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them _____ and _____ to your children. Talk about them when you are at _____ and when you are on the _____, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.

The daily routine of family life provides the setting for continual learning. In this context, parents talk about God's Word and principles while their children are 'seated, walking, lying down, or getting up'.

The mother especially has the ability to train with the repetition and explanation necessary to form the child's thinking. The father's instruction of principles should balance what the child receives. Their personal behaviors and attitudes also should provide and example for their children to follow.

Isaiah 28:10

He tells us everything _____ and _____ — one line at a time, one line at a time, a little here, and a little there!"

The father, with his emphasis on biblical principles, takes the leadership in demonstrating effective training and discipline. The mother takes the lead in nurturing her children through application of the biblical principles. Her 'hands on' approach permits the children to experience the practical, not just theoretical, aspects of godly living.

We have seen, in our culture, the effects of fatherless families. This is not to say that a single mother or father cannot train their children. But it is much more difficult to do so. If you find yourself in a situation where one of the parents is uninvolved, you must rely on the Lord.

Character Goals

Parental training and nurture should definitely include specific character goals. Character affects everything we do, every relationship we have, and any potential for success we may encounter. Bad character ruins relationships and spoils success. Good character enhances and improves relationships and gives us more opportunities for success in life.

Proverbs 1:7

Fear of the LORD is the foundation of true knowledge, but _____ despise wisdom and discipline.

Wise behavior is based on the fear of the Lord; the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

Paul instructed Timothy, as he raised up leaders in Ephesus, to focus on love, a pure heart and a good conscience. These qualities provide the basis for practical and enduring faith in Jesus Christ. Sound judgment and discernment, so prized by the writer of Proverbs, bring blessing to the person who pursues them. He finds life for his soul in them.

Titus 1:6

An elder must live a blameless life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who _____ have a reputation for being wild or rebellious.

Proverbs 3:21-22

My child, don't lose sight of _____ and discernment. Hang on to them, for they will refresh your soul. They are like jewels on a necklace.

God gave His Son, Jesus of Nazareth, the opportunity for testing in the area of yieldedness. He acquired 'reverent submission' through his family environment. And although He was the Son of God, He learned obedience through trials. If Jesus learned His character qualities through His family's lifestyle, our own children can also.

Character Qualities

Humility

Good parents have a desire for their children to be successful in whatever they pursue. We don't want them to become braggarts or blowhards. We want them to be willing to admit when they fail or make mistakes. We want them to be able to acknowledge the role of their role models and helpers rather than becoming people who are arrogant in their own achievements.

Proverbs 27:2

Let someone _____ praise you, not your own mouth— a stranger, not your own lips.

Contentment

We want our children to be ambitious and strive to achieve goals, but at the same time find a balance of contentment. Can a person every really be happy if they are not content?

1 Timothy 6:6

Yet true godliness _____ contentment is itself great wealth.

Honesty & Dependability

Honesty and truthfulness to self and to others makes you a reliable individual. An honest individual sleeps well and has better odds of being happy.

Proverbs 12:22

The LORD _____ lying lips, but he delights in those who tell the truth.

Dependability goes hand-in-hand with honesty. Being dependable means that you will honor your commitments, and fulfill your promises. For example: when a commitment is made to a sports team for a season, the family keeps that commitment, no matter how hard it gets. Those short-term commitments are the building ground for longer-term commitments which will be made in adult life.

More Character Qualities

Perseverance

Perseverance is sticking with things. It means being hardworking and finishing what is started, despite barriers and obstacles that arise. It has a “never give up” type of vibe. There is grit and determination involved. This does not come easily.

Patience

In our 21st Century culture, this may be the character trait that is lacking the most. The ability to wait for the right timing of events, the ability to delay gratification is a quality that really needs to be learned. Acknowledging that some things in life are beyond our control and being willing to wait is a sign of maturity. A lack of patience breeds restlessness, frustration, and anger. Patience brings more peace into our lives.

Cheerfulness

Optimism in the face of difficult obstacles goes a long way toward positive outcomes. An optimist keeps a cheerful disposition and brings in positivity not just benefitting himself but encouraging those around him. Especially during the teenage years, when young people go through physical, chemical, and hormonal changes. Puberty can be a confusing time, and can manifest in sullen, irritable moodiness. One of my favorite memories is my mother telling me to “Put on gladness,” during this time in my life. If a person can learn to control their own moods and attitudes, choosing to think of others before themselves while they are young, this step toward maturity will serve them well in their adult life.

Proverbs 11:25

... those who refresh _____
will themselves be refreshed.

Self Control — Actions & Attitude

Self-control is something that is sadly lacking today. We used to tell our children, “If you do not control yourself, someone else will control you.”

An extreme example of this is a person who does not control his actions or attitudes. He wants

something, so he steals it. He gets caught and prosecuted and put into jail. He has no more control over his own life, others are in control of him.

Children need to be trained to control not just their actions, but their attitudes as well. A child who is permitted to disrespect his parents will disrespect other authorities as he grows into adulthood – this includes the police, judges, pastors, and elected officials. A child who learns proper respect will honor his parents and other authorities, even if he does not agree with them.

Courage

Learning anything new means coming into contact with the unknown. Fear and apprehension can hinder the learning process. It takes gumption to conquer new things. Again, children are in an ideal time to learn courage. They will make mistakes, but they make them in our homes, under our guidance, and we can encourage them and teach them how to improve.

Compassion & Kindness

Love is the basis of all compassion and kindness. This is the most important character quality of all. Cultivate love in your children. Teach them compassion for those who may not have such a great quality of life. Teach them compassion for the deaf, the blind, the poor, etc. Encourage them to defend the weak. Encourage them to be givers; givers of their time, their talent, and their treasure. Help them to consider the feelings of others, and teach them how to bring encouragement to those who are discouraged. They will reap what they sow, so help them learn how to sow good things.

Colossians 3:14

Above all, clothe yourselves with _____, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

Course Correction

There are, of course, many more character qualities than the ones we have mentioned in this chapter.

On your parenting journey, you will find that a lot of training and discipleship takes place through “course correction.”

Today, nearly everyone has a smart phone. Along with smart phones has come a wonderful thing called Global Positioning System mapping. If you use a GPS mapping application, you type in an address for your destination, and the application finds the most efficient route to take you to your destination. If you make a mistake, and get off course, the application will do a “course correction” to get you back on track so you don’t get lost. A message will pop up saying something like, “re-calibrating . . .,” or something like that, and before you know it, you’re back on your way as if nothing had gone amiss.

Parenting is a lot like that. We may have family devotions around the dinner or breakfast table. We teach our children as much as we can through those devotions. But in the course of everyday life, the sinful nature of our children will pop up now and then, and we realize we must do a “course correction” in their training. This is perfectly natural.

For example, have you ever noticed that a child does not need to be taught how to tell a lie? It just happens naturally because they have a sinful nature. So when that happens, we do a “course correction” and teach them that it is wrong to lie, and how God hates lies, and how we need to be truth-tellers. Then when it happens again, we know they have been taught correctly, and we may apply more firm methods of training.

One day, my little girl stole a pack of gum from the grocery store. I was not aware of it until we got into the car and she pulled it out of her pocket with a look of glee. She had never been taught to steal, it just came out from sinful nature. Even though it was inconvenient, I took her back into that store and made her give the pack of gum to

the cashier. My daughter was embarrassed and ashamed. Why? Because she knew innately that taking that gum was a wrong thing to do. And I, as her mother, knew that this was not the kind of person I wanted my daughter to grow up to be. So I did a course correction. After we got home I opened up the Bible and showed her where it says, “Thou shalt not steal.” She was not even old enough to read, but I wanted her to know that the Bible was the source of our truth. She wept and repented – and that was a good thing. As far as I know, she never stole anything ever again.

Application

Do you have a “vision” for your children? If so, how do you “see” them in their future? How does that vision reflect God's priorities? Which Bible characters suffered because of a lack of parental training? Write down several ways by which you can build biblical training into your routine of family life.

Conclusion

In our culture, we have seen the breakdown of the extended family and the mockery of biblical roles for parents.

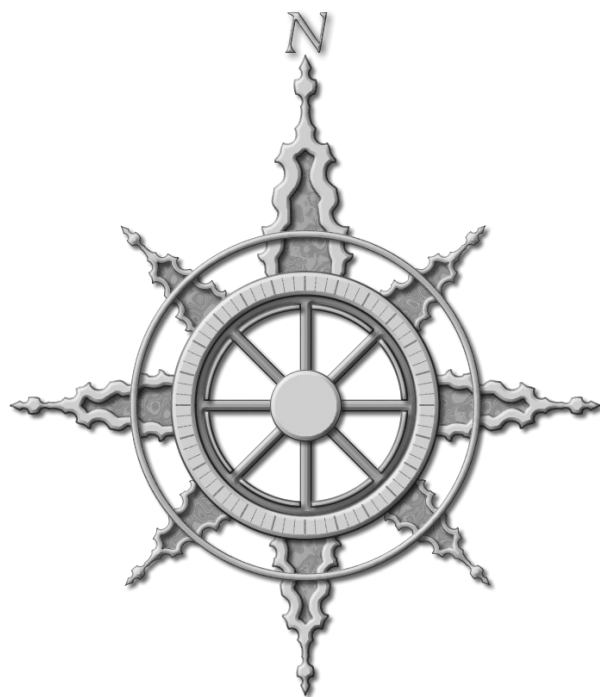
God appoints parents to follow biblical guidelines and models as the primary means through which they train their children. God entrusts to parents the opportunity to steward the lives of those He commits to their care. Parents, and biblical parenting, are under tremendous attack in today's society.

So-called 'experts' have duped many parents into believing that they don't have what it takes to raise their own children. But the same God who gave your children to you will also provide you with the wisdom, strength, and resources that you need to raise them successfully. This is His promise.

Isaiah 49:25

But the LORD says, “. . . I will fight those who fight you, and I will _____ your children.

Discipline



Discipline Brings Maturity

The subject of training and discipline within the home has received much attention from various sectors of contemporary society. There are articles in magazines and newspapers, guests on television talk shows and news shows talking about this subject. We hear the case made for children's 'rights', parents' 'rights', and the ever present issue of how much government regulation should be involved in the domestic life of our families. God's Word addresses the confusion of current society. We will examine here a biblical basis for discipline, and guidelines from the Scriptures for the application of discipline within the home.

Instruction and Discipline

When we talk about **instruction**, we are talking about more of an academic type of teaching. Parents instruct their children about righteous living. Instruction provides the necessary information to produce wise and good behavior. To ignore instruction invites disaster in morality, in family life, and in business.

Job 5:17

But consider the _____ of those corrected by God! Do not _____ the discipline of the Almighty when you sin.

Proverbs 3:11

My child, don't reject the LORD's discipline, and don't be upset when he _____ you.

Proverbs 4:13

Take hold of my instructions; don't _____ them _____. Guard them, for they are the key to life.

Proverbs 23:12

_____ yourself to instruction; listen carefully to words of knowledge.

God trains His children through **discipline**. He makes it a pathway to maturity.

Discipline calls children to account for poor behavior. The godly standard set before them feeds back into positive self-identity. The warnings for rebellious behavior provide guidelines to prevent self-destruction, foolishness, and poverty.

Proverbs 13:24

Those who spare the rod of discipline _____ their children. Those who _____ their children care enough to discipline them.

The purpose of parental discipline is to train a child toward **self-discipline**. If a child can discipline himself, he no longer needs discipline by an outside source. God asks children to learn how to guide their own behavior. If a child is continually aware of the probability of consistent parental correction he is more likely to curb his own negative impulses.

Proverbs 13:18

If you ignore criticism, you will end in poverty and disgrace; if you _____ correction, you will be honored.

Proverbs 19:18

Discipline your children while there is hope. Otherwise you will _____ their lives.

Biblical punishment or correction calls for a consequence in the life of the child for unacceptable behavior. Parents fit the punishment to the seriousness of the offense. God sees discipline as His means for bringing about repentance and restoration of broken relationships. There is pain involved. It is not mere physical pain, but emotional pain as a child recognizes his fault and feels sorrow for it. A child's rebellion breaks, it must break, even though it is painful.

Proverbs 15:5

Only a _____ despises a parent's discipline; whoever learns from correction is _____.

God's Discipline through Parental Discipline

Hebrews 12:5-8

. . . don't **make light** of the LORD's discipline, and don't give up when he corrects you. For the LORD disciplines those he loves, and he punishes each one he accepts as his child . . . If God **doesn't** discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are **illegitimate** and are not really his children at all.

God uses discipline to affirm His **profound love and care** for His children. Lack of discipline confirms that God has **no covenant relationship** with that person. God also uses discipline to produce a righteous lifestyle and maturity as we follow Jesus throughout our lives.

God instructs that parents assume the responsibility for the conduct and maturity level of their children. God provides the discernment needed to evaluate the level of discipline necessary. The Word of God itself also provides specific pathways for correction.

1 Samuel 3:13

I have warned him (the high priest, Eli) that _____ is coming upon his family forever, because his sons are blaspheming God and he **hasn't disciplined them**.

From God's perspective, the motivation for discipline comes from the desire to obey God and love our children. Unchallenged, persistent willfulness in the child prepares him to encounter the sterner aspects of God's judgement upon earth (policemen, judges, etc.). God designs parental discipline to remove the foolishness (selfishness) and evil (rebellion) from a child's life.

God's perspective on a child includes the obvious need for correction and discipline. If parents fail to provide training and discipline, the stage will be set for the child's lack of self-worth. Even worse, the child will have a difficult time handling forgiveness – either receiving it or giving it. He will also find it difficult to handle the standards, prohi-

bitions, and authorities of life. This will be seen in school, in the workplace, and in society. The tragedy touches both the parents and children.

Discipline as Verbal Instruction and Understanding

The normal process of discipline includes verbal instruction that the child comprehends. Instruction needs to touch the child in ways that are practical and related to normal life's situations. Often, we would teach one of our children something and then ask, "Now, what did you just learn?" so that he would repeat it back to us. This is one way we used to make sure he understood what we were teaching him.

Parents must be sure that children understand the biblical instruction and the consequences for ignoring or disobeying it.

Example: If one of our children told a lie, we would teach them about how God hates lies, because He is the truth. So for us to lie is against who we are because we are made in the image of God. We also taught them that the Bible says, "All liars will burn in the lake of fire." (Revelation 21:8) to discourage them from making a lifestyle of telling lies. We had a "vision" of our children that they would grow up to be honest adults.

Our correction or discipline should follow appropriate guidelines:

- That it be administered promptly when required
- That it be consistently and fairly applied
- That it be lovingly administered (not in anger) with the goal of restoring relationships

Remember . . .

**Discipline is something you do *for* a child,
not something you do *to* a child.**

God and “the Rod”

Proverbs 13:24

Those who spare the rod of discipline hate their children. Those who love their children care enough to discipline them.

No matter how our culture dislikes it, the Bible presents the use of the 'rod', or corporal discipline as a normal part of training children. It states clearly that, among other methods, some form of physical discipline is a necessary part of child training.

Proverbs 22:15

A youngster's heart is _____ with foolishness, but physical discipline will drive it far away.

The Bible depicts the rod of authority as a way to open the child's ears to hear wisdom. It teaches that the rod delivers the child from selfishness and willfulness. The act of corporal discipline, when administered with love, stands between one's children and the evil tendencies of his old nature and the influence of the world.

Proverbs 23:13-14

Don't fail to discipline your children. They won't die if you _____ them. Physical discipline may well save them from death.

Corporal discipline is administered within the overall framework of godly goals and methods of discipline. It is administered in love, not in anger, so that the end of the matter is greater understanding and respect, rather than a provoking of wrath and rebellion.

I think we would all agree that there is a difference between making a mistake and sinning. For example, if you are at the dinner table and one of your children accidentally spills his milk, we would not suggest corporal punishment for that mistake. Instead, if the child is old enough, you might get him some paper towels and have him clean up his own mess, with an admonishment to be more careful in the future.

Pray, Pray, PRAY!

We want to encourage parents to habitually pray over your children. Pray that God would reveal to you areas in your children's character that may need to be adjusted. Pray that your children would "get caught" - that they would not be able to get away with secret sin, that all would be revealed, because we cannot correct bad behavior that we don't know about. Pray for wisdom and purity of heart for yourselves as you deal with your children.

Parents may need to evaluate the following as they endeavor to make "punishment fit the crime."

Accidents	Accidents are things that are often beyond our control, and allowances should be made for them. However, the same "accident" recurring again and again may signal another issue.
Mistakes	Everybody makes mistakes. Mistakes are opportunities for instruction. Teach your children avoid the same mistake in the future. The same mistake happening over and over again, even after you have taught them a better way, probably involves either a misunderstanding and/or direct disobedience.
Errors in Judgment	Everybody errs in judgment from time to time. Again, teach better judgment and more wise choices. If the same error in judgment occurs again and again, even after proper instruction, the issue may be deeper and require a different approach.
Disobedience	When your child hears you, understands you, and disobeys you, this is sin . Sin requires more than just a reprimand, more than instruction, and often more than natural consequences.
Defiance/Rebellion	Sinful action along with sinful attitude . This requires more than the results of disobedience because it also requires the correction of an attitude.

Goals of Faithful Discipline

God designs certain goals for our children to be realized through the faithful application of discipline. We discussed the goal of good character attributes in an earlier chapter.

Wisdom, as a lifestyle, leads first to the “fear of God” (reverence, awe) and then the knowledge of God. When we say the “knowledge of God,” we are not talking about simply knowing *about* God. We are talking about *knowing God* personally.

Individual maturity, (the ability to respond to God appropriately in lifestyle and work) comes from a life that is taught discipline from a biblical perspective.

Hebrews 12:10-11

... God’s discipline is

_____ good for us, so that we might share in his holiness. No discipline is enjoyable while it is happening—it’s painful! But afterward there will be a peaceful _____ of right living for those who are trained in this way.

Consistent, biblical discipline produces a harvest of peace and righteousness for those who have been trained by it. A person who comes to know God and follows His ways, has a more blessed life, more prosperity and freedom from fear.

Misuse of Parental Authority

God warns parents about the misapplication of discipline. Since God made children in His own image, as He did parents, then they learn to discern and respect that image of God, not taking it lightly. Children are not of less importance than adults, they are simply in a different time of life, and in need of training.

The Bible suggests the following:

1. Praise in public, correct in private. Discipline in private preserves the dignity of the child. Public ridicule for offenses only encourages broken relationships within and outside the family. Indeed, a parent who makes a point of

scolding scolds his/her child in front of others, only makes himself look bad and provokes sympathy for the child – even if the child has misbehaved. It is far better (even for the parent) to correct the child privately.

Matthew 18:15

“If another believer sins against you, go _____ and point out the offense. . .

2. God bases discipline upon His Word and the conditions of His covenant. Mood swings and convenience provide an unstable base for deciding the conditions for discipline. Parents who themselves exhibit self-control provide a great example of self-control for their children.

John 17:17

Make them holy by your truth; teach them _____, which is truth.

3. Using encouragement, rather than scolding or humiliation, moves the child toward personal integrity and the desire to accomplish good works before God.

Ephesians 6:4

Fathers, do not provoke your children to _____ by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

Scriptures caution parents to avoid provoking their children to anger and bitterness. It demonstrates wisdom from God to gather facts carefully (without favoritism or prejudice) and to move in a deliberate and measured pace to accomplish the discipline.

Colossians 3:21

Fathers, do not _____ your children, or they will become discouraged.

Do not Neglect . . .

Children learn most easily from consistent and unwavering discipline. This provides stability in his life from which he learns to respect parental ideas and words. Discipline that proceeds from an angry, offended, and vengeful spirit serves only to produce an angry, offended, and vengeful spirit in the child. Loving confrontation that seeks to mend and reconcile flows from the heart of our loving Father who reconciled all mankind to Himself in the awful cost of His Son. He calls us to learn how to confront lovingly, to restore what has been offended and broken, often at the expense of our own time, convenience, and cultural up-bringing.

Hebrews 10:24-25

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us _____ our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

Christ's Body—the Church

If you're a Christian, you ought be involved in a church – ONE church, for a long period of time. You ought to submit yourself to the leadership and become involved in the vision and mission of that church.

This is a solid biblical concept that many people fail to understand.

The writer of the book of Hebrews exhorts us not to neglect meeting together "as some people do." If you, as a parent, take church involvement lightly, your children will do the same – or worse.

Involvement in a church body has many benefits. One is to be linked together with other like-minded, like-hearted families. Your children can spend time with their children. The adults can hang out together and share problems and solutions together. They can encourage one another during difficult times and rejoice with one another during good times.

Application

How do you respond to those who would say that physical discipline is emotionally harmful? What do you believe to be the results of the lack of physical discipline? Describe here what you believe would be an orderly and sound approach in applying physical discipline to a child.

Describe other means of discipline which are found in Scripture and which God has used with His own children.

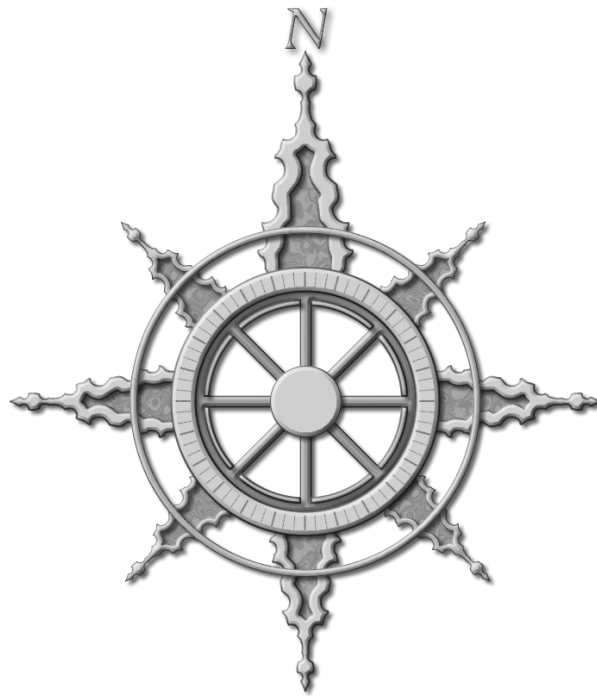
Conclusion

The current cultural climate concerning the issue of child abuse has heightened and confused the issue of physical discipline within the home. Western society places great value on a person's 'rights' irrespective of age. This leaves Christian parents in need of a clear and defensible philosophy for training and discipline within the family.

God's Word presents an unchanging standard that has endured for thousands of years. It sets forth the ultimate guidelines for raising children toward productive adulthood. God's formula for successful parenting: instruction in righteousness through biblical guidelines of consistent discipline. The Lord gave Isaac to Abraham because Abraham would 'command his children' and train them in righteousness. In doing so, he gave them a legacy of blessing. Parents today are told not to shape their children, to let them grow and develop 'naturally' on their own. But this is contrary to God's Word and has produced a harvest of heart-break. If you are afraid to shape or train your children, you must be warned that there is a multibillion dollar secular education and entertainment empire that is more than eager to do it for you.

Who will you allow to shape your children?

A Training Ground



The Family as a Training Ground

The culture and environment of the family is the first setting where the individual child learns values and standards for living. The quality of life experienced within the home and in relationship with parents has proven historically to be the greatest influence which shapes the child. Beyond that, a young person's attitudes and perspectives for having a good life and becoming mature adults are formed in this setting. Here, we will examine the family in the light of Scripture as the training ground for righteous living in the kingdom of God.

God's Design for the Family

In previous chapters, we have covered well the fact that God fashioned Adam and Eve in His image. He designed the family structure to receive each child, and to develop His image in them through nurture and training. God revealed His own nature and ways to the first family within the sphere of their family.

Through the setting of the first family, God planned to extend His own rule throughout the earth. He entrusted the management of family and work assignment to them.

God commanded the parents to instruct, develop, and release their children in the ways of God. He designed the family context as the best possible environment in which child training could take place.

Deuteronomy 4:9

"But watch out! Be careful never to forget what you yourself have seen. Do not let these memories escape from your mind as long as you live! And be sure to _____ them _____ to your children and grandchildren. . ."

While children are within the covering of a family, they are free to make mistakes and learn from them while still under their parents' authority and protection. Crucial to learn before adulthood ~ responsibility, accountability, respect for authori-

ty, character development, and more! If they fail to learn important principles during this time, they will most likely struggle as adults.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. _____ them again and _____ to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up.

The Book of Proverbs represents those principles which unerringly prepare children to serve God.

Proverbs 22:6

_____ your children onto the _____ path, and when they are older, they will not leave it.

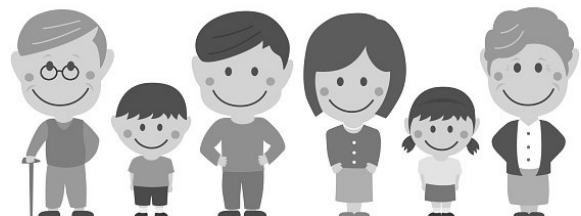
Proverbs 1:8-9

My child, listen when your father corrects you. Don't neglect your mother's instruction. What you _____ from them will crown you with grace and be a chain of _____ around your neck.

God also structured the family context to receive those who are alone (solitary) in life. Whether widow, single, dysfunctional, or dis-advantaged, God designed His grace-gifts to flow to them within the family setting.

Psalms 68:5-6

Father to the fatherless, defender of widows— this is God, whose dwelling is holy. God places the lonely in _____ . . .



Relating to God

Deuteronomy 5:8-11

“You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind, or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands. “You must not misuse the name of the LORD your God. The LORD will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.”

Learning to Honor God

God instructed parents to focus primarily on training their children to recognize and honor God as the Sovereign, the Creator, and the Owner of all things on earth and in heaven. God reveals Himself as the Sovereign Creator of all things. We recognize and worship nothing in the entire universe that could remotely be imagined as standing more above the Person of God in Jesus Christ.

Proverbs 1:7

Fear of the LORD is the

_____ of true knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.

Proverbs 9:10

Fear of the LORD is the

_____ of wisdom. Knowledge of the Holy One results in good judgment.

Proverbs 15:33

Fear of the LORD

_____ wisdom; humility precedes honor.

To fear (reverence in awe) the Living God is the

beginning of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. In other words, there is no way to attain right knowledge, wisdom, and understanding without knowing the Lord! It would serve us all well to remember that fact. **All orientation to life begins here: to know the Holy One, the Lord.**

God enables the parents, in the context of the family, to train their children in the appropriate exercise of authority and responsibility. Whether the management of a child's sphere or the respect for the spheres of others, God designed the home environment for imparting these values.

1 Timothy 3:4-5

He must manage his own family well, having children who

_____ and _____ him. For if a man cannot manage his own household, how can he take care of God's church?

Our world system places the 'rights of the individual' above honoring God. It rarely acknowledges God at all! But God asks parents to develop in their children the ability to revere God's ways and carry them out as they are revealed in the Scriptures. The setting of the home provides the most practical environment for helping children to develop their capacity to honor God above their natural desires and the demands or expectations of our culture.

Deuteronomy 5:16

_____ your father and mother, as the LORD your God commanded you. _____ you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Within the home, God asks parents to teach their children how to assume responsibility for their actions. In this context, children learn either to see themselves as victims of circumstances or as accountable to God for their choices and actions.

Relating to Others

Learning to Honor Parents

After God Himself, parents are the first expressions of authority in the earth. Through parental instruction at home, children learn respect and reverence for parents and the authority they exercise under God.

By honoring a father and mother, a child encounters the first occasion in which he learns to defer to the preferences of another. As the child learns to honor his parents and follow their leading, he builds the links within himself for physical and emotional well-being. Then, by following the wisdom of God, the child places himself in the pathway of God's on-going blessing in life.

Exodus 20:12

Honor your father and mother.

_____ you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

This Exodus 20:12 reference is part of what is commonly known as "The Ten Commandments." It is the first commandment that comes with its own promise, a conditional promise (Ephesians 6:1-3)! The promise is that *if* a child honors his parents he will live a long and full life! Who doesn't want that?

Leviticus 19:3

Each of you must show _____
_____ for your mother and father . . . I am the LORD your God.

As the child learns to submit to his parents' authority, he begins to enter the authority of God's Kingdom on earth. He opens his spirit and mind not just to know God's deeds on earth, but to know the Lord *Himself*. What a wonderful relationship to enter into! **This is the greatest inheritance you can give to your children.**

So learning to honor parents is very, very important. But it goes even beyond that . . .

Learning to Honor Family Members

The family context provides the first opportunities for the child to develop the capacity to defer to others, and to reject their own natural tendency toward selfishness. Parents impart an understanding of the value of human life by teaching their children how to lay down their own lives for others. The concept of self-sacrifice runs counter to our current culture of "self-fulfillment."

Romans 12:10

Love each other with _____ affection, and take _____ in honoring each other.

Children within the context of the home observe, emulate, and learn to respect the covenant commitments represented within the family . . . that of parents to each other, of children to their parents, and to one another.

Philippians 2:3

Don't be _____;
don't try to impress others. Be _____, thinking of others as better than yourselves.

The parent's example shows the children how to steward the reputation of others, either in avoiding hyper-critical speech and 'putting down', or in promoting honor and sensitivity. To honor one another as those who bear the image of God, children learn this most of all in the home and among their peers.

Titus 3:2

They must not slander anyone and must _____ quarreling. Instead, they should be _____ and show true humility to everyone.

Growing in these types of relationship skills will help our children as they grow into adulthood. If they learn these things in our homes, they will be equipped to handle other relationships outside, in the business realm, and pass them on to their own children in the future.

Relating to Material Possessions

Proverbs 3:9-10

Honor the LORD with your wealth and with the best part of everything you produce. Then he will fill your barns with grain, and your vats will overflow with good wine.

Here is another conditional promise. IF we honor the Lord with our increase, THEN he will bless us accordingly. That's simply how the Kingdom of God works! Knowing this, we have choices:

- We can ignore it, or
- We can learn it, practice it, and receive blessing because of it.

Ideally, through their example, parents impart biblical attitudes towards material possessions. They live before their children the principles of God's Word concerning stewardship and accountability. Parents *display* how to handle money wisely: earning, tithing, giving, spending, and saving. These activities will either confirm or contradict what you have taught them with your words.

The book of Proverbs contains a great deal of wisdom about attitudes and principles concerning material possessions. We encourage you to teach your children the book of Proverbs, and to encourage them to practice the principles they learn from it. Again, we have choices: to be wise, or to be foolish. What will your choice be? Keep in mind that however you live your life, your children will see your example, and their tendency will be to follow that example. So, choose wisely!

Proverbs 10:2

Tainted wealth has no lasting value, but right living can _____ your _____.

Proverbs 22:7

Just as the rich rule the poor, so the borrower is _____ to the lender.

Life & Health

Parents provide for their children principles for

life and *health* as they follow God's wisdom in the daily affairs of life. Their authority, as an extension of God's authority, bears fruit ~ and that fruit validates their practices, proving them to be either wise or foolish. Choose wisdom!

Proverbs 13:20

Walk with the wise and _____ wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.

Proverbs 4:20-22

My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, for they _____ to those who find them, and _____ to their whole body.

Children first recognize God's perspective about individual integrity in the human interplay within the family. They may learn to despise life through media violence, abortions, guns, drugs, and gang mayhem. Those things come naturally. They appeal to our sinful nature. We see them every day on television and in the movies. Or, they learn to appreciate the image of God in other people. This does not come naturally, because it goes against the way of the world and our own sinful nature. Therefore, it must be *caught and taught*. It is "caught" through observing godly character examples of parents. It is "taught" through parental teaching and coaching throughout the time our children are in our homes.

Psalms 119:9-11

How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word. . . I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

Ephesians 6:1

Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the _____ thing to do.

Relating to Work

The view of our world system is to view work as a replacement for God, or to find our identity in our work, or to despise our work.

In the home, the children absorb parental attitudes towards work, its value, and its function in life. God establishes the home as a training ground to see work as God's gift, as responsibility, and as the place for exercising God-given talents and abilities on behalf of others.

Proverbs 10:4-5

_____ people are soon _____ ;
hard workers get rich. A wise youth harvests in the summer, but one who sleeps during harvest is a disgrace.

Proverbs 13:4

Lazy people _____ much but
_____ little, but those who work hard will prosper.

Proverbs 18:9

A lazy person is as bad as someone who
_____ things.

Proverbs 21:5

Good planning and hard work lead to prosperity, but hasty shortcuts lead to poverty.

God's word teaches us to go beyond merely working. Working is good, but working **with excellence** is even better. And there is a reward attached to it.

Proverbs 22:29

Do you see any truly _____
workers? They will serve kings rather than
working for _____ people.

You see, we have choices affecting our work. We can choose to be lazy, to be average, or to be excellent. We hope you choose excellence. We hope you teach your children to choose excellence!

Conclusion

Much of the trauma and confusion in today's culture has grown from the inadequate training by parents in the home. Our society more and more expects schools and other social institutions to impart to children what parents have failed to impart. The child's work ethic and responsible management of material resources grow out of the formative years of development, as children observe how their parents handle life in the context of the home. God gives to the parents, the responsibility for instructing the next generation regarding the proper management of values, character, morals, and wealth. The church can assist in this, but it is ultimately the parents' responsibility.

The blessing of God's ways for the next generation depends upon the diligence of parents and the help of the local church.

Application

Identify several areas in your attitudes toward material possessions that were shaped by parents and family.

Identify ways by which training in the family will positively influence the work ethic in the marketplace.

What areas of your life do you believe God is addressing concerning personal stewardship of those resources entrusted to you?

In your life, what roles do tithing and giving play toward fulfilling responsible stewardship?

The Extended Family



The Pattern & Purpose of God

Today, our culture seems to have departed from Judeo-Christian values. This departure has resulted in damage to both the concept and the structure of the nuclear family. And it has nearly neutralized the effect of the **extended family**.

In this chapter, we want to discover the **high value** God places on extended families. We want to find and reveal the purpose extended family fulfills in His design for His Kingdom and our society. And so, we will study the family relationships *beyond* those of husband-wife and parent-child.

God Extends his Covenant Promise through Family

God created the family as the basic social unit through which He extends His covenant promise and Kingdom reign on earth. God dealt with both Abraham and Noah in terms of family units.

God purposed through the extended family of Abraham (people of faith) to convey His covenantal blessing to every family group on the face of the earth. Abraham's natural family was used by God to generate the nation of Israel. He also used Abraham's family to produce **all people of the faith** on earth.

Genesis 12:1-3

The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your native country, your relatives, and your father's family, and go to the land that I will show you. I will make you into a _____ . I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. _____ the families on earth will be blessed through you."

Galatians 3:6-9

In the same way, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." The _____ children of Abraham, then, are those who

put their faith in God. What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would declare the Gentiles to be righteous because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you." So _____ who put their _____ in _____ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.

Galatians 3:26-29

For you are all children of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all who have been united with Christ in baptism have put on the character of Christ, like putting on new clothes. There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus. And now that you belong to Christ, you are the _____ children of Abraham. You are his _____, and God's promise to Abraham _____ to you.

The sons of Jacob became the tribes of Israel, which included the extended families, the ancestors that came through Jacob's offspring. The 70 descendants of Jacob who went into Egypt came out 430 years later as 600,000 men divided into twelve tribal groupings! Take some time to look at Genesis 49 where you will see the characteristics of each of the twelve tribal heads. Amazing!

Genesis 6:18

But I will confirm my covenant with you. So enter the boat—you and your _____ and your _____ and their wives.

Genesis 9:8-9

Then God told Noah _____ his sons, "I hereby confirm my covenant with you and your _____ . . .

Identity through Family

God is the One who established extended families. His purpose was to bless families so that through them He might grant **generational** identity and blessing. Extended families share genetic traits in common. The offspring recognize common characteristics and understand themselves as part of the larger family.

Genesis 12:2-3

I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you and make you famous, and you will be a blessing to others. I will bless those who bless you and curse those who treat you with contempt. _____ the families on earth will be blessed through you."

God extended His blessing **beyond** Noah to his related family members.

Genesis 8:16-22

"Leave the boat, all of you—you and your wife, and your sons and their wives. Release all the animals—the birds, the livestock, and the small animals that scurry along the ground—so they can be fruitful and multiply throughout the earth." So Noah, his wife, and his sons and their wives left the boat. And all of the large and small animals and birds came out of the boat, pair by pair. Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and there he sacrificed as burnt offerings the animals and birds that had been approved for that purpose. And the LORD was pleased with the aroma of the sacrifice and said to himself, "I will _____ curse the ground because of the human race, even though everything they think or imagine is bent toward evil from childhood. I will never again destroy all living things. As long as the earth remains, there will be planting and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night."

God extended His covenant promise through

Abraham's natural family, to his descendants and all the generations that would follow, as they walked in obedience to the covenant. Abraham imparted his faith to Isaac; then Isaac to Jacob; then Jacob to his descendants.

Genesis 17:3-8

At this, Abram fell face down on the ground. Then God said to him, "This is my covenant with you: I will make you the father of a multitude of nations! What's more, I am changing your name. It will no longer be Abram. Instead, you will be called Abraham, for you will be the father of many nations. I will make you extremely fruitful. Your descendants will become many nations, and kings will be among them! "I will confirm my covenant with you and your descendants after you, from generation to generation. This is the everlasting covenant: I will _____ be your God and the God of your descendants after you. And I will give the entire land of Canaan, where you now live as a foreigner, to you and your descendants. It will be their possession forever, and I will be their God."

The apostle Paul used this transgenerational principle to show Timothy the source of his faith.

Then he also used the same principle in the training of *spiritual* descendants.

1 Timothy 1:5

The purpose of my instruction is that _____ believers would be filled with love that comes from a pure heart, a clear conscience, and genuine faith.

2 Timothy 2:2

You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by _____ reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to _____ trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.

The Heritage Passed on Through Family

God conveys distinctive family heritage through the members of the larger family units as they work and fellowship with each other. Then, these extended families bear God's trans-generational purposes on earth.

Scripture recognizes and emphasizes the linkage of generations preceding the birth of Jesus of Nazareth (we see this in Matthew 1:1-17).

God promises salvation to succeeding generations and transmits that promise through the heritage of the extended family. God also transmits the **memory** of His covenant and His deeds generationally.

Genesis 28:3-4

May God Almighty bless you and give you many children. And may your descendants multiply and become many nations! May God

_____ to you and your descendants the blessings he promised to Abraham. May you own this land where you are now living as a foreigner, for God gave this land to Abraham.”

Even beyond the family, God uses the generations of those who serve Him to communicate His purposes and plans for the nations. The Early Church began to share the message to their generation and those to follow. The Church today continues to relay the Good News about Jesus, in obedience to His covenant and commands.

Jeremiah 1:4-5

The LORD gave me this message: “I knew you before I formed you in your mother’s

womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet _____ the _____.”

Ephesians 3:21

Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through _____ generations forever and ever! Amen.

God warns us that attitudes problems and habitual sin may be passed down through following generations. So what God had intended to be a transgenerational blessing, through disobedience, turns into a generational plague, curse, or punishment.

Exodus 34:7

I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I _____

Psalms 78:1-4

_____ the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected— even children in the third and fourth generations.

Exodus 20:5

You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will _____ your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me.

O my people, listen to my instructions.

*Open your ears to what I am saying,
for I will speak to you in a parable.*

*I will teach you hidden lessons from our past—
stories we have heard and known,
stories our ancestors handed down to us.*

*We will not hide these truths from our children;
we will tell the next generation
about the glorious deeds of the LORD,
about his power and his mighty wonders.*

God Honors the Wisdom of Preceding Generations

God encourages us again and again to honor preceding generations so that we can receive their wisdom and heritage.

Exodus 20:12

_____ your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

The old covenant required that the children learn to honor their parents. The consequences of not doing so were severe!

Deuteronomy 21:18-21

Suppose a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will _____.
_____ his father or mother, even though they discipline him. In such a case, the father and mother must take the son to the elders . . . ²¹ Then all the men of his town must _____ him to _____. In this way, you will _____
_____ from among you, and all Israel will hear about it and be afraid.

Wow — that's a steep price to pay for rebellion! But the purpose was to purge THIS particular evil from their culture.

When we dishonor our parents or our grandparents, we cut ourselves off from receiving or inheriting all that they had learned and experienced from God. I don't think we realize how terrible a consequence this is. When we do not hold ourselves and our children accountable to God, we reap a crop of rebellion and selfish ambition in our families AND in our society.

The new covenant, purchased by Christ's blood, still calls for children to honor their parents. When they do, it pleases God and opens the way for the blessing to continue to the children. Children learn to honor their parents within the home. They also learn, by extension, to value and honor their family's heritage and ancestry.

Proverbs 2:1

My child, listen to what I say, and _____ my commands.

Ephesians 6:1-3

Children, _____ your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the _____ thing to do. "Honor your father and mother." This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, "things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth."

When we honor one another in our families, it sets a precedent for honoring members of the extended family, in both blood and marriage relationships. The honor of one generation toward another creates an appreciation for heritage as well as passing on truth and testimony from preceding generations. What a great opportunity we have, just by living our lives in families!

Psalms 145:4

Let each generation _____ its children of your mighty acts; let them _____ your power.

Deuteronomy 6:5-7

And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today.
_____ them again and again to your children. _____ about them _____ you are at home and _____ you are on the road, _____ you are going to bed and _____ you are getting up.

In other words, talk about them ALL the time!

The Value of Honor

Honor and care toward the aged determine the blessing of God upon future generations. Honor toward parents and relatives gives a foundation for honor toward all those in authority in the Church and throughout local society.

The Bible even mentions things that might be considered etiquette toward our elders:

1 Timothy 5:1

Never speak harshly to an older man, but appeal to him

_____ as you would to your own father. Talk to younger men as you would to your own brothers.

Leviticus 19:32

_____ in the presence of the elderly, and show _____ for the aged. Fear your God. I am the LORD.

Notice at the end of this verse God adds, “Fear your God. I am the LORD.” That means this commandment is important to Him! The Bible has quite a few stories about young people who did not heed the wisdom and advice from those who were older and more seasoned in life.

1 Kings 12:8

But Rehoboam

_____ the advice of the older men and instead asked the opinion of the _____ men who had grown up with him and were now his advisers.

Rehoboam was the son of the great King Solomon, who was known throughout the world for his wisdom. If you read the rest of the story of Rehoboam, in 1 Kings 12, you will see that he chose his advisers poorly. So when you seek advice, be sure to seek it from someone who is more wise than you are!

Proverbs 13:20

Walk with the wise and

_____ wise; associate with fools and get in trouble.

Parental care towards children establishes a pattern in the children to show similar care towards succeeding generations. The practice of love, honor, and nurture in the basic family unit is conveyed to the extended family, and from this to the larger community and society.

Hebrews 13:17

_____ your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with joy and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit.

Romans 13:1-5

Everyone must submit to _____ authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished.

1 Timothy 5:8

But those who won't care for _____ relatives, especially those in their own household, have denied the true faith. Such people are worse than unbelievers.

Some Extra Thoughts

Be aware that we have an enemy who wants nothing more than to destroy what God has designed. The destruction of the family, including the influence of extended family has taken a great toll on our culture. Let's work at restoring it!

Parents – get your children involved with their grandparents. Speak highly of them. We realize that all parents aren't wonderful, so don't lie, but try to find ways to honor them before your children. The Bible says to "Speak evil of no one." (Titus 3:2) That includes our parents—even if we think they deserve it! Consider that you can even use negative characteristics to teach your children what NOT to do.

Grandparents – recognize that God wants you to leave a heritage of righteousness for the next generation and the generations following. As we age, it is easy to slip into bad habits, complaining about our aches and pains and the state of the world in general. We can become grumpy old men and women. We encourage you to pursue the presence of the Lord, where there is fullness of JOY (Psalm 16:11)! Ask yourselves, "How do I want my grandchildren to remember me?" "What kind of legacy do I want to pass on to my grandchildren?"

Family Fellowship – if your family gatherings are not places of fellowship, ask yourself why. Pray about how to establish your family get-togethers as places of unity and fellowship. Tell your stories about what God has done for you, so that other family members can hear.

A Godly Legacy—the Best Gift of All

One of the best gifts I have ever received was during a year when my son could not afford to buy gifts. So instead, he wrote letters. In his letter to us, he wrote about how he remembered from his childhood how we shared about answered prayers and God's provision and how those stories affected him and caused him to grow in his faith. Looking back, I realize that all we did was to share our stories (true stories). God did all the rest! But it

had an impact! And the letters he wrote to us are framed and hanging up on a wall in our home, more precious to us than silver or gold.

Application

Describe the attitudes you encountered during childhood about extended family relationships. What areas do you recognize in your life that ought to conform more fully to a biblical approach to family in the future?

Review your sense of heritage and how God has used your extended family to instill values of importance to your life.

What impact will the trend toward fewer children have on society?

Conclusion

God works in society primarily through family units.

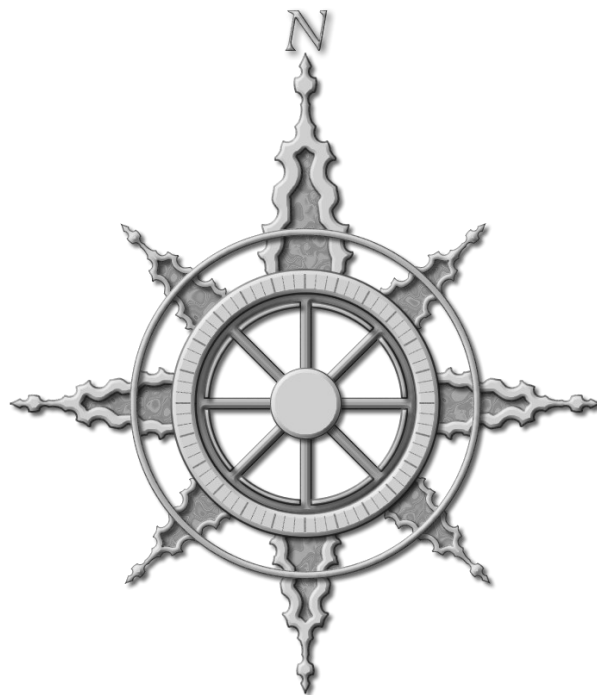
Contemporary society (secular and humanistic) places far more value on individualism and personal fulfillment.

The Bible teaches us that our heritage, as a gift from God, forms a vital part of who we are and enables us to fulfill our mission as servants to those around us.

The primary mission of the Church of Jesus Christ is to make disciples. That begins with our children. We establish strong families ordered upon biblical principles. The hope of current society lies in God's truth, lived out by Christian families as they display righteous management and compassionate care of children.

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The Altered Family



God's Special Concern

Our modern society has accepted, embraced, and even invented alternative views of the family. The challenge to the Church is how to effectively minister to unusual and often dysfunctional family situations.

Homes are often painfully torn apart through abandonment and divorce. Many families are begun without the benefit of marriage, creating single-parent, mostly fatherless families. Also, those who have been divorced re-marry, creating a "blended" family, which is often not a united family. These broken and divided families seriously impact society in general. This impact is very negative, affecting families in many ways, including financially, relationally, emotionally, and spiritually. But these situations are certainly not hopeless!

We, as the Church, have been called to follow the example of Jesus, upholding the Father's original standard while loving and working with those in exceptional family situations. In this chapter, we will address how to extend the kingdom of God into altered families and to impart God's special provision to those not able to live within the ideal biblical framework.

God's Love for Altered Families

Genesis 1:27

So God created human beings in his own image. In the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

God has demonstrated His concern for those in altered families, going back from the Mosaic Law and including the new covenant. God lives in the complexity of a Divine Company (the Trinity) and He desires that no one should live all alone in life.

Genesis 2:18

Then the LORD God said, "It is _____ for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him."

Genesis 2:24

This explains why a man _____ his father and mother and is _____ to his wife, and the two are united into one.

He completed His creation of Adam by creating Eve for him. He declared that it was "not good" for Adam to live alone. So God revealed Himself as a Father to the fatherless, making provision for them in His Law.

Psalms 68:5

_____ to the fatherless, defender of widows— this is God, whose dwelling is holy.

God, as the preeminent Father, made provision in the old covenant for the widow, the orphan, and the stranger. Also, He set the lonely and single people in families.

Deuteronomy 10:18

He ensures that _____ and _____ receive justice. He shows love to the _____ living among you and gives them food and clothing.

Psalms 146:9

The LORD _____ the foreigners among us. He _____ for the orphans and widows, but he frustrates the plans of the wicked.

Why God Hates Divorce

Yes, He really HATES it!

He speaks *very* clearly in the *strongest* language from His *rightful* position as Lord and God, as we see in the book written by the prophet Malachi:

Malachi 2:16

“For I _____ divorce!” says the LORD, the God of Israel. “To divorce your wife is to overwhelm her with cruelty,” says the LORD of Heaven’s Armies. “So guard your heart; do not be unfaithful to your wife.”

When a man divorces his wife, he “overwhelms with cruelty” the one he should protect! And when a woman divorces her husband, she “overwhelms with cruelty” the one she should support! And we won’t even get started on how this “cruelty” affects the children involved! That is for another chapter.

The disciples questioned Jesus about divorce, and He responded by making them aware that divorce was not what God had originally intended. The only reason it had been allowed by Moses was because of the hardness of their hearts – and that is not a good thing!

Matthew 19:7-8

“Then why did Moses say in the law that a man could give his wife a written notice of divorce and send her away?” they asked. Jesus replied, “Moses permitted divorce only as a concession to your _____ hearts, but it was _____ what God had originally _____.”

1 Corinthians 7:27-28

If you have a wife, do not seek to end the marriage. If you do not have a wife, do not seek to get married. But if you do get married, it is not a sin. And if a young woman gets married, it is not a sin. However, those who get married at this time will have troubles, and I am trying to spare you those problems.

No one, after reading these passages, can refute the fact that God hates divorce and all its effects. Yet He acknowledged the sinfulness (selfishness) of people by making provision for divorce in the Mosaic Law.

The relational and emotional havoc created through divorce neutralizes the very covenantal bond through which God deals with all people on earth.

However, God calls us to relate with mercy and kindness to the fragmented members of altered families with the same grace and love our Heavenly Father extends to us.

God has always asked His People to Love Altered Families

Over 3,000 years ago God began to call His people to show mercy and kindness for those in altered families. The Law of Moses in the old covenant provides for the protection of the widow, the fatherless, and the stranger in Israel. (Keep in mind as you read these passages, that in Bible times the word “orphan” applied to fatherless children.)

Deuteronomy 14:29

Give it to . . . the foreigners living among you, the orphans, and the widows in your towns, so they can eat and be satisfied. . .

(Also read Psalm 10:14, Proverbs 15:25, Jeremiah 49:11)

In the same way today, God calls His people of the new covenant to care for widows, orphans, and strangers. God's concern for the altered families in the Early Church prompted the first administrative efforts within the Church to address those needs (Acts 6:1-6). This is very serious to God and should also be very serious to us.

James 1:27

Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means _____ for orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you.

Serving God by Serving Altered Families

When we embraced Christ's atoning sacrifice of himself for our sins, God included us in His family! Hallelujah! There are no words adequate to describe what a great blessing this is! And He doesn't stop there, He has also granted us the full rights and privileges of that family. We are not "second-class citizens" of the Kingdom. We are embraced and nurtured as FAMILY. It all starts with a relationship with His only begotten Son (our Brother), Jesus Christ.

Romans 8:15

So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he _____ you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father."

"Abba" is a term which, in our modern-day language, could be translated as "Daddy." It denotes a closeness, a familiarity, a personal intimacy - a real *relationship*. That is how our relationship is to be with God!

Not everyone has the kind of intimate relationship with their earthly father that lets them call him, "Daddy." Paul tells us it is that precise relationship that God wants with us. We *belong* to Him. He *loves* us. We should be comfortable in His presence. And Paul writes further in Hebrews 4:16 that we can come *boldly* to the throne of our gracious God! It is there that we find mercy and grace to help us when we need it the most. How can we contain our gratitude and our praise?!!

Galatians 4:3-6

And that's the way it was with us before Christ came. We were like children; we were slaves to the basic spiritual principles of this world. But when the right time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, subject to the law. God sent him to buy _____ for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. And _____ we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son

into our hearts, prompting us to call out, "Abba, Father."

Ephesians 1:5

God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he _____ to do, and it gave him great _____.

Since we have received the spirit of adoption from God, we need to learn to exercise the same spirit toward one another. Whenever we can, we look for ways to include the members of altered families in our own spiritual families, and in our natural families, too, when appropriate.

Here are some biblical examples:

- 1) Boaz, Ruth, and Naomi (Ruth 1-5)
- 2) Elijah, the widow, and her son (I Kings 17)
- 3) Joseph and Jesus (Matthew 1)
- 4) Paul and Timothy (I Timothy 1)

God delighted in making provision for those who suffer great need because of their altered family situation. He indicted Israel many times for their failure to represent His compassionate faithfulness. Their unwillingness to follow God in this respect contributed to their captivity as a nation and helped lead to their destruction. The same fate should await the United States of America if we fail to be compassionate to these who God has so clearly cautioned us to care for.

Proverbs 18:24

There are "friends" who destroy each other, but a _____ friend sticks closer than a brother.

Isaiah 1:17

Learn to do _____. Seek justice. Help the oppressed.

_____ the cause of orphans. _____ for the rights of widows.

Loving what God Loves

Paul and Timothy

The Bible doesn't say much about Timothy's natural father, except to say that he was a Greek. It says more about Timothy's mother and grandmother, speaking highly of them as faithful women of God (Acts 16:1-5, I Timothy 1:3-5). But at some point, he encountered the apostle Paul on one of his mission trips. He may have been very young at the time. But Paul took Timothy with him on his travels and became a mentor to him. (Acts 16:4-5). Soon, Timothy served not only as a companion for Paul, but also as a Pastor. He had been personally trained by Paul himself. He also suffered along with Paul during some of his trials.

Paul called Timothy, "my dear son." Meaning that Timothy was his son "in the faith." And so, we see that it is possible to become a father figure, or a fatherly example to those who are not natural-born children.

Passing on the "Spirit of Adoption"

We have seen this "spirit of adoption" at work with our own eyes and in our own hearts.

We have seen strangers loved, accepted, and forgiven. We have seen those who are stronger in the faith, reach out to help others grow.

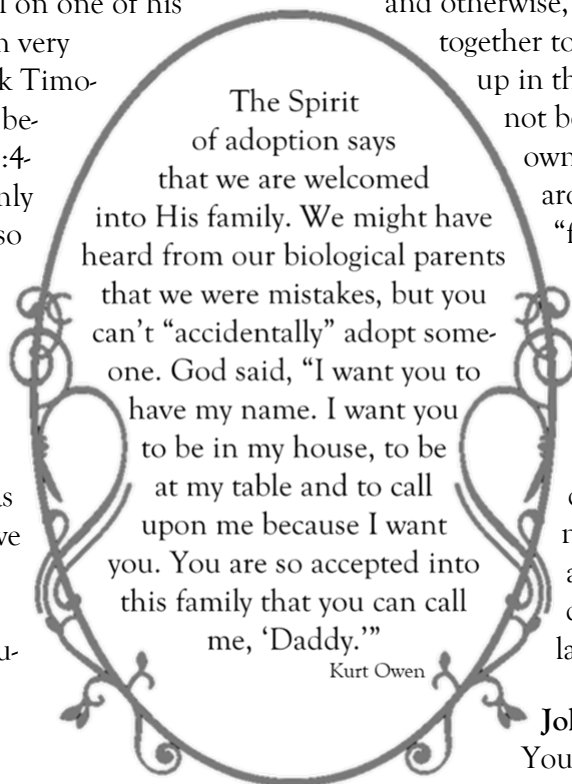
We have seen men reach out to other men and women reach out to other women helping them to grow and increase in their faith.

We have witnessed a man who had children of his own notice another little boy who was fatherless. This man took this little boy under his wing and

included him in his family so that this boy could grow up and see what a good dad could be to his family. They invited the little boy's family over for dinner and included them in some of their family gatherings at holiday times.

When the family of this boy had needs, financial and otherwise, our church pooled resources together to care for them. This boy grew up in this church and is thriving today, not because he had a father of his own, but because others came around him and helped to "father" him for no other reason than because they wanted to love and please their Lord.

This takes a great deal of time and effort. It takes a kind of "death" to selfishness, laying down our lives for others. It is not always easy, and does not always bring pleasure. But . . . it does bear fruit, fruit that will last!



John 15:16

You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce _____ fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name.

Galatians 6:9

So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we _____.

Moving Forward

Application

Look around you.

Notice families that are impacted by altered family conditions.

Is there anything you can do to help?

Can you give some time? Some effort? Your friendship?

Why do you believe that God reflects special interest towards the orphan and widow?

If you are in an altered family situation, or have been negatively impacted from an altered family situation — have you found a local church family that will care for you and help you to find healing from the Lord?

Conclusion

God is greatly concerned with the members of altered families. He calls His people to serve them by helping them to find their place in God and His Church family. God set the example for fatherhood for us by sending His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, to meet our needs.

Jesus paid the price so we could be restored to the Father. God wants us to learn how to impart this great salvation, acceptance, and nurture to single people, single parents, widows, and the fatherless.

The Church's effectiveness in the local society will be measured by its ability to demonstrate care and show mercy to those who are already objects of God's special care.

Those who show mercy are the ones who receive mercy.

The Redeemed Family & Society



God's Plan for Redemption

In the past several lessons we have studied God's design for family and society, according to what He determined in His covenants with Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses. Then, in His covenant with David, we begin to see God shift a bit. While He never abandons the importance of His original design, He begins to add ways to restore the damage brought to mankind through sin.

The Scriptures show that the world system rejected the original model for family and society. Indeed, it continues to do so to this day, as we can clearly see in our own culture. And so, if they already despise the original model, how can they be expected to take God seriously when it comes to a plan for redemption?

In this lesson we will look carefully at God's goals and healing process for the family and society. It is truly amazing!

Please read the following two passages carefully, taking time to ponder each sentence. Pray for God to give you understanding.

Romans 5:12-21

When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned. Yes, people sinned even before the law was given. But it was not counted as sin because there was not yet any law to break. Still, everyone died—from the time of Adam to the time of Moses—even those who did not disobey an explicit commandment of God, as Adam did. Now Adam is a symbol, a representation of Christ, who was yet to come. But there is a great difference between Adam's sin and God's gracious gift. For the sin of this one man, Adam, brought death to many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of forgiveness to many through this other man, Jesus Christ. And the result of God's gracious gift is very different from the result of that one man's sin. For Adam's sin led to condemnation, but God's

free gift leads to our being made right with God, even though we are guilty of many sins. For the sin of this one man, Adam, caused death to rule over many. But even greater is God's wonderful grace and his gift of righteousness, for all who receive it will live in triumph over sin and death through this one man, Jesus Christ.

Yes, Adam's one sin brings condemnation for everyone, but Christ's one act of righteousness brings a right relationship with God and new life for everyone. Because one person disobeyed God, many became sinners. But because one other person obeyed God, many will be made righteous.

God's law was given so that all people could see how sinful they were. But as people sinned more and more, God's wonderful grace became more abundant. So just as sin ruled over all people and brought them to death, now God's wonderful grace rules instead, giving us right standing with God and resulting in eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Genesis 6:5-8

The LORD observed the extent of human wickedness on the earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil. So the LORD was sorry he had ever made them and put them on the earth. It broke his heart. And the LORD said, "I will wipe this human race I have created from the face of the earth. Yes, and I will destroy every living thing—all the people, the large animals, the small animals that scurry along the ground, and even the birds of the sky. I am sorry I ever made them." But Noah found favor with the LORD.

This is a lot to absorb. We pray that God will do a work in your heart as you grasp how truly great and merciful our God is toward us.

God's Provision for Redemption of Family

As we read on the previous page, after Adam and Eve's failure in the Garden, sin passed upon all mankind. As God warned, this brought death upon the earth (Genesis 2:16-17). The infection of rebellion and selfishness grew increasingly worse. First, man's relationship with God was broken. Then the breakdown of family relationships followed. Notice how soon murder appears after Eden. One brother kills the other brother – shocking! Gradually, every attitude, intention, and act was infected by each person's rebellion and selfishness. Each of us, as individuals, are truly without excuse (Romans 1:20).

God stated that He could stand it no longer and sent the flood both to judge and to cleanse. God structured and communicated the Mosaic Law to show people just how far they had gone into sin.

Galatians 3:19

Why, then, was the law given? It was given alongside the promise to _____ people their _____ . . .

The Law uncovered and revealed the dimensions of sin. It has no power of its own to give life or righteousness, or to save or change people. The Law is like a mirror – something to look at and compare ourselves to so that we can be more aware of how far we have fallen. Then, if we respond to it properly, it leads us to Christ. The Law did not cancel or nullify the Abrahamic covenant. Both the old and new covenant places our relationship with God on the basis of faith rather than fulfilling a law. The truth is, none of us are capable of fulfilling the Law! We cannot earn our relationship with God!

Galatians 3:26

For you are all children of God through _____ in Christ Jesus.

As God continued to reveal His covenant with David, we see a shift in attitude. God now deals with David in terms of redemption and restoration – not obedience or disobedience. God will still correct him when he sins, as any earthly father

would. But He reveals His heart, how He longs to redeem and restore, not to judge and condemn.

2 Samuel 7:14-16

I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he sins, I will _____ and discipline him with the rod, like any father would do. But my favor will _____ from him . . .

The new covenant now comes into focus through the Prophets. Every promise and example in the entire Old Testament points to Jesus. His obedience and death on the cross, His sending of the Spirit, and the gifts of the Spirit, are all part of the plan of redemption. Jesus is the fulfillment of all the covenants.

We want to draw three conclusions from this quick survey of man's sin and God's redemption:

- First, the original family model, given in the Garden of Eden, has suffered along with all of creation as rebellion and selfishness progressively infected its very core.
- Second, the original family model finds its redemption and completeness - structure, identity, and fulfillment - in Jesus Christ.
- Third, Jesus' victory at the cross enables us to build our families around the Word and Spirit of God as revealed and fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth.

Jeremiah 31:31-33

"The day is coming," says the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. . . They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife," says the LORD. "But this is the new covenant . . .," says the LORD. "I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I _____ their God, and they _____ my people."

The Original and the Redeemed

The original family model from Eden to Moses contains the default or 'bare bones' outline of all that God intended for mankind. The true dimensions and fullness of that family model can be found only in Jesus Christ.

The apostles spent time with Jesus (the Living Word) . They sat under His teaching and worked with Him for about three years. When they wrote about the family (and all things), they wanted to express all they heard from the Creator-Architect whose lifestyle affected them so profoundly.

Jesus builds upon the original family model and transforms it into a family motivated by the Holy Spirit, structured by the Word of God, and focused on fulfilling God's plan for their lives. This redeemed family is built upon the guidelines of the Spirit, not an earthly premise.

The redeemed family model finds its fulfillment and meaning in Jesus Christ. The 'rebuilt' model takes the 'bare bones' of Adam's revelation and transforms it within the framework of Jesus' lifestyle and attitudes.

Ideally, the redeemed family looks for a city with eternal foundations, that is built by God. They present themselves daily as a living sacrifice to God.

Hebrews 11:10
Abraham was confidently looking forward to a city . . . designed and _____ by _____.

Romans 12:1-2
And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. _____ the behavior and customs of this _____, . . .

They consider themselves crucified (dead) to the world and the world dead to them. They keep their eyes (their life's perspective, purpose, and goals) on Jesus Christ.

Galatians 6:14
As for me, . . . my interest in this world has been _____, and the world's interest in me has also _____.

Within a redeemed family, parents see themselves in terms of Jesus' plans for them and their children. The husband works to lead and provide for all members of his family. He cultivates his love relationship with his wife. He recognizes the Spirit's gifts upon her and provides opportunity and resources for godly development. He enables her to grow into her place of radiance in God.

The wife develops a quiet, gracious, and yielding spirit before God so that her husband, children, and society receive the full measure of the witness her life expresses. Her uniquely enabling support releases her husband into the fullness of God's purpose for him so that he can sit with the leaders in Church, business, and society.

They work with each child, as a specific and unique gift from God, training and equipping each one for his privileged placement in God's Kingdom.

The children learn to fear the Living God to yield, to obey, to develop control of mind, body, and-soul – their old nature. As they emulate their parents' lifestyle, by serving and protecting their brothers and sisters, their witness permeates their life in the school, church, and neighborhood.

The Church and Fractured Family Members

The members of each family in each local church, by the Word and Spirit, should strive to be an example of the family redeemed by the grace of God. As we grow by the Word and the Spirit, we learn to handle the pressures of life within our own spheres, including our family spheres. Then God can and will use our families to reach into our local communities, communicating His grace, mercy, and wisdom.

Be aware that God permits the testing of the well-ordered Christian family to rid them of any hints of self-righteousness or arrogance in attitude.

James 1:2-4

Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your _____ is _____, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and _____, needing nothing.

Jesus, in the synagogue of Nazareth, quoted Isaiah 61, declaring Himself to be the fulfillment of Isaiah's Messianic prophecy.

Isaiah 61:1

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is upon me, for the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to comfort the _____ and to proclaim that captives will be released and prisoners will be freed.

We see that this Messiah, Jesus Christ, comes to comfort the broken-hearted. The New Testament Letters to the churches (Epistles) are full of godly principles and power for addressing all the needs suffered by those whose hearts are shattered. Let us look at the 'broken hearted' in our churches and society.

More than fifty percent of marriages in America end in divorce. God has emphatically revealed His own attitude towards divorce: HE HATES IT.

Malachi 2:16

"For I _____ divorce!" says the LORD, the God of Israel. "To divorce your wife is to overwhelm her with cruelty," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. "So guard your heart; do not be unfaithful to your wife."

As we stated in the last chapter, the reason for God's hatred of divorce lies in the relational and emotional havoc created by it. It neutralizes the covenantal bond through which God deals with people on earth. More than that, marriage represents the Christ's relationship with His Church. When we have a superficial attitude towards commitment in marriage it reflects a similar attitude of commitment to Christ. Millions have been shattered by this experience, and need the healing that only Christ can bring.

Let us enumerate here several types of brokenness affecting families:

- **The widowed** – specifically mentioned by the Lord as a special object of His love and concern. In the New Testament Letters (Epistles) we see them as a special responsibility for the elders and community. (I Timothy 5:3-6) They can choose to remarry, or to remain as they are.
- **Divorced and still single** – Paul specifically states that if the unbelieving spouse abandons them, they are "free." (I Corinthians 7:15-40) Some interpret this 'freedom' as eligibility for re-marriage; others do not. Paul encourages them to remain as he is, but clarifies that this is his view, not a pronouncement of God.
- **Divorced, but 'living together'** – Paul addresses immorality as sexual relationships outside of biblical guidelines. He states that immorality injures the one who indulges in it. Divorce equals no longer married, therefore a sexual relationship between unmarried parties enters the category of immorality. Often, explaining this concept (with compassion and love) causes those involved to choose a better alternative.

Fractured Family, continued . . .

- **Divorced and re-married as Christians** – Many believers fall into this category. For some reason, their first marriage ended. Often, without taking time to consider the reasons, they enter into another relationship and seek the blessing of the church. Then within that new marriage, they bear the consequences of breaking their first covenant. It is better to take time, consider your part in the failure of your marriage, seek forgiveness, redemption and healing before you begin to look for another spouse.
- **'Deadbeat' parents** – Those who procreate and then abandon their families in order to live in the fantasy of self-fulfillment. Often, the one leaving has been the father, but it is occurring with more frequency among women. God calls His Church to step in with emotional and family support for those abandoned.
- **Celibate homosexuals** – Some Christians recognize these tendencies within them. They resist their old natures, bringing them to the cross and the grace of God. Pledged to Christ, they live 'in the Spirit,' and turn their backs on the permissive standards and attitudes of society.
- **Homosexual marriage** – Our culture has accepted and embraced marriage between homosexuals. The Bible warns against the harm of such things upon a society. We want to extend love to those who are caught up in homosexuality.. However, in the same way we would discourage heterosexual immorality and adultery, we must also discourage homosexual immorality and adultery.
- **The promiscuous** – Our society nearly demands that individuals should freely practice their inner desires, no matter how perverted or harmful. This is the epitome of selfishness. The promiscuous are called to stop their promiscuity, whether it be homosexual or heterosexual, and to walk in the Spirit, so we don't fulfill the lusts of our flesh. (I Corinthians 6:9-10 & 18, 10:13, Galatians 5:19-21)
- **The dysfunctional or abusive marriage** – God hates any kind of abuse toward self or others. Within a family, where the members are supposed to love one another, it is especially heinous.

The perpetrators of abuse must be confronted and hopefully brought to repentance. God gives ministry gifts to address and cover the needs represented for the abused spouse and children.

- **The addictive lifestyle** – Again, God showers His Church and followers with all the ministries necessary to work with these 'shattered' people and families.

There are many more areas of brokenness in homes. Jesus knows the need. He paid the penalty for sin at the cross and broke the power of sin through the Resurrection. We can bring all these expressions of brokenness' to Him. Indeed, He is the only One who can bring this kind of healing.

May we, as members of His Church, have the wisdom, grace, and compassion to help those who have been wounded or caught in a web of sin.

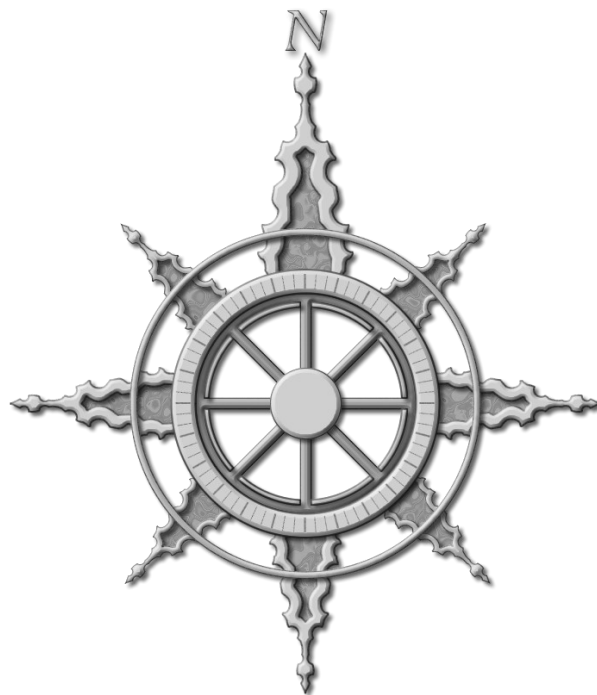
APPLICATION

How would you handle a 'stranger' in your church service? Would it make a difference to you if they were divorced, dysfunctional, or shattered in some other way? How would you express grace and compassion to them? Do you sense within yourself a tendency to withdraw from them because they are not like you? What concrete steps could you take to gently restore a 'shattered' person? Have you ever experienced a shattering? What steps are you taking to receive healing?

CONCLUSION

The grace of God has come to earth, first in Jesus and now in His Church. Jesus addressed the needs of the shattered through His death on the cross and gifts of His Spirit. Today He calls His followers to express His grace and mercy by recognizing the kinds of brokenness that devastates lives. More than that, Jesus gives gifts to some of His followers to engage the healing process with the community of believers. And Jesus constantly tests His Church to expose the self-righteousness that isolates His followers from the very people who most need His provision. The redeemed model of the family encompasses the fullness of God Almighty on earth; the redeemed family builds itself into the redeemed local church.

Managing Family Finances



Guidelines from the Scriptures

2 Peter 1:3

By his divine power, God has given us _____ we need for living a godly life. . . .

Everything that we need to live a godly life can be found in the Bible, including God's principles for financial freedom. Scripture speaks directly to all issues of financial stewardship, on both the earning and spending categories. God designed the family to be an example by practicing good stewardship when it comes to finances. In this chapter, we will study those biblical guidelines.

Biblical Guidelines for Finances

Matthew 6:33

Seek the Kingdom of God _____, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need.

In a day and age where the very definition of family is questioned and twisted, more than ever, we need to realize and understand how important the family unit is in this world. God designed marriage and the human family as the primary witness to the grace of God for individuals, families, and societies. And so, we find guidelines in His Word for attitudes towards finances and material possessions. The fundamental attitude is, "Seek *first* the kingdom of God. . . ."

1 Timothy 6:6-7

Yet true godliness _____ contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it.

The contentment we crave does not depend upon food, money, supplies, or other resources. Rather,

it comes from the capacity of a believer to trust God in all circumstances, to be "calm in the palm" of our God. This is a huge part of our growth process in the Kingdom of God, and it is fundamental to our life journey. The Holy Spirit produces contentment in us as we yield ourselves to trusting God. The more we trust Him, the more content we will be!

Philippians 4:19

And this same God who takes care of me will supply _____ your _____ from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.

The temptation to become rich easily and quickly, actually entraps the one who follows it. It makes us slaves to the love of money and neutralizes our trust in God. We reject God and His provision, and chase after "get rich quick schemes."

1 Timothy 6:10

For the love of money is the _____ of all kinds of _____. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

Instead, the Bible teaches wisdom, the attitude of 'gathering money little by little' to make it grow.

Proverbs 13:11

Wealth from get-rich-quick schemes quickly disappears; wealth from hard work grows _____.

I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. . . .

Philippians 4:11-14

Priorities—What's Most Important

The Scriptures tell us what is of greater value – a good name, the blessing of God, relationships, etc.

Proverbs 22:1

Choose a good reputation _____
great riches; being held in high esteem is
_____ than silver or gold.

Many of those who value riches above all else have great sorrow and trouble in their lives. When God blesses a person with wealth, it is a different story.

Proverbs 10:22

The blessing of the LORD makes a person rich, and he adds _____
_____ with it.

The Bible teaches us that to trust in financial prosperity is foolish, because it can be lost or taken away very easily.

Proverbs 23:5

In the blink of an eye wealth disappears,
for it will sprout wings and _____
_____ like an eagle.

It is God, Himself, who even gives us the ability to work and make money to provide for our families. Therefore, we owe Him our gratitude. He is truly a gracious and generous God!

Deuteronomy 8:18

Remember the LORD your God. _____
is the one who _____ you
power to be successful, in order to fulfill
the covenant he confirmed to your ancestors with an oath.

Generating Surpluses

Proverbs 10:4

Lazy people are soon poor; hard
_____ get rich.

Proverbs 28:20

The trustworthy person will get a _____
reward, but a person who wants quick riches
will get into trouble.

We save for the future through diligence. The Scriptures guide us to store what God gives us beyond our immediate needs.

The Scriptures direct our savings in terms of gathering money little by little to make it grow. To save money in small increments reflects this biblical wisdom

The interest earned from various types of savings accounts, if left in the account, earns interest on the savings plus the interest. This compounding of savings, especially if left for 25 years or more, will generate surpluses for generosity towards the work of God's Kingdom, for retirement, or the next generation.

Proverbs 27:12

A prudent person _____
danger and takes precautions. The simpleton goes _____ on
and suffers the consequences.

See also: Proverbs 27:23-27

Prudence means planning for the future. Scripture mandates that we provide for our own families.

Proverbs 13:22

Good people leave an _____
to their grandchildren, but the sinner's
wealth passes to the godly.

Scripture also instructs those who are rich to also become rich in good deeds.

Investing Surpluses

We give generously because God gives generously to us. We store treasure in heaven for ourselves when we give our resources or invest them in people and projects that further the kingdom of God. This includes others who labor in God's Kingdom, the local Church, outreach to the poor, evangelism, missions, biblical teaching, and other ministries. (Matthew 6:19-21)

Beware!

Destructive Spending

Some spending habits find their source in weakness. They can be compulsive, impulsive, without regard for consequences. They can lead the individual and the family into back-breaking debt. When this occurs, the future of the family and even for the next generation is put at risk. Beware! The entire media industry contains advertising seeking to separate the viewer from as much money as possible. Our sinful natures tend to crave self-indulgence, instead of seeking the greater good of society as a whole. If we allow that to continue, our society will be destroyed, and us along with it!

Proverbs 21:17

Those who love pleasure become _____; those who love wine and luxury will never be rich.

See also: Proverbs 4:7, 21:20, and 23:23

Financial planners who have an appreciation for Judeo-Christian values suggest the '10-10-80 program' to guide family spending. This program plans ten percent for tithes and offerings; ten percent for savings; and eighty percent for all necessities (taxes, food, clothing, shelter, insurance, etc). This is a great way to set up a family budget.

Matthew 6:21

Wherever your _____ is, there the desires of your _____ will also be.

Do you realize that our spending habits say a lot about our heart attitudes? We must ask God to reveal destructive spending to us. Destructive spending means you buy what you want, when you want it, without regard to the value represented in the price paid or the consequence of its effect on the family's future. The Bible warns us that in this scenario, poverty lies waiting at the door!

Dangers & Consequences of Debt

Proverbs 22:7

Just as the rich rule the poor, so the borrower is _____ to the lender.

The Scriptures place limits around us to guide us especially in avoiding debt, or the need for paying down debt. Our culture casts debt in such a favorable light by extolling the credit card industry. We need to face the jolting reality from the Scripture: **Debt makes me a slave to the lender.** The interest paid on debt robs the worker of his financial future!

To borrow today for what I cannot afford presumes on the grace of God that He will provide for my indulgence. Indulgence means that I cannot pay for what I just bought. God will indeed provide our every *need* within our covenantal relationship. But God does not lead us to borrow money for which we have no collateral or means of repaying.

Co-signing

We realize this is not a popular subject, but the Bible warns us about this! We must be very sure we can pay a debt before agreeing to co-sign for another person – even if that other person is our own child!

Proverbs 22:26-27

Don't agree to guarantee another person's debt or put up security for someone else. If you can't pay it, even your bed will be snatched from under you.

It is far better to make a gift of something—expecting nothing in return, than to co-sign and risk having to pay for a debt you cannot afford.

Biblical Qualities for Productivity

The Bible is very clear in explaining those attitudes and motivations that are pleasing to the Lord and warns us against those that are NOT.

Diligence – the steady application of time, energies, and skill to the work. The opposite of this is laziness, which the Bible equates with robbery or destruction.

Proverbs 10:4

_____ people are soon poor; hard workers get rich.

Proverbs 18:9

A lazy person is as bad as someone who _____ things.

Faithfulness – loyalty and dependability in carrying out assignments or responsibilities. The opposite of this is being inattentive and having sloppy work habits. The Bible warns us that these will result in poverty! (Matthew 25:14-30)

Luke 16:10

If you are faithful in little things, you will be faithful in large ones. But if you are dishonest in little things, you won't be honest with greater responsibilities.

Wisdom – the application of biblical attitudes and principles to one's family, work, and lifestyle. Biblical wisdom produces riches and honor. The opposite of wisdom is foolishness: emptiness in the heart, no reservoir of biblical attitudes and principles, which results in self-destructive, poverty-prone behavior.

Proverbs 3:14-15

For wisdom is more profitable than silver, and her _____ are better than gold. Wisdom is more _____ than rubies; nothing you desire can compare with her.

Skill – practiced and developed ability to use our knowledge effectively. Skills represent God's gifting to people, not to keep for ourselves, but to develop and use for the good of society. Example:

God gave skills so people could participate in building the tabernacle and Solomon's temple (Exodus 31). If we ignore our God-given talents and giftings or leave them untrained, we risk reaping poverty for ourselves.

Proverbs 22:29

Do you see any truly competent workers? They will serve kings rather than working for ordinary people.

See also: I Kings 11:28, II Chronicles 2:13, and I Kings 7:13-14

Teachability – the type of humility that makes us continue to learn, grow, and change, seeking deliberate study or apprenticeship. Job markets change continually. The knowledge and skill we gained twenty years ago may become obsolete. Therefore, there is a need to update our knowledge and skills. Failure to be teachable can result in job demotion or loss . . . and poverty.

Proverbs 10:14

_____ people treasure knowledge, but the babbling of a fool invites disaster.

See also: Proverbs 1:4, 8:12, 9:6, and 9:9

Work heartily – With zest, gusto, sincerity, we purpose to please God, primarily -not simply our bosses. That perspective assures us that we also please our earthly managers. To serve God with the skills and placement He designs brings joy to the worker's heart.

Colossians 3:23

Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.

See also: Ecclesiastes 9:10, & 17-18

All of these attributes are pleasing to God, and so we should practice them. When we live our lives in this way, we bring a smile to His face and gladness to His heart – and then, guess what? Just as any good parent, when our children please us, we want to BLESS them! We want to encourage that kind of attitude and behavior, right?

Giving & Spending

The Scriptures give us guidelines for giving to God. Some assume that tithing was a part of the Law, and therefore no longer required. But according to the Bible, Tithing was practiced several hundred years *before* the Law! Cain and Abel brought “gifts” to the Lord (Genesis 4:4) Abraham tithed to Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God (Genesis 14:18-20). Offerings to God date back to the time just after Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 8:20-22)

Then, when the Law was given, it included details about how to please God with tithes and offerings (Exodus 23:19, 34:26, Deuteronomy 11, 26-28, 14:22). Their failure to honor God with their ‘first fruits’ led Israel into captivity. But God promises restoration based on the resumption of tithes and offerings.

The Scriptures exhort us to give generously because God has given generously to us.

Proverbs 11:24-25

Give _____ and become more wealthy; be _____ and lose everything. The generous will prosper; those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.

So, if you sow (give) generously, you will reap (receive) generously. The opposite is also true.

God especially encourages us to help the poor. To share with the poor is the same as sharing with God.

Proverbs 19:17

If you help the poor, you are lending to the _____ – and he will repay you!

Taxes!

From the teachings of Jesus, we see the necessity of paying our taxes (Luke 20:21-25, Matthew 17:24-27). The Apostle Paul adds that we also owe honor and respect along with our taxes!

Romans 13:6-7

Pay your

_____, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do. . . . and give

_____ and honor to those who are in authority.

Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don’t give reluctantly or in response to pressure. “For God loves a person who gives cheerfully.” And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

APPLICATION

Make a list of the many ways that God has blessed you and your family in material things. If you are not using a budget for your family, consider seeking the assistance of a leader who can help you establish a sound budget for you and your family. Study the Scripture concerning the tithe and put your trust in the Lord. My husband and I are fond of saying, “We can’t afford NOT to tithe.” because we have seen God’s faithfulness to His promise of blessing in our lives.

CONCLUSION

In His Word, God reveals His guidelines for earning, giving, minimizing dangers, generating savings and avoiding the slavery of debt. God gives both financial liberty and peace of mind as we follow His ways.

His ways are better than our ways! After all, He created everything – and he knows how it works best! Teaching your children these principles will bring them a lifetime of blessing.

The Family & the Church



The Church in Miniature

The principles that govern the natural family also extend to the Church. They provide the structure and environment in which we work as part of the household of God and functioning members of His Church. The spiritual health of the local church reflects the condition of the families which form its members. The scriptures describe the Church as the *family of God* and the *body of Christ* in the earth. In this final lesson of this section, we address the family as the basic unit (beyond the individual) which makes up the Church.

Ephesians 3:14-15 (NLT)

For this reason I kneel before the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name.

Both the Church and the family relate to fatherhood as the **source** of authority and guidance. For the family is a miniature expression of the Church. The father in his own home leads and guides his family. The Church looks to God as the Eternal Father, the one source of all authority and provision.

Appropriate submission within the natural family conveys the heart of yielding to godly authority within Christ's Church. God calls for hearts of submission within the natural family. The ability to defer to appropriate authority within the family forms the training ground for yielding to Christ, and within Christ's Kingdom as expressed through His Church.

Ephesians 5:21

And further, submit to _____
_____ out of reverence for Christ.

The experience of training and discipline within the family sets the stage for equipping and oversight through the leadership of the Church. As children learn to respond to and value their family instruction and reproof, they sensitize themselves to the guidance, the reproofs, and impartation of God's Spirit. And so, if we learn to yield to the authority in our own family, we will be better

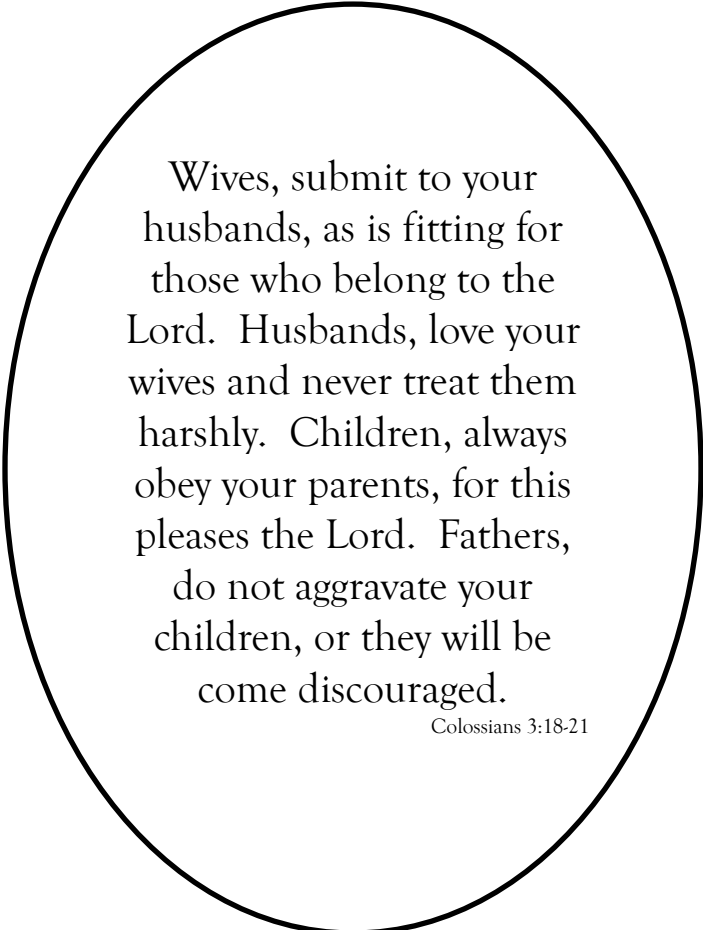
equipped to yield to other authorities, both secular (police, judicial, and governmental) and sacred, including Christ and the appropriate authority in the church he places us in. If we do not learn this in our family, we will have a difficult time submitting to other authorities, anywhere.

This is why the instruction for fathers and mothers from the Word of God is so important because we are passing on heart attitudes as well as instruction about our God and His Kingdom.

Ephesians 6:4

Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you _____
_____. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.

God is fully aware of the weaknesses of mankind. That is why His word is so specific in these instructions and admonitions.



Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly. Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will be come discouraged.

Colossians 3:18-21

The Church IS a Family

Psalm 103:13

The LORD is like a

_____ to his children,
_____ and compassionate
to those who fear him.

Throughout scripture, God reveals Himself in terms of family roles and identity. He characterizes Himself as a father, the only God who deals with followers in terms of fatherly compassion. He depicts Himself as a devoted and faithful Husband, dedicated to the love of His life. He also portrays Himself as a nursing mother, giving sensitive care and attention to His children.

Ephesians 3:18

And may you have the power to

_____, as
all God's people should, how wide, how
long, how high, and how deep his love is.

Jesus, as he taught us to pray, instructs us to approach God as our Father (Matthew 6:9-13). We are not to approach God as a generalized, abstract, far away person! He wants **relationship**. We can approach Him as "our Father", who loves and cares for us with a faithfulness beyond human comprehension.

1 John 3:1

See _____ very _____ our
Father loves us, for he calls us his children,
and that is what we _____! . . .

The apostle Paul shows us the meaning and closeness of the fatherly relationship in the Spirit's prompting us to call Him 'Abba', the equivalent of 'Daddy'.

Galatians 4:5-6

God sent him to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his _____
children. And because we are his children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, prompting us to call out,
"_____, Father."

God the Father speaks of Jesus, very simply, as His Son. From the mystery of Psalm 2 (Psalm 2:7), to the Davidic declaration of Samuel (2 Samuel 7:11-16), to the Heavenly declaration at Jesus's Baptism (Matthew 3:16), the Scriptures recognize Him as God's one and only Son. The Scriptures also recognize Jesus as a Bridegroom, who sees His Church relationally as His Bride (2 Corinthians 11:2, Revelation 19:7).

Relationally, the husband-wife bond symbolizes the mystery of just how Christ relates to His Church. God looks at the Church as a spiritual unit, His family, nurtured through the headship of Christ to become like Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16). This Church, God's own family, practices loving care for one another and those in the world. The Spirit of God builds Christ's Church as God's family into a spiritual household, a dwelling place for the Living God.

ORDER: the Family & the Church

1 Corinthians 14:40

But be sure that everything is done

_____ and in
_____.

The ability of the Church to experience and practice order takes for granted the same quality of order within the home and family. God designated the man, as the head of his household, to represent his family before God and the Church. Likewise, he represents God and the Church before his family. Headship and the resulting order expresses itself most clearly in the effect the local family has upon the Church and the kingdom of God.

See the following related passages:

Acts 6:3 (guidelines for the very first deacons)

1 Timothy 3:1-13 (order and standards for Elders & Deacons)

1 Corinthians 11:3 (headship)

Reciprocal Support

The Family Supporting the Church

The church is God's people, families and individuals, gathered! We were never meant to function alone. God has called us **together**. It is our task to support the Family of God in the local church where He has placed us. Beyond that, he has assigned to us the role of making disciples and spreading the good news in all the earth. This is our mission! Service organizations can do great things. Para-church organizations can have an impact for a season. But they can never replace the godly family as the source for carrying out Christ's mission on earth. God, through His giftings, enables the family to extend loving care in ways that no organization could hope to match.

Romans 12:13

When God's people are in need, be ready to _____ them. Always be _____ to practice hospitality.

The complementary roles represented in godly fathers and mothers provide **nurture** as well as **teaching**. God graces the godly family for benevolence, hospitality, and service which no institution can provide. The Good News of Jesus's Gospel spreads naturally and appropriately from the platform of the family within the local church.

John 13:34-35

So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.

The Gospel, lived out in our daily lifestyle, is displayed much more accurately and declares its inherent truth and power. However, any unresolved family problems soon find their way into the arena of the Church family. So take care to resolve family problems in a godly way.

See also: Acts 18:18-19 & 24-26, Romans 13:8, Rom 16:1-5, I Timothy 1:5 & 5:8-10, Titus 2:1-8, Hebrews 13:1-45, I Peter 4:9-11,

The Church Supporting the Family

God fashioned the family and the Church to be mutually supportive in the working of His Kingdom. He designed what we call the "five-fold ministries" to impact and impart truth, power, and godly structure into families. These ministries are: Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers (Ephesians 4:11-13). The Bible says it is their **responsibility** to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church. The Church leadership, enabled by these ministry giftings, helps define and support the integrity and strength of family relationships, as each family embraces their guidance and instruction.

Ephesians 4:11-13

Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the **apostles**, the **prophets**, the **evangelists**, and the **pastors** and **teachers**. Their responsibility is to _____ God's people to do his work and _____ up the church . . .

So, church leaders must faithfully guard, protect, and communicate God's counsel regarding men, women, and children, godly families, and the Church. If they fail in this responsibility, the health and stability of our families will tend to decline. OR, if our leaders ARE conveying God's Counsel, and we don't receive it, or we rebel against it, we will reap that same decline. A decline in the health and stability of our families will then produce a decline in the health and stability of our churches, and then that instability will extend even more outward into our communities and our nations.

Hebrews 13:17

Obeys your spiritual leaders, and do what they say. Their work is to _____ over your souls, and they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this with _____ and not with sorrow. That would certainly _____ be for your _____.

The Family & Evangelism: Fill the Earth

Genesis 1:28

Then God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and

_____ the earth and govern it . . .

Beyond the individual, the Kingdom of God expresses itself most immediately in the human family. God blesses the righteous family with righteous offspring, for spreading the knowledge of Himself worldwide and replenishing the human race with more righteous offspring. Within the context of the family, God supplies the resources for procreation, productivity, and evangelism for His purposes throughout the earth. You see, God has always had a plan for covering the earth with His people.

The Family, Procreation, & the Human Race

God designed the family for the procreation of the human race. Healthy procreation proceeds from family nurture, covenant, and government. Fruitfulness expresses the nature of God. Along with the original creation, He created animals, birds, and fish to multiply (Genesis 1:11 & 20). Then He instructed Adam and Eve to be fruitful and increase in number (Genesis 1:27-28).

God intended to fill the earth through procreation within the family. He wanted the parents to raise children to inherit and manage the earth. The family context provides the nurturing environment and the training for the children to walk in the ways of the Lord.

Spiritual nurture, the goal of the new covenant, has its roots in the old covenant's emphasis on human procreation. The earth will be filled with the knowledge of God as the offspring of godly parents fill the earth.

Psalm 22:30-31

Our children will also serve him. Future

_____ will hear about the wonders of the Lord. His righteous acts will be told to those _____ born. They

will hear about everything he has done.

Even couples who do not conceive natural children are called and graced by God to bear spiritual offspring. Whether through adoption or service within the body of Christ, they extend the love and Good News of Christ's Kingdom into new fields, bringing forth a rich harvest of righteousness and blessing.

Psalm 68:6

God places the lonely in

_____ . . .

The Family, Benevolence & Good Works

God designed social life on earth so the family can display and express its relationship with God. As Christian people, we should be the BEST at kindness and good works!

Philippians 2:3-4

. . . Don't look out only for your _____ interests, but take an interest in _____, too.

Genesis 12:3

I will bless those who bless you . . . _____ the _____ on earth will be blessed through you.

God called us to be a blessing to all the world. His blessing flows *beyond* the family. Caring for family members and relatives *connects* with practicing our love and faith for Jesus Christ. The family reaches out with God's blessing to help address the needs of others.

Galatians 6:10

Therefore, whenever we have the opportunity, we should do good to _____—especially to those in the family of faith.

Kindness and good works need to walk in step with evangelistic and church planting efforts to help demonstrate the practicality of Christ's life and teachings.

The Family, Evangelism, & Church Planting

God designed family blessing to reach beyond the known believers and touch strangers and the poor. God permeated the Mosaic Law with His attitudes about **social justice** for people without family structures. God reaches out to include them within His loving care. The non-Christian workman, the traveler, the wanderer (homeless), the foreign guest, the abused ~ all these God includes within the responsibility of His Church (formerly, His Israel). Christian families who reach out to involve dysfunctional individuals and families will find significant opportunities for evangelism and extending the knowledge and blessing of God.

Leviticus 19:33-34

Do not take advantage of foreigners who live among you in your land. . . love them as you love yourself. Remember that _____ were _____ foreigners . . .

Psalms 146:9

The LORD protects the

_____ among us. He cares for the orphans and widows, . . .

Hebrews 13:2

Don't forget to show hospitality to _____, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it!

Built into Creation!

God built this principle into creation: fruit reproduces after its kind, whether animal, bird, fish, trees or agricultural seed (Genesis 1:11). It is fully displayed in the human family. From righteous parents and family spring God's life and blessing. God's life reproduced in the children reaches out through them and touches the neighborhood, town, and world.

Isaiah 11:9

. . . for as the waters fill the sea, so the earth will be _____ with people who know the LORD.

God designed us to reproduce after our kind. This means that we will also reproduce our spiritual life in others. To reproduce the graces of the Holy Spirit in our children, and then in extended family and neighbors, spreads the glory of God over the face of the earth. Jesus sends us forth to bear much permanent fruit in the lives of new believers.

John 15:8

When you produce much fruit, you are my _____ disciples. This brings great _____ to my Father.

The Family of Christ Blesses the Nations

God sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, into a family within local society. Through Him, God reaches into all the families of the earth. God has designed the family so that it produces abundant fruit, after its kind. This fruit forms the future leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ as well as the local society.

Galatians 3:6-7

. . . "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." The _____ children of Abraham, then, are those who put their _____ in God.

How do the relational qualities of a family relate to relational qualities in the Church. What goals can you set for your household that will help you to be a better model for your children and extended family? How has your natural family helped or hindered your journey in the Kingdom of God?

In what ways can couples without natural children bear spiritual children?

Many alternate models for the family in local culture challenge the biblical home and family. Such challenges work directly against the structural integrity of the Church of Jesus Christ and hinder the fulfillment of its mission.

GLOSSARY

Altered Family	a family unit in which either the mother, the father (or both) are absent and not supporting their family.
Benevolence	the disposition to accomplish good works; charitableness.
Bond	union, connection; a binding.
Chastise	the act or process of correcting or punishing with a view toward reclaiming the child from his self-destructive behavior and broken relationships.
Church	the committed Christian community worldwide; the local gathering of the followers of Jesus Christ.
Community	a society of people who enjoy common bonds, privileges, interests, and goals.
Complement	to supply fullness or completion.
Contract	an agreement between two parties in which each party binds himself to perform or forbear certain acts.
Covenant	a coming together; a binding together; a permanent bond based on self-sacrifice for the common good.
Debt	that which is due from one person to another; frequently the result of not generating a consistent family financial surplus.
Discipline	the oversight, instruction, and correction necessary to protect and produce maturity.
Dominion	supreme authority; absolute ownership
Economics	(Greek: oikonomikos) pertaining to the management of the household; the study of the management of production, distribution, and consumption of goods.
Eunuch	under the old covenant, a man rendered incapable of producing children, for the sake of giving his life to a particular service. Under the new covenant, a person chooses to live a single life and not produce children, for the sake of giving his life, his time, his energies and his resources, to God's service in His Kingdom.
Extended Family	the family unit composed of a father, a mother, and their children, as well as grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and in-laws.
Family	the basic unit of society typically comprised of a man, his wife and their offspring

Family Economics	the study of the management of household finances in accordance with God's will and principles as set forth in His Word.
Father	1) a man who procreates a child, or functions in a paternal capacity. 2) one who accepts the responsibilities for procreation; caring, providing,
Female	that which relates to the distinctions of women in God's creation
Fruit	in agriculture: the harvest of labor; in Family: children, descendants.
Helpmeet	one who is suited and equipped to assist another.
Household	those who live under the same roof and form part of the same family.
Integrity	wholeness, entireness, completeness; unbroken state which comprehends the character of an entity; internal soundness.
Lineage	descent in line from a common progenitor (Webster)
Love	(Greek: <i>agape</i>) the self-sacrificing compassion of God evidenced in seeking another's welfare at the expense of personal interest.
Male	that which relates to the distinction of man in God's creation
Mandate	an authoritative command
Mankind	the human race, including both men and women
Microcosm	an entity or unit that is an epitome of a larger unit
Mother	a woman who procreates a child, or functions in a maternal capacity.
Nuclear Family	a family unit composed of a father and mother with all of their children
Nurture	that which promotes growth, feeds or nourishes
Original Model of the Family	the family as initially revealed in Eden and defined through the Mosaic Law
Parent	a father or mother who assumes the duties of loving, maintaining, educating and training children
Procreate	to beget; to produce offspring; have children, "beget," or generate de-
Provider	one who furnishes or supplies
Redeemed Model for the Family	the family as seen through Jesus' perspective; the family structure and purpose as seen at the high point of God's revelation in Jesus and His apos-
Redeemed	the salvation and sanctification process, based on conformity to the image of Christ, which the Holy Spirit undertakes in all Christ's followers, in their families, their societies, and nations. The completion awaits the return of Christ, our resurrected bodies and the fullness of God's Kingdom

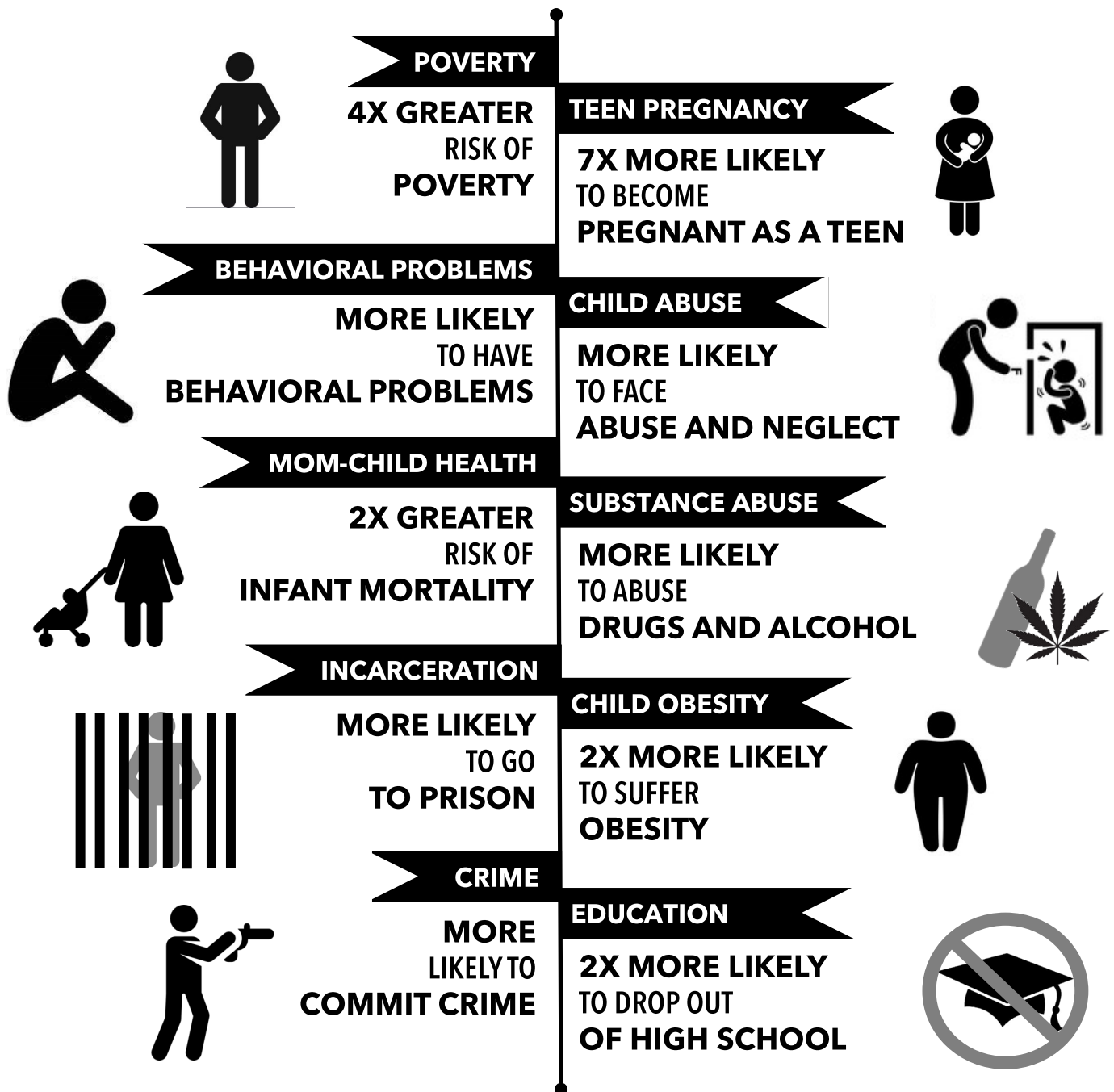
Respond	to answer, reply; to be answerable
Responsibility	the state of being accountable or answerable as for a trust, or office or for a debt (Webster, 1829)
Rod	an instrument for correction or punishment
Role	a function assigned with a position
Sacrifice	to surrender or suffer loss for the sake of obtaining something deemed more valuable
Secular	behavior, thought, and culture patterns controlled by the world system and dominated by the spirit of disobedience; that which is against spirituality and holiness
Secular Humanism	a philosophy or religion that rejects Judeo-Christian values of a Sovereign God, absolute standards, Man's sinful (selfish) nature, and the essentiality of biblical dis-
Seed	progeny, offspring, children, descendants
Stewardship	a sphere of responsibility to be worked for another, for which one must give ac-
Surplus	that which remains when need is satisfied; an excess of earnings over expenses, de-
Technological Society	a society which provides necessities for human sustenance and comfort based on
Training	the act or process of educating to produce consistent behavior
Trans-generational	passing through multiple generations
Vocation	calling; a summon to a specific work, lifestyle, or course of action

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ADDENDUM

The Crisis and Curses of Father Absence

There is a fundamental crisis in America. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 18.3 million children (1 in 4) live without a biological, step, or adoptive father in their home. Consequently, there is a “father factor” in nearly all of the societal ills facing America today. Research shows when a child is raised in a father-absent home, he or she is affected in the ways displayed in the graphic below:



TEST

Foundations for Living: Family

Name: _____

Score: _____

2 Points each

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the correct answer in each of the following TRUE/FALSE questions.
THIS IS AN OPEN-BOOK TEST!

1. T F In our modern culture, we can and should change the nature of the family to suit our individual preferences and desires.
2. T F Satan has distorted the roles of both men and women.
3. T F Our modern culture has rejected respect and honor in favor of rebellion and arrogance.
4. T F The Lord is concerned about our purity, whether we are married or single.
5. T F God calls some of his followers to the single life.
6. T F Earthly contracts are open for renegotiation.
7. T F God builds biblical marriages upon the covenantal reality of commitment, faithfulness, and trust
8. T F God does not expect fathers to represent godly leadership before their wives and children
9. T F Our current Western culture continues to value biblical roles for women.
10. T F God's design for women is for no other reason than filling the earth with babies.
11. T F The purpose of parental discipline is to train a child toward self-discipline
12. T F When your child hears you, understands you, and disobeys you, it is simply an accident on their part.
13. T F Family is the first environment where a child learns values and standards for living.
14. T F God places a high value upon extended family.
15. T F When we dishonor our parents or our grandparents, we cut ourselves off from receiving or inheriting all they had learned and experienced from God.
16. T F Altered families ought to be rejected by the church.
17. T F God doesn't mind divorce at all.
18. T F God's Word gives us no guidance when it comes to financial matters.
19. T F Principles that govern the natural family also extend to the church.
20. T F The complementary roles represented in godly fathers and mothers provide nurture as well as teaching.

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the correct answer in each of the following multiple-choice questions.

26. The Family is the basic social unit designed by

- a. a person's preferences and desires.
- b. God.
- c. The government
- d. All of the above

27. The word, "dominion" means

- a. The power or right of governing and controlling
- b. The winner of a game
- c. Conquering our enemies
- d. All of the above

28. Who determines the nature of manhood?

- a. We do
- b. Our parents do
- c. God
- d. All of the above

29. All through the scriptures, we are taught to be

- a. Less self-seeking
- b. More humble, gracious, and generous.
- c. More like God
- d. All of the above.

30. As a wife trusts her husband's leadership and honors him in attitude and conduct

- a. She also trusts God's leadership
- b. She gets herself enslaved to her husband.
- c. She also honors God with her attitude and conduct
- d. A & C

31. Contemporary marriages rise and fall in direct relationship to

- a. commitment
- b. Fluctuations of emotions
- c. Self-serving desires
- d. B and C

32. The universe

- a. Is in a self-developing mode.
- b. Starts and stops at God's Word.
- c. Is the result of an explosion in the ozone.
- d. All of the above.

33. A father should

- a. Represent godly leadership to his children
- b. Represent Christ's interests in the world.
- c. Set parameters for instruction and discipline with his children.
- d. All of the above.

34. A husband should never

- a. Tell his wife she is beautiful.
- b. Spend uninterrupted time with his wife.
- c. Put his children before his wife.
- d. All of the above.

35. We are all

- a. Worthy to be worshipped.
- b. Unworthy of being worshipped.
- c. Created poorly.
- d. All of the above.

36. How many ways are there to be a perfect mother?

- a. 42
- b. 0
- c. 365
- d. 5

37. Children belong to:

- a. their parents
- b. God
- c. their government
- d. their community

38. Training children takes place during

- a. school hours
- b. Sunday school
- c. everyday life
- d. their time with friends

39. The purpose of parental discipline is

- a. to humiliate the child
- b. to train a child toward self-discipline
- c. to incite rebellion in a child.
- d. to keep the parents sane

40. Involvement in a church body

- a. links you with other like-minded families
- b. provides a place to share problems and solutions
- c. provides encouragement during difficult times
- d. all of the above

41. The book of Proverbs contains wisdom about:

- a. attitudes and actions
- b. material possessions
- c. choices we need to make
- d. all of the above

42. The extended family is valuable because

- a. God transmits the memory of his covenant and his deeds generationally.
- b. They pass down familiar traits through the generations
- c. The sins of the fathers are passed down through generations
- d. none of the above

43. Effectively ministering to unusual and dysfunctional families

- a. is a very simple thing.
- b. is impossible.
- c. is challenging to the Church
- d. requires a college degree in psychology.

44. God calls his people to extend His love to:

- a. those who are widowed
- b. those who are fatherless
- c. those who are divorced
- d. all of the above

45. As each family functions as God intended:

- a. their witness is seen in their school, their church, and their neighborhood.
- b. people will hate them and stay away from them.
- c. their children will grow up to reject the Lord.
- d. they look for a place to build for themselves.

46. Principles for handling financial matters

- a. do not matter to God
- b. can be found in the Bible
- c. need to be taken to an accountant
- d. none of the above

47. Tithing is

- a. no longer required today
- b. a part of the old covenant
- c. one of the ways we please God.
- d. a curse

48. Married couples who do not have children

- a. are cursed
- b. are blessed
- c. can't nurture anyone
- d. can bear spiritual offspring

49. Mankind includes:

- a. men and women
- b. men, women, animals, and fish
- c. men, women, animals, fish, and plants
- d. men only

50. A fundamental crisis that we face in our day is:

- a. fatherless homes
- b. high tax rates
- c. global warming
- d. social distancing

When you have completed your test, tear it out of the book and turn it in to the office or to your Home Group Leader.

If you score 80% or above you will receive a certificate of achievement.

MASTERPIECES

