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The Family

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE



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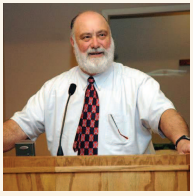
Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it.

PSALM 127:1, EXCERPT

The household is a setting for instruction, care, and daily responsibility. John Weaver considers the family through messages on biblical relationships, parental duties, discipline, and faithful conduct. This collection encourages readers to examine how the teaching of Scripture shapes the life and order of the home.

"It is one thing to know what is right and another to have the power and ability to do what is right."

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.

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CHAPTER 1

The Family

Part One

The Institution of the Family

Genesis chapter 2, beginning with verse 18: “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them. And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one

flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

This is the institution of the family. God has created only three institutions. He created the family, which is a ministry of education. He created the church, which is a ministry of grace. And He created civil government, which is to be a ministry of justice.

Introduction: The Primacy of the Family

The family is the most fundamental and necessary of all the institutions. Why? Without the family, you cannot have either a church or a state. Without the family, you do not have anything. It is the most basic institution. Without the family you cannot have proper teaching, proper training, or proper education. You cannot have either good Christians or good citizens.

Children, listen carefully: those who will not respect the family will not respect the church or civil government. Children who rebel against the family will also rebel against the church and civil government.

If I had a blackboard and were trying to draw a picture for you today, I would put a great big circle and in that circle write the name God. Then I would draw a straight line down from God, draw a smaller circle, and write the word family. From the family, I would draw a horizontal line on one side, drop down, draw another little circle, and write church. On the other side of the family, I would draw another horizontal line, drop down, draw another circle, and put civil government. So you can see that everything comes from God to the family, and from the family it branches out into the church and into the civil government. This picture would be a proper diagram of the importance of the family and of the three institutions that God has ordained.

The same sovereign God who ordained each of these institutions also defined and limited each institution and gave it its proper sphere of authority. Therefore, each institution has its own sphere of authority and is not to be interfered with by the other institutions, as long as each institution is fulfilling its proper role. The point is that there is to be absolutely no usurpation of authority.

For instance, here is the family. As long as the family is functioning in the role that God has ordained, the state, or civil government, has no authority and no right to step into the family and say, “Look, you cannot train your children like that,” or, “You must train your children like this.” No, the state has no authority to do that. The only time the state would have authority is if there is a parent who is murdering or hurting the child, or something like that. If there is a clear violation of the law of God, then the civil authority would come in and have the right to do so, to interfere in that family. But as long as that family is not violating the law of God, as long as it is functioning in the role that God has ordained, there is to be no usurpation of authority. Therefore, with the state, or with civil government, there would have to be what you and I would call a hands-off policy.

On the other hand, neither the church nor the family can look at the civil government and say, “You can execute that murderer.”

Yes, they can. God says they can. We have no right to tell the state that it cannot fulfill the proper role God has ordained for it, and that role is the ministry of justice. God not only instituted each of these institutions; He created them, defined and limited their roles, and gave each its sphere of authority.

Each institution must function biblically in order for there to be prosperity and peace. If we are to exercise dominion in our proper sphere, we must function according to the way God has ordained each sphere to function. If there is a breakdown in the church, family, or state, there will be one of two things: either anarchy or totalitarianism.

That is true in the family as well as in civil government. Look at the family today: on one hand, you have some hard-nosed, iron-clad man slapping his fist down and saying, "It'll be this way or else!" On the other hand, there is no discipline whatsoever. The children do what they want, the husband and wife do what they want—in other words, total, absolute anarchy. That is what is happening in our land today.

The same is true when the state or the church fails to function biblically. In the average church, there is no such thing as church

discipline. It is nothing but total anarchy because most people do what they want and live as they want, absolutely without regard to the Word of God.

When we are talking about the family, let us ask a simple question: Why do we even have a family? Why not, as the hippies used to advocate in the 1960s, free love? Why have a husband, a wife, and a family? Why not breed as dogs, cattle, horses, and other animals? Have you ever noticed that in the animal realm, after mating, there is usually no communication, no responsibility, and no exercise of dominion? It is simply each animal for himself.

When a buck mates with a doe, he does not stay to help raise the fawn; he leaves. The same is true of a hog or a horse. There is simply no responsibility in the animal realm. When that is applied to the human realm, it is the same truth. Probably five, six, or seven years ago, Alice and I were told about a man whose brother-in-law had sired 36 children at that time. Of course, they were from different women. He was not married to any of them, but he had sired 36 children.

The Family Must Be Viewed in Terms of God

How many of those children do you think that man supports? How many does he discipline? How many does he educate, teach, and train? The answer is none. It is now left up to our great welfare society, and to the taxpayers, to feed and clothe his children and give them a good government education.

When humans live like animals, they end up acting like animals, and there is never any assumption of responsibility. God has ordained the family. In the family, there is responsibility.

The family must be viewed in terms of God. If we are to understand the family, we must do so in terms of God. The proper point of beginning is God. God is the one who creates the family; God is the one who ordained the family. He made it as an institution. Therefore, it can only be understood in terms of God.

Sigmund Freud and other socialist philosophers teach the evolutionary development of the family. In other words, originally it was not like this, but the family simply evolved. Then they infer that

we can go on from the family and no longer need it. The family is absolutely disposable, like a disposable diaper or disposable Kleenex: just throw it away.

Please understand what the socialist philosophers want. When you do away with the old collectivity, the family, it is only so that you may further establish the new collectivity, the state. The family will no longer have control; the state will control everything. The family will no longer be independent. The government will have control of everything.

Was it not even Hillary Clinton herself who wrote a book on the family and said, “It takes a village”? Why do you need families? You do not need families; you need a village. You need a government. That is what she was saying. Anytime you try to do away with the family, you are trying to do away with the God-ordained, God-created unit that God has given us to function in this society, that we may properly be good Christians and good citizens as well. The meaning of the family is not even to be sought for in procreation.

Producing offspring to perpetuate your race is indeed important. But although it is important, it is certainly not the whole of the family. The family has to be understood in a theological sense. It is not simply a social institution. Family life only has meaning in terms of God and His Word. It is to be God-centered, not man-centered; theocentric, not anthropocentric. God is to be at the absolute center of it.

R. J. Rushdoony, in his book Institutes of Biblical Law, gives us the importance of the family, especially its importance in reference to God: "The family is not only the first environment of the child. It is also his first school where he receives his basic education. His first church, where he's taught his first and foundational lessons concerning God and life. His first state, where he learns the elements of law and order and obeys them. And his first vocation, where he is given work to do and responsibility in terms of it. The essential world for a small child is the family, his father and mother in particular."

Roderick C. Meredith has summarized the matter aptly: "In the eyes of a small child, a parent stands in the place of God Himself. For the parent is the child's provider, protector, lover, teacher, and lawgiver."

The first environment is the family. The first school is the family. The first church is the family. The first state is the family. The first vocation is the family. The family has to be understood in theological terms. It cannot be understood in man's ideas, man's theories, and man's views. God created and ordained the family; therefore, if you understand the function of the family, you must understand it in reference to God Himself.

The Family as an Instrument of Dominion

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 1:27-30 (KJV)

> The family was designed by God to be an instrument of dominion.
>
> "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, the man and the wife, and God said unto them, the man and the wife, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat."

I want to call your attention back to verse 28. There are two words there: subdue and dominion. God said that the man and the wife were to subdue the earth and have dominion over it.

The word subdue is the Hebrew word kabash, which translated literally means to subdue, to bring into subjection, to bring into bondage, to keep under, to dominate, to tread down, and to make subservient. God gave Adam and Eve the order to make the earth

subservient to themselves, to bring it under domination. The word dominion is radah, which means to rule, to exercise dominion, to prevail, to subjugate, and to cause to dominate. Thus, God called Adam and Eve to subdue the earth, to bring it under their feet, and to exercise dominion.

Genesis 1:28 has been variously referred to as the Dominion Mandate, the Dominion Charter, or the Great Charter. Note that the Dominion Mandate was given to Adam in his married estate. What does the Bible say? “And God blessed them, the man and the wife, and God said to them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion.” Why do you think that, when God brought Eve to Adam, she is called a help meet?

That is an old English term meaning a helper that is suitable to, a helper that is answerable to. When Adam saw all those animals, there was no helper suitable to him. God said, “I'm going to make a helper that is suitable to the man.” The word help-meet is from the Hebrew word ezer, meaning a helper, a help-meet, one who is suitable and answerable to one's needs.

The husband and the wife, the father and the mother, are therefore called to dominion. God gave this dominion mandate to Adam in his married estate. Christian men are called to dominion, but Christian families should also be dominion conscious. The sovereign God has delegated authority, power, and dominion to the family in and through Jesus Christ.

Man, by nature, is dominion-oriented. In fact, man is dominion-oriented not only by nature, but by calling as well. Men are usually more aggressive than women, and usually it is the man who chases the woman.

Except in my case—Alice chased me. I can tell you all really believe that, don't you? But man is more aggressive than woman. Studies comparing men and women have made an amazing discovery: men and women are basically identical, except that men are superior to women in only two areas—the first is abstract thinking, and the second is aggression. By nature, then, we are the aggressive sex.

God created Adam to be His vicegerent, or vice-president. God created Adam to rule in that garden as His vice-president, under God, for God's honor and glory. You remember the very first catechetical question asked in the Westminster or Philadelphia, and probably Barry Souther, catechetical instructions: “What is the chief duty of man?” “To glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” Adam had that dominion mandate in the garden to glorify God.

By nature, we want to exercise dominion. We want to conquer. But we are not only dominion-oriented by nature; we are also dominion-oriented by calling. God not only created Adam to be dominion-oriented; God actually called Adam to exercise dominion. This calling, then, is a biblical calling. Practically speaking, God created Adam, placed him in the garden, and called him to a vocation: to till, plant, control, protect, harvest, and enjoy that garden. Work and fulfillment, work and responsibility and fulfillment, go together.

Work, Responsibility, and Fulfillment

Do you know why there are so many unfulfilled people in this land today? There are very few who work, and very few who work responsibly. I have often wondered about those who live off welfare: Have they ever taken a vacation? How do you ever rest up if you do not ever do anything? God has pointed out that work, responsibility, and fulfillment go together.

As you read Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, you will find that work existed before the fall. It only became onerous and difficult after the fall. Before the fall, work was a joy and a pleasure. Holby and I had some tough times this week, and both of us probably sweated out a gallon or two of sweat. But I thought about this: I wonder if we would have sweated back in the garden. I do not think so. I think we would have just enjoyed it.

Work did not really become difficult and onerous until after the fall. Since God has created us as dominion-oriented individuals, not only by nature but by calling, it is equally important that we understand that any calling, any vocation whereby man extends his dominion under God, according to God's purpose, without abusing or misusing or showing contempt for the earth, is indeed a holy

calling. You do not have to be a preacher to have a holy calling. OBGYN is a holy calling. A veterinarian is a holy calling. Buying books and selling books is a holy calling. As long as you are extending dominion under God without abusing or misusing anything that God gave you, it is a holy calling. Whether you eat or whether you drink, do all for God's honor and God's glory. The very fact of the matter is, when God called us to our work, it was a holy calling.

When God created Adam and Eve, He created them full-grown. He did not create a little baby and nurse them until they grew up; He created them mature. The goal is maturity. You cannot understand man by a primitive past. The way you understand man, and what really makes a man, is mature responsibility and work.

It is not age that makes a man, but maturity, responsibility, and work. I have known men much older than myself whom I would not entrust anything to, and I have seen some much younger than myself to whom I would very gladly entrust something, because for their age they were exceedingly mature. Maturity is the goal. Man has been called to work. Man has been called to assume responsibility. Man has been called to exercise dominion, and only in that light can he be considered a man. It is not muscles that make the man. It is not physique that makes the man. Plenty of women have fallen in love with a man's body, only to be exceedingly disappointed when they found out they had married a child or a mama's boy.

Man's calling is under God. The woman's calling is in terms of her husband's calling. That is why she is called a help-meet: a helper suitable to, or answerable to, her husband's need.

Since God has called man to exercise dominion, his work must be productive, fruitful, and fulfilling. Otherwise, he is frustrated and discouraged. His calling is in terms of his vocation under God. If a man is unsuccessful in his calling, there will be absolutely no satisfaction in his life.

Can you imagine what Adam would have achieved in the garden if he had never sinned? The garden was really and truly nothing but a test plot, so to speak. Had Adam succeeded there, it would have been the earth. Once he conquered the earth, who knows what else he

would have conquered? If Adam had not sinned, he would have been successful at anything and everything that he had done. He would have been able, ladies, to finish whatever he started.

Now you know why most men do not finish whatever they start: because we are sinners. Men, particularly, are dominion-oriented by nature and by calling, and their work must be fulfilling in order for them to be satisfied. Wives, some of you have now retired husbands, and that is okay. But do you remember when your husband was working? When he came in in the afternoon, could you automatically tell whether he had had a good day or a bad day? The answer is yes. By the time he walks in the door, he is going to kick the cat or do something, and you can look at his face and know that he is upset, disappointed, and unfulfilled.

Remember this: a woman's calling is in terms of her husband. If a husband comes home unfulfilled and unsatisfied in his work, there is absolutely nothing the woman can do to please him and satisfy him. Then she begins to feel disappointed and frustrated herself. Women have never really and truly grasped the importance of a man's work.

You heard about the husband who came home after having a bad day. His wife said, "What do you want for supper?" "Some two eggs." "Fine, how do you want them?" "One fried hard, and I want the other over easy."

She brought them to him. He looked at them and said, “Wouldn’t you know it? You fried the wrong one hard.” That is the way it is when a man comes home unsuccessful, unsatisfied, and unfulfilled. When he is that way, there is not one thing you can do to help him. Then you consider yourself a failure because you cannot. The problem is that you have never grasped what work really and truly means to a man.

Men must work, and they must be successful in their line of work, or ultimately the family suffers. Let me go further. Men must be men not only in terms of work but also in terms of knowledge.

The Husband's Role in Knowledge and Teaching

Look back in Genesis chapter 2, verse 19: “And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air

and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them. And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help answerable or suitable for him."

God created all these animals and brought them to Adam to see what he would name them. Please do not think Adam was merely looking around and saying, "Oh, there's that cow; she's trying to be number one, I'll call her Bossy. Oh, and there's one that's multicolored; I'll call her Paint." No, that is not what Adam was doing. When Adam was naming the animals, the Hebrew word is shem. He was scientifically classifying those animals.

More specifically, Adam was reading in those animals the very purpose for which God created them. There was knowledge; it was not just work. Adam knew the mind of God, the will of God, and the purpose of God for each of those animals that He created. Adam was classifying those animals.

One of our problems in this day and time is that we live in a world of absolute, abysmal ignorance. We had a prayer request earlier today that the Lord would teach us, share with us, and open our eyes to the truth. Let me ask you: How many books have you read this year? Think about it. Do you realize most people never read?

They can tell you what Channel 7 says on television, but they cannot tell you what Matthew 7 or Romans 7 says. The point is this: men can be men not only in terms of work, but also in terms of knowledge. Men are responsible to lead their families and teach them. Let me show you from 1 Corinthians 14. I am showing you where we have failed and where we are failing.

One of our problems in this country and in our churches is addressed in 1 Corinthians 14:33-35:

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

Now, God is not the author of confusion. I wonder what part of confusion He is talking about here? I enjoy answering questions, and I do not mind answering questions, but I am going to tell you how it really and truly is supposed to work. If Marilyn has a question, she is supposed to ask Ernie. If Ernie does not know the answer, he is supposed to ask me; then I tell him, and he goes back and teaches his wife. Really, the way it is supposed to work is that the husband is to have the knowledge and skills to find the answer himself.

Men can only be men in terms of work and in terms of knowledge. The husband is not only to be the provider for the family; he is also to be the main teacher in the family. Are you listening? That does not mean his wife cannot help him, and it does not mean that she cannot help teach the children. It does mean that the husband is to teach his wife, and he is ultimately responsible even for that which the wife teaches. God has called us to exercise dominion, but the man is responsible.

Men, how in the world can you fulfill your responsibility if you are ignorant of the Bible? How can you pass on any kind of knowledge that you do not possess yourself? It is impossible. When God created Adam, He gave him work and knowledge. If you and I are to exercise dominion, we have to learn to work biblically, and we have to learn and possess knowledge and communicate that knowledge in a biblical way.

First of all, the family can only be understood in terms of God. Secondly, God created the family for dominion. By the way, that is one reason God gave the wife as a help meet: someone answerable to and suitable to the needs of the man, someone who will work with the man and help the man.

The Fall: Autonomous Dominion Without God

You've heard me say, and I don't mind saying it: if the Lord took Alice, I'd have to marry forty to take her place. I am simply saying that this is the way it is to be.

The third thing today is this: man's fall was the result of attempting an autonomous dominion without God. Autonomous means independent: auto, self; nomos, law. Autonomous means

self-law. Man's fall came about because he attempted an independent dominion without God.

In Genesis 3 we read: "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

Before commenting on chapter 3, look back to chapter 2 and verse 16: "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

When the Bible says that the Lord God commanded the man, literally it means that the Lord God put him under an oath. It was not merely that God said, "Adam, thou shalt not eat of that tree." He did say that, but God put him under the oath: "Adam, you tell me you will not do this thing." Thus, when we come to Genesis 3, the woman sees that the tree is good for fruit, a tree to be desired to make one wise.

She looks, she lusts, she takes, and she gives to her husband. Why? Look at what the serpent said in verse 5: “For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” I have told you before that the Hebrew word for knowing has the force of determining: “Ye shall be as gods determining good and evil.” In other words, God, in Genesis 1 and 2, laid down the law for Adam and Eve: “Here is what you shall do, and here is what you shall not do.”

When you get to Genesis 3, the temptation is this: "You do not have to obey God. You can be your own god. You can make your own laws. Adam, are you content with being vice president of this garden? You can be president. You can run things the way you want to run them. You do not have to listen to God." The fall was brought about when Adam and Eve tried to impose their will upon creation. Adam was no longer content to be under God and to be vice president; he wanted to be president and to be over God.

Let me tell you about Genesis 3 and verse 5. I will use a long philosophical term and then explain it. In philosophy, there is a phrase known as Aristotelian Auditorianism. All that means is that Aristotle, one of the Greek philosophers, taught that the world was a huge auditorium and that anything could happen. In other words, he taught an open system, in which anything and everything could happen—by chance, by love, by faith, or by anything.

A gnat might even mate with a camel. You might actually find something to turn lead into gold. That is an open system. The Bible does not teach an open system; it teaches a closed system. You know what is going to happen in this world: exactly what God has ordained and nothing else.

If you want to waste your time trying to cross a monkey and a donkey, have at it. Why waste your time doing what God says cannot be done? Spend your time doing what God says can be done. The serpent was saying, "You can become gods." It is impossible for man to be a god. Man is a creature, not a god. He is not now a god, never has been a god, and, contrary to Mormonism, never will be a god. There is only one God.

The Bible teaches a closed system. Romans 5:12 sets before us what happened when man attempted to impose his will upon creation: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The verse says again, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men." Now notice the words, "for all sinned." It is an aorist: it happened once and for all. When did all of us sin? The answer is, we all sinned in Adam. We fell.

Genesis 3, beginning with verse 15, gives the account: “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” When Adam tried to impose his will upon creation, he brought forth death—death to himself and death to his posterity.

You know what happens in this world when a family, a church, or a state tries to impose its will upon creation and live the way it thinks it ought to live, irrespective of God and His Word: it produces death.

Our Lord said it very plainly in Proverbs 8:36: “But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.” Let me give you a quote, and then I want to make an application.

Most of you have read George Orwell's writings. If you have not, I would encourage you to read some of them. I especially like Napoleon and Snowball, the pigs in Animal Farm. Orwell wrote 1984, and he was not a Christian, but he saw the meaning of life without God. In that book he said, “If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face forever.”

Without God, His law, and an orderly way, all a family can bring forth is death. Without God, His law, and an orderly way, all a church can bring forth is death. Without God and His law and His orderly way, the only thing a state can bring forth is death. Without God and His Word, all we produce is a society of death.

As our Lord said, “He that sinneth against Me wrongeth his own soul. All they that hate Me love death.” What has happened to the

family in our day and time? It basically has been destroyed. The basic family unit, for all practical purposes, is dead, because most families are anti-God, anti-Christ, and anti-Bible.

Do you know why we are in the political trouble this country faces today? Our country is in such a mess because our families are in such a mess. That also shows why our churches are in a mess: our families are in a mess. Whatever happens to the family ultimately happens in the church and in the state.

God created us for His honor and His glory, to exercise our callings under Him, extend dominion, and bring creation into submission and subjection to Him and His Word. As we do so, there are peace, prosperity, happiness, and fulfillment. Without that, there is nothing but death. Our Lord said, "Without Me, ye can do nothing." We must have God-centered families.

Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ today that You would help us, teach us, and enable us to determine in our own hearts that we will be godly husbands and wives and godly children. May we be godly in our callings and do whatever we do for Your honor and Your glory. Give us grace that we may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 2

The Family

Part Two

SCRIPTURE READING - Genesis 2:18-25 (KJV)

Introduction and Review

These next four messages, I believe, are going to be vitally important as far as the family is concerned—the doctrine of the family. I would encourage you to be faithful for the next four Sundays after next Sunday so that you may hear these messages. There are going to be a few more beyond that. I do pray that you will be faithful and make application to them. Already, there are a number of things that I want to bring to you beyond this that I have been working on.

I was asked to write an article. When I wrote the article, I said, "Might as well make it a message." The article I was asked to write is entitled, "What's the Secession Treason?" I have to prove it not only historically, but biblically. I have dealt with that, as well as several other messages that I am eager to preach.

> There is a lot to share, so let us open our Bibles today to Genesis chapter 2, verses 18 through 25. Today we come to number two, message number 2 on the institution of the family, and we are still covering the dominion aspect. Notice Genesis 2, beginning with verse 18:
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> "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make an help meet for him. And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them. And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh."

"They were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed." Genesis chapter 2 demonstrates not only the origin of the family, but also the dominion aspect. Why did God institute the family? Very obviously, it was for more reasons than mere reproduction. Adam and Eve were not only told to reproduce; they were also told to subdue and exercise dominion. This dominion mandate was given in light of the married estate, to Adam and Eve as husband and wife.

The family must be viewed in terms of God; it has theological significance. You cannot understand the family by modern-day theories of socialism and evolution or by Freudian philosophy. The only way you can understand the family is based upon the Word of God. The family was designed by God to be an instrument in dominion; therefore, it has cultural significance. Man's fall was the result of attempting autonomous dominion apart from God. Remember what the word autonomous means: auto is self, and

nomos is law. An autonomous individual follows his own law and his own will; he is following self. The fall in Genesis chapter 3 came about when Adam endeavored to create basically his own law and exercise dominion apart from God. When Adam tried to do that, he brought death to himself and to his posterity.

Proverbs 8:36 says, “He that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.” We died in Adam. In fact, everything we had in Adam, we lost. We not only lost everything we had in Adam; we were positively cursed. In Adam, the only thing that now exists is misery, death, and destruction. Martin Luther expressed it this way: there are only two men in the world, Christ and Adam, and everyone hangs from their girdles. You are either in Christ or in Adam. We basically lost everything in Adam. That is why the Bible says in Romans 5:12, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” When did all sin? We all sinned in Adam. In Adam, then, we lost everything, and the curse of God was placed upon us.

Christ Restores a Godly People and a Godly Dominion

Christ, the Second Man, Restores Godly Dominion

Christ, the second man, the last Adam, came to restore a godly people and a godly dominion.

Psalm 69 is a messianic psalm and has reference to Christ. In verse 4, our Lord says, “They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head: they that would destroy me, being my enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored that which I took not away.”

Psalm 69:4 applies directly to Jesus Christ. In the New Testament, in John 15:25, our Lord quotes Psalm 69:4 and applies it to Himself: “...but this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.” Thus, the first part of Psalm 69:4 is applied directly to Jesus Christ. I might also point out that the last part of the verse is also applied directly to Him. Those who hated Him hated Him without a cause, and His enemies were numerous.

But then He says, “Then I restored that which I took not away.” Christ has given back something that He did not take away. What is He talking about? Look at 1 Corinthians 15:45–47: “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven.”

The passage distinguishes what was natural from what is spiritual, saying that afterward came that which is spiritual. In verse 45, Adam is called the first man, and Christ is called the last Adam. In verse 47, Adam is called the first man of the earth, and Christ is called the second man. Jesus Christ is therefore called both the last Adam and the second man. Adam is the first man of the earth, earthy; Christ is the second man, the Lord from heaven. How in the world can Christ be called the last Adam?

How can Christ be called the second man? Well, He is called the second man not because He was the second man chronologically speaking. Christ was first and foremost. It was Christ who created Adam. He is the Creator of all things. But He is called the second man because He was the second one in time to sustain a federal headship with a people. Adam was the first one in time to sustain a federal headship. In other words, we were in Adam. What Adam did, we did. When Adam sinned, we sinned.

That is why the curse of God passed upon us. That is why, as in Adam, all die. Everything that happened to Adam basically happened to us. We did it because he was our representative, and we were there in him. Jesus Christ is called the last Adam because there will never, ever be anyone else after Him to sustain this federal headship and representation with the people.

Romans 5:14 compares Christ and Adam. The Bible says, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." This must be seen in light of 1 Corinthians 15. Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who was the figure of Him who was to come.

So you have to ask yourself this question: How in the world could Adam be a figure or a type of Christ? Adam sinned; Christ did not sin. Adam failed; Christ did not fail. How in the world could Adam then be a figure or a type of Christ? The answer is that Adam sustained a federal headship with a people. He was our federal representative. Christ also sustains a federal headship with the people; He also is our representative. He is the figure, or type, of Adam only in the fact that He sustained this federal headship. Adam plunged all of his posterity into sin and death. Christ takes all of His posterity, raises them out of sin and death, and gives them eternal life.

There is a whole argument based upon this in Romans 5, but I am not going to get into that today because I am not dealing with this particularly. If I were to ask you why Jesus Christ came, you would probably answer, "To save sinners." That is an excellent answer, although it may not be the full answer. You would have to understand what salvation included for that answer to be acceptable.

Why did Jesus Christ come? Yes, He came to save sinners. The Apostle Paul said that He came to save sinners, of whom Paul said he was chief. But salvation involves more than that. Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.

What happened in the garden? Adam sinned. He hid himself, lied, and ran from God. Christ comes and saves us, but in saving us He brings us back to God. In the garden, Adam essentially said, “Lord, I do not want Your law. I am going to be a law to myself. I am going to do what I want to do. I will exercise dominion the way I want to exercise dominion. You do not have any right to tell me what to do.”

Now Christ has come, saves us, brings us to Himself, and leads us back to the Father. We bow to the Father and say, “O how love I thy law! Thou hast the right to rule over me. You have the right to tell me what to do and how to live. It is You, Lord, that I need to love and serve.” In other words, Christ has reversed the fall.

What did Adam have in the garden? He had original knowledge, righteousness, and dominion. Adam was not a caveman. He communed with God and walked with the Lord in the cool of the day.

He read the purpose of God in all the animals he named. As I said last week, he was scientifically classifying those animals. Adam was a brilliant man. He had original knowledge, righteousness, and dominion.

But when he sinned against God, he lost all of it. His mind became clouded; he became ignorant. In fact, that is what the Bible says about those who left God: they were ignorant of God. He lost his righteousness, and he lost his dominion, in the sense that it became perverted. What, then, does Christ do for us in salvation?

Colossians 3:10 says, Here is what the Bible says: "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." This verse directs us to the new man, renewed in knowledge after the image of his Creator. We will then go to Ephesians chapter 4.

What does Christ do when He saves us? He restores knowledge to us—knowledge of God and knowledge of His Word. We have put on "the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." In Christ, then, we have a renewed, godly knowledge. Ephesians 4:24 says, "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness."

What have we gotten back? Not only knowledge, but righteousness and holiness. What about dominion? In Matthew 28:18, our Lord said, "All authority in heaven and earth is given unto me. Therefore, go ye into all the world and preach the gospel." The Great Commission is an aspect of the dominion mandate, an aspect of the great charter that God gave to Adam and Eve to subdue and exercise dominion.

We got back far more in Christ than we ever lost in Adam. Adam had limited authority; Christ has all authority. Adam had a created righteousness; we now have the perfect righteousness of Christ. Adam had original knowledge; we now have the full revelation of God given us in His Word. Why did Christ come? To save sinners, yes—but to save those sinners and bring them back to God the Father.

Dominion as the Function of the Family

The Christian man and the Christian family are now instruments in extending the Kingdom of God. They have been brought back by Christ to serve the Father, honoring Him and extending His Kingdom.

Dominion is the function of the family as well as individuals. Have you ever asked yourself, What if Adam had not sinned? One thing is certain: he would never die. If Adam had not sinned, everyone who had ever been born since the beginning of time would still be alive.

Had Adam not sinned, would he have remained in the Garden of Eden forever? No. The Garden of Eden was simply a prototype. He would have gone from there, subduing the earth and exercising dominion as he had been commanded by God in Genesis 1:26–27. The Garden was only the beginning. Psalm 115:16 says, “Even the heavens are the Lord's: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.” What all the earth includes, I do not know.

It may include our moon, it may include our sun, it may include our planet. I am simply saying that God gave us the entire earth. Thus, in Christ, the Christian man and the Christian family are called to function in the sphere of dominion. Now, think about this. The home, the Christian family, is only the beginning. Just as the Garden of Eden was to be the beginning for Adam, our Christian families are simply to be the beginning for us.

We refer to our homes as our domiciles. Have you ever wondered why you refer to your home as your domicile? The Latin word dominus means Lord, and the Latin word domus means house. Do you know what domicile actually means? It means that you are the lord of your house. Have you ever heard the old expression that a man's home is his castle? What does that mean? He is king there. That is where he rules. That is where he reigns. It is from the word domicile. Thus, just as the garden would have been a beginning for Adam in subduing and exercising dominion over all the earth, our family is simply the beginning for you and me to do the same.

Let me explain this a little further. I do not want to get too much into this today because I will probably develop it a little more later. But I want you to look in your Bibles to Psalm 127. Your family is to

be simply the beginning of your dominion. Psalm 127, verse 4: "As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth."

As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth. What do you do with an arrow? You shoot it. Who do you shoot arrows at—your enemies, or any target that you want to bring down, subdue, or conquer? Do you realize that one aspect of the Christian family is that we are to exercise dominion and subdue the earth by sending our children out as conquering arrows to exercise dominion for Christ?

Genesis 22:17 gives this blessing: "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies."

Do you know where courts were held and where kings normally ruled from? From the gates. They had palaces, but anything else that was done was done publicly. When the Bible says that your seed will possess the gates of your enemies, what does that mean? You control them. You have subdued them. You exercise dominion over them.

Rebekah was given this blessing by her family: “And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate thee.” Let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate thee. In other words, let them exercise dominion.

Psalm 127 says, “Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them.” “They shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate.” What are the children doing? Conquering. Dominion is an aspect of the family as well as the individual.

Dominion clearly implies responsibility and authority. We as Christian families have a responsibility to use God's earth, God's world, in terms of God's law. God is the creator. He is the lawgiver. He has commanded dominion, but we are to exercise dominion according to his word. What God has given us, he has given us as a

stewardship. He is still the transcendent owner. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 4:2, “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

Responsibility and Authority in the Family

We must recognize, acknowledge, and confess that everything that is, everything that we have, and everything that we possess in reality belongs to God. We are just the stewards of it. God gave it, and God may take it. We have a responsibility to be stewards.

Authority is given to us by God to rule and exercise authority in terms of God's law. We have no authority to abuse, misuse, destroy, or pervert that which God has given us. We do have authority to act within the law of God. Without authority, the family would quickly move into social anarchy. The source of the family's authority is God, and the main representative of that authority is the husband and the father, as you find in 1 Corinthians 11:1–3; we will deal with that shortly.

But let me show you what the abdication of this authority results in. Isaiah 3:12 says, "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths." As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them.

God has given the family responsibility and authority. Unhappily, many men abdicate their authority, refuse to work, and refuse to exercise biblical knowledge. When men abdicate, deny, misuse, or abuse their position, social anarchy results not only in the home but in every other realm; the children become the rulers and oppressors, or the women. In the average home in this country, the average home is either ruled by the children or by the wife. Consequently, you have social anarchy and family anarchy.

Isaiah 3:16 says, "Moreover the Lord saith, Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet: Therefore the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will discover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling

ornaments about their feet, and their cauls, and their round tires like the moon, the chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets, and the ornaments of the legs,"

Isaiah describes God's judgment: the ornaments and garments of the daughters of Zion would be replaced with stench, a rent instead of a girdle, baldness instead of well-set hair, sackcloth instead of a stomacher, and burning instead of beauty. Their men would fall by the sword, and their mighty in the war. The severity of that judgment appears in chapter 4, verse 1: “And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.”

When men refuse to exercise biblical and godly authority, there is nothing but family and social anarchy, which results in political anarchy. I am not being ugly when I say this, but if Hillary Clinton was a perfect woman, I still would not vote for her. She has no business being in office, period. Authority is absolutely necessary for the protection, promotion, and preservation of the family. But it must be biblical authority, exercised in terms of God's Word.

On the one hand, God prohibits us from abusing and misusing the earth. On the other hand, He gives us full authority to use it according to His law, for our good and for His glory. You cannot have a family without responsibility and authority. The true meaning of the family, then, is found in a God-centered responsibility and authority, in terms of man's calling to subdue the earth and exercise dominion over it.

Private Property and Dominion

Dominion clearly implies private property. There are many verses in the Bible; for instance, Exodus 9:29 and Psalm 24:1: “The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.” No state or government owns this world, nor does any private individual. God owns the world. He is the absolute and transcendent owner of everything—the Creator, the Owner, and the Sustainer. He has given us authority, delegated it to us, to exercise dominion under Him for our good and for His glory. Even property, then, is given to us as a stewardship.

Biblically speaking, families have always been, are now, and will always be the controllers of property, not the state. One way children were taught responsibility and discipline was through the use of property. Disobedient, recalcitrant, rebellious children were always disinherited. They were cut out; they were cut off.

Let me give you a quote from Rush Dooney's Institutes of Biblical Law: “The question of inheritance and wills can best be understood if we examine the biblical word for will or testament. It is the word blessing. And inheritance is precisely that, a blessing. And for a parent to confer a blessing, or the central blessing on an unbelieving child, or rebellious, contemptuous child, is to bless evil.” He then adds, “To cut off a child is a total curse.”

When you stop and think about biblical law, there were basically only two ways of dealing with a rebellious, recalcitrant, disobedient child. And I am not talking about someone six years old.

I'm talking about a grown child. The first way to deal with that is based upon Deuteronomy 21. When the parents went to the elders and said, "This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard," the elders would take him and stone him to death. That was one way to get rid of him. The other alternative was to disinherit him, and most parents had rather disinherit the child than have him stoned to death.

When the child is disinherited, he has a choice of repenting and doing that which is right and biblical or losing everything. It's just that simple. As you read through the Bible, you find that sometimes the elder child who was supposed to receive the double portion was set aside because of sin and irresponsibility. Reuben was set aside, you'll remember. Esau was set aside, you'll remember. Reuben sinned against his father and had sex with his father's concubine. Jacob said he was not going to be the one to get the double portion in his house. He was set aside.

Parents have to learn that whatever we have is a stewardship from God, and we cannot bless evil by giving our stewardship to wicked, rebellious children. My wife can tell you that I told my girls and my grandchildren, "I love you, I'll help you, I'll break my neck for you, as long as you're doing what's right. But if you think for one instance

that you're going to rebel and sin and expect me to help subsidize your wickedness, you're mistaken. You'll never get one cent from me to help you do what is wrong and wicked." You cannot bless evil.

A further demonstration from Scripture that property, private property, was to be controlled by the family is found in Ezekiel 46, verses 16 through 18. We've gone over that passage in times past. That is where the king is forbidden the right of eminent domain. He was forbidden to take the property of the people and give it to his family or his servants. Eminent domain belongs only to God, because eminent domain is an aspect of sovereignty. It does not belong to the state, for the state is not sovereign.

I don't know if I told you this or not, but years ago I was in a meeting. There was an American Indian who was attending that church and was a professing Christian. I preached all week, and every day I had dinner with the pastor and this American Indian. Everything was fine; we talked and had good fellowship. About the last day, when we were at dinner, he was morose and sullen. I looked at him and said, "What's wrong with you?"

He said something he shouldn't have said: “You white men stole our land.” I said, “I'll tell you something. It wasn't your land. It was God's land. God has the right to disinherit anyone who will not pay Him His taxes, and His taxes are worship and praise and honor. He disinherited the Amorites, the Philistines, the Jebusites, the Hivites, and all those others.

“Here, your people were out running around worshiping the sun, the moon, the stars, and the trees. God had every right to take it away from you and give it to us. And God will have every right to take it away from us and give it to someone else if we go into idolatry like you did. Are we clear on that?” Listen, God is the Sovereign.

Ahab learned the lesson the hard way: he didn't really have eminent domain. He thought he could take Naboth's property and get away with it, but God killed him because of it. Eminent domain belongs to God alone, because the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. The right of the state to eminent domain has no place in biblical law.

Rush Dooney said something that every politician needs to hear: “The state has the duty to protect man and his property, but not to tax it or confiscate it.” That's the truth. One of the problems we have in this country is that we have a whole country full of displaced citizens. By displaced citizens, I mean that our homes, our farms, and our lands have been taken from us either through eminent domain, taxation, fraud, or theft of some kind.

Fifty or sixty years ago, most Americans were born, raised, lived, and died on the family property. They never left it. I am not being ugly when I say this, but listen to me: do you know what the most popular home in this country today is? A mobile home. I am not denigrating anyone who lives in a mobile home. But I am showing you that the emphasis is on the mobile. You can move it here or there; you can go there. In other words, there are no roots.

Consequently, no one has anything worth fighting for or dying for. They don't have the family farm or the family land; they just move hither and move yon, and it doesn't bother them. They are like nomads. It was not like that in the founding of this country.

The truth of the matter is that we must go back and start developing a family and family roots. I do not care whether it is one acre, two acres, or whatever, just so it is yours by virtue of God. You can live there and farm it, and you have something to fight for. But you have nothing to fight for when you are paying a lot of rent every month. If things get rough, you simply move. I suppose that is probably one reason there is very little conviction in this country today. Why would you fight for something that is not yours?

Historically, the family has been the controller, possessor, and preserver of property. Therefore, private property is inherent in the exercise of dominion.

God's Law as the Instrument of Dominion

God's law is the instrument of dominion. Look what God told Joshua in Joshua chapter 1: “Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead. Now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto

the land which I do give to them." Notice that God was giving it to them, "even to the children of Israel. Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses."

The word tread means to crumble off, to break down, to subdue—radah. "From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

Now look what God says to Joshua: "Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."

Joshua, you are about to go into this land. You are going to be exercising dominion and subduing. I have given you this land. I have taken it away from the Amorites, the Hittites, the Jebusites, the Hivites, and all the otherites. It is yours. Only be strong and very courageous, and observe to do everything that I have commanded you. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left. Only then will you be successful; only then will you be prosperous.

When God says that His law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein, what is God doing? God is giving us the prescription for success and prosperity. We are not going to succeed, and we are not going to prosper, apart from God.

What happened to Adam when he tried to exercise an independent dominion? He died. He lost everything. When I use the

term law, I am using it in its broadest sense to refer to the entirety of the revealed Word of God. Remember this: a king rules by his law, and every word that God speaks is law.

The Hebrew word for law is Torah. Torah means instruction, authoritative direction, or instruction. It is like when you get a new machine; along with that new machine comes an instruction booklet—which all the women read, but the men never do. This book is our instruction booklet for success and prosperity and exercising dominion.

All you have to do is read through the Bible to find out what happens when we do not obey God and His law. Look at Leviticus 26, Deuteronomy 28, Amos 4, and Isaiah 58. There is a curse attached for disobedience. The more and the greater our disobedience, the more and the greater the curses that fall upon us. God said, "Look, if you want success, here it is."

I've given you the plan. You have to learn to exercise dominion biblically. You know what the Bible says in 2 Timothy 2:5: "And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully."

There are plenty of big churches in this country. We could have a big church too. That's no problem. Just get the best entertainers in and have the shortest sermons. You can get wood, hay, and stubble in a heartbeat. I could say, "I've got 5,000 in church, and I'm successful," but I've got news for you: if I'm going to run a race, I'm not crowned except I strive lawfully. Whatever I do, I have to run according to the Word of God. I don't care if it's building a church, building a family, or building a business. If we want success, if we want prosperity, we must follow God's Word. We must bring our lives and our businesses into conformity to the Word of God. We're to exercise dominion the way God says we're to exercise dominion. Otherwise, it's an autonomous dominion, and it doesn't count.

I could challenge everybody to a foot race around this block. Although I might start out last, I might cut across the yards, come back in and around, break the tape, and say, "I won, I won, I won." But did I win? No. I beat you to the tape, but I didn't stay on course. I

cheated. The man who strives for mastery is not crowned except he strives lawfully.

God has told us in His Word how to raise our family, teach our children, treat our husband, and treat our wife. He's given us everything that we need to know. If we don't learn it and apply it, we're never, ever going to prosper. If you have good, godly, knowledgeable, honest, and upright children, you've already won. You've already been successful. If you haven't, you need to cry out to God for conversion for them and for wisdom on your part. We've got to learn to go according to the Word of God.

Applications: Communication, Cooperation, and Obedience

God has instituted the family as an instrument of dominion. I think that is clear from Scripture. He has given us responsibility and authority. God created the woman to be the helper suitable to the man. What does that mean? First, the dominion mandate requires communication and cooperation within the family. You have to communicate and cooperate in order to work things out and exercise dominion. A wife who will not help her husband is not right with God. A husband who will not consider his wife is not right with God. When you will not talk to each other, you cannot possibly be right with God. Family members—whether husband, wife, or child—must understand their proper role and fulfill that role. I will deal with this in the future, but each member must understand and fulfill that role. This is necessary for dominion.

You must, by all means, communicate. You can talk and not communicate, and you can communicate and not talk. What do I mean? If I looked at you and said, "I love you," what did you hear me say? "I love you." But what did I actually communicate? I may be mad, angry, and upset, and probably do not love you. Yet I said, "I love you." I can communicate this and never say a word.

If we are going to have Christian families and exercise dominion, if we are going to do what God tells us to do, we have to communicate and cooperate. We have to work together.

The second application is this: If we are going to be obedient to the Word of God, first and foremost, we must know the Word of God; we must find out what it says. Second, we must apply the Word of God. As we apply it, we seek the Lord for His blessing and for the Holy Spirit to enable us to carry out and fulfill our responsibilities. God has called us to dominion.

He did not just call us to reproduction. He called us to dominion. We are to conquer for Christ. We are to tell people, live it, show it, and demonstrate that Jesus Christ is Lord. What does the word Lord mean? It means boss, owner, master, sovereign. When I say Jesus Christ is Lord, that means everyone is required to bow to Jesus Christ.

That is our goal. As we exercise dominion for Him, we extend His kingdom, bringing men and women into submission and subjection to the Word of God, bowing the knee and acknowledging that Jesus Christ is Lord of all.

Father, we thank You for Your love and Your truth to us. We ask that You would help us to understand the dominion aspect of the family. It is so basic and fundamental. The reason You instituted the family was so that we could exercise dominion under Thee. Help us, Lord, to bring our personal lives and our family lives into conformity to Your Word. Give us grace to serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 3

The Family

Part Three

"It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him an help meet for him." And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them. Whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And he took one of the ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Introduction: The Foundational Role of the Family

God has created only three institutions: the family, which is a ministry of education; the church, which is a ministry of grace; and the state, which is a ministry of justice. Of these three institutions, the family is the most foundational, fundamental, and necessary. Without the family, there is no church or state. The family, then, is an absolute necessity. The destruction of the family equals the destruction of the church and the destruction of the state. The anarchy and rebellion observed not only in churches but also in government result from the rebellion and anarchy found in the family.

The family is disintegrating, and likewise all society. The family must be understood from a theological perspective, in reference to God. You cannot understand the family from an evolutionary perspective. God did not allow the family to evolve. God created the family, created Adam and Eve, and performed their first marriage when He brought Eve unto Adam. Thus the family is an instrument of dominion, designed to conquer under the banner of Christ. Dominion involves authority, responsibility, and stewardship, and it must be accomplished according to God's word and God's orderly way.

Why Genesis 2:18-25 Was Placed Here

When you look in Genesis chapter 2, one question you might ask is why this passage was placed where it is in regard to the first marriage. I believe there is an answer, and the answer is not placed there simply to satisfy our curiosity. Many times, when we read something in the Bible, we ask, “Why did the Apostle Paul say that right there?” What is the implication of this word, statement, or question? Sometimes curiosity will indeed make us study and do more research. But God does not place things in the Bible merely to satisfy our curiosity.

Genesis 2:18-25 was placed there intentionally and purposefully by God in order that we might have a real understanding concerning creation and marriage. We are going to see that creation and marriage are intimately connected. This text was not given as an

academic battlefield simply so people could fight over it. Let me tell you why God gave us this text right where He did.

Romans 15:4 says, “For whatsoever things were written aforetime”—that is, the Old Testament—“were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.” Everything God has recorded in the Old Testament is written for our learning and admonition.

The Greek word for learning is didaskalia, meaning learning, instruction, doctrine, and precept. Why, then, did God place the text of Genesis 2:18-25 right where He did? The answer is: for our learning, for our instruction, for our doctrine, and so that the precepts of His Word might be made plain.

Marriage Is Connected to Creation

It is important to notice that marriage is closely connected with creation. God gives us this account right after telling us how He created the world. Why? Because we must remember that we are creatures. There is no such thing as a superman or a superwoman. All of us are creatures.

That means all of us have limitations. Sometimes I tease Alice when she asks whether I expect her to do something, and I say, “Why not? Aren’t you superwoman?” But I know better than that, and she knows better than that. I am not a superman. Each of us is a creature; we are limited and have limitations. We will never have a proper relationship or a proper understanding of the family until we grasp that principle.

Psalm 33 gives us a passage that deals with creation: “By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathered the waters of the sea together as a heap. He layeth up the depths in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast.”

The passage continues: “The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to naught, he maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.”

The Bible is teaching that God created everything that exists. He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. In light of His creation, our responsibility is to fear the Lord and stand in awe of Him. In light even of the creation of the institution of marriage, we are still to stand in awe of Him and fear Him.

The Lord bringeth the counsel of the heathen to naught, but the counsel of the Lord shall stand forever. Now, what is God telling us? It does us no good to fight against God. It does not do us any good to imagine against God. It does not do us any good to try to purpose and plan contrary to the counsel of God, because it is the counsel of God that is going to stand. All the Bible is telling us and teaching us right here is a very simple principle. The simple principle is this: We may either submit to Him and obey Him and be happy and prosperous, or we may rebel against Him and disobey Him and be cursed and miserable. That is true not only in creation, but also in our families.

Psalm 100, verse 3, says, “Know ye that the Lord, He is God. It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.” If God is the one who has made us, He has the sovereign right to dictate to us our responsibilities and also our accountability to Him.

In the context of Genesis chapter 2, we understand that God sovereignly ordained marriage. He sovereignly ordained marriage between a man and a woman. He did not ordain marriage between two men or two women, or between a man and an animal, or a woman and an animal. He ordained marriage between a man and a woman. Therefore, the only marriage that exists in reality is a marriage between a man and a woman. Without a man and without a woman, there cannot be a marriage.

Out of all creation, the Bible says there was not a help found that was suitable for Adam, and so God made him the woman. He did not make Adam another man. We must understand that God's creation, and in that creation, God has perfectly designed and perfectly suited man and woman for each other in marriage. Therefore, when the husband and the wife fulfill their functions according to God's orderly way, fulfill their roles, and submit to His Word, they will not only be successful, but they will exercise biblical dominion as well.

Reasons for Family Problems: Ignorance, Rebellion, and Inability

Think about something today. If you look around in our day and time, you will find broken homes, divorces, spousal abuse, child abuse, fornication, adultery, unhappiness, and misery. Why? Every one of those things, along with a multitude of other sins, stems from a violation of the principles God has laid down in His Word. Every one of these sins stems from a violation of the law of God. God is telling us that there are not only principles in the Bible that we are to grasp, but also creational differences. When we overlook those creational differences, we always have heartache and heartbreak. Look around today, and you will find our homes disintegrating. Why are so many people unhappy in their marriages? I hear people all the time wanting to get out of their marriage. Why are so many seeking divorce, willing to commit fornication or adultery, or facing problems in the average home—some problems that are longstanding in nature?

There can be several answers to these questions. The first reason so many problems exist in modern-day families is simply ignorance. Most people, let us be honest, have never been taught the Word of God. They do not know biblical principles. I often wonder how any man and woman can stay together in this day and age without Christ and without the Word of God, considering the pressures on every side.

I saw a bumper sticker recently and snickered at it. Then I thought, "Well, there is a biblical application of that." The bumper sticker said, "I started out with nothing. And I have most of it left." We could change that and say, "I started out with ignorance and I still have most of it left." The truth is, most of us are ignorant about biblical principles.

But do you realize that ignorance is really and truly no excuse? Each of us has the responsibility, privilege, and obligation to study the Word of God and find out for ourselves. If we are ignorant, it is basically our fault. We may not be able to acquire perfect knowledge, but we are able to acquire some knowledge.

The problem is that most who are ignorant are willfully ignorant. They will not study the Word of God. They will not seek help or ask for help. They will not fulfill their responsibility. They really and truly want to remain ignorant. You have heard the old adage: “Ignorance is curable, but stupidity is forever.” So one reason there are so many problems is ignorance.

The second reason is rebellion. Rebellion is nothing more than a clenched fist in the face of God, saying, “God, I know what You said, but I do not like it, I do not want to do it, and I am not going to do it.” I may know what is right, but I am determined to do what I want to do. In other words, we want our will, our way, and our wishes above and beyond that which God has ordained and declared. It was the Apostle Paul who, in Romans 9:20, asked this question: “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?”

"Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" The Greek word translated repliest literally means to contradict in reply, to answer by contradiction, or to reply against. In other words, man dislikes what God says and contradicts Him, replying against God: "I do not care what You say; I want my will and my way." All who do this are rebels in rebellion against God.

Some hear what is right and simply will not do it, preferring their will and way over the will and way of God. The third reason we have so many problems in our families is not only ignorance and rebellion, but also that some do not have the power or ability to obey. It is one thing to know what is right and another to have the power and ability to do what is right. Those saved by the grace of God have been given that power and ability by His grace.

Remember John 6:44, when our Lord said, "No man can come unto me except the Father who hath sent me draw him." Can is a term of ability. No man has the ability to come to Christ unless the Father who sent Him draws him; no man can come to Christ without the supernatural drawing of the Father.

Men may have heard the Word of God preached audibly. Some may have memorized Scripture and be able to quote it left and right, but unless God's grace has been in their life, they literally do not

have the power to obey. Our Lord said it succinctly in John 15:5: "Without me, you can do how much?" Without Him, you cannot obey.

Some are unconverted. They may have heard and know the truth, but they do not have the power to obey because they have never experienced the grace of God in their life.

When we talk about problems in our homes, the main problem is not all the multitudinous problems we have. It is that most will not seek Christ for grace, mercy, and power to help. We think we are going to do it on our own.

The Bible tells us in Genesis 2 that God made the woman and brought her to the man. Genesis 2:21 says, "And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her to the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man."

Women Are Made in the Image of God

Let me give you one simple point, and then I'm going to go further from this point. But women are partakers of the image of God just as men are.

I know the Bible told us that God caused that deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and that He took the woman out of man. That is, He took the rib out of the man and made the woman, and He brought her to Adam. But if you look back in your Bibles to Genesis 1 verse 27, look what the Bible says. "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created he him, are you looking, male and female created he them."

What is that telling us? That is telling us that the woman is made in the image of God just like man is made in the image of God, although the woman was taken from man.

When the Bible says that God created man, the Hebrew word is Adam or Adam, which literally would include men and women. But there are specific words for men and women in the Hebrew, and

when the Bible says here that He created them male and female, He uses the Hebrew words zakar and nekabah, which means men and women, or male and female. So these two words are used distinctively for men and women. Thus God created mankind in general. He created us in Adam. But then he made a distinction in mankind by dividing us between men and women.

Now, there is a passage in Galatians 3 and verse 28 that I want to quote. And I want to give you what Albert Barnes says on this commentary of this verse. Listen to Galatians 3 and verse 28. Our Lord says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you're all one in Christ Jesus."

What is God doing there? What is He saying? Is He saying that there's neither male nor female? There's neither bond nor free? Is He saying somehow we kind of merge into some abstract blob? No. You'd have to take that verse into context. And this is what Albert Barnes says, and of course I could take you there and show you, but he says it beautifully. He says this concerning Galatians 3.28, "All are on a level.

All are saved in the same way and entitled to the same privileges. There is no favoritism on account of birth, beauty, or blood. All confess that they are sinners, and all are saved by the marriage to the same Savior. All were admitted to the same privileges as children of God. The word Greek here is used to denote the Gentiles, since the whole world was divided by the Jews into Jews and Greeks, with Greeks being the foreign nation best known to them. The Syriac renders it the Aramean, using the word to denote the Gentiles generally. The meaning is that whatever the birth, rank, or nation, all under the gospel were on a level. They were admitted to the same privileges and endowed with the same hopes of eternal life.

This does not mean that all civil distinctions among men are to be disregarded. It does not mean that no respect is to be shown to those in office or to men in elevated rank. It does not mean that all are on a level in regard to talents, comforts, or wealth. It means only that all men are on a level in regard to standing before God.

This is the sole point under discussion, and the interpretation should be limited to this. It is not a fact that men are on a level in all things, nor is it a fact that the gospel designs to break down all the distinctions of society. Paul means to teach that no man has any preference or advantage in the kingdom of God because he is rich or of elevated rank. No one is under any disadvantage because he is poor, ignorant, or a slave.

All at the foot of the cross are sinners. All at the communion table are saved by the same grace. All who enter into heaven will enter clothed in the same robes of salvation and arranged, not as princes and nobles and rich men and poor men in separate orders and rites, but mingling together as redeemed by the same blood and arranged in ranks according to their eminence in holiness.

So he is not absolving the distinctions. He is saying that we are one in the sense that we have a standing before God, which I will develop a little more next week.

When the Bible says that a woman was made in the image of God, it simply means that she is the creature of God, just as men are the creatures of God. Therefore, women may be redeemed, and they may approach God in the same distinction. That is, male and female are on an equal footing before God.

Creational Differences Between Men and Women

That does not mean there are no creation differences. When you go back to Genesis 2:21, the Bible says that God took the rib from Adam. We know for a fact that when He made the woman, He did not make an exact copy of Adam. He made a woman and brought her to the man. There are distinctions between male and female embedded in Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:21. The Bible says, “male and female created He them.” God made mankind in a generic sense, but then He made a specific differentiation when He said, “male and female.” Our Lord refers to and emphasizes this fact in Matthew 19:4 when He said to the Pharisees, “Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female?”

So what is He saying? He is saying there are creation differences that exist between men and women.

I do not care how much the liberals rant and rave. I do not care how much the feminist organizations shout defiantly. I do not care how many amendments the government tries to pass. The truth is that there are differences between men and women, and they are not just physical differences. No governmental decree can change the creation of God. No organization can alter the purpose of God. All attempts to obliterate these differences are simply attempts to destroy the family, the church, and society as a whole.

Stop and think about this. Any attempt to change what God created is a necessity to fly in the face of God, shake your fist in His face, and say, "I do not like Your creation. I do not like what You are doing. I am going to change things." To attack these differences, then, is to attack the family, the church, and society as a whole.

Obviously, there are physical differences between men and women. Certainly every man appreciates those differences, and every woman should appreciate them. But there are more than physical differences. For instance, I have been around women and have seen and heard them, when frustrated, put their hands on their hips and say, "Men!" I have been around men who look around and say, "Women, you can't live with them, you can't live without them." What are they saying? They are saying there are some differences.

You think of all the jokes that exist concerning the differences between men and women. But in reality, they are really not jokes; it is the truth. There are differences. The downside of these differences is that they usually become problems only because of our sin, our ignorance, and our anger. The difference was not a problem before the fall, but it is now a problem after the fall. Even after the fall, however, these very differences attract men to women and women to men. God made us different.

If you look in Genesis 2:18, why did God bring Adam his wife to begin with? "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone." The very first reason God gives for making the woman is that it is not good for man to be alone. Was Adam literally alone?

The answer is no. He had all those animals, but they could not fellowship with Adam, because Adam was different from the

animals. Therefore, Adam was alone, although he was in the middle of creation. God said it is not good for a man to be alone. He saw in those animals not one that would satisfy his needs or longings. He had no one to be his confidant. So here is the second thing God says in verse 18: “I will make an help meet for him.” That is, “I will make someone who will be suitable to Adam, someone who will be answerable to Adam, someone who will meet his needs.” When God made the woman, He did not make an exact duplicate of Adam, but someone to complement, that is, complete the man. He made someone to provide for the man mental, physical, emotional, and social health.

To deny these differences brings about the destruction of the race. What are the sodomites saying? Well, it's alright for men to marry men, it's alright for women to marry women. Well, let me ask you. If women marry women and men marry men, what's going to happen to the race because sodomites cannot reproduce? It's genocide. I mean, it's literally a killing of the race. And as I pointed out earlier, in the strictest sense of the word, sodomites really cannot marry because marriage is between a man and a woman, according to the Bible. If you say, well, all right, I'm going to acknowledge those differences, but I'm not going to acknowledge the fact that God created those differences, well, that is still suicide as well, because what you're saying is God has not placed distinguishing roles for the man and the woman. And therefore, you're trying to say that the man and the woman are capable of doing the same thing, which is not true either. So if you try to alter what God created in any way, all you're going to do is basically fight against God and destroy yourself.

Now, let me show you. Look in your Bibles, hold Genesis 2, but turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter 3 and look at verse 7. 1 Peter 3, verse 7. Here's a very interesting verse. I'm going to give you time to get there because I want you to see it. 1 Peter 3, verse 7.

"Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them," that is, the wives, "according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together to the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered." Now, the Bible says, "likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge." What is God telling us? Very simply, if you're going to live with a woman, there

are some things you better know. You've got to know it. The word knowledge is the word gnosis, which signifies an intelligence, an understanding, wisdom and discernment. He just says you've got to know some things. He says, "likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge." Now look, "giving honor unto the wife." Now, the word honor is the Greek word time, which means deference. That is, it is honor that you show to someone by deference. In other words, you would show deference to someone who is of a higher rank or someone who has a more important office. So you would give them honor.

This is exactly what he's saying here. You just honor them because there is deference due to the wife in the role that she has. Now watch this. "Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel." In other words, God is saying there's some things you need to know men to live with a woman, and one of them is that the woman is the weaker vessel. By the way, the Greek word for weaker is the word asthenes, and guess what? It means weak and weaker. That's what it means. Giving honor unto the wife as the weaker vessel. In other words, it refers to her weakness, that she is more feeble, that she doesn't have the strength.

Now, feminist organizations will shout and scream and they'll tell you, listen, women can do everything that a man can do. It's not so. The government says, I believe that women are capable of doing what men can do, and therefore I'm going to put them on the front line in battle. No, it doesn't mean it's so. I want to show you something, men. I'm going to cover this in just a moment. But look what the Bible says.

Verse 7, "Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel." Oh, that means then that we're the strong ones.

Now, that's not what the scripture says. When the scripture says, "likewise you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor to the wife as the weaker vessel," what does that teach us? That men are weak too. Women are just weaker. So it's not that we're superheroes. It's not that we're supermen. We are weak too. The wife is just simply weaker. It is a comparative statement.

Peter says, “Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge,” giving honor to the wife as the weaker vessel. You are weak too, but she is weaker than you. They are “heirs together of the grace of life,” so that your prayers be not hindered.

When you do not dwell with your wife according to knowledge and do not give her honor as the weaker vessel, your prayers are hindered. Why? Because there will be nothing but conflict between the two of you. First Peter 3:7 declares that the woman is the weaker vessel. How are women weaker than men? I am going to give you three answers, and that is as far as I am going today.

The Woman as the Weaker Vessel: Physical Weakness

First of all, the most obvious answer is that women are weaker physically. It does not take a rocket scientist to figure this out. Men are bigger and stronger than women. If there were ever a slugfest between men and women, I would always bet on the men, because men usually can whip the women.

The United States government does not believe that, because it is going to put a 120-pound woman on the front line in full battle gear next to a 250-pound man. I have news for you: If I am in battle and in a foxhole with someone, I do not want to be in a foxhole with a 120-pound woman. If I am wounded and weigh 250 pounds, there is no way she is going to drag me off to safety. She simply cannot do it; she is not physically able.

I become exasperated when I look at some of these women on the police force. I realize that some look like men, are built like men, walk like men, and talk like men. But I also see little, pretty, petite 115- or 120-pound girls. Outside of her weapon, if I did not want to be arrested, I do not believe there is any woman who could arrest me. I am not saying that I can whip every woman in this world.

I know there are some women somewhere who could probably wipe me out. Cynthia Rothrock would be one of them, probably, because she has been a martial artist in several different styles all her life. But the truth of the matter is that most women cannot. You remember the little woman deputy they put in Atlanta to guard that six-foot-two prisoner while he was changing clothes. What did that

prisoner do? He slapped that little woman down, beat her, took her pistol, killed her, and went out and killed a judge and another person as well. Why in the world would anybody with one and a half cents put a 120-pound woman to judge or to try to control a 250-pound man? It is unbelievable. I will tell you why: simply because they try to obliterate these creation differences. Women are not the same physically.

I do not care what feminist organizations say, and I do not care what the federal government says. Women are weaker than men physically. That means our wives cannot lift the heavy objects that we do, nor can they keep up with us in difficult, strenuous tasks. Men, you ought not to get mad and upset just because your wife cannot lift that 100-pound feed bag. Now, mine can. No, I am teasing. There are plenty of things that Alice can do that she can outdo me in. But when it comes to physical things outside, although I stay inside and study a lot, I can still outperform her.

I remember back when we used to throw hay. I would try to let her drive the truck most of the time. I would do the loading of the wagon, and the men would be putting it in the barn. I would not expect her to stand there and throw three to five hundred bales of hay, stacking it and throwing it up over there. She cannot do it.

If we are going to understand that we must dwell with women according to knowledge and give honor to them as the weaker vessel, there are some things physically that they cannot do. There is no reason to become upset, mad, or frustrated, and no reason to fight about it. It is simply a creative difference. To be absolutely honest, I am thankful that my wife cannot whip me. Brother Ernie, for sure. Let us face it, folks: there are creative differences, and that is just the most obvious one.

The second difference is this: women are weaker judgmentally. Women, listen carefully to what I say and what I do not say. Let me tell you what I did not say. I did not say that women are weaker mentally, that they have a lower IQ, or that they are stupid. I did not say that. I said that women are weaker judgmentally. This is not a statement that women are mentally inferior, have lower intelligence, or are stupid; it is a distinction concerning judgment.

The Woman as the Weaker Vessel: Judgmental Weakness

In studies, as I pointed out before, between men and women there are only two areas in which men excel women: abstract thinking and aggression, or dominion orientation. You have to remember, we may have chased our wives, but they let us catch them. Some of them did not have too good a judgment, did they? But let me show you what I am talking about.

Look in your Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 14. The Bible says, concerning Adam and Eve, “And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.” I am going to deal with some of these in more detail later. It was not Adam who was deceived back in Genesis chapter 3. Adam sinned willingly, knowingly, and premeditatedly. His sin was worse than Eve’s sin. Eve was seduced. Eve was deceived. Eve was left alone. She did not enter into sin the same way Adam entered into sin. Adam was more blameworthy than Eve. Adam knew what was going on, but Eve did not. So it is true that Eve was the first one to sin, but Adam was responsible. Do you remember what the Bible said when Eve saw that the tree was good for fruit?

"And a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took and did eat. And then she gave to her husband." Eve should never have made that momentous decision alone. She should have consulted with Adam. God had told Adam specifically, "You're not to eat of this fruit. That's my tree. You can have everything else in the garden. Just don't eat of this tree."

What I'm saying is comparative. I know that somewhere there's a woman who has shrewder judgment than a man. I understand that. But by and large, women do not have that shrewdness and judgment. Therefore, they are easier targets for scam artists, crooked mechanics, and anyone who wants to hoodwink them.

I remember years ago, right here in this town, there was a business that had a sale on shock absorbers, and I needed some, so I ordered four. I was busy working, and I sent Alice over there with those shocks to have them put on. They told me how much they would cost. Alice took the car over there, and they tried to tell her

that they couldn't put those shocks on without replacing this, this, this, and this. What initially was to be twenty dollars was going to end up being two or three hundred dollars.

Thankfully, she knew enough to call me. When she told me what the mechanic said, I left what I was doing and took the car up there. I said, "You get the manager here right now. We're going to have an understanding, because what you're trying to do is scam my wife. I know better than this, and you're not going to do this." All I'm saying is, look how many women have been taken advantage of simply because they don't know anything about mechanics. I'm not a mechanic, but I know a little bit—at least enough not to tell them that I need my blinkers filled with water to make them work.

Do not attempt to inform me, "Yes, Brother Weaver, here's a sharp woman that has all of this objective shrewdness and all of this objective judgment, and she can put a man down." I understand that, and I understand Proverbs 31. But that Proverbs 31 woman was a woman who worked at home under her husband. Then you have to ask yourself this question: How many Proverbs 31 women are there? Very few. The difference between men and women in this area is very simple.

Consider these illustrations. When men enter sin, they usually do so openly, willingly, and knowingly. They know what they are doing. Many times women are left alone: they are deceived and seduced. In adultery and fornication, the man usually initiates, pursues, and plans it. Often the woman does not even know what is happening until it is too late.

We had an incident recently. A fifteen-year-old boy said to his mother, “Mom, that man’s hitting on you.” The mother had not even realized it. There is a difference judgmentally.

This happens many times in the Christian school. A little boy would do something wrong and wicked, and I would have to call his parents, tell them what had happened, and explain what course of action we would take. Whenever I called the parents and asked someone to come in so I could speak with them, I always preferred to talk to the father. Why? Usually, when the mother came into my office and I laid out what her son had done, tears began running

down her cheeks. She would say, “I just can’t believe he would do something like that. There’s got to be some mistake. My son wouldn’t do that.”

The Woman as the Weaker Vessel: Emotional Weakness

There is a difference judgmentally. I understand there are exceptions, but generally and comparatively speaking, not only are women weaker than men physically; women are also weaker than men judgmentally. Thirdly, women are weaker than men emotionally. I can make a woman cry before she can make me cry. Women are far more sensitive than men.

This is not a fault; it is a creation difference. Being weaker judgmentally is not a fault. Being weaker physically is not a fault. It is a creation difference. Women have less endurance under stress and pressure than men do. You put me under pressure, and I will produce, or I will get angry and say, “I am going to work this out. I am going to take care of this right now.” You put Alice under pressure, and she will go to pieces. Is that a fault with her? No, it is a creation difference. The sensitivity of women is not a fault; it is a creation difference. Women simply do not hold up under stress and pressure as a man does.

On the other hand, that sensitivity makes a woman more gracious, compassionate, and sensitive to the needs of others. A woman will recognize the need of a child before a man ever does. She will recognize the needs of other women, men, and families before a man ever does. That is a created difference.

When we understand this, we can see how women are far more easily and quickly hurt than men. Every man has experienced this. As a boy, you got into a fight with somebody, and shortly after the fight was over, you had your arms around each other’s shoulders and went off to play together. Men can be in a huddle, slaying at each other, fussing, cussing, and fighting, and five minutes later it is over. We usually shake things off easily as men. It does not work that way with a woman.

Application: Dwelling with Wives According to Knowledge

Sometimes, about a month or two later, you find out what you said that upset her. She has been holding it back and holding it against you for two months. You do not even remember saying it or doing it, but believe me, she does. Why? Because that is a difference. This is a creative difference. Women are weaker than men, and that is no shame and no fault. Men are weaker than Christ. Men are weak, too.

Why am I emphasizing this? Let me quote 1 Peter 3:7: “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.” If we are going to function in the area of dominion and in God’s orderly way in our homes, then we must know something and know how to honor each other. If we are to live with our wives, we must do so according to knowledge. Correct knowledge will lead us to right considerations. They are indeed weaker than we are in some areas.

If they are more sensitive, it means that women cannot take the jokes and jabs that men throw at each other. I have said things to Alice jokingly at times, and the next thing I knew, she was in the corner crying. I would ask, “Why are you upset?” She would say, “Well, you said so and so.” I would answer, “Sweetheart, that was a joke. Do you not understand? That was a joke! I had no intent to hurt you.” But men can cut each other, and it does not bother us at all. Women are more sensitive. Often we hurt our wives without meaning to do so simply because of their creative sensitivity. How many times have you said something and your wife took it the wrong way, though you did not mean a thing by it?

When we get frustrated, we tend to take it out on each other. We have to understand that there are differences, and God created these differences. If we are to function in our homes the way God would have us function, we have to understand them. Men, God places the primary responsibility for this upon you.

"Likewise, you husbands dwell with them according to knowledge." It is our responsibility. We must understand these differences that God has created.

It is true that this is our primary responsibility as men, but it is equally the responsibility of women. Women, please listen to this: Why in the world should you get upset when we are not upset because you are upset? Do not expect us to cry at a stupid love scene in a movie. We are not going to do it. And do not expect your wife to get happy just because you are watching the Ultimate Fighting Championship and she sees nothing in it. She does not jump up and down at your ballgame.

God created us with differences. Women ought not to expect us to get mad every time they get mad, and men ought not to expect women to get upset every time they get upset. These are differences, not faults or failures. God created them. I will tell the young people here: before you marry, you had better make sure that you understand these differences, and that your fiancé understands them as well. You had better make sure that you know how to live with each other according to knowledge, giving honor to the wife as the weaker vessel, and being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.

All of these differences, let me repeat again, are not faults. They are not failures. That is simply the way God created us. In the beginning, He created them male and female. When God brought Eve to Adam, she was not an exact duplicate or copy, thankfully. God designed the man and the woman to complement, or complete, each other.

And God says, "Dwell with them according to knowledge," understanding these created differences.

Let us pray. Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ for Your grace and mercy to us. We pray, Lord, that You help us to understand these differences that You have created in us and help us to live together according to knowledge, giving honor to the wife as the weaker vessel, as being heirs together of the grace of life, that our prayers be not hindered. Give us grace, Lord, that we may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. We ask for Your divine protection and provision and kind and gracious providence. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 4

The Family

Part Four

God's Intentional Order

Introduction and Reading of Genesis 2:18-25

Genesis 2:18–25 says: “The Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a help meet for him.’ And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every fowl of the air and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them. And whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a help meet, or suitable for him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept. And he took one of the ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother

and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.' And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed."

Review of Previous Messages

Today we come to the fourth message, entitled "God's Intentional Order." We are looking at this one point. So far, we have covered three messages. The first two dealt with the dominion aspect of the family. Dominion included responsibility, authority, and stewardship, and God created and ordained the family and the roles within it.

Last week, we looked at creational differences between men and women. God did indeed design differences between the man and the woman. There were three main differences: first, a physical difference; secondly, a judgmental difference; and thirdly, an emotional difference.

Now we come to this fourth aspect, God's intentional order. At this point, it may be well to remember a distinction given in times past: the distinction between a theoretical atheist and a practical atheist.

Theoretical vs. Practical Atheism

A theoretical atheist is one who denies the existence of God based upon his own weak, anemic intellect. He denies creation, providence, and the existence of God simply because he cannot conceive of such in his mind or explain it satisfactorily for himself. That is why the Bible, in Psalm 14:1 and Psalm 53:1, says, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Based upon his own intellect, the theoretical atheist denies the existence of God.

Secondly, there is the practical atheist. The practical atheist admits that there is a God. He may even confess to believe that God created the world and sovereignly rules in His providence. But practically speaking, he lives as if God had not spoken, or as if God's Word were not true. While admitting that God exists and has spoken, he lives as if God does not exist and does not speak.

The Bible explains this in Titus 1:16: "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and

disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." They profess that they know God, but in their works—that is, in their lives and everyday conduct—they deny Him. A practical atheist makes a confession with his mouth, but his life is contrary to the truth of God.

I believe that every one of you would agree with me that, as a whole, our families are disintegrating before our eyes. One of the real reasons is that, in the average family, they live as if there were no purpose, order, or design in our lives—at least none created by God.

May I remind you what I have already said? The family did not evolve. It did not just happen or simply come into existence, nor is it merely a convenient social compact. God created the family for a specific purpose and gave a very deliberate and intentional order in creating it. Evolution is a lie regarding creation, and it is equally a lie regarding the family. The family was created by God.

So many people have become practical atheists because they profess to believe the Bible but never make application of God's truth to their everyday life. If you are a theoretical atheist and deny the reality of God, or if you are a practical atheist and confess that He exists but do not make application to your life, in either instance you condemn yourself to misery and heartache.

God's Sovereignty and Rebellion

The one thing upon which we must come to an agreement is this: there is only one sovereign. There is only one God. God is absolutely sovereign, and God is in absolute control. What does that mean? That means rebellion is wicked and wrong. In 1 Samuel, chapter 15, verse 23, God likens rebellion to witchcraft, and He likens stubbornness to iniquity and idolatry. What was the penalty for witchcraft? Death. What was the penalty for idolatry? Death. Listen to what He said: "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." Do you realize that failure to follow God's will is rebellion?

Most of us do not ever think about this. When we think about rebellion, we think about someone who murders, commits fornication, or steals, and we say, "That man is a rebel against God."

Or we think of someone shaking his fist in the face of God. Just like the comedian Kathy Griffin, who recently cursed Jesus Christ publicly—I will not even repeat what she said. Then she held her trophy and said, “This is now my God.” My response was, “Well, let's see how your God delivers you in death.” You can say that and be in rebellion against God, but you do not have to be that open and blasphemous to be in rebellion against God.

Do you realize that spiritual sins, such as resistance to His Word, wicked attitudes, and lack of submission to Him, are equally rebellious? We do not have to commit those blasphemous, idolatrous sins in order to be in rebellion. God has an intentional order in the family. The family did not just happen, nor did it evolve. God created the family, and He did so based upon His sovereign will.

Adam Created First: The Foundational Principle

If you look in your Bibles, in verse 18 of Genesis 2: “And the Lord God said, ‘It is not good that the man should be alone.’” What does that verse tell us? It tells us a number of things, but first of all, it tells us that God made the man first. Adam was the first. Adam was alone.

Let me ask you a question. Did God purposely create Adam first? And if He did purposely create Adam first, why? You have heard the old joke that God created man first because He did not want any help from the woman. Had He created the woman first, she would have told Him how to create the man. That is a joke, of course, and you understand that. But the fact is that God did create Adam first.

Now you have to ask, why was Adam created before Eve? Evidently, Adam was not merely created before Eve; he was already working in the garden. He had already named the animals, and he had already been commanded by God to dress and to keep the garden.

I want to emphasize one truth today, and I am going to show you that this one truth is repeated over and over in Scripture: God created Adam first. Now let me ask you a question which I have asked you a dozen times over the years. You know the answer. How many times does God have to say something to make it true? One.

That means that if God repeats a truth over and over, He is either, number one, doing so for emphasis, or, number two, telling us that it is a very important principle, something that we need to grasp. The Bible tells us in Genesis chapter 2 that God created Adam first. Look in your Bibles, if you would, to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Hold Genesis 2, but go over to 1 Corinthians chapter 11, and let us read verse 3.

Biblical Evidence for God's Intentional Order

You might want to mark this passage because we will be coming back to it. In 1 Corinthians 11, verse 3, the Apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, says, “But I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.” Now look at that one more time. It is very simple: “But I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ.” “And the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.” Here you have God's intentional order: God, Christ, man, woman.

There is a very important word in verse 3: “head.” The Greek word is kephalē, referring to that which is supreme, chief, or prominent. The head of man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man. In relationships, “head” refers to what we would call master or lord, and it is used in reference to a husband and his wife. It is also used in reference to Christ and the church, because Christ is not only the head, but the husband of the church.

I want to give you three quotes to show that I am not making up what I am telling you. This has been a historical interpretation down through the ages. “But I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.”

The expositor Albert Barnes says: “The word ‘head’ in the Scriptures is designed often to denote master, ruler, chief. The Hebrew word is thus used in the Old Testament”—and he gives a large number of passages. Then he continues: “In the New Testament the word is used in the sense of lord, ruler, chief. Here it means that Christ is the ruler, director, or lord of the Christian man.”

"The truth was to be regarded in all their feelings and arrangements and was never to be forgotten. Every Christian should recollect the relation in which he stands to Him as one that is fitted to produce the strictest decorum and a steady sense of subordination." He continues: "...and the head of the woman is the man. The sense is she is subordinate to him, and in all circumstances, in her demeanor, her dress, her conversation, in public and in the family circle, should recognize her subordination to him."

That was Albert Barnes. Here is John Gill: "The man is first in order and being, was first formed, and the woman out of him, who was made for him, and not he for the woman, and therefore must be the head and chief, as he is also with respect to his superior gifts and excellencies, as strength of

With regard to body and endowments of mind, the woman is called the weaker vessel. Likewise, with regard to preeminence of government, the man is the head. As Christ is the head of the church, and the church is subject to Him, so the husband is the head of the wife, and she is to be subject to him in everything natural, civil, and religious. Moreover, the man is the head of the woman to provide and care for her, nourish and cherish her, and protect and defend her against all insults and injuries.

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown say: "The Corinthian women, on the ground of the abolition of the distinction of the sexes in Christ, claimed equality with the male sex, and, overstepping the bounds of propriety, came forward to pray and prophesy. The gospel doubtless did raise women from the degradation in which they had been sunk, especially in the East. Yet while on a level with males as to the offer of and standing in grace, their subjection in point of order, modesty, and seemliness is to be maintained. Paul reproves here their unseemliness as to dress and as to the retiring modesty in public which becomes them. He grounds his reproof here on the subjection of women to man and the order of creation."

The only reason I read those passages was to show you, first, that what I am about to teach is not anything new. Secondly, the Bible teaches that there is an intentional order in creation. God is the head of everything, and God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is

the mediator and servant of the Father. One phrase found repeatedly of Christ in the Gospels is that He is the sent one. Over man is Christ, and over the woman is the man. God does have an intentional order: God, Christ, man, woman.

Now look in 1 Corinthians 11. We will come back to this passage, but consider verses 8 and 9. “For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man.” We tend to think only in terms of women producing men because only women can have babies, but the Bible says that originally and initially, the man is not of the woman, but the woman is of the man. Verse 9 says, “Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.”

Why is God emphasizing that man was made first, that man is not of the woman, and that the woman was made for the man? In Genesis 2:18, which we read earlier, God said that it was not meet for man to be alone, but that He would make a help meet for him—that is, a helper suitable for him. Adam was already created, and now God creates a woman out of the man and for the man, to be a helper suitable to him.

Here is a very important principle, which I will show you in Scripture: The woman was created to fulfill a supporting role to the man. She was not made to fulfill a leading role, but a supporting role. She was to be the helper of the man. Go back to Genesis 2:23. God created the woman out of the man, for the man, and brought her to the man. “And Adam said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken out of man.’”

Now, let me explain something to you. There is a play on words in the Hebrew that you don't get when you read it in English. Here's what Adam said: "She shall be called Ishah, for she was taken out of Ish." She shall be called woman—that is, of a man—because she was taken from the man.

Now, I want you to think about this. When Janet married Henry, she became a Clingler. She took his name. Joyce married Don; she became a Fleming. She took his name. When Alice married me, she took my name. Why do women take the name of the man when they marry? Here is why: Because the woman now becomes partaker of

her husband's life, his work, and his family. She now fulfills a supporting role for the man that she marries. Hollywood to the contrary, the woman's role is one to support her husband.

She is entered into His calling, into His domain. She becomes His equal in standing, which I've explained before and I shall explain later on. She becomes His equal in standing, but subordinate in position. She's under the man. The creation ordinance has a great deal of significance and importance in relation to the purpose of marriage. So what has God done? God has created the woman out of the man, from the man, for the man, brought her to the man, and He said she shall be called woman because she was taken out of the man.

Now, I want you to look in your Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 2. Then we're going to 1 Corinthians 15. 1 Timothy chapter 2. We're still coming back to 1 Corinthians 11, so you may hold that if you want to. But we're going to 1 Timothy chapter 2 and then 1 Corinthians 15. I told you I was emphasizing one thing today, and that is God's intentional order. So look at this. 1 Timothy chapter 2, verse 13. You can hold this passage; we'll be coming back here as well. 1 Timothy 2, verse 13. Notice what the Bible says: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." Wow. Well, he just told us that. He's told us that already several times. But now he says, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." Now hold this passage; we're going to come back here, but look in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 15 and verse 45. 1 Corinthians 15 verse 45. Notice if you would please what is said. 1 Corinthians 15 verse 45: "And so it is written, 'The first man Adam was a living soul.'"

"The first man Adam was a living soul." Over and over in Scripture, God points out that Adam was made first. Why does God point this out? It is obvious when you read Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. God is pointing it out because it is God's intentional order. The problem today is that very few really and truly want to submit to the Word of God, especially in family life. Consequently, many families are trying to overthrow the Word of God in their lives.

Consequences of Reversing the Order

For instance, some women marry, keep their maiden names, and pursue independent careers—that is, careers totally independent of their husbands. Some men simply stay at home, send their wives off to work, and let their wives make the living while the husbands take care of the house. Usually, they are referred to as househusbands.

All I am saying is that there is something seriously wrong with that way of thinking. In both instances, what is produced is a matriarchal society. If a woman keeps her maiden name and has an independent career, she is independent of her husband; she is not dependent upon him. In some instances, the husband stays home while the wife makes the living. Usually, whoever makes the money wants to control the money, and you end up with a matriarchal society. If you want to see an example of a matriarchal society, listen carefully to what I am about to say.

Look at the black communities. I know there are exceptions because I have met some, but as a whole, the black community is a matriarchal community. If you want anything done, you go to the woman. It is the black woman who maintains the home, raises the children, and manages the finances, while the husband usually loafs, runs around, and does nothing. I never will forget—since I was raised in the South, I have been around blacks all my life—when, as a young boy, I went to pick some up to work on the farm. I stopped in front of a house to pick up a mother, and her little child ran out and said, "Mama said to tell you she ain't home today." What I am trying to say is that if Mama does not want to do something, Mama does not do anything, because Daddy is usually not there to make her do it, encourage her to do it, or help her do it.

All I am trying to point out is this: God made the man first. What does that mean? It means the man was designed to lead. He made the woman for the man; consequently, she was designed to follow.

Go back in your Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 2. We read verse 13 earlier: “For Adam was first formed, then Eve.” Now go back to verse 11. The Apostle Paul says, “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority

over the man, but to be in silence." I am going to show you that we are really and truly talking about the church here.

Application to Church and Marriage

Why can a woman not teach men publicly? Why can a woman not lead in prayer publicly when men are present? Here is why: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." God says, Go back to creation; go back to My intentional order. My intentional order is God, Christ, man, woman. That is the way God ordained it. He says, "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

If you were to go to Acts 16—you do not need to turn there—you would find that there was a woman's prayer meeting, a prayer meeting just for women down by the riverside. When Paul got there, the women bowed out and said, "Paul, since you are here, you are the man; you lead and you speak." And he did so.

The fact is, Adam was first formed. Why does the Bible forbid a woman to teach? Not to teach women—she may teach women. She may teach children. What the Bible forbids here is a woman teaching men and women together. Here is why: it harkens back to creation.

If you look in 1 Timothy 3:15, you will see the theme of 1 Timothy: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." So the theme is: How ought you to behave yourself in the house of God? How should women behave themselves in the house of God? Verse 12 of chapter 2 says, "But I suffer not a woman to teach…"

"Nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Why? "For Adam was first formed, then Eve." He gives another reason, which I will explain later: "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." But the first answer he gives is the creation mandate. In other words, here is God's intentional order. He designed men to lead and women to follow. Remember, God created the man first. He created the woman for the man, out of the man. He brought her to the man and said, "This is your help meet." This is the helper suitable for him.

Once Eve entered Adam's life, she entered into his covenant and was designed to be one with him in marriage, helping and supporting him in the vocation to which God had called him. Interestingly enough, the very first time Eve acted independently of Adam, she sinned. That is why verse 14 says, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

In Genesis chapter 3, the man and woman have sinned. God places a curse upon the serpent, curses the ground for the man's sake, and places curses upon the man as well. Then, in verse 16, God places a curse upon the woman: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children." Then He says, "And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Did God not already create the woman to be the man's helper? Yes. Did He not already create the man to lead? Over and over Scripture says, "For Adam was created first, then Eve." Yes. Why, then, does He emphasize that "thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee"?

Originally, as God intended and created Adam and Eve, her submission was not onerous or painful. There was nothing wrong with it; that was the way God created it. But because of sin and the rebellious nature, because she is now a sinner, her submission to her husband will be distasteful. She will not like it or want to submit. As a sinner, it will be onerous. Yet God says, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

Here was the creative order, and now you have the punitive decree to back up that creative order. Let me quote it again, 1 Peter 3:7: "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with your wives according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as the weaker vessel, and being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered." The fact is, the woman is indeed the weaker vessel. If the woman is the weaker vessel, what does that mean?

That means she is to be dependent upon her head. This does not mean the man is exceedingly strong—no, he is weak too, but he is not as weak as the woman. So God created woman to be the weaker vessel, subordinate to her husband. One in standing, equal in

standing, but the positions differ: God, Christ, man, woman. Man and woman may be equal in standing, but they are not equal in positions.

Now, here is how modern-day individuals look upon the woman. All you have to do is watch television, watch Hollywood movies, listen to the radio, watch commercials, and especially these hair commercials for women. They suggest that if you use this shampoo, not only will your hair sparkle, always be beautiful, and stay in place, but you will have men waiting upon you to obey your every whim and command—if you just use the right kind of shampoo. They show that. Everything in modern day and time revolves around the woman, and men are pictured as being subservient, waiting upon her, just wanting her to move her little finger so they can take care of every command and order she gives.

Well, that is totally and completely contrary to Scripture, by the way. Let me show you something. Those of you who have pictures of your grandma and grandpa, or great-grandma and great-grandpa, sometimes a family picture—have you ever noticed in the old pictures? The men are seated, and the women are standing beside them or behind them. In modern-day pictures, the woman is seated and the man is doing the standing. Have you ever noticed that?

What I am trying to say is that there is a reversal of God's intended order. Look around today at women who are seeking and following their own independent careers, acting totally independently of their husbands—not with his blessing particularly, not with his permission particularly, but simply doing what they want to do.

Now let me show you a principle. I want you to turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians chapter 7. Let me make a statement and then prove it to you from Scripture. Here is my statement: women who do their own thing—let me change that—wives who do their own thing, independent of their husbands, without their blessing, or even sometimes without their knowledge, are not right with God. It cannot be right with God.

You say, "How can you say that?" Well, let me show you. Look in 1 Corinthians chapter 7, and let us begin reading at verse 29. Without

my going over 1 Corinthians 7, let me just tell you: in this passage, God gives you three reasons why you should marry and three reasons why you should not marry.

So He balances them out. But He says in 1 Corinthians 7, verse 29: "But this I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth that both they that have wives be as though they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoice as though they rejoiced not, and they that buy as though they possessed not, and they that use this world as not abusing it, for the fashion of this world passeth away." Now look what He says: "But I would have you without carefulness."

"He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord. But he that is married careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife. There is a difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy, both in body and spirit. But she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband."

Now, I want you to go back to verse 20. I am going to comment on that in just a moment, but look in verse 20. Look what God says: "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called." And then He explains that. The man is to continue in his career, working in order that he may please his wife. There is nothing wrong with pleasing the wife, nothing wrong with that at all. But once the man is married, he has a distraction. He has a wife and possibly a family that he has to take care of. So there are some things he cannot do like an unmarried man can do.

Now He says there is also a difference between a virgin and a married woman. Once she is married, the wife cares for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. God does not necessarily give every woman a husband. Not every woman is married. So if God does not give a woman a husband, then she may follow whatever career she wants, with the blessing of her father and the blessing of the Lord. There is no problem there. But once she is married, her obligation is to support her husband, to follow him, to help him, and to please him.

Let me give you an illustration. I have met several women who told me that God had called them to be missionaries in a foreign country. They were so sure of this calling that they drug their husbands and children to those countries so they could be missionaries. Based upon the principles of the Word of God, I do not believe that God has ever called a woman to be a missionary independent of her husband. Why? God created God, Christ, man, woman. If God wants the woman on the mission field, He is going to call the man. Then the woman, in her supporting role, goes with the man and carries their family. God does not call the woman and let her drag her husband and children. That is contrary to the principles laid down in His Word. God created the man first.

There are ramifications for this principle everywhere you turn. Consider women preachers. I do not know how they get around 1 Timothy 2 or 1 Timothy chapter 3. I have never known a woman who could be the husband of one wife. I knew of one lady in Georgia who was the pastor of the church, while her husband was the janitor.

There is something wrong with that somewhere. I am simply saying that if God gives a woman a husband, then everything is settled: her calling is to support her husband. If God does not give the woman a husband, then she is free to do whatever God and her father bless her to do. There is no problem there.

The greatest honor that any woman can have—and I am going to deal with this even next week—the greatest honor that any woman or any man can have is being in submission to the will of God. It is not degrading, dishonoring, or demeaning to be in submission. Christ was in submission to His Father. Men are to be in submission to Christ, women to their husbands, children to their parents, and servants to their masters. Each of us has to be in submission one way or the other. The greatest honor we can have is to be found in obedience to our Heavenly Father.

You look at the average home today, and the failure in the average home is found in one of several things. Number one, the husband has never been taught to be the head of his own. Number two, the wife has never been taught to be in submission to her husband. Number three, the husband does not want to be the head of his

house. Number four, the wife will not allow him to be the head of his house.

In either instance, it is rebellion against God. The result is that, in our society today, we have the feminization of men and the masculinization of women. Let me remind you of something. Those of you who remember the first two messages I preached on the dominion aspect of the family, masculinity has a great deal more to do than muscles and physique. According to the Bible, masculinity has to do with authority. It has to do with responsibility, obedience, and knowledge.

What is happening in this day, and what has happened, is that a number of wives have emasculated their husbands, sometimes unknowingly, sometimes willingly. Consequently, they have destroyed their homes. No wonder most marriages are in trouble. It is just that simple.

We do have a few young women here today who are not married, but since God requires you to submit to your husband, you have no right to marry anyone to whom you really cannot submit. Young men, God requires your wife to be in submission to you, and you have no right to marry someone who is going to be in rebellion to you.

You say, "Oh, I'll change him." "I'll change her." No, it does not work like that. Young ladies, if you look at how a young man treats his mother and sister, you will probably get a pretty good idea of how he is going to treat you. Young men, if that young woman is in rebellion to her father, she is going to end up being in rebellion to you. It is just that simple. Some men will not lead. Some women will not follow. Both are equally sinful and in rebellion against God. God has ordained His intentional order.

Honor and Humility in God's Order

Let me show you from Scripture man's honor and man's humility, and also the woman's honor and the woman's humility. In 1 Corinthians 11:3, Paul says, "But I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God."

Then, in verses 7 through 12, he says, "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and the glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels. Neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman, but all things of God."

First, note man's honor in verses 7 through 9. A man can say, "I was not created for the woman. The woman was created for me. I was created first. I was made in God's image." Yes, the woman is made in God's image as well, but the woman was taken from the man. Thus, the man has his honor, his area of boasting, if you want to say, because he was made first.

But notice also the woman's humility, found in these same verses. The woman has to say, "I was not made first. I was made second. The man was not made for me; I was made for the man. Adam was created in God's glory. I was created in man's glory because I was taken out of man." There is man's honor and a woman's humility.

Now look in verse 11, because here is man's humility: "Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman." Man can boast all he wants to: "I was made first and the woman was made for me." Yet he is not without the woman, and "all things" are of God.

But then we've got to admit and confess and acknowledge something as men. And that is: without the woman we're nothing. It takes the woman to complete the man. We have to acknowledge and confess: without the woman, the race ceases. It's over.

So the man can boast and say, in one sense of the word, "I was made—I was not made for the woman; she was made for me. I was made first." But then he must admit in humility that without her, he is nothing. I need her.

Fourthly, the woman's honor is in verse 11: "Nevertheless, neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man in the Lord." The woman can truthfully say, "Here is my honor: I may have been made second and made for the man, but I am the

only one who can complete the man. Without me, he is absolutely nothing. He cannot carry on posterity without me. As a woman, I am not only needed, I am absolutely necessary." That's her honor.

Fifthly, God's intentional order: "For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman."

"But all things are of God." God's intentional order. God gave man both honor and humility, and God gave the woman both honor and humility. As we fulfill our proper roles and see God's intentional order in creation, marriage, the home, and society, we see that God has an ordained way that we should live. God has not made any mistakes. The mistakes in our homes are from our sins, our rebellion, and our ignorance.

Conclusion and Call to Submission

I want to show you the next two Sundays the role of a wife and the role of a husband. When you understand those roles, you'll understand God's intentional order, God's creation differences, and also, I hope more fully, the dominion aspect of the family. God does have an intentional order. Read it through Scripture. God ordained it for a reason. When we submit to that order, we prosper, we're successful, and we're blessed. When we pervert that order, we're cursed.

We have heartache and misery. Adam was created first, then Eve. The man was not made for the woman, but the woman for the man. Nevertheless, without the woman, man is nothing. All things are of God.

Father, we do ask that You would help us and teach us. Open our eyes and show us the truth of Thy Word. Give us grace that we may bow to Thee, be in submission to Thee, and thus have Thy blessings in our lives. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 5

The Family

Part Five

SCRIPTURE READING - Ephesians 5:21-33 (KJV)

Ephesians 5, submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and

mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife, even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence the husband.

We have been looking at the biblical doctrine of the family for several weeks. We have looked at the dominion aspect of the family, and I shared with you and showed you how the dominion aspect not only teaches responsibility and stewardship, but also involves authority, and how God has ordained the family to be an instrument of dominion. Then we looked at the creation differences between men and women. I showed you how God had purposely, deliberately made these differences, especially how men and women differ, particularly in relationship to the women. They not only differ physically, but judgmentally and, of course, emotionally. Then last week, we looked at God's intentional order. I showed you how in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, God has ordained that God, Christ, man, and woman. And I went through the Bible and showed you over and over where the Bible emphasized the fact that God created Adam first. And so there was an intentional order in creation which results in an intentional order in the home and an intentional order in society.

The Roles God Has Assigned

Introduction: Distinctive Roles in the Family

Today I want to begin the part on the distinctive roles that God has assigned to wives, husbands, and children. I will take the role of the wife first, because that is the way it appears in Scripture.

By way of introduction, each role has been ordained by God Himself. If we are to fulfill our roles, we must understand them; as we understand them, we must obey them; and in obeying them, we will have a blessed and successful family. It does not take much discernment to look around in our day and realize that families are falling apart in America.

Very few homes are happy homes. Very few homes are fulfilling and spiritual homes. I could go further and say this: The average home is usually a living hell on earth. It ought not to be that way. It should not be that way. But it is that way because of our rebellion toward God. When we are talking about the family, rebellion does not necessarily have to occur only in the children. Rebellion can also occur in the wife, and it can also occur in the husband and the father as well. The Word of God condemns and forbids all types of rebellion. It does not matter whether we are talking about rebellious children, tyrannical and henpecked husbands, unsubmissive wives, or any combination thereof. All are condemned by God.

Four Introductory Principles for Ephesians 5

As we look in Ephesians chapter 5, I want to give you several introductory principles concerning the role of the wife. Originally, I had planned on dealing with the role of the wife this Sunday and the role of the husband next Sunday. But as I was preparing, I realized I would never finish the role of the wife in one message. Out of the four points I have, I am only going to cover one today. The next three will come next week, and then, when I return from the mission trip out west, I will pick up with the role of the husband. Please understand these four principles as we consider Ephesians chapter 5. Here is number one: First, the whole of this passage is to be interpreted in light of the analogy of faith.

Everything that you find in Ephesians chapter 5 is organically connected to the rest of Scripture and may be substantiated through a multitude of Scriptures throughout the entirety of the Bible. Ephesians chapter 5 is not an isolated passage. You cannot say that Paul simply got upset with the feminist movement in his day and therefore was going to straighten it out. The principles taught in Ephesians chapter 5 are taught throughout the Bible. For instance, Ephesians 5:31 says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife."

"They two shall be one flesh." That may be found in Genesis chapter 2 and verse 24. When you come to Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 2, "Honor thy father and thy mother," that may be found in Exodus chapter 20 and verse 12. Paul continues his argument in

chapter 6 as well, and whatever passage you take from Ephesians chapters 5 and 6 may be substantiated throughout the rest of Scripture. Very obviously, then, if you are upset with what Paul teaches in Ephesians chapter 5, you are not just upset with Paul. You are upset with all the apostles and prophets in the Old Testament and the New Testament, and you are primarily upset with God, because God is the one who gave His Word. The very first thing that you have to understand is that this passage is organically connected to the entirety of Scripture, and it must be interpreted in light of the analogy of faith.

The second principle is this: the whole of Ephesians chapters 5 and 6 is to be understood in the perspective of our oneness, our wholeness, and our completeness in Jesus Christ. Each of us has exactly the same standing before God. I do not care if it is a husband, a wife, a child, a servant, or a master. Each of us has the exact same standing before God.

For instance, Ephesians 4:1-6 says: "I therefore the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness and longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. Now look, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, there is one body and one Spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in you all."

Galatians 3:27-28 says, "For as many of you have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ." Then he makes this statement: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, you are all one in Christ."

Please understand what the Apostle Paul is saying. Paul is not saying that when you were converted, there are no longer any distinctions between the sexes or the races. That is not what he is saying. Very obviously, I am thankful that when my wife and I were converted, she remained a woman and I remained a man. But he is saying that there is no distinction in the standing that we have before God. Each of us has an equal footing before God. That is why the Bible talks about our standing in Romans 5:2. Men, women, children, servants, and masters all have an equal standing before

God in three ways. Number one, creation dignity: we are all created in the image of God.

Number two, natural depravity: each of us are sinners. Number three, redemptive privileges: we may all be redeemed by the grace of God. So we have an equal standing before God. But that does not mean that we all have equal positions before God. There is a vast difference between standing and position.

The third principle is this: the whole of Ephesians chapter 5 is distinctively Christian. This passage relates to Christians and to Christian desires and motives. Unless one is a Christian, he will think that this passage is absolute nonsense. A non-Christian cannot see the wonder, beauty, and wisdom of the will of God revealed here. The Apostle Paul continues his teaching in chapter 6, where children and parents, masters and slaves, all are admonished; but each one is admonished from a Christian perspective. When God admonishes the wife in Ephesians chapter 5, He is appealing to a Christian wife, with Christian motives. When He admonishes the husband, He is appealing to a Christian husband, with Christian motives; and likewise to children, servants, and masters.

The fourth point is this: each part of this passage is inseparably joined to its counterpart. Just because I am dealing with wives today and next Sunday, men should not sit back and say, "Not a boy preacher, you tell them." Your part is inseparably joined to her part. It is true that God commands wives to submit to their husbands, but it is equally true that God commands husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. Children are to submit to their parents, but God also commands parents, especially fathers, to provoke not their children to wrath. Servants or slaves are to be obedient to their masters, but God commands masters not to forget that they have a Master in heaven who will judge them according to their actions.

Each part is inseparably joined to its counterpart. Although these roles are being separated so that we may see them individually, understand that they go together: the wife and the husband, the children and the parents, the servants and the masters.

The Nature of Submission

The Key Word for the Wife: Submission

Ephesians 5:21 says, “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.”

Colossians 3:18 says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as it is fit in the Lord.” Then 1 Peter 3:5-6 says, “For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection to their own husbands, even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him Lord, whose daughters you are, as long as you do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.” Notice verse 5: “For after this manner in the old time, the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves being in subjection to their own husbands.”

Having read these three passages that deal with wives, what would you say the key word for the wife is in each of these passages? Submit, or submission, or subjection. It is repeated over and over. The Scriptures speak of wives submitting themselves unto their own husbands as unto the Lord; they describe the husband as the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and they say that the church is subject unto Christ. Colossians says that this submission is fit in the Lord, and Peter points to the holy women of old who trusted in God and were in subjection to their own husbands.

Therefore, let me give you the outline that I am going to follow. I am only going to cover one point today. I want to discuss this carefully because I believe this is vitally important, and there is so much misunderstanding concerning this subject. Number one is the nature of submission. Next Sunday, Lord willing, we will look at the ground of submission, the extent of submission, and the climate of submission. But today, the only point is the nature of submission.

Ephesians 5:22 says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord."

The word submission is usually a hated, despised, and oftentimes misunderstood word. The word for submit here is the Greek word hupotasso, which is translated in our Bibles as put under, be subject to, to submit oneself unto, to be in subjection unto, and to put under subjection. The word actually means to arrange under, to subordinate, to subject, to be in subjection, to obey, to submit to one's control, and to yield to one's admonition and advice.

It is interesting that the Greek word hupotasso is actually a Greek military term. It dealt with the arrangement of troops in a military fashion under a commander or leader. In non-military usage, it came to mean a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden.

One passage explains this word more than all the delineation of Greek terms and definitions. Most of you would know the story of how our Lord went with His parents up to Jerusalem for the feast. When they left, they assumed that He was somehow with the family. When they got down the road, they found out He was not there. When they went back, they saw Him in the temple, teaching and hearing and answering questions to all of those leaders.

In Luke 2:51, they take Christ, who is now twelve years old. Beginning with verse 48, we see the context: "And when they saw him, they were amazed. And his mother said of him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said of them, How is it that you sought me?"

"Wished you not that I must be about my father's business? And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them, and he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. But his mother kept all these sayings in her heart." Remember, the word subject in verse 51 is exactly the same that is translated as submit in Ephesians chapter 5. The Bible says that Jesus Christ went down to Nazareth and was subject unto them. What does it mean when the Bible says that Jesus Christ was subject unto his parents? It simply means this: Christ performed the duty of a faithful and obedient child in every respect. He obeyed. He

honored. He helped. He worked with his parents. He submitted to their demands and to their wishes.

Now, let me ask you a question. At this particular time, our Lord was twelve years of age. Was Jesus Christ God when he was a boy? Of course he was. If you say, “No, he wasn't God when he was a boy,” then you've got to answer the question: When then did he become God? And how did he become God? The Scripture teaches that Jesus Christ was God even before he was born. And when he was born, he was still God.

Matthew 1:21-23 says, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted as what? God with us."

So yes, Jesus Christ was God when He was a boy. He was God before He was born. He was God after He was born. There never has been a time when Jesus Christ was not God. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 3:16, "And without all controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh."

When Jesus Christ was born in the flesh, He was God. Now consider this important question, which relates to our subject: Was Jesus Christ any less God because He was in subjection to His parents? The answer is no. Was He demeaned, dishonored, or shamed in any way by being in subjection to His parents? No. When His parents came back and said, "Son, come on home with us," He probably said, "Yes ma'am." Then He went down and was in subjection unto them.

What was Jesus Christ doing? He was assuming the proper role of a child in the structure of the family. Had He not assumed that role as a child, or had He acted in any other way, it would have been rebellion to the Word of God. We must learn that true liberty is found only in obedience to the will and the Word of God. Jesus Christ went back and was in subjection to His parents.

When the Bible says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands," is it therefore demeaning, dishonorable, and shameful

for a wife to be in submission to her husband? The answer is no. Just as Jesus Christ assumed His God-ordained role in the family as a child by being in submission to His parents, the wife is not demeaned, dishonored, or shamed by being in submission to her husband, because that is her God-ordained role.

Was Christ wiser than His parents? Oh, yes. Did He have more knowledge and understanding than His parents? Yes, He did. Was He smarter? Yes, He was. Submission does not have anything to do with education, brains, or smarts. It has to do with obedience to the will of God.

Did Christ have greater ability than His parents? The answer is yes. He created the world and everything therein. The point is that submission is not a matter of education, ability, IQ, culture, or anything else other than simple obedience. Jesus Christ went down and was subject to His parents because that was God's ordained role for the child. Had He done anything else, it would have been considered rebellion. What is God's ordained role for the wife? It is submission to her husband.

The Nature of Submission: Voluntary but Not Optional

Submission is not dishonorable, demeaning, or shameful. Ephesians 5:22 says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord.” Verse 24 adds, “Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything.”

First, we are talking about the nature of submission. It is to be a voluntary submission: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord.” The whole assumption in Ephesians 5 is that the husband has wooed and won the wife, just as Jesus Christ has wooed, won, and drawn the Christian to Himself. The wife is to be in submission to the husband as the church is to be in submission to Christ.

There is a parallel in John 6:44: “No man can come unto me except the father who had sent me draw him and I will raise him up at the last day.” How does Christ get us to Himself? By His irresistible grace and love. He does so in such a way that we want to

be in submission to Him. He draws us. He loves us. He works in our lives so that we want to be in submission to Him more than anything else.

The first point under the nature of this submission is that it is voluntary. But while it is to be voluntary, it is not optional. Why? Because it is a command given by God. When He says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands,” it is a command; it is something that God gives. This command is addressed to the renewed and regenerated will of Christian wives. He commands Christian wives to voluntarily submit themselves unto their husbands and voluntarily and willingly delight in submission to them. Thus, the submission is not forced upon an unwilling heart, but is to arise from a renewed will that has been brought into agreement with God's command. The wife is called to submit herself as the church submits to Christ, and the Christian is drawn by grace so that submission becomes the desire of the heart. Yet the fact that this submission is desired does not make it optional, because its authority rests in the command of God.

Men, notice that Scripture does not say, “Husbands, force your wives into submission.” Forced submission is an oxymoron. If it is forced, it is not submission; and if it is submission, it is not forced. Forced submission is a contradiction in terms, like a sober drunk, a Christian prostitute, or an honest politician. No man can force his wife to submit to him, and even if he could, he would break down the parallel of the passage.

Ephesians 5:22 says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” Does Christ force the church into subjection unto Him? No. He draws us, woos us, wins us, teaches us, and helps us so that we willingly and voluntarily submit ourselves unto Him. That is exactly what is being said here. Even if you could force your wife into submission, it would violate the figure and picture presented in Ephesians chapter 5.

A wife who will not willingly and voluntarily submit herself to her husband is either unregenerate and unconverted, or, if she is a

Christian, in rebellion to the Word of God and not right with God, in violation of His will. If she is unregenerate, instead of seeking to force her into submission, it would be far better to pray that God would grant her repentance and faith, and that God would save her.

There is one truth I have learned in forty-two years of preaching. It is difficult to face and admit, but I had to face it and admit it: I cannot save anybody. Nor can I make anybody do what is right. I wish I could, but I cannot. If God does not save us, we are not saved; and if God does not work in our hearts, we are not saved.

The only thing that you can do if you have an unconverted mate—this applies to women as well as husbands—is pray that the Lord would give them grace, live a Christian life before them, and use every opportunity to get the Word of God before them. If a woman is a Christian and is in rebellion to the Word of God, she will not be in rebellion that long, because Hebrews chapter 12 says, "As many as he loves, he does what? He chastens."

Let me put it very bluntly: if you or anyone can sin against God and get away with it, you do not belong to Him. He scourges every son whom he receiveth, says the Bible. If you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. For what son is he whom the Father chastened not? If you be without chastisement, then are you bastards and not sons. If a man or woman can sin against God constantly and continually and get by with it in this life, apparently, then that person is not a Christian. God has worked out that we are either living a changed life or a chastised life.

You remember that passage in Micah 6, verse 9: "Hear ye the rod and him who hath appointed it?" In other words, if you do not hear the Word, then you are going to hear the rod.

Listen to what the Bible says in Hebrews 12:11: "Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless, afterwards it yieldeth a peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who exercise thereby." Chastening is not joyous; it is grievous. How many of you, as a child, really loved being whipped? Nobody. I do not even like it as an adult. But you understand that when you received that chastening, it was for your

good, for your benefit. After it is over, it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto those who are exercised thereby.

Many times we whipped our children and it did not take. We had to whip them again and again and again. But God does not have to do that. When God gets through with you, His lessons take. It yields a peaceable fruit of righteousness unto those who are exercised thereby.

Let me give you an illustration to underline this fact from Hebrews chapter 12. Let us suppose that James is my son. I say, "James, please go do such and such for me," and he says, "No, father, I am not going to do it." I ask, "Did you misunderstand me, son?" He replies, "No, Dad, I did not misunderstand you. I am just telling you right now, I am not going to do it." Now, as his father, wanting him to be loving, obedient, respectful, and kind, am I going to turn around and say, "Perhaps you will obey me next week when I ask you to do something"? What am I going to do? If he were my son, I would jerk him up, jerk a limb, and beat him with an inch of his life, saying, "Son, next time I tell you something, you say, 'Yes, sir.' Do you understand?"

Why would I do that? Because I hate him? No. Because I understand that the longer I allow him to continue in rebellion, the further he will rebel and the harder it will be to reclaim him. So I am going to whip him right away. What is God saying in Hebrews chapter 12? If you can sin constantly and continually and get by with it, you do not belong to Him. He understands that principle just as we do. He will jerk a knot in us.

Wives, here is what it boils down to: ask yourself this question. Do you love Jesus Christ? Do you love the will of God and the Word of God? Do you want to please God, obey Christ, and honor Christ? Our Lord said, "If you love me, keep my commandments." In verse 21, he says, "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."

Ladies, remember this: submission has nothing to do with intelligence, culture, education, or anything else. It only has to do with the will of God. What is the will of God for your life? The will of God is that you be in submission to your husband—a voluntary

submission that God has ordained because the husband is the head of the wife.

But you object and say, "Pastor, you just don't know my husband." No, I don't. But God does, and he knew him before he ever wrote Ephesians chapter 5. You say, "But you don't understand." I may not understand, but I can read. The Bible says, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands."

Here is the parallel: the wife is representative of the church, and her submission to her husband represents the submission of the church to Jesus Christ. Therefore, any wife who professes that she loves her husband but will not submit to him is offering empty talk; she does not really love her husband.

Any Christian who professes to love Jesus Christ but will not submit to Him and obey Him is offering empty talk. He does not really love Christ. You remember what our Lord said in Luke 6:46? “Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say unto you.” In other words, the proof that we love Christ is that we keep His commandments: “If you love me, keep my commandments.” It is unreal even to imagine that someone can be a real, genuine Christian and not be in submission to Christ. If a man loves Christ, he is going to submit to Him. Likewise, if a woman loves her husband and, of course, loves Christ, she is going to submit to her husband, because the woman’s role represents the role of the church in submission to Christ. It is to be a voluntary submission.

The Nature of Submission: Exclusive to One's Own Husband

Secondly, look in your Bibles at Ephesians 5:22. It is to be an exclusive submission: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands.” I like that little word, idios. It does not mean idiot in the Greek. The word idios means that which is peculiar to yourself, that which particularly belongs to you. Why submit yourselves to that man who particularly belongs to you?

There is indeed and in truth a submission to be given to all men in general, but that is different from this submission. In Acts chapter 16, Paul went down to the river where a women’s prayer meeting was

being held. Did the women there ignore Paul and carry on? No. They said, "Well, Paul, you're here. You speak and you pray." That is a general deference and a general submission.

If I walked into a room of women who were about to have a Bible study, and the leader was about to ask someone to lead in prayer, and I was standing in the room, I would expect her to ask me, not a woman. Why? Because there is a man there. That is a general deference and a general submission. While that is true, it is not what he is talking about here in Ephesians 5:22. He is saying, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own particular husband." I could go back and ask Janet some questions or ask her to do some things for me. She may be kind and gracious and say, "Well, Pastor, I'd be more than willing to help you." That is fine. That is a submission to me.

She does not owe me what she owes Henry, and Alice does not owe Henry what she owes me. It is a totally different thing. So God says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own peculiar and particular husband."

The Nature of Submission: Religious, as unto the Lord

Thirdly, we are talking about the nature of submission. It is to be a religious submission: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord." This is a vital point. The woman's submission to her husband is not based upon cultural mores, evolutionary development, or some tyrannical standard. It is based upon a Christian principle: "as unto the Lord."

Since God designed and assigned this particular role in marriage to the wife, it is part and parcel of her worship and submission to Him to be in submission to her husband. In other words, it is primarily a matter of recognition and submission to God's sovereign authority. The woman recognizes, "This is part of my worship to God. This is part of my submission to God, to be in submission to my husband. I am doing this as unto the Lord."

Look in Ephesians 6, where Paul addresses servants, or slaves: "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling and singleness of your heart as

unto Christ, not with eye service as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."

What did God tell those servants? They owed their masters obedience, but they did not obey merely because those men were their masters or because they had to. They looked beyond the master and saw the Lord, because He was the one who said, "Servants, submit yourselves unto your masters. Obey your masters."

It is the same principle in Ephesians 5. When God says, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands," and adds, "as unto the Lord," He is saying that the wife must look beyond her husband and see Him. She must understand that God ordained and appointed her role, and that part of her worship and submission to Him is her submission to her husband.

It is important to grasp this fact. Women who are not in submission to their husbands in the biblical sense are not right with God and cannot be right with God. Why? Because God demands that submission.

A wife who is not in submission to her husband is out of the will of God, just as children who are not in submission to their parents are out of the will of God, and husbands who are not in submission to Christ are out of the will of God. It is God who ordained these roles. When wives recognize that part of their worship to the Lord is their submission to their husbands, it will basically revolutionize their life and their worship. Part and parcel of their submission to God and worship of God is biblical submission to their husbands.

The Nature of Submission: Ordained by God

Fourthly, it is to be an ordained submission. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord: for the husband is the head of the wife." The husband is the head of the wife. Who ordained the husband to be the head? The husband did not beat his way to the top. It was not culture. It was not evolutionary development. It was not a democratic election. No. God ordained the man to be the head.

The family did not evolve. Culture had nothing to do with it. God says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, for the

husband is the head of the wife." When you see that it was God who ordained the family, and that it was God who ordained each individual role in the structure of the family, it should revolutionize your life as you see what God requires of you. Lord willing, that will be covered in the next three points.

Applications and Conclusion

Now let me make a couple of applications for today. Although we have dealt with the nature of submission, especially in reference to wives, we have to remember one simple truth: we are all called to be in submission in one way or another. Wives must submit to their husbands. It is equally true that children must submit to their parents. It is equally true that husbands must submit to Christ. It is equally true that servants must submit to masters. It is equally true that employees must submit to employers. Everybody is in submission. Submission is not something onerous. It is not something demeaning. It is not something shameful.

We have to understand that it is God who ordained the institution of the family and the roles of the family. Each of these roles is inseparably joined to its counterpart. When God says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands," equally true is, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." It is easy for a woman to be in submission to her husband when the husband loves her as Christ loved the church.

We must understand the difference between standing and position. We all have equal standing before God, but we do not have different positions before God. God has instituted the man to be the head of the wife, and the husband and wife to be the head of the children. There are positions that differ from standing.

What is the nature of submission? It is to be voluntary, but it is not optional. It is to be exclusive, religious, and ordained. We must understand that this comes from the hand of God, and that should be sufficient to answer our questions.

Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ that You would help us, teach us, and build us up in the most holy faith. May we understand, to some extent today, the nature of submission, and begin to give not

only to our mates, but, as a church, to Thee this voluntary, exclusive, religious, and ordained submission, because Thou art the head of the church, and our lives are to be conformed to Thee and Thy Word. Give us grace to serve Thee acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we pray, Amen.

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CHAPTER 6

The Family

Part Six

Review of Previous Messages

We have been dealing with the subject of the family for the last five weeks. This is the sixth week, and there are probably going to be another four or five messages after this dealing with the family as it is given to us in the Word of God.

Our passage is Ephesians chapter 5, beginning with verse 21: "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it."

The first two messages dealt with the dominion aspect of the family, showing how God had ordained and instituted the family to be an instrument of dominion: to honor Him, to serve Him, and to

glorify Him, and to bring the earth into subjugation unto God as we use it for His honor and His glory.

The third message dealt with creation differences, showing how God created men and women differently. He created them differently for their roles in the family. Women were created differently not only physically, but judgmentally and emotionally as well.

The fourth message dealt with God's ordained order. From 1 Corinthians 11, verse 3, and throughout the Bible, we saw that God had it like this: God, Christ, man, woman. The Bible emphasizes this over and over. God created Adam first. The man was first formed, then the woman. We looked at all of those passages in 1 Corinthians chapter 11.

Last week we began looking at the roles that God has ordained for each member of the family. We began with the role of the wife. We are not only going to cover the role of the wife, but the role of the husband, the role of the children, and the role of the father and the mother, and then get into some other things as well.

Review of the Wife's Role: Nature of Submission

Having read several passages from Ephesians chapter 5, Colossians chapter 3, and 1 Peter chapter 3, we reviewed the key word given to the wife. The word was submit, repeated over and over in those passages. In Ephesians chapter 5, especially verses 22 and 23, we considered the nature of the submission God requires.

First, the submission is voluntary: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord." While it is voluntary, I pointed out that it is not optional, because God commanded it. Secondly, it is exclusive: "Submit yourselves to your own husbands." Scripture teaches that there is a general deference women give to men in public. For instance, in Acts 16, there was a woman's prayer meeting down by the riverside, and the women were totally in charge until Paul went there; then they asked Paul to take over, which was fine. But when the Bible says, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands," the word is idios, meaning that which exclusively or particularly belongs to you. Although Alice would be kind and

gracious to any man, she would not give any other man the submission she gives to me, because it is to be an exclusive submission.

Thirdly, it is a religious submission. Scripture says, “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as unto the Lord.” In other words, part of a wife’s submission to her husband is her submission to God; part of her worship of God is her submission to her husband. Whatever she does to her husband, she is to do as unto the Lord.

Ephesians 6 says, “Servants, be obedient to your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling and singleness of heart as unto the Lord.” In other words, as the servant was to look beyond the master and see the Lord, so the wife is to look beyond the husband and see the Lord. So it is a religious submission. Fourthly, it is an ordained submission, because verse 23 says, “For the husband is the head of the wife.” In other words, God ordained it that way.

The Ground of Submission

Having looked at the nature of submission, let us begin with the second point: the ground of submission. The ground of the wife's submission to her husband is simply that God has constituted and ordained it to be so. He ordained the family, and he set the structure in the family. Rather than merely stating that summary, we will consider the three heads under which God has given us the ground of submission.

First of all, there is the created order. I am not going to re-preach this, because it was preached in the fourth message, but in Genesis 1, Genesis 2, 1 Timothy 2, and 1 Corinthians 11, Scripture repeatedly emphasizes, "For the man was created first, then the woman." Here is God's intentional order in creation. This is a simple truth that was pointed out in the fourth message.

The tendency of the woman to follow was embedded in her when she came forth from the hand of her Creator. Why? Because God created the woman, according to 1 Corinthians 11 and Genesis 2, to be a help meet, or a help answerable to and suitable to the man. When God created the woman, when she came forth from the hand

of her Creator, she came forth as a help meet; it was embedded in her to be a follower of her husband.

If sin had not entered into the world, the most normal thing for a woman to do would be to submit to her husband. If sin had not entered the world, the most normal thing for a man to do would be to love his wife, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. But in the created order, it was Adam first, and then Eve. So the very first ground is the created order.

The second ground is the punitive decree. In Genesis 3, verse 16, the man was punished for his sin, the serpent was punished for his sin, and the woman was punished for hers: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow in thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

That was how God created it initially and originally: the man was to be over the wife.

The Redemptive Pattern

As part of her punishment for her sin, the woman is now not only going to be in submission, but her submission is going to be onerous because of her sin and simply because of her rebellion. Otherwise, it would have been normal and natural.

The third point under consideration is the redemptive pattern. We are talking about the ground of a woman's submission. There is the creative order: God created a man first, then the woman. There is the punitive decree, where God decreed that the woman's desire was to be to her husband and that he would rule over her. Now consider the redemptive pattern in Ephesians chapter 5, verse 22: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."

Notice that in this text Christ is mentioned and the church is mentioned, as well as the husband and the wife. There is a relationship that exists between Christ and the church and between

the husband and the wife. What is that relationship, and what is that connection?

In the context of Ephesians chapter 5, the role of the wife is to emulate and typify the role of the church, and the role of the husband is to emulate and typify the role of Christ. The relationship that exists between Christ and His church is to be typified, symbolized, and emulated between the husband and the wife. Christ and the church are set forth on one side, and the husband and the wife on the other; the husband-and-wife relationship is to typify, symbolize, and be emblematic of the relationship that Christ has with His church. This is the redemptive pattern, and this is the principal emphasis of the message.

Stop and think for a moment about the relationship that Christ has to His church. The Church, of course, is to present to Jesus Christ a loving, obedient, pervasive, and voluntary submission, because He is the Head of the Church.

The Apostle Paul did not and could not conceive of anyone who is a true Christian who is not in submission to Jesus Christ. It is normal and natural for a man who is saved by grace to bow to Christ. So the reality that forms this comparison is that, as the church and Christians are in subjection to Jesus Christ, so the wives, therefore, are to be in subjection to their husbands.

Note very carefully what the Bible says in verse 24. I believe that Paul chose his words carefully: “Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ.” He did not say, “as the church should be subject to Christ,” “as the church ought to be subject to Christ,” or “as the church could be subject to Christ.” No. He said, “as the church is subject to Christ.”

The word “subject” in Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 24 is exactly the same word as “submit” in Ephesians 5 and verse 22. So when the Bible says, “wives submit,” and when the Bible says that “the church is subject unto Christ,” it is exactly the same word. Moreover, the word “subject” is in the present tense. What does that mean? That means that there is to be a constant, continual, progressive submission to Christ. Likewise, there should be a constant, continual, progressive submission of the wife to the husband.

Now let me show you a very important theological point. There are those who deny the Lordship of Jesus Christ. They would say that a person may be saved and never bow to Jesus Christ. In other words, one may receive Christ as prophet and priest, but not have to receive Him as king. Those who hold that position destroy the redemptive pattern that is given to us here in Ephesians chapter 5. Think about this: if a real, genuine Christian can be saved and never bow to the kingship and lordship of Jesus Christ, then a real, genuine Christian wife can be saved and never be in submission to her husband. That destroys the parallel in this passage. Paul could not conceive of a man being saved and not bowing to the lordship of Christ, just as he could not conceive of a Christian woman not voluntarily submitting to her husband.

And if you say that one does not need to bow to the Lordship of Christ, then you destroy the redemptive pattern given to us in Ephesians chapter 5. Therefore, wives who are not in subjection to their husbands misrepresent and pervert one of the most sacred truths of Scripture. The wife's submission to her husband is to picture the submission of the church to Jesus Christ. Her submission is to be analogous to the submission of the church to Jesus Christ—to be emblematical, symbolical, demonstrative, and a true picture of the Christian's submission to Christ.

In Ephesians 5 and verse 32, the apostle says, "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." What Paul is doing is comparing the relationship of Christ and His church with the relationship of the husband and the wife. The wife's submission to her husband is to picture the submission of the church to Jesus Christ.

And he says it is a great mystery. Some points may be difficult to comprehend and some points may be difficult to understand, yet you have to agree that it is plain rebellion to misrepresent the relationship that exists between Christ and His church, which should be symbolized between the wife and the husband. So Christ has ordained the role of the wife to be symbolical of the role of the church.

The ground of her submission is the creative order, the punitive decree, and the redemptive pattern. Now look in verse 24, because,

thirdly, here is the extent of the submission. The Bible says, "Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."

The Extent of Submission

The little word pas, P-A-S, is found in verse 24. That is where it is translated as "everything," literally "in all things."

The Scripture does not demand that wives submit to their husbands when it is convenient, when the husbands know more, or when the husbands appear to be right. No, it simply says, "You submit to your husbands in everything."

All of us have heard numerous jokes concerning this issue. One I heard years ago was about the man who bragged that he was the head of his house, made all the big decisions, and allowed his wife to make the little decisions. Someone asked him, "What kind of big decisions do you make, and what kind of little decisions does your wife make?" He said, "I make all the big decisions, like, should America go to war with Russia? Or what should the lending rate be from the Federal Reserve? My wife covers all the little things, like where we should live, what kind of car we should drive, where the kids go to school, and what we wear."

He was actually saying that his wife basically ran the show. We laugh at those things when they are not true, but unhappily, in most instances, they are true. There was also the man who stated publicly, in front of his wife and others, that he was the head in his house. His wife agreed.

She said, “I'm just the neck. But the neck turns the head.” Then, of course, there are the T-shirts that everybody sees: “The rooster rules the roost. But I rule the rooster.” That is just another way of saying it. We can laugh at those things, and some of them are cute and funny. But the sad thing is that, in most homes, it is really no laughing matter.

Look at verse 24: “Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” When the Bible says, “so let the wives be subject to their husbands in everything,” it literally refers to the totality of life.

Ask yourself this question: How many exemptions are there for the church not to be in submission to Christ? Can we jokingly say that we, the church, rule the head, which is Christ? No, we cannot do that. Can we say, as the church, that there are areas, departments, and times in which we are exempted from obedience to Christ? No. What does the Bible say in 2 Corinthians 10, verse 5? "Bringing every thought into captivity to Jesus Christ." As the church is subject unto Christ in everything, there is not one area in which the church is not to be in subjection to Jesus Christ. He says, "Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything," or "in all things."

Let me explain how this text is usually perverted and the errors that most people fall into when they read it. "Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." Men, simply because your wife is required by scripture to be in submission to you

Submission does not mean that you may run roughshod over your wife, discount her counsel, or discount her personhood. The woman was equally created in the image of God, just like the man was. That means that the woman is a person as well. She is an image bearer of God, and she has been gifted in areas in which men have not been gifted. The fact that the wife is required to be in submission to her husband does not mean that you may ignore her or pretend that she has no input into anything that concerns her or the family, or pretend that she has absolutely nothing to contribute.

How would you receive it, men, if other people made decisions concerning you and your life without either notifying you or consulting with you? You would not like that too well. In fact, you would be incensed. You would say, "Look, I'm a person. And I'm intelligent. And I've got sense. And you need to consult me before you start making decisions concerning my life." Apply the same principle to your wife. Your wife may be required to be in submission to you, but that does not mean that you ignore her. It does not mean that you disregard her person or that she has absolutely nothing to contribute.

It is true that the husband is responsible to make the ultimate decision. The wife may be included in that decision, but this does not

mean that she is to be ignored or not consulted with. Since God has gifted the woman differently than the man, many times the wife may have insight, discernment, and knowledge that not only might help you make a decision, but might help save your hide.

Submission does not mean that you ignore your wife. It does not mean that you do not consult her. It does not mean that you refuse to talk with her or discuss things with her. The Bible says that the wife is to be in submission to the man in everything. But it does not mean that she can be ignored, overlooked, and discounted as if she has nothing to say, no input, and no importance.

Let me clarify something else, especially since I am talking to men here. When God requires that the wife be in submission in everything, and we understand that "everything" is all-inclusive, we must also understand that there is an exception to this command. What is that exception? Consider this question: How many times is our Lord, as the Head of the church, commanded or asked to have the church do something contrary to His Word? Does Christ ever ask the church to do anything unbiblical? No, not at all.

Likewise, Christ has never given the husband authority to ask or demand that his wife do something contrary to the Word of God. I may be the head of my wife, but we are to be her heads for her good, not for her detriment or destruction. Christ never asked the church to do anything contrary to His Word, and the husband never has authority from Christ to ask his wife to do anything contrary to the law of God.

Remember when Peter and the other apostles were preaching in Acts chapter 5 and were captured? The ruler said, "You are not going to preach anymore in the name of Christ; we command you not to do this." Peter and the other apostles said, "We ought to obey God rather than man." What does that mean? Husbands, if you want to make sure that your wife does not submit to you, act tyrannically and unbiblically. Whenever you ask or demand that your wife do something contrary to the Word of God, act in a manner displeasing to the Lord, or do that which is wicked and wrong, you are acting outside of your headship and authority.

In such situations, the wife ought to look to her husband and very sweetly and gently say, “Well, sweetheart, I would really like to submit to you, but I am not being rebellious. I want to be in submission. However, what you are asking is contrary to the Word of God. According to Scripture, I must obey God rather than man, because God is the highest authority, and my ultimate submission and subjection are to Him. You have no authority to ask me to go contrary to the Word of God.”

The Climate of Submission

Biblical submission does not include submission to tyranny and wickedness. God does not expect a wife to violate His Word even if she is commanded by her husband to do so. You can make this thing simple. I do not have to look at Alice and say, “I don't have enough money to pay my bills this month. Take this pistol and go rob the bank so I can have the money to pay my bills.” I do not have authority to tell her to violate the law of God. God says, “Thou shalt not steal.” God has not set me up as some type of little tyrant to enable me to constantly and continually violate His Word. So God does not expect a wife to violate His Word even if commanded by her husband to do so. On the other hand, God expects a wife to obey Him since He is the highest authority, and she must understand that God never gave the husband the authority to go contrary to the word.

The Climate of Submission: Reverence

The ground of submission is the created order, the punitive decree, and the redemptive pattern. Now we see the extent of that submission: in all things, with the exception that we have no right to ask them to go contrary to the Word of God. Fourthly, I want you to look at the climate of that submission. In verse 33, the Bible says, “Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.” The wife is to see that she reverence her husband. What does that mean?

The Greek word for “reverence” is the root word phobeo, which is the word for fear. It is the standard word for fear. However, the word is also used to indicate reverence. Here it means to venerate, to treat with deference, reverential obedience. The word is sometimes used

also to mean to stand in awe or to stand in amazement. If you are standing in awe, if you are reverencing, you are not ridiculing, mocking, or making light of someone's position or authority.

Hold Ephesians 5, but turn to 1 Peter 3. Look at verse 6 and then verse 15. We are going to see the same word, fear. First Peter 3 and verse 6.

“Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.” After forty-five years of marriage, I still can't get Alice to call me lord. I don't know why. I just can't get her to bow down, Timothy. I don't understand that. But Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.

Now look what he says: “Whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.” In verse 15 we find the same word, fear: “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” Very obviously, the word “fear,” here as well as in the other passage, does not mean to be afraid, tremble, shake, or be fearful for your life.

That is not what it is talking about. It has to do with reverence and respect. Albert Barnes, in his commentary, said this concerning the word fear: “So long as you perform your duty with a resolute mind, and keep from that which is contrary to your faith, or as long as you subject yourselves to your husbands willingly, cheerfully, and without slavish fear of being losers by your obedience, and fearing the worse for your patience and submission.”

In verse 15, when he says, “sanctify the Lord God in your heart and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of hope that is in you with meekness and fear,” once again it is the word phobeo. Certainly, it has reference there to reverence.

God then requires the wife to reverence her husband. What does that mean? In 1 Peter 2:17, God gives another command: “Honour all men,” which is general; “Love the brotherhood,” which is general; “Fear God,” which is specific; and “Honour the king,” which is specific. What does God mean when He says, “Honour the king”?

Let me ask you a question. Are kings always honorable? No. Are they always right? No. What God is saying is this: You have to honor the office of authority, even though there happens to be someone in that office who is dishonorable or who is not right. And Lord, you do not despise the office just because the man in it happens to be wrong or at times happens to be wicked.

Now, I am going to let you women know something today that probably you have never thought of. It is probably never entered your mind, but here it is: Men are not always right. We are not always right. We can be ugly. Sometimes we can be downright hateful. All I am pointing out is this: The husband is not always right. He is not always honorable. But he is always the husband, and he is always in the office that God has ordained for him. So, while someone can hold an office and be disrespectful and dishonorable, that does not mean that you dishonor the office. You must reverence that office.

Let me ask you another question. In Ephesians 5, verse 33, God says that the wife see that she reverence her husband. How do you reverence your husband? Do you reverence him by always agreeing with him and always admitting that he is right? The answer is, of course not, because he is not always right. You may disagree with your husband. You may lovingly point out his errors and his sins. But you may not disrespect his office. The office that he holds is that of the head of the wife and the head of the family, which God has ordained and which God has appointed.

Now let me show you a parallel. Look in your Bibles to 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 1. Here is what the Scripture says: “Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren.” Now, an elder in this passage is not just an older man; the word elder is a term for a pastor in the Bible. So literally, here is what he says: “Rebuke not a pastor, but intreat him as a father.”

Are pastors always right? No. But they do have an office. Can a pastor sin? Yes. Can a pastor be wrong? Yes. Can a pastor be confronted when he sins and is wrong? Yes, because he is not only a pastor; he is also a brother and may be confronted as a brother.

But look what God says: when you go to confront a pastor, you had better make sure that you rebuke him not, but entreat him as a father. When you were a child and disagreed with your father, did you go up to him, shake your finger in his face, and say, “Let me tell you something, and let me tell you something right now”? If you had a father like mine, you only did it once. Even as a grown son, I never did that to my father, though there were plenty of times I disagreed with him.

What does it mean? It means you have to treat him with respect and respect the office he is holding. If I sin, since you are my Christian brothers and sisters in the Lord, you have the right to come to me lovingly and gently and say, “Pastor, may I point something out for you from scripture? Let me show you where you are violating the word of God.” There is nothing wrong with that. But if you come up angry, shake your finger in my face, and cuss me out, there is something wrong with that. Scripture says, “Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father.”

It is the same thing, ladies, with your husbands. This does not mean that you cannot disagree with them or lovingly help them see the error of their ways and correct them. It means that you must do so respectfully, reverencing their office. As the head of a wife and the head of the family, he must be treated as a father and as the head of the house.

Applications to Wives

On the word reverence—“the wife see that she reverence her husband”—Albert Barnes, the commentator, wrote: “The meaning is that it was the special duty of the wife to show respect for her husband as the head of the family and as set over her in the Lord. The word rendered reverence is that which usually notes fear, phobeo. She is to fear, that is, to honor, to respect, obey the will of her husband. It is, of course, not implied that it is not also her duty to love her husband, but that there should be no usurping of authority, no disregard of the arrangement which God has made and that no order and peace should be secured in a family by regarding the husband as the source of law.” God is simply requiring you to respect the office that your husband has over you.

Calvin said on reverence, “Husbands are required to love their wives, and wives to fear their husbands, understanding by fear that reverence which will lead them to be submissive, where reverence does not exist, there will be no willing subjection.”

When God says, “Wives, see that ye reverence your husband,” that reverence arises from two main factors. The first is the fact that the husband is the head of the wife and the head of the family. You say, “Well, I don’t like that.” Then you have to take that up with the Lord, because He is the one who made you a woman. He is the one who created you, and He is the one who ordained the man to be the head of the house. So there is the fact that the husband is the head of the wife and the family. Secondly, this reverence has been ordained by God; God instituted it so. Your argument is not with man. Your argument is with God. The Bible says the climate is the wife see that she reverence the husband.

Now, to the wives: it is imperative that you remember that your position is to reflect the position of the church to Christ. God has ordained that your role in the family be reflective of and demonstrative of the role of the church to Jesus Christ. The church is not only to be in submission to Christ; it is to reverence Christ as her head. Ladies, please remember this.

Applications

One of the truest examples and witnesses to your children is how you react, how you respond, and how you relive in relation to your husband. The sad thing is that our children usually turn out to be the kind of wives and husbands that we are. If we give them a wrong example, they are going to be wrong in their lives. Our children will inevitably develop the same attitudes they perceive in their parents. Wives must be in submission in order to be in obedience to Christ, to honor their husbands as their head, and to give a living example to their children.

The second application is this: in order for your conduct to be biblical, it must be grounded and founded upon doctrine. Doctrine describes your duty and informs you how to fulfill it. You must grasp the doctrine in order to be obedient. Make sure that you understand

that your duty is always based upon doctrine. If you understand the doctrine that has been taught, then your duty should be obvious.

The third application is this: since everything I have just given you is true, you must now see the desperate need we have of the grace of God in our lives in order to live holy, godly, and obedient lives. Our Lord said in John 15, "without me, you can do nothing." Is obedience something? Yes. Is reverence something? Yes. Is submission something? Yes. What does that mean? It means we need the grace of God.

Ephesians 5:21 shows that God does not simply demand that wives be in submission. Husbands must be in submission to Christ. Children must be in submission to their parents. Servants must be in submission to their masters. Employees must be in submission to their employers. In Ephesians 5:21, our Lord says it like this.

Ephesians 5:21 says, “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” That is, we all have an area of submission. Calvin said it like this: “God has bound us so strongly to each other that no man ought to endeavor to avoid subjection. And where love reigns, mutual services will be rendered. I do not accept kings and governors, whose very authority is held for the service of the community. It is highly proper that all should be exhorted to be subject to each other in their turn.”

So that means this: As the husband is in subjection to Christ, the wife is to be in subjection to the husband. The children are to be in subjection to the parents. For this is the will of God and the individual roles that God has ordained for husbands, wives, and children.

Ladies, let me encourage you. When I return, I will be dealing with the husband, so make sure that you are here and make sure that your husband is here.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your grace and Your mercy today. We are so thankful, Lord, that You have ordained the family. You have instituted the roles of the family of each individual member. Give us grace, Lord, that we may understand these roles, and to serve the Lord with reverence and godly fear, fulfill those roles that we may honor Thee and obey Thee and have

joyful, successful, and prosperous lives in obedience to Thy Word. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 7

The Family

Part Seven

Ephesians 5:21 begins: “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church, for we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

Introduction and Review

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself, and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”

The biblical doctrine of the family includes the dominion aspect of the family. God instituted the family as an instrument of dominion, involving both authority and responsibility. God created men and women differently, not only physically, but also emotionally and judgmentally. He has also ordained an intentional order in creation: God, Christ, man, woman, according to 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Again and again, Scripture emphasizes that God created the man first. Thus, God has created the man to lead and the woman to follow.

The key word for the wife is submit. The wife is to picture the submission of the church to Jesus Christ: “Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.” The woman's submission to her husband is part and parcel of her submission to Jesus Christ.

A woman who is not rightly submitted to her husband is not right with God. But the husband who does not love his wife the way Christ loved the church is not right with God either. In other words, God has ordained individual roles in marriage. The role of the wife is to represent, typify, and be emblematical of the submission of the Church to Jesus Christ. The role of the husband is to picture and represent Christ's love to the Church.

Since the key word for the wife is submit, and we looked at it all through Scripture, you would automatically think that the key word for the husband would be rule or conquer. But it is neither. In Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives." Verse 28 says, "So ought men to love their wives." Verse 33 says, "Nevertheless, let every one in particular so love his wife." Colossians 3:19 says, "Husbands, love your wives."

The Particular Command: Love Your Wife

The key word for the husband is not rule or conquer; it is love. The particular command God gives husbands is for the husband to love his wife. As God ordains that the woman is to be in submission to her husband, He also ordains that the husband is to love his wife.

In each instance, when the Bible tells the wife to submit to the husband and the husband to love the wife, it is a present middle imperative. The imperative means it is a command. The present means it is something that you are now doing and something that you continue to do. It is not something that can be done once a week, once a month, once a year, or once in a lifetime. The wife is to be constantly, continually, progressively submitting herself to her husband, and the husband is to be constantly, continually, progressively loving his wife as Christ also loved the church. It cannot be done once and then dismissed by saying, "I did that last year." It must be constant, continuous, and progressive.

Now, men, the Greek word for love is agapao, from agape, which, of course, is the highest form of love. It is the form of love that God gave to us when He gave His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. So it is not mere phileo. Phileo is where we get our words family and philanthropic. It is not merely family love or philanthropic love. No, it is a spiritual love that transcends even the love of the family. Moreover, it is not simply erotic or physical love that God commands. It is His kind of love—the highest form. It is spiritual love.

Let me show you how we, as fallen human beings, turn everything upside down. Fallen man always begins with the physical or the fleshly. Usually, men are attracted to women, and women are attracted to men, not because of spiritual insight or deep, holy, godly love, but simply because of lust or infatuation. Once they are attracted physically, then, hopefully, after they marry, they might reach familial, or family, love; and only by the supernatural grace of God will they ever reach agape, or spiritual love. What God says is, “Look, we have it upside down. We should always start with the highest form of love.” If we begin with that, the other types are very easily achieved. But when you turn it upside down and begin from the bottom up, then you have a real, genuine struggle.

When the Bible commands husbands to love their wives, here is what the commentators Jamieson, Fausset and Brown said: “That has seen the measure of obedience. Now, here also the measure of love. Do you wish your wife to obey you as the church is to obey Christ? Then have a solicitude for her as Christ had for the church.” So, rather bluntly, he said this: If you want your wife to submit to you, men, the way God demands, then love her the way God demands.

John Gill went a little bit further, and I think this is so beautiful. Explaining the phrase “husbands love your wives,” he says: “Husbands love your wives, which consists in a strong and cordial affection for them, in a real delight and pleasure in them, in showing respect and doing honor to them, in seeking their contentment, satisfaction and pleasure, in a quiet, constant and comfortable dwelling with them, in providing all things necessary for them, in protecting

This love protects them from all injuries and abuses, conceals their faults and covers their infirmities, entertains the best opinion of their persons and actions, and endeavors to promote their spiritual good and welfare. It ought to be hearty and sincere, not feigned and selfish. It should be shown in private as well as in public; it should be chaste and single, constant and perpetual. It should exceed that which is borne to neighbors, or even to parents, and should be equal to that a man bears to himself, though not so as to hinder or break upon the love to God in Christ.

Many of the reasons why husbands should love their wives are given here: they are helps unto them, companions of them, wives of the covenant, their own wives, yea, their own bodies, their own flesh, and even themselves. They are their image and their glory. Especially, the example of Christ in His love to His church and people should engage them in it.

When the Bible says, “Husbands, love your wives,” understand that this particular command discusses the husband’s love for his wife on the absolute highest plane imaginable—that of real spiritual love. Here, then, is the command: “Husbands, love your wives.”

The Position of Love: Headship

Look back in your Bibles, in Ephesians 5 and verse 25, and notice, secondly, the position of this love: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it." While God demands that husbands love their wives, He also demands that the husband love his wife from a position of headship. Christ loves the church as her head.

Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of God the Father and was given all authority in heaven and earth. It is true that Jesus Christ loves the church, but His love for the church does not negate or nullify His headship. He is still the head. So when the Bible commands husbands to love their wives, the position from which they are to love is that of the head of the wife and the head of the family.

There are two extremes that must be avoided at all times, and unhappily, these extremes prevail in most marriages. The first is when the husband thinks that loving his wife means giving in to her every whim, allowing her to have her way in everything, and becoming nothing but a lackey and a "yes, dear" man. The other extreme is when the husband becomes a demanding, exacting tyrant.

On the one hand, the husband is nothing but a lackey for a domineering wife who assiduously demands that he bow to her every whim. Either way you cut it, the woman rules the roost. Unhappily, her daughters will turn out to be exactly the way she is, and if she has sons, they will also become lackeys for their wives, because they know nothing but female dominance.

I have known women, and still know some, who make their husbands' lives a living hell on earth. When the husbands try to stand up to their wives, the wives make it so difficult that finally the husbands cave in, just to have a few moments of peace and to be left alone. Do you know homes like that? Surely you do.

On the other hand, I have known men who are determined not to be ruled by a woman, so much so that they become absolute tyrants, demanding that their wives dot every I and cross every T. If their wives do not perform exactly as they demand, the wives are usually

verbally, emotionally, and sometimes physically abused. Their attitude is that the wife has to know who is in charge.

Both of these extremes are unbiblical, ungodly, and unchristian. We are not to be lackeys, men, nor are we to be tyrants. The position from which the husband is to love the wife is a position of headship. Christ loves the church, but He has never given up His headship. God constituted Christ as the head of the church, and likewise constituted the husband as the head of the home and the head of the wife. Husbands who love their wives must love them from a position of headship, and that position of headship is always for the good of the wife.

When God instituted the husband as the head of the wife, and as the head of the family, He did not institute or give that husband authority to harm, hurt, devastate, or destroy his wife. He did not elevate the man to be a lackey, nor did He elevate him to be a tyrant. He elevated the man so that the man's position would be reflective of His own position.

As Christ loved the church, so the husband is to love the wife. Loving from a position of headship does not mean that love always allows the wife to have her way. Does Christ always allow the church to have her way? No. But it also means that loving from a position of headship does not mean that she must never have her way. Does the church sometimes have her way?

When it is for our benefit and we are obedient, of course. Loving from a position of headship means that the husband is always looking out for the best interest of his wife, providing for and protecting her as well. He loves her, but it is from a position of headship. He is not being a lackey. He is not being a tyrant. He is being honest, biblical, and looking out for the best interest of his wife. The position, then, from which we must love our wives is the position of headship.

The Purity of Love: Qualitatively Like Christ

The purity, or quality, of this love is stated in Ephesians 5:25: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.”

Consider the two little words “even as.” They are from the Greek word kathos, which literally means “as,” “even as,” “according as,” or “according to.” We could translate them another way: “Husbands, love your wives equal to, or commensurate with, or reflective of, the love that Christ has for the church.” Love your wives even as.

This is a very demanding point. When God commands us to love our wives as Christ loved the church, we cannot love them quantitatively the way Christ loved the church, because Christ is God. Therefore, Christ can love in a far greater degree than you and I could ever possibly imagine. He is not demanding that we love our wives quantitatively the way Christ loves the church. What he is demanding is that we love our wives qualitatively—that is, that we have the same kind of love for our wives that Christ had for the church.

Christ Loved the Church Realistically

That is the kind of love that led Christ to the cross to suffer, bleed, and die for the church. What the Lord is telling us is this: we must learn, as husbands, to exercise the same quality of love toward our wives as Christ did for His church. As the wife's role is to picture the submission of the church to Jesus Christ, so the husband's role is to picture the love of Christ for His church as he loves his wife.

In order for us to discover how Christ loved the church, we must ask this question: How did Christ love the church? If we understand how Christ loved the church, we can understand how Christ wants husbands to love their wives. Look at verse 25: “Husbands, love your wives, even as”—equal to, commensurate with—the way Christ loved the church.

How did Christ love the church? First of all, Christ loved the church realistically. When Christ set His love upon us, what were we like? Were we perfect, pure, holy, just, and righteous? Romans 5:6–8 says, “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

The Bible says that, in due time, Christ died for the ungodly, and while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Do you think that Jesus Christ came into this world to die for a perfect people who would always be obedient and always want to do that which was right and holy? I do not think so. There was no misconception in His mind. Remember what He said in Luke 19:10: “I came not to save that which was righteous, but that which was lost.” He came to seek and to save that which was lost. How did He love us? He loved us realistically. He loved us the way we were. Have you heard the old adage, “love is blind”? That is really not true.

Love is not blind. Love is realistic. Biblical love is realistic. Christ loved the church realistically, and we should learn to love our wives realistically. There is no such thing as a perfect church. Usually, I tell people, if you ever find a perfect church, don't join it. You'll mess it up.

Men, because there is no perfect church, there is no perfect wife. All of our wives have faults, failings, blemishes, and scars. But our love is not to be diminished because of those faults, failings, blemishes, or scars.

Our wives may not be beauty queens. They may not have the greatest intellect. They may no longer have their schoolgirl figures. But that should never diminish our love. I know of one young man who told his young wife that he never wanted her to gain weight and that, if they wanted a happy marriage, she had to keep her schoolgirl figure. That was highly unrealistic. Either she will never grow physically, she will never have children, or she will die at a very early age.

All the men here could truthfully say, “I'm not the man I used to be.” Our wives are not what they used to be either. We grow old, we age, and we have problems. When I say we are to love our wives realistically, it is interesting that in Colossians 3 and verse 19 the Bible says, “Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them.”

What causes bitterness? Bitterness comes when our expectations are unfulfilled: “She's just not cracked up to be what I thought she was going to be. She's just not acting the way I thought she should

act. She's just not treating me the way I think I should be treated." Our bitterness shows when we speak to our wives with contempt, sarcasm, and ridicule, or when we give them the silent treatment. Unrealistic expectations always lead to bitterness.

Now think about this. The Bible says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it," right?

There is a comparison here. Men, let me ask you this: Suppose Christ became bitter and resentful toward you because of all your sin, failings, and faults, because you have never measured up to what He thinks you should be. Husbands, would you like Christ to give you the silent treatment? Would you like Him to ridicule you and become sarcastic with you?

You say, "But, Pastor, my wife has not turned out the way I thought she would." Well, have you turned out the way Christ desired you to turn out? Let us understand something. If you read 1 Corinthians 13, I think there is a little phrase there that goes like this: "love beareth all things." The next time you become anxious because your wife has gained a few pounds, has wrinkles, or has crow's feet, it may be time for you to look in the mirror yourself.

You are going to find that your hair is not as full as it once was. What is really bad is when our ears have more hair than our heads do. And, in South Georgia lingo, we are not as suave and debonair as we used to be—sort of suave and have an air. We are not.

We must consider the fact that, realistically, our wives are sinners just as we are. Therefore, they will have faults, failings, and problems; they are not going to be perfect. There is no such thing as a perfect wife. Ladies, I hate to burst your bubble, but I will go ahead and say it: there is no such thing as a perfect husband. There is not, because we are all sinners.

Christ Loved the Church Exclusively

But Christ loved the church realistically. There was no misconception in His mind. He knew we were wicked, sinners, and ungodly, but He loved us anyway. Secondly, look back at verse 25: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." He not only loved us realistically; He loved us

exclusively. Scripture emphasizes that He loved the church. He did not love the world particularly; He loved the church particularly. What does that mean? Husbands are to love their own peculiar and particular wives—the one who belongs to them. They are not to love their neighbor's wife.

In order to understand this distinction, you must understand the distinction between the love of benevolence in the Bible and God's special redemptive love. I said earlier that Christ did not love the world the way He loved the church. Before you begin quoting John 3:16, let me explain what I mean. Yes, there is a sense in which God loves the world benevolently. The benevolent love of God is revealed in Matthew 5, where He causes the sun to rise upon the just and the unjust alike and sends showers upon them alike.

Peter said in Acts chapter 14, verse 17, "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." That is a benevolent love. It means loving people in the sense that you do not wish them any harm or ill, and you are more than willing to do things for them. But that does not mean that you love them with a special, particular, redemptive love.

God has not shown that to the world. He has shown that to His church. Someone says, "The Lord loves everyone alike and loves everyone exactly the same way." Do you mean to tell me that God loved Esau exactly the way He loved Jacob? Do you mean to tell me that God loved Judas in the same way and in the same degree that He loved the Apostle Paul? Do you mean to tell me that God loves those who are condemned to death and hell in the same way that He loves His church? I don't think so. If judgment and death and hell are acts of God's love, truthfully, I don't want to be loved like that.

You and I both know there is a difference. Look in your Bible to John 17, the high priestly prayer of our Lord. Notice verse 9: "I pray for them," that is, His believers, His church. "I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine." Our Lord is praying for His own. If He loved everybody alike, why did He not pray for everybody alike? No, He does not love everybody the same way.

That is why the saints, as you read through Scripture, are always called the beloved of the Lord. Does our Lord act graciously and mercifully toward all? Of course He does. That is why they have life, food, and family. But that does not mean that He loves them in that special, redemptive way. He has not chosen to save everyone by grace through faith in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

What is He saying? “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church.” It is an exclusive love. I could say truthfully that I love every woman in this room, and I do. I do not want them to die of cancer, be killed in a car wreck, or be deprived and do without. But I could also say that I love my wife, and I do not love everyone in this room the way I love my wife. If I loved every woman in this room the way I love my wife, I would be in real problems. I can truthfully say that any man who tries to love my wife the way he loves his wife is going to be in bore water problems himself. I would hope that every man in this congregation, and every other man, would feel the same way if I tried to make advances toward his wife.

No, God says you love your wives. You love your own peculiar, particular wife. If you love your wife, there will be no cases of infatuation, lust, or playing around. You are to resist all temptation. We must understand that we are to love our wives.

When God says, "Husbands, love your wives," here is a very important truth: love is an act of the will. Love is not necessarily an emotion. Since love is an act of the will, it can be commanded: "Husbands, love your wives." By implication, the wife is to love the husband. Love is an act of the will; we will to love.

I've heard people say, "I just fell out of love." You did not fall out of love; you just quit willing to love. You do not fall in love, and you do not fall out of love. I once had a man come to me for counseling who had already determined that he was going to divorce his wife and marry another woman. He had no biblical grounds to divorce her. She had committed no sin; he was simply going to get another woman.

When people come to you for counseling, usually they do not really want counseling. They want you to put your stamp of approval on what they have already decided to do. This man had decided,

before he ever came to my office, to divorce his wife and marry the other woman. I found that there were no grounds for divorce, and I told him, "You cannot divorce your wife. She has done nothing worthy of divorce. If you do so, you will be sinning against God. It is a violation of the Word of God."

He blurted out, "But I don't love her." I said, "I'm sorry. You have no choice in the matter. God has commanded you, 'Husbands, love your wife.' God has placed you under a commandment-oriented life. It is an act of the will. You must love your wife." His answer was, "Well, I just can't love her as a wife." I said, "Well, let me ask you. She is at least the closest neighbor you have, isn't she?"

No one else could be any closer. She is at least living in the same house with you. He said, “Yeah, I guess so.” I said, “Good, because the Scripture says, ‘Love your neighbor.’ Since your wife is your closest neighbor, God commands you to love her. Why is it that you cannot even love her as a neighbor? Would you count her as an enemy?” He said, “Yes, she is my enemy.” I said, “Good. The Word of God says, ‘Love your enemies.’” When he saw he could not get out of it, suddenly he had to be somewhere else, and the counseling session was over.

Please understand this: I love my wife, and I will love her every day. I pray and ask God to help me love her as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. I love my wife more now than I ever did when we met or when we first married. I did not even know what love was when we married, and most people do not. The reason there are so many divorces is that people have never understood that love is an act of the will.

Christ Loved the Church Sacrificially

It is something you must do and work at daily. Mark it down: God commands you to love your wife. You cannot get out of it. Whichever woman God has given you, He commands you to love her as Christ loved the church. He gave her to you in His providence, and now He commands you to love her.

Thirdly, Christ not only loved the church realistically and exclusively; He loved the church sacrificially. Ephesians 5:25 says,

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.” The essence of love is to spend itself for another.

Men, listen carefully. Scripture does not say that Christ gave of Himself; it says that Christ gave Himself. That means we must love our wives sacrificially. Lust and infatuation may lead a man into marriage, but only sacrificial love will keep him there. Once a man is married, his wife is to be number one in his life.

Friends, associates, and all other pleasures take a back seat. I've known men who got married and wanted to keep up their time with the boys: hunt all night, fish all weekend, and spend all their time with their friends. As we say in South Georgia, that dog won't hunt. If you treat your wife like that, those who sacrifice their wives for their friends will soon have only friends and no wives. Once you marry, that wife becomes your best friend, your number one companion, and all else takes a back seat. She comes first.

That doesn't mean you can't go hunting or fishing. Sometimes wives appreciate the fact that you're gone for a couple of days. But make sure you pay close attention to her. I often tell my wife I don't see how she gets anything done when I'm away from her, because I'm not there to give her orders. She tells me she can get ten times more done when I'm not there to give her orders. But be honest: you cannot sacrifice your wife for your friends.

“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.”

Palmer wrote a wonderful book on the family, comparing the husband to Christ and the husband's love for his wife with Christ's love for his church. He says, “The second argument of the apostle is the analogy between the husband's love and that of Christ for the church. We can afford here only to skirt the edge of this mystery, which is reserved for a later exposition and another connection where the parallel not suggested in Scripture, we should not ourselves dare to conceive of it. Yet in how many striking particulars does it hold good? For example, the free electing sovereign love by which we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world to be the subjects of grace is faintly shadowed forth in the priority of

the husband's love which pitched upon the one woman out of all of her sex to be his solace and his joy."

The continuance of Christ's love, in which, having loved his own, he loved them to the end, is likewise pictured in the law of marriage, which constitutes a union indissoluble until death. Then the immense sacrifice whereby Christ gave himself for the Church finds its type, indescribably faint, in the consecration of the husband when, forsaking all past associations and fellowship, he cleaves unto his wife and devotes himself to her alone.

Still further, the real but mystical union of the believer with Christ, through which he becomes a partaker of his life, found its earliest expression in the mystical union of marriage, wherein the two are made one flesh. Again, the gracious love of Christ with which he nourishes and cherishes the Church, by the communication of his Spirit, has an earthly illustration in the providence and toil with which the husband feeds, protects, and comforts her, who is supremely dependent upon his care. The aim of Christ in all this watchful tenderness of his redeeming love is that he might sanctify and cleanse the church, and present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

In like manner have we begun to exhaust the signification of marriage until we comprehend its moral usage in making the parties to the same cure and better for this life and the life to come. To this end, how incumbent it is upon Him, whose nature is the stronger, to bring the support of His will, and the clearness of His judgment, and the majesty of His influence to strengthen and guide and to uphold her, who by the right of her dependence leans upon Him for all this. And how beneficent is the reciprocal effect of true conjugal intercourse between the two when she, by her winning tenderness, softens in him all that is harsh and rough, and he with his kindly firmness upholds and trains those plight graces which bloom the brighter as they twine themselves around his strength.

Can higher honor be placed upon the husband's love, or can its sacredness be expressed with greater emphasis than by this analogy with the redeeming love of Christ our Lord? Were it always cherished, the husband's supremacy would rest gently upon the

wife's obedience, the yoke would be easy, and the burden would be light. Isn't that beautiful? Showing how, really and truly, the husband's love for the wife is to picture the love of Christ for the church.

The Bible says in verse 25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself, a glorious church."

The Purpose of Love: Sanctification

The purpose of our Lord's love for the church is to make it a holy, glorious, and godly entity. Our love for our wives is to be as the love of Christ for the church.

Men, let me ask you a question: Has your wife become more holy, more obedient, and godlier because she has been married to you? Is she more sanctified now than when you married her? Are you to her what Christ is to the church, a sanctifier? That is why He gave Himself for it: that He might sanctify and cleanse it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Men like to make a point of the fact that the wife is to be in submission to the husband as the church is in submission to Christ. That is true. But it is equally true that men are to love their wives even as Christ loved the church. The purpose of that love is to make that wife more holy, more godly, and more obedient. It is easier for a wife to be in submission to a man who loves her as Christ loved the church.

As the wife is to picture the submission of the church to Christ, so the husband is the picture of the love of Christ for the church.

The Particularity of Love: As One's Own Body

Notice the particularity of this love in verses 28 through 33: “So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.” Scripture says, “He that loveth his wife loveth himself.” If it is true that he who loves his wife loves his own self,

then turn it upside down and look at the other side: He who does not love his own wife does not really love himself.

That could be another real issue in today's marriages. People hate themselves because they are disobedient to the word of God. Notice verse 29: "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." If a man loves his wife, he is not going to neglect her or abuse her. He is going to nourish her, cherish her, take care of her, and provide for her.

That is the evidence of love. What is the evidence that Christ loves the church? He protects us, provides for us, communicates with us, and loves us. Verse 31 demonstrates once again the truth of verses 28 and 29: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, they two shall be one flesh." Then notice verse 33: "Nevertheless, let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself." So if you love yourself, you love Christ.

Love does not mean that we never rebuke our wives when they are wrong or wicked. What does our Lord say in Revelation 3:19? "As many as I love, I rebuke." Our Lord rebukes us when we are wrong. Should a husband rebuke his wife when she is wicked or wrong? Of course. But rebuke should be done biblically. Does this mean that we are never to be angry with the sins of our wives, or that wives are never to be angry with the sins of their husbands? Of course not. The Bible says in Ephesians 4:26, "Be angry and sin not."

There is a biblical use of anger, and that use is not to lash out at each other, but to resolve the problem and the sin. Our Lord rebukes us when we are wrong, and we may rebuke each other in biblical love when the other is wrong.

Conclusion and Application

Husbands, have your wives become more godly and more holy because they married you? Do you love your wife qualitatively—that is, with the same kind of love that Christ loved the church? You may answer yes, but suppose I asked your wife how she would answer it.

When was the last time you told your wife that you loved her and appreciated her? When was the last time you opened the Scripture and taught her principles from the Word of God? When was the last

time you said, like our Lord, “I'll never leave you and never forsake you”? I've told my wife a hundred times that I'm never going to leave her, and if she ever leaves me, she better pack my suitcase because I'm going with her. If we love ourselves, we love our wives. If we do not love ourselves, we do not love our wives.

Husbands love, wives submit. These two things must always be taken together; they are inseparably bound to each other. When men demand that their wives submit without loving them the way Christ loved the church, they are demanding that which never can be and never will be. When women demand that their husbands love them the way Christ loved the church without being willing to submit to them, they are demanding what never will be and never can be. The two are inseparably bound together.

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, without spot, without wrinkle. What is God's directive for the husband? Love your wife even as Christ loved the church. God commands it. You cannot get out of it without sinning against Him. Let's pray.

Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ that you would help, teach, and build us up in the most holy faith. We pray for grace that we may fulfill thy commands. May our wives be more godly and more holy, but may we as husbands be more godly and more holy, more loving, and reflective of the love of Christ. May we always understand we must love from a position of headship, as Christ is the head of the church. Give us grace that we may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear. In Thy name we pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 8

The Family

Part Eight

Introduction and Review of the Family Series

Let us open our Bibles to Ephesians chapter 6. We have been dealing with the family, and we will continue that series for the next several weeks. I want to call your attention to the fact that I brought the first two messages dealing with the family as an instrument of dominion. If you have forgotten those messages, I trust that you will go back and listen to the tapes and refresh your mind concerning how God created the family to be an instrument of dominion.

Then I dealt with the differences between men and women in creation, showing how they differed not only physically, but emotionally and judgmentally as well. I showed God's intentional order, not only in creation but in the family: God, Christ, man, and woman. In the family, He constituted the man as the head of the house. We then began to look at the different roles that God has ordained for the members of the family.

We looked first at the wife. The key word for the wife was submit. It was a willing submission, but it was not optional, because God commanded it. I spent two messages dealing with the wife. Last week I dealt with the role of the husband, where the Bible says, "Husbands, love your wives." I pointed out that this is to be an exclusive love and a sacrificial love. We may not be able to love our wives quantitatively as Christ does, because Christ is God and is capable of far more love than we can ever give. But we may love our wives qualitatively—that is, with the same kind of love. He says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." The wife is to submit, and the husband is to love.

The Two Directives for Children: Obey and Honor

Today we come to Ephesians chapter 6, verses 1 through 3, because we are dealing with the role of children. I am only going to get half the message today; the other half will be next Lord's Day. When we are talking about children, it is not just little children. It is even adult children, because God has words for those who are little and for those who are old as well.

Ephesians 6:1 says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." Verse 2 continues: "Honour thy father and thy mother; which is the first commandment with promise;" and verse 3 adds, "That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

Note that God had one key word for the wife: submit. God had one key word for the husband: love. But when it comes to the children, God has two key words: obey and honor. We live in a day when each of those concepts is despised. Look around today at the average home and the average family. Children disobey, dishonor, and live a life of rebellion, contrary to the plain teaching of the Word of God.

Children Must Hear the Word of God with Parents

One of the main reasons children are so disobedient and rebellious today is that they are not exposed to real biblical teaching and preaching. There are many Christian families who say, "I take my children to church." Yes, they do. But when they go to that church,

their children are immediately taken from them and escorted to a junior church, where everything is watered down and given to the children on their level, so to speak.

God deals with children exactly as He deals with adults: through His Word. There is no illumination and no enlightenment apart from the Word of God and apart from the Holy Spirit. Consider the directives God has given us in His Word. Three passages will make this clear, and they raise important questions for us.

The first passage is Deuteronomy 31:12. Notice the directions that God gives: "Gather the people together, men and women and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear and that they may learn and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law." Note carefully what he said: gather the people together—men, women, and children—that they may hear, learn, fear the Lord, and observe to do all the words of this law.

Joshua 8:34–35 says, "And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the curses, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not, before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them." He read all of the law to the congregation with the women and the little ones.

Ezra 10:1 says, "Now, when Ezra had prayed, and when he had confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, there assembled unto him out of Israel a very great congregation of men and women and children, for the people wept very sore."

Isn't it interesting that in each of these three passages, it was men, women, and children who came together?

Let me ask you several questions. First of all, based upon these verses and certainly other principles in the Word of God, do you think that in the Bible families were together when the Word of God was spoken or read? Very obviously they were. Let me ask you a further question. If God has constituted the Father as the head of the house, and if the Father is responsible for what his children learn,

then the question of who is present when the Word of God is spoken or read is important.

How can he be sure they are being taught the truth if they are separated from him, taken to a different part of the building, and instructed without his knowledge or hearing, without him knowing the content of that instruction? It is absolutely impossible. That is why I believe God is saying here that men, women, and children are to hear the Word of God.

Some will say, "Brother Weaver, don't you understand that when we have a junior church, they aren't hearing the Word of God? We have to understand that children do not have the same level of intelligence that adults do. Adults are so much smarter—at least hopefully they should be—and therefore we have to speak to the children on their level so that they can understand the Word of God."

Who can understand the Word of God apart from the illumination of the Holy Spirit? No one. Can an adult understand the Word of God apart from the Holy Spirit? No. Can a child understand the Word of God apart from the Holy Spirit? No. The Holy Spirit is needed to open the eyes of both the young and the old.

He may do so without any difficulty whatsoever. It does not matter whether that child is in the main preaching or anywhere else. No one is capable of understanding the Word of God apart from the Holy Spirit. God has only one way of dealing with people. I do not care whether they are men, women, or children. That one way is through His Word and by His Spirit. It does not matter whether someone is a child like Samuel or an adult like Saul of Tarsus. It still requires the illumination of the Holy Spirit to open the mind. Period. So why should you separate children? Why should they not be able to hear the pure, unadulterated Word of God?

When you argue that it is over their heads, it is also over the heads of adults. I have been in many churches and preached some of the simplest sermons—so simple that I was embarrassed to preach some of them. Yet adults have come up to me and said, "Oh, that is so deep and so profound." And I thought, "Lord, have mercy. What level are you on?"

I do not care how simple something is, and I do not care how complex something is. The Holy Ghost can open the eyes of anyone—man, woman, or child.

Children need to hear the Word of God, and they really need to hear the Word of God with their parents. That way, if there are any questions, they may ask their parents as well.

Having told you one of my pet peeves and shown you what I believe is one of the reasons our children are so disobedient and so ignorant today of the Word of God, let me ask this question: What are God's directives to children? He actually gives two directives.

The first one is found in Ephesians 6:1: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.” That is as far as we are going to get today, but I am going to go ahead and give you the second word, in verse 2: “Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” So there are two directives: obey and honor. Now let us go back to verse 1. It begins with children.

Definition and Nature of Obedience

The Greek word for children is the little word teknon. The word normally signifies those who are young, but here it is evidently used to denote those who are under the care and government of their parents, those who are not of age, or, listen carefully, those who are of age but choose to remain under the authority of their parents.

What do you do with an adult child who is living at home? He is still a child. It is still the parents' home, and they still have the authority.

I am going to explain a little bit more of that next week, but I am simply pointing out that this word is a very broad word. It can be used not only of little tiny children, but also of teenagers and of what you and I would call grown children who are still living at home. And so God simply says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.”

Let us go forward with the definition of obedience. He says, “Children, obey.” So we have to ask the question: What does it mean to obey? In order to communicate, we have to understand terms,

understand and comprehend definitions. If I am going to define obey, I want to define it in such a way that you and I know what we are talking about and have the same idea in mind.

First of all, the word obey is a very explicit term. It comes from the Greek word hupakouō, which literally is translated in our Bible as "obey," "to be obedient," and "to hearken." The word originally had reference to a porter. Do you know what a porter was? I am not talking about someone who carried something. A porter was someone who stood at the door waiting for the knock, waiting for someone to say, "Open the door." The porter then immediately reached out and opened the door. He was someone who listened, but he listened with the intent to obey.

So when you hear the word obey used right here in Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 1, it refers to someone who is listening, but it is not only listening; he is listening with the absolute intent to obey. He is someone who is waiting for instructions, and when he receives those instructions, he submits and does exactly what he is instructed to do.

Look in verse 1: "Children, obey your parents." Just so there is no misunderstanding, skip down to verse 5: "Servants or slaves, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ."

Now, let me ask you a question. Think about this. If you were my slave and I commanded you to do something, would you be obligated to obey me? The answer is yes. The word obedient in verse 5 and the word obey in verse 1 are exactly the same word. So here is what God is saying to children: It is the children's responsibility to obey their parents just as it is the servant's or the slave's responsibility to obey his master's will.

The application should be clear. The first duty that God has enjoined upon children is obedience—that is, to do exactly what their parents have commanded them. Historically, practically, and biblically, it is the responsibility of children to obey.

Six Reasons Children Must Obey

The word obey is much stronger than the word submit. We see the word submit when the Bible says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.” But when it comes to children, it says, “Children, obey.” How can there be a difference between submit and obey? Here is the difference: submission is the willing subjection of one person to another, whereas obedience is a more direct word, demanding action and a response from someone who has the rightful authority to give that command. In other words, when I tell my children or grandchildren what to do, God is saying that they have a responsibility to obey because I have the authority to command. Thus, the word obey is much stronger than the word submit. Since children are to obey, obviously they must be open to the direction of their parents.

They must seek to understand those directions and carry them out to the best of their ability, fully intending to follow them. As a parent, consider this: when you give your child a directive or an order, and discover that the child has done what you asked half-heartedly or sloppily—so much so that it would have been better if the child had not obeyed to begin with—what is your response?

Does it not irritate you? Does it not make you say, “Delayed and slothful obedience is equal to disobedience”? And it is. I told my children, and I tell my grandchildren, if anything is worth doing, it is worth doing right, and it is worth doing right the first time. If you do something right the first time, you do not have to keep repeating it over and over. When children hear and obey, they should do it right the first time.

Why must children obey? There are many answers to that question, including biblical and common-sense answers. God has good sense. First of all, let me give you six reasons: Number one, obedience is necessary for the good order of a family.

No family can function or be prosperous where there is not due subordination in the household. Do you think that I could possibly do what I do as a preacher and as a pastor without my wife? I could not. I have my role, and she has her role. I could go further: do you think that I could do what I do as a pastor and as a preacher without

my grandchildren? Since my children are all grown, the answer is no.

The point I am trying to show you is this: it takes order in any household to be functional, prosperous, and successful. If members of the household are not willing to submit or obey, there will be a breakdown in the family and in the household. So, first of all, obedience is necessary for the good order of a family.

Secondly, the welfare of a child depends upon his learning obedience. Can you imagine what the future of a child will be like when that child has never learned to obey? A lot of families today are leaving their children to do their own thing. They do not want to interfere with their development; they are afraid they might warp their personality. I have got news for you: it is some other part of their anatomy that needs warping that will straighten out the personality.

If a child has never learned to obey, how in the world can he ever hold down a job? If you work for me, I expect you to do what I ask you to do. If you want me to pay you, I expect you to do not only what I ask you to do, but the way that I ask you to do it. How can a child fit into a school situation, an educational situation, or a social situation? A child that has never learned to obey simply cannot function in society.

It amazes me to no end that children who cannot stand their parents telling them what to do, and who cannot wait to leave home, will turn eighteen and run off to join the army, where they are told what to do twenty-four hours a day: when to get up, when to go to bed, when to shower, when to shave, when to eat, what to eat, and what not to eat. It beats me. But can you imagine what it is like for a child who has never learned to obey? He simply will not be able to function in society.

Thirdly, younger children are not competent and are unable to reason. Therefore, they must be subject to the will of some other person. Very obviously, that person is, or should be, their parents. You can understand that at three, four, or seven. Adults can understand it when their children are sixteen or seventeen, though

sometimes those children cannot. Very obviously, children are incapable in and of themselves.

Fourthly, common sense tells you that parents, by their age and experience, are more qualified to direct and guide a child. Generally speaking, the love that God has placed in the hearts of those parents for their children will be enough to secure a just and loving direction for them. How many of you have told your children, as I have told mine and as my father told me, “Son, I do not want you to make the mistakes that I made”? I have. “Do not do this.” I can tell you right now, it does not work. When parents sit down and talk to their children like that, they have the best interests of those children at heart.

Fifthly, obedience is demanded because the family government is designed to be an imitation of God’s government. The government of God is what a perfect family government would be. To accustom a child to obedience to a parent is designed to lead him to be obedient unto God. Now, listen very carefully: the child who is disobedient to his parents will be disobedient to his church, the civil authorities, and God. You remember that verse: “There is no fear of God before their eyes.” Why?

They have never learned obedience. The one who has learned obedience will fear being disobedient to God. The child who has learned obedience is most likely, humanly speaking, the child who will yield obedience to the Word of God and trust the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sixthly, the best and simplest answer to why children should obey is this: because God commanded them to do so. It is just that simple. It is the will of God for children, period.

Now let us look in Ephesians 6:1 at the nature of obedience: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.” Notice the words, “in the Lord.” In Ephesians 5:22, wives are told, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.” A wife’s submission to her husband is part and parcel of her submission to the Lord. In other words, it is a religious act, an act of worship.

Obedience 'in the Lord' as a Religious Act

The same is true in Ephesians 6:1. Children must look beyond their parents and see the Lord. The authority that parents possess is authority from God Himself. How, then, should children view their parents? As God's delegated authority for their lives. Consequently, children need to understand that their obedience, in seeking to please and honor their parents, is also expressive and demonstrative of seeking to please and honor the Lord who gave them those parents. Obedience or disobedience goes beyond the parents. When the Bible says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord," what does that mean?

The child who obeys his parents does so as unto the Lord and in the Lord; that is, it is part of his worship and part of his honor of God. But when children disobey their parents, it goes beyond the parents. They are disobeying God and dishonoring God, who gave those parents. In other words, the child who is disobedient to his parents is disobedient to the Lord.

It could be said that a child may be obedient to his parents and not be a Christian. But one cannot be a Christian child and be constantly and continuously disobedient to his parents. Why? For this is the will of God for the child. To be in disobedience to the parents is sin, wickedness, and rebellion. When God saves us and converts us, we turn from our sin and disobedience. Therefore, rebellion, disobedience, and dishonor on the part of a child are evidence of an unrepentant and unconverted heart. Again, the child's obedience is in the Lord.

Generally speaking, the only time a child may lawfully disobey his parents is when those parents command him to do something contrary to the Word of God. I have no right to command my children to rob a bank, commit murder, or commit fornication. I have no right to command them to do anything wicked and wrong or contrary to the Word of God. If a parent asks a child to do that which is wicked and wrong, the child should say, "I love you, I want to honor you, and I want to obey you, but in this instance I cannot. I must obey God rather than man."

Our Lord says in Matthew 10:37, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” Children cannot place their parents above our Lord, nor can parents place their children above the Lord. We are to love the Lord supremely. He is sovereign; we love Him first.

Therefore, no parent has the right to ask a child to do that which is wicked and wrong. We must love the Lord first and our parents second, or the Lord first and our children second. He is to be first in all things.

Ephesians 6:1 says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” We have seen the nature of obedience: it is in the Lord; it is a religious act. Now notice the reason for obedience: it is right.

Obedience Is Righteousness

The word right is the Greek word dikaios, the word translated in our Bibles as righteousness. Literally, the command is, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is righteousness.” If a child wants to live a holy, godly life, he must obey his parents. Why? For that is righteousness for a child. If it is righteousness to obey, what would it be to disobey? Unrighteous. Sin. Wicked. Ungodly.

Why should children obey their parents? The answer is, because it is right. Why is it right? Because it is righteousness. Why is it righteousness? Because that is the way God ordained it. God is the one who determines what is right and what is wrong. God is the one who determines what is just and what is unjust. God is the one who determines what is righteousness and what is unrighteousness. For the child, righteousness is summed up in two words: obedience and honor. This is not merely a human arrangement or a matter of personal preference; it is the order God has established.

Colossians 3:20 says, “Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.” Ephesians 6:1 says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” If it is right, it is righteousness; and if it is righteous, it is well pleasing to the Lord. Thus obedience to parents belongs to the child’s holy, godly life and is an act that pleases God.

Listen carefully, children. God does not command you to obey as long as you understand, or if you are able to reason things out. He simply commands you to obey, whether you understand or not, whether you can see the logic or not. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is righteousness. It is righteous for a child to obey.

Oftentimes, when parents ask, tell, or command their children to do something, the children give that famous question: "Why?" "Please go do this." "Why?" "Please don't do that." "Why?" Usually the parent will say, "Because I said so." Frankly speaking, that is a good answer. Biblically speaking, it should be a sufficient answer, because the parent is the authority—God's delegated authority.

But sometimes, as children age and mature, when they ask why, it is not necessarily out of rebellion or disobedience. They want to know the logical explanation. When Lacy was three or four, I could say, "Lacy, do such and such," and her response should have been, "Yes, sir." Now she is a teenager. I ask her to do something, and she says, "Well, Papa, why are you asking me to do that?" That is the opportunity for me to explain the reason, the logic behind it, or the scriptural admonition behind it. It is not disobedience; she wants to know, learn, and understand.

You have to deal with children on different levels of maturity. But if a parent ever says to a child—I do not care whether the child is three, sixteen, seventeen, or eighteen at home—"Because I said so," that is still a legitimate and biblical answer. Parents have the best interest of their children at heart. Most parents are not going to ask their children to do anything detrimental to their welfare. If you are a child and profess faith in Jesus Christ, what is God's command to you? Obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Now look in your Bibles to Luke, chapter 2, verse 51. I think this is a wonderful illustration. I used it in reference to wives, but I am using it again in reference to children. Our Lord had been left behind. He was twelve years of age, in the temple hearing and answering questions. His parents supposed that He was in the crowd, but He was not.

They went back and saw him. Luke 2:47 says, "And all they that heard him were astonished at his understanding and his answers.

And when they saw him, they were amazed. And his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" And they understood not the saying which he spake to them. "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. And his mother kept all these things in her heart."

Did our Lord know more than his parents? Yes—more intellectual ability, more power, and more understanding. But when they said, "Son, come home," He submitted Himself unto them. The Bible teaches us in 1 Peter 2 that Christ is to be our example in all things. In this, He submitted to and was obedient to His parents.

Parents as Prophet, Priest, and King

When the Bible says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right," the passage assumes that parents are giving clear, distinct, and understandable commands to their children. Children cannot obey suggestions. Nor can they read your mind, and they cannot obey what they do not understand. If you want your children to obey you, you must give clear and distinct commands.

Parents, God has placed you in a unique position. You are to be three things to your children: a prophet, a priest, and a king. As a prophet, the parent is to declare the Word of God to the children. As a priest, he is to make intercession and pray for them. As a king, he is to rule over them.

You do not leave children alone or allow them to do their own thing. Children do not rule the home; the parents rule the home, for the parents are prophet, priest, and king. These are the three offices that our Lord holds. He is prophet, priest, and king to the church. Wives are to picture the church, and husbands are to picture Christ. As Christ is prophet, priest, and king over His family, so parents are to be prophet, priest, and king over their family. They are to declare the Word of God, pray and make intercession for their children, and rule over those children. But how do they rule?

Look particularly at Deuteronomy 17:18–20 and what God demands of a king. “And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them, that his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment to the right hand or to the left, to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he and his children in the midst of Israel.”

God said that the king was to have his own copy of the Word of God, read therein day and night, learn the fear of the Lord, and keep all the words of the law and these statutes, to do them. His heart was not to be lifted up above his brethren, and he was to turn neither to the right hand nor to the left. This would prolong his days, not only his, but his children’s as well.

How then are parents to rule? Parents are to rule according to the Word of God. That is our standard and our rule book. It gives us the directions for ruling over our children. Parents do have the authority to tell their children how to dress, what to do, where they may go, where they may not go, how long they may stay, and anything else that falls under the purview of kingship.

The parents are kings over their children—not the village, not the public school, and not the government. The parents are the authority in the home, and they may instruct, command, chastise, and punish according to the Word of God, because the Word of God is the rule book for kings, prophets, and priests.

Our children must come to realize that failure to obey their parents is a great sin. It is nothing short of rebellion. When children disobey their parents, it is nothing less than despising those parents. But it goes beyond the parents: it is also despising God and His sovereign authority, who ordained those parents to be the authority in that home. Rebellion against the parents is rebellion against God.

Biblical Remedies for Grown Rebellious Children

Would you say, Pastor, that we are living in a day and age where we have lost an entire generation? That is true. I told one man a few years ago—I hate to say it, but it is the truth—that children under forty in today's society, from both black and white families, are usually not worth shooting.

Stop and think about that. Look at how the children of this past generation lived and are living, and look at the lack of morals and standards they have. Here is my question: What do we do with grown children who have never learned to obey and who are rebellious, wicked, and ungodly? Unless God's grace touches them, for all practical purposes they are worthless, useless, and no account.

The Word of God gives two remedies for such children. Look in your Bibles to Deuteronomy 21. Here is the first remedy for rebellious children. I am not talking about a child five or six years of age, or even ten or twelve; you will understand why. Deuteronomy 21:18 says:

"If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them. Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of the city, and into the gate of his place. And they shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey our voice. He is a glutton and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die. So shalt thou put evil away from among you, and all Israel shall hear, and fear."

That ought to sink deeply into our hearts. God demands the death penalty for grown, stubborn, rebellious, recalcitrant children. Again, I am not talking about someone five or six years old. This man was old enough to be a drunkard. He was stubborn, would not work, and, when chastened, would not listen. His parents brought him to the elders and said, "This our son's a drunkard. He's worthless. He's useless. He's stubborn. You can't chastise him. He won't listen. He won't receive it." They held a trial for him and put him to death.

Someone may say, “Brother Weaver, that is impractical today because, number one, we do not have a government that will execute anybody.” That is just about the truth. But the death penalty still has not been done away with. God is still on the throne, and God can execute it whenever He chooses.

Although this law is in the Bible, as many times as I have read the Bible, I have never found one instance where it was applied. What does that mean? It means that parents are willing to go as far as they can to salvage their children. I have known parents who had to call the law on their adult children, who were either dopeheads or drunkards and threatening their lives. I understand that. But there is not one instance in the Bible of a parent bringing the child to the elders and saying, “Here he is; execute him.”

The family does not have the power to execute anyone. Lest someone think, “The government will not do it, so I will take matters into my own hands,” God has never given the family that authority. But what you could do as a priest and as a prophet is turn that child over to God and say, “Lord, You deal with him. I cannot. I know what Your law demands, but I cannot do it. The government is so wicked that it will not do it. But, Lord, You are still on the throne, and You can still execute Your justice.”

That was one way of dealing with it. But there was another way, and this is what is usually followed: disinheritance. You disinherit them. Does anybody know who Jacob’s firstborn was? Reuben. But who received the double portion? It was not Reuben; it was Joseph. Reuben went into his father’s concubine and defiled his father’s bed. Jacob said, “You are disinherited. You are not getting this. The birthright is not going to you; it is going to someone else.”

Christian parents have an obligation concerning everything God has given them. Whatever God has given you, He has given you as a stewardship. If you have grown adult, rebellious, disobedient, hateful, unbelieving children, you do not leave your stewardship to them. I told my children, and I have told my grandchildren.

As long as you do what's right, I'll break my neck to help you. I'll give you everything I've got. But if you ever think for one minute that I'm going to subsidize your sin and your rebellion and help you do

what's wrong and wicked, you're mistaken. You're on your own. We have a responsibility not to throw away the stewardship that God has given us on wicked, disobedient, rebellious children. And therefore, parents have the choice, biblically speaking, when they have grown children who are disobedient and wicked, they may either turn them over to civil authorities or they may disinherit.

Disobedience Listed Among Dark Sins

Look in Romans chapter 1 and 2 Timothy chapter 3, and then we are going back to Proverbs. I want you to see that God lists disobedience to parents as some of the darkest, most wicked, and evil sins. Look at Romans chapter 1, beginning with verse 18: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.” Now skip down to verse 30. He is talking about the wrath of God being revealed against those who hold the truth in unrighteousness: “Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful.”

Isn’t that amazing? Disobedient to parents is placed among all these sins in Romans 1, verses 30 through 31: backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, and inventors of evil things.

Look in your Bibles to 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 1 and 2: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.” In the middle of all those dark, dank sins is disobedience to parents. Isn’t that amazing? God frowns upon children’s disobedience to their parents.

One last Scripture: Proverbs 30, verse 17: “The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.” Do I need to tell you that this means God will kill disobedient children? It is the judgment of death. “The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it

out, and the young eagles shall eat it." Disobedience to parents is a serious sin. We may take it lightly, but God does not.

Applications and Closing Prayer

Now let me make two applications. First, it is amazingly simple how easily explained the roles of the family really are. Husbands love. Wives submit. Children obey and honor. Isn't that simple? You do not have to learn an instruction manual of 445 pages to know your role. It is simple. Thank God the government never designed these roles. You can even read through the book of regulations, and it is still so simple.

Why is it that we cannot grasp such simplicity? Because of our natural depravity, our sin and rebellion. Husbands do not want to love the way they are commanded. Wives do not want to submit the way they are commanded. Children do not want to obey and honor the way they are commanded. It is our wickedness, our sin, and our rebellion that keep us from having the family God designed. If we would obey, we would find that our families would turn out to be heaven on earth.

The second application is this: children who wish to be righteous, to obey and honor and worship the Lord Jesus Christ, must obey their parents. Why? For that is righteousness for a child. Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is righteousness. It is well-pleasing unto the Lord.

Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ that You would help us, make us holy, and make us godly. Help these words and directives to sink deeply into our hearts, not only as children, but as parents. May we give honor and glory unto Thee and do that which is right and holy. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 9

The Family

Part Nine

Introduction and Review

Let us turn to Ephesians chapter 6 and the first three verses. I will pick up verse 4 next week, Lord willing. Beginning with verse 1: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with a promise that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth."

In dealing with the family over the past eight weeks, we have covered the dominion aspect of the family, how God created the family to be an instrument of dominion. We have dealt with the creation differences between men and women and looked at God's intentional order as He has ordained it in the family. Then we began to examine the roles of the individuals in the family: the role of the wife and the role of the husband. We saw that the key word for the wife was submit, while the key word for the husband was love. As I have said repeatedly through this study, it is easy for a wife to submit

to a husband when that husband loves her as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.

Last week we began considering God's directives to children, and I pointed out that God gives them two directives. The first is to obey, and the second is to honor. We live in a day and age when both concepts are absolutely despised. One reason they are so despised, I believe, is that children no longer really hear the Word of God; they are never taught the Word of God. The average church immediately divides the family and sends the children off to a junior church, leaving the parents somewhere else. Then it attempts to "water it down," or put it to the children on their level.

No adult can understand anything apart from the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Very obviously, then, we need the ministry of the Holy Spirit not only in the life of a child but also in the life of an adult. We are thankful for the ministry of the Holy Spirit. It takes the grace of God and the work of the Holy Spirit to illuminate and enlighten a child, just as it takes the same grace of God and ministry of the Holy Spirit to illuminate and enlighten an adult. God only has one way of dealing with people, and that is through His Word and by His Spirit.

We also looked at Deuteronomy 31, Joshua 8, and Ezra 10, where God said, "Gather the people together, men, women, and children, that they may hear the word of God." God gives clear, concise directives. What, then, are God's directives to children?

The Command to Honor

Ephesians 6, verse 1: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." I dealt with obedience last week. This week I want to deal with the second aspect, verse 2: "Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth." The first directive was that children are to obey. I gave you the reasons for that and showed you that it was religious obedience as unto the Lord. Today, He tells us to honor.

What does it mean to honor? Obedience, in one sense of the word, is evidence of honoring our parents. The child who is disobedient is a child who dishonors his parents. But there is far more to honor than

simple obedience. The Greek word timao is translated as to honor or to value. It means to fix an estimate, to fix the value, to have honor, to revere, and to venerate. When God says, "Honor your father and your mother," He is saying that you revere and venerate them. You hold them high in estimation. Since the command is to honor them, it refers to an inward disposition and attitude. Obedience is the duty, and honor is the disposition. Honor goes beyond obedience.

Obedience vs. Honor

It is possible for a child to obey his parents and dishonor them at the same time. You say, how in the world can that be? Each of us has probably heard the story of the little girl riding in the car with her mother. The mother kept telling her to sit down because she was standing up in the seat. The little girl continued standing. Finally, the mother became irritated, reached over, took the little girl by the arm, jerked her down into the seat, and said firmly, "I said sit down." The little girl sat there, and finally turned to her mother and said, "Mother, I may be sitting down on the outside, but I'm standing up on the inside."

Did she obey? Oh, yes, she obeyed—but only because she was forced to obey. Her disposition and attitude were ones of rebellion and wickedness. It was total dishonor.

Rushdoony, in The Institutes of Biblical Law, says, "The original command to honor father and mother applies to all of us throughout our lives. But in this place, children specifically are told to obey their parents in the Lord. Because of this total lack of experience and judgment, it is absolutely necessary that a child be taught to obey his parents instantly and without question. Explanations and reasons for this may and should be given to the child from time to time, but at the moment a parental command is given, there may not be time or opportunity to give the reason why. Therefore, it is imperative that a child be taught the habit of unquestioning obedience to his parents. For until the young child develops, his parents stand to him in the place of God, and God holds them responsible for teaching and directing the child properly."

"By direct implication, a parent is bound by the fifth commandment to make himself honorable. For to be honored, one

must be honorable. Every parent needs to realize that he represents God to his child."

As I was preparing this message, I thought that many Christians, in fact, I would venture to say most Christians, are almost like that little girl whom her mother forced to sit. By that, I mean this: many Christians sometimes do what is right only because they are either forced to or believe they have to. In other words, they are not doing it willingly, lovingly, and obediently. Children are not only required to obey their parents; they are also required to honor them—to highly venerate them, to revere them, and to reverence them. They are required to do so because of the position that God has placed their parents.

In 1 John 5 and verse 23, we are commanded to honor the Son. In 1 Peter 2 and verse 17, God says, “Honor the king.” In Ephesians 6 and verse 2, “Honor your father and your mother.” Each time the word honor is used, it is the same Greek word, timao. What is God saying? He is saying that we are required to honor Christ the Son and the office which He holds. We are required to honor the office of civil authority. We are also required to honor our parents.

In each of these instances, it is God who established the office of authority. It is God who established the office of Christ as prophet, priest, and king. It is God who instituted and ordained civil government. It is God who instituted the family and placed the husband as the head and the father and mother over the children. Therefore, as we are required to venerate, revere, and honor Christ, we are also required to honor, venerate, and revere the office of our parents.

The Scope of Honor

There is a general sense in which a child's obedience to his parent ceases, but the honor of his parents never ceases. Generally speaking, there is a time when general obedience to a child's parents ceases, but there is never an instance in which he may dishonor his parents. Honor always continues. What, then, do I mean when I say that there is a time, generally speaking, when a child's obedience to his parents ceases?

God commanded that a man leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife. When a child marries with the blessings of his parents, he becomes the head of his house. He provides for himself and his family and is now an authority over his family in his new home. In that sense, generally speaking, obedience to his parents ceases.

Honoring Parents as an Adult

But there is still the requirement that he continue to honor his parents. Regardless of the reality that the son is now the head of his home, when he returns to his father's house to visit his father, he must remember that his father is still the head of his house, and he is still his father's son. When I left the home of my father and mother and married my wife, I became the head of my house. But when I went back home to visit my father, my father was still the head of his house, and I was still his son.

No matter how old you are, you are still your parents' child. In this sense, grown, mature adult children should always endeavor to obey their parents in everything they can, especially while they are in their parents' home. Why? They are still your parents, and you are still their child, no matter how old you are.

If you understand this concept, many fights, disappointments, arguments, hurt feelings, and much bitterness could be avoided. Oftentimes grown children clash with their parents because they say, “I’m grown now; I can do what I want to do.” You may be grown and may do what you want to do, but when you go home, your father is still the head of his house and you are still his child. Parents do not cease to be parents simply because their children are grown.

When God saved me and called me to preach, whenever I went back home, I tried to obey my father and my mother in every area I could. Why? I was still their child, they were still my parents, and my father was still the head of his house. Just because you are the head of your house, do not attempt to usurp your father's authority in his home, because he is still the head of his house. I remember one time I went home to visit my father and, of course, my mother. I was on my way somewhere and did not have long to visit, but I had on a suit, shirt, and tie.

I had on a pair of wingtip shoes. Dad said, "Son, come on down to the pond with me. I want to show you the new hog pen I built with the pigs in it." I said, "Sure." So I jumped in the truck with my dad. We rode across the pond dam, and just as he looked at the pen he had built, those pigs had torn a hole in the fence.

Ten or fifteen of them were already out, and others were getting out. My dad slammed on the brakes, put the truck in park, jumped out, and hollered at me, "Son, get in there and stop those pigs from getting out." You know what I said? "Yes, sir." I jumped into that pigpen with my suit and wingtip shoes on and stood in the hole to keep the other pigs from getting out while he went and got the others back in.

You say, "But you had on a suit." Yes, I did, and wingtip shoes. But shoes will clean up, and the suit can go to the cleaners. I was grown, married, and had children, but I simply said, "Yes, sir."

Now, let me point out something. Look in your Bibles to 1 Timothy, chapter 5. Let's think this thing through. You may be the head of your house as a grown child, but when you go back home, grown or not, your father is still the head of his house. And you are still your parent's child.

What if you disagree with your dad or your mother? There will always be disagreements. But think this through with me. First Timothy chapter 5 and verse 1 says, “Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father, and the younger men as brethren.” When he says, “Rebuke not an elder,” he is talking about a pastor. God is commanding you not to rebuke an elder, but to treat him as a father. If you are not to verbally browbeat, shout at, threaten, and throw a temper tantrum at a pastor, but are to treat him as a father, does it not follow that you are to treat your father in the same manner? You are not to attack him, holler at him, or scream at him. You may disagree with him, but you do so lovingly, kindly, and congenially, recognizing that he is still your father.

You may be the head of your new house, but your father is still the head of his house. So make sure that when you go back home, you understand that. You will save yourself a lot of heartaches and

disappointments between yourself and your father, especially men. The hardest thing for a man to face is the loss of his authority.

If a child is wise, he will try to see that he does indeed help his father maintain some authority over his own house and home. Here is the second thing: adult married children have the responsibility of leaving and cleaving. We tend to forget the Scripture that teaches us to leave our father and mother and cleave only to the wife. When the Bible commands that we leave our father and mother, that certainly does not mean that we are to forsake them, forget them, or forever terminate any relationship with them. Of course not.

Leaving and Cleaving

We are still required to honor them. But what the Bible is teaching is that once the children are married, there is to be a separate home, a separate headship, and a separate duty. That duty is for the man to cleave unto his wife and the wife to cleave to her husband. So when adult children marry, they should leave father and mother financially, emotionally, and governmentally. One of the best ways to do that is to leave them geographically.

When I say that, I simply mean this: sometimes it is best not to live next door to them. There are exceptions. Probably a number of young families have lived next door to father and mother and gotten along fine. But as a general rule, most cannot do that without interference. It is one thing to give advice, another thing to seek advice, and quite another thing to give orders.

If you follow God's commands, there will not be mama's boys and mama's girls. There will be a God-ordained husband-and-wife relationship and the honoring of the parents. Apron strings must be cut. The old government gives way to a new government; the old dominion gives way to a new dominion. Since it is a new home and a new family, help is sometimes needed through advice and other assistance from the father and mother, but you are still to be on your own.

There is an interesting thing in the Bible. Do you realize that there are only three instances where the mother is placed before the

father? It is usually father and mother, but only three passages mention the mother before the father.

Look in Genesis 44 and verse 20. These first two are very easily explained. Judah is explaining things to Joseph, not knowing at this point that Joseph is his brother. Genesis 44:20 says, "And we said unto my lord, We have a father, an old man, and a child of his old age, a little one, and his brother is dead, and he is alone, left of his mother, and his father loveth him."

He is explaining that Benjamin is at home and was the last child of the mother. He was not the only child; Joseph was her child as well, but Benjamin was the only one left at home of the mother. His father loved him, so this is easily explained. In Leviticus 21 and verse 2, you will see the second instance, likewise easily explained. God is telling Aaron that, as the high priest, he cannot defile himself for just anyone.

Leviticus 21, verse 1, says, “The Lord said to Moses, speaking to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people, but for his kin that is near them, that is, for his mother, and for his father, and for his son, and for his daughter, and for his brother.” In other words, he may be defiled for those, but not for anyone else. Those are easily explained.

But in Leviticus 19, verse 2, God says, “Speak unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say unto them, You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. You shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the Lord your God.”

Fearing Mother and Father

Part of holiness, then, is fearing mother and father. Since the father is the head of the house and God ordained him so, why would God have placed the mother in Leviticus 19, verse 3, ahead of the father? I believe there is an answer. God places the mother first to emphasize that she too is not only to be honored and venerated, but to be feared.

I realize the word fear has two different connotations. There can be reverential awe, but there is also fear of punishment. The woman,

the mother, is to be feared exactly as the father. There is a tendency, especially with young boys, to love the mother and fear the father. Why? Each of us knows that fathers whip a whole lot harder than mothers. If I were to ask you, when you were a child, who would you rather be whipped by, your father or your mother? I can assure you, I'd much rather be whipped by my mother, because my father did not play.

In fact, my sister and I wanted so much to be whipped by our mother that we would do anything to be whipped by her. Every time she would strike us, all we had to say was, "Oh, oh, oh," and we would holler and scream and carry on, and she would stop.

Contrary to what my sister says, my sister always started those arguments. We got into an argument, and Mother told us to hush, but we did not mind her. So Mother got a switch and was going to whip us. When she started whipping me, I began hollering and jumping around, and she stopped. She never hurt me; I only did it to get her to stop. Then she went to whip Barbara, and Barbara did the same thing. Mother stopped.

Barbara and I went outside, around the house to the pantry side, and laughed because we had pulled it over on Mother. What we did not realize was that Mother had stepped into the pantry and heard us. When she called us back in, we no longer had to pretend. We learned to fear Mother because we found that, when she wanted to, she could whip just as hard as Daddy could.

God says, "Ye shall fear your mother and your father." Listen to what Rushdoony says in his Institutes of Biblical Law, commenting on Leviticus 19:3: "Children ordinarily fear the father and love the mother. Hence they say precedence is here given to the mother in order to inculcate the duty of fearing them both alike. The expression fear, however, they take to include the following."

First, if you fear your father and mother, you will not stand or sit in the place set apart for your parents. Every mom and dad has a favorite chair. Second, you will not carp at or oppose their statements: "Oh, Mama, why did I have to do that? I want to do that." None of that if you fear them. Third, you will not call them by

their proper names, but will call them father and mother, or my master and my lady.

How We Honor Our Parents

The expression honor, which is used in the parallel passage, Exodus 20 and verse 12, is understood to include providing parents with food and raiment when they are elderly, and escorting them. The parents, he urges, are God's representatives upon earth. God is both to be honored with our substance and feared; so our parents are both to be honored and feared. As he who blasphemes the name of God is stoned, so he who curses father and mother is stoned—Deuteronomy 20 and verse 9.

Interesting. So, fear the mother and the father. Since God requires us to honor our parents, how do we honor them? What are some practical ways that we may honor our parents?

Practical Ways to Honor Parents

First, we must honor them by showing respect for their persons. Your mother may not be the prettiest lady in the world. Your father may not be the smartest or most intelligent man in the world. Yet you have never gone hungry, and you have never lived in a hovel or a pigpen. Your parents provided for you, loved you, nourished you, sustained you, helped you, instructed you, and gave you everything that they could. The least you could do is show respect to them and for them.

I used to cringe, and I still do, when I hear young people refer to their parents as “my old man” and “my old lady.” No. They are your father and your mother. The least you could do is show respect to them and for them, and at least develop a little courtesy, like we do down south, when we say to our father, “Yes, sir” and “No, sir,” and to our mother, “Yes, ma'am” and “No, ma'am.” The very first way you honor them is by showing respect for them. You honor them as your parents.

Secondly, you honor them by not bringing shame upon the family. Everything that we do reflects upon our families. The Bible says in Romans chapter 14, no man liveth to himself and no man dieth to

himself. Your sin affects others—not only yourself, but your family, your church, your neighbors, even your nation. I do not have time to develop that thought from Scripture, but it is true. Whatever you do to bring shame upon your family dishonors them. Years ago, I was preaching at a church in another state.

The meeting began on Sunday morning, and as I walked in, I noticed that the two back rows were filled with teenagers and their parents. Most of the teenagers were sitting there with their heads hanging down. It was unusual. Teenagers normally sit on the back rows, but not with their parents and not with their heads hanging down.

After the service, I asked the pastor what was going on and why those two back rows were filled with teenagers and their parents. He said, "Oh, those are the seniors who were expelled this past week for cheating on their final exams." Was it an embarrassment? Yes. Was it dishonoring? Yes. Do you realize that rebelliousness, thievery, hatefulness, lying, cheating, and any other sin that brings shame upon your family is a violation of the fifth commandment?

For God says, "Honor thy father and thy mother." When you live dishonorably, you are breaking the fifth commandment. So you need to think twice before you act, not only as a child, but as an adult.

Third, you honor your parents by being sensitive to their needs. This is going to be a shocker for children when they discover that their parents have needs. It is not just children who have needs: "I need a new coat. I need a new book bag. I need this. I need that." How many times do you hear that? Your parents have needs as well. One of their main needs is this: they need to be loved and appreciated, valued, and even thanked.

Parents have needs as well. You remember those ten lepers that our Lord healed? When all ten found that they were healed, how many turned back? One. And our Lord said, "Where are the nine? Were not ten healed? There is none but this Samaritan that returned to give thanks unto God."

Let me ask you—do not answer out loud—when is the last time you told your father and mother that you love them? When is the last time you thanked them for everything they have done for you and

everything they give you? Some in this room cannot now thank their parents or tell them they love them because their parents are already dead and gone. Do not wait until your mother and father are on their deathbed before you tell them that you love and appreciate them. I talk to my mother every day if possible. If I do not see her, I talk to her every day. I tell her I love her. My father has been dead about fifteen years.

You can thank your parents now for their sacrifices, their toil, their labor, and all the work they put into raising you. Alice can tell you that one thing that thrilled my heart as a father was having my girls sit on my lap, hug my neck, kiss me, and tell me how much they love me. When you have identical twins, with one on each knee, and the other two fighting to get a knee, it thrills your heart a little bit.

Of course, all of them promised faithfully that they would never leave me and never marry. Alas and woe, my granddaughters have promised me the same thing. But you know how that goes. As a father, my girls are grown, but I still like them to put their arms around my neck, love me, kiss me, and tell me how much they love me. I still enjoy that. I still enjoy grown grandchildren sitting on my lap and kissing me.

Every parent needs this, and grandparents need it. Children, listen: it is this kind of honor and respect that will keep your parents wanting to help you, give to you, and be everything they can be to you. No parent wants to help a wicked, rebellious, ungrateful, unthankful child. If you want your parents' help and blessing, the best thing you can do is honor and obey them and treat them correctly, biblically, and respectfully.

My two oldest grandchildren will soon be twenty. This happened eighteen years ago, when they were about two or two and a half. They wanted what they called cow boots—cowboy boots, but they called them cow boots. We had them only for a little while, so we went into the store to see what size they wore and how much the boots cost. They were not that expensive, and certainly not that big, since the children were so young. But here is the kicker.

I had one twenty-dollar bill in my pocket. That was all the money I had, and it was grocery money for the week. We took the children to

the store and tried the boots on them. We found the size they needed, and they liked them. Our plan was to return in a week or two, when we had the money, and have the store keep them for us. I picked up the grandson, Alice picked up the granddaughter, and we started out of the store. The little grandson looked back and said, "Bye-bye, cow boots." I looked at Alice and said, "Get them! We'll go hungry!" And we did. They got their cow boots, and we went hungry.

Now, what would have happened if that child had thrown himself on the floor, pitched a temper tantrum, and beaten his fists on the floor, crying, "I don't want those boots!"? I would have jerked him up and beaten his fanny. He would never have gotten any cow boots. You follow me? All I am trying to say is this: if children want their parents to help and bless them, all they have to do is do what is right, and parents will break their necks for them.

Children must remember to be sensitive to their parents' needs. Parents have needs. Here is another eye-opener most children do not realize: parents get old and tired more quickly than their children do. Have you ever noticed that? I get tickled at a friend of mine, exactly my age, who recently had the opportunity to help raise three little children. He told me, "You know, I always believed that girls ought to get married by the time they were seventeen or eighteen and start having babies."

He said, "I've changed my mind on that. I think now they ought to get married by 11 or 12." He said, "I don't know how you get the energy to take care of all these young'uns." Of course, he was joking. But the point I'm trying to make is this: parents tire more quickly and easily than do their children. Therefore, children, when you see that your parents are tired, help them out. Wash the dishes. Mow the grass. Clean the house. Do something for them.

Be sensitive to their needs. Remember their birthdays. Remember their anniversary. Honor thy father and thy mother.

Ephesians 6:2 says, "Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise." Here is the reason given in requiring honor. First and most importantly, it is God's command. Ephesians 6:1-2 is a quotation taken from Exodus 20:12.

The Promise Attached to Honor

Here is the bottom line: your Creator, the Lord, Redeemer, Master, and King, the One who holds you in His hand, has given you a command: "Honor thy father and thy mother." Basically speaking, no other reason is needed. God has spoken; therefore, we must obey. Since God has spoken, His command is backed by His sovereign authority and power, and to disobey would be absolutely foolish.

Why in the world would you desire to face His righteous anger and wrath? Why in the world would you want to infuriate Him and turn His wrath against you? You must remember that Scripture says that our God is a consuming fire. It is much easier to obey than to face the consequences of disobedience.

But note the latter part of verse 2: "Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise." Then verse 3 gives the promise: "that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long upon the earth." So God attaches a special promise to obedience with this command. There is the promise of long life and well-being if one honors his father and mother.

God's promise is based upon His sovereign, particular will for each individual. Generally speaking, those who obey and honor will live a long and fruitful life. There are two reasons for this. Number one, there are indeed God's blessings: God says, "I'll bless you." Number two, those who listen to their parents, learn, and obey are usually individuals who turn out to be responsible and thoughtful.

They will not be wasteful or irresponsible. They will be individuals who have learned self-control, management, and financial responsibility. They will have learned to conduct their lives according to the Word of God. So you could basically say that there is a supernatural reason and a natural reason. The supernatural reason is the blessings of God, and the natural reason is that we have learned from our parents what was right.

In Ephesians 6:1, we read, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.” Then verse 2 says, “Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth.” God commands us to obey, and God commands us to honor. How many

of us can do that on our own and by ourselves? None. What did our Lord say in John 15? “Without me, you can do how much?” Nothing.

Here is what God does: God gives us a command. Then God gives us grace and power to obey that command. Then God rewards us for obeying the command. Is not that gracious, kind, and magnificent? Although we have not the ability in ourselves, He gives us the ability and then rewards us for doing what He gave us the ability to do. Gracious, kind, merciful, and loving.

Applications and Conclusion

Let me tie things together and make a couple of applications. Paul wrote this letter to the church at Ephesus. In Ephesians chapter 5, he addressed the wives and the husbands. In Ephesians chapter 6, he addressed the children and the servants. Since this letter was to the church at Ephesus, what does that mean? It means everybody was sitting together listening to the Word of God.

There were no junior churches and no division between the ranks. All sat there to hear the Word of God. The problem is that we have not progressed in our day; we have digressed. We have thought that we could better the Word of God. We have not. Consequently, most of our children today do not hear the pure, unadulterated Word of God. They hear it watered down because the concept today is that children cannot understand. The answer is that no one can understand apart from God, the Holy Spirit.

If He does not open our eyes, our eyes will never be opened. Here is the second application: the New Testament does not cancel out the Old Testament. Paul, in teaching New Testament doctrine, does not hesitate to quote from the Old Testament. The Old Testament has not been done away with. It is God's Word, and God's law is regulative and directive. It is to regulate our lives and direct our lives. Love may be our motive, but law is our direction. God gives us His law.

Here is a third application. When the Bible says, “Honor thy father and thy mother,” worthy parents make it easy for their children to obey and honor them. They give them a godly example, godly instruction, and demonstrate their love and concern by

teaching them the truth of God and developing godly character in their lives.

I know the objection some are going to raise. Unhappily, there are dishonorable parents, just as there are dishonorable civil rulers—a whole heap of them. But what God still requires is that we honor the office. The man in the office may be dishonorable, but the office is still honorable.

People have asked me, “How can I honor my father? He abused me when I was a child?” What a horrible thing and what a hard question. Others ask, “How can I honor my parents? When I was converted to Christ, they disowned me, hated me, despised me, and kicked me out.” They may have done wrong and may have been wicked, but that does not give you the right to be wrong and do wickedly. You still have to do what is right. You say, “But Pastor, my parents turned out to be my enemies.”

Do you know what the Lord said? “If your enemy hunger, what? Feed him. If he thirst, give him water to drink.” God does not require you to buy your enemy a $200 bottle of wine and a steak dinner, but He does require you to feed him and give him water. No matter how your parents have mistreated or abused you, they are still your parents, and you can still do what is right toward them within the limits of God's law and God's Word. This does not mean that you must have special feelings toward them. If I have an enemy, handing him a glass of water does not mean that I suddenly love him or agree with him. But it does mean this: I have done what is right.

It does mean that I do not harbor bitterness, ill will, or resentment in my heart. That is the biggest problem for the average Christian: they cannot get over the bitterness, resentment, ill treatment, and hard feelings that they have developed in their lives over the years. Worthy parents make it easy for their children to obey and honor them. The fourth application is this.

Young and old, child and adult, we desperately need the grace of God in order to obey the Word of God and to be acceptable and pleasing unto God. We need to honor our parents, not because they deserve honor, which may be true, and not even because we love

them, which also may be true, but in order to obey God. For God has commanded, "Honor thy father and thy mother."

We please Him by obeying Him. Honor and obedience always go together. Obedience is the duty; honor is the disposition and the attitude, but honor goes far beyond obedience. We are never to do anything that will bring dishonor upon our God or upon our families. "Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that your days may be long upon this earth, that it may be well with thee." If you want the blessing of God and long life, you need to learn to obey and to honor.

Let's pray. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask for Your blessing and help. May this message be applied to every heart: younger children, teenage children, and adult children, and those of us blessed still to have a father or mother. May we express our love and appreciation for them, set a high value and estimate upon them, revere them, reverence them, obey them, and honor them. Help us, Father, to please Thee, fulfill our individual roles—whether husband, wife, or child—and bring our lives into conformity with Thy Word. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 10

The Family

Part Ten

God's Admonition to Fathers

Introduction and Review

Ephesians 6 begins: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

We've been looking at the biblical doctrine of the family for at least the last nine weeks. We've covered the dominion aspect of the family, creation differences, and God's intentional order in the family. We've looked at the role of the wife, whose key word was submit, and the role of the husband, whose key word was to love. These two truths are inseparably bound together. It is easy for a woman to be in submission to a man who loves her as Christ loves the church.

Then we looked at God's directives to children. We saw two key words for children: obey and honor. We discussed what it means for children to obey and what it means for children to honor their parents.

We live in a world today where both of these concepts are absolutely despised. Children do not want to obey, and children do not want to honor. Most children live in rebellion and disobedience to the plain Word of God. Most of our children have never been taught to obey, and they have never been taught to honor. They have been neglected, abused, and misused, and basically remain in abysmal, biblical ignorance. They are ignorant of the Word of God.

Now we come to God's admonition to the fathers. It is interesting how God has spoken to the wife, to the father, to the children, and now He goes back to the father again: “And you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord.” Ephesians 6 and verse 4 is very simple and straightforward. It is not a complicated text, and it does not take someone with a giant or great intellect to understand it. Its teachings and implications are very, very simple.

The Recipients of the Command

Verse 4 gives us two thoughts: first, the recipients of this command, and secondly, the essence or elements of the command. At this time, only the negative aspect of the command is being considered; the positive aspect will be mentioned later. First, then, consider the recipients, or objects, of this command.

The Recipients of the Command: Fathers

God specifically says, “And ye fathers. Provoke not your children to wrath.” God explicitly directs and addresses this command to fathers. Let me point it out: it is specifically a paternal command.

Paul had a perfectly good word for parents. It is the Greek word goneusin, which he used in verse 1: “Children, obey your parents.” That word refers to father and mother. But in verse 4 he specifically uses the Greek word pateres, which relates primarily, distinctly, and

specifically to fathers. This command, then, is addressed to fathers. Why did Paul address this command specifically to them?

There are three reasons. First of all, because the husband is the head of the house. Secondly, because God has constituted the husband as the head of the wife. And thirdly, because, as head, he is charged with the responsibility of teaching and training his children. In other words, he is responsible for the education and the nurture of the children.

Colossians 3 summarizes what has been shared from Ephesians chapters 5 and 6. “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.” Then verse 21 says, again specifically addressed to fathers, “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.”

Now look back to Ephesians chapter 6 and verse 4: “And you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord.” Children can be provoked to anger, and children can also be provoked to discouragement. The fathers are singled out and specifically told not to provoke their children to either anger or discouragement. Biblically speaking, fathers have always been in charge of the education, nurture, teaching, and training of their children.

Biblical Basis for Paternal Responsibility

It was so much so in Bible times that the Apostle Paul used the reality of this truth as an illustration in the Bible. In 1 Thessalonians 2, verse 10, he says, “Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe. As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children.”

What did Paul say to these Thessalonians? He said, when we were with you, we lived holily and justly and unblameably. We behaved ourselves among you, and we taught you, exhorted you, and encouraged you as a father doth his children. Paul was using the reality as an illustration in 1 Thessalonians 2. So you can ask this

question: Who is it that is giving the instruction, the encouragement, and the comfort? In the text, in 1 Thessalonians 2, it is the father.

It was very common in Bible times for the father to instruct his family, and it was very common during times of revival and awakening for fathers to instruct their families. When fathers fail to teach, when fathers fail to instruct, and when they fail to comfort and educate their children, it is a manifestation of apostasy and rebellion. So let me ask you this question.

What do you think is going on in our land today? Apostasy and rebellion. The fact of the matter is this: Most fathers leave all the instruction, all the education, all the correction, and all the discipline to the mothers. Basically, they abdicate their headship and their authority. That is why God specifically addresses this command to the fathers.

Now, listen. It really boils down to something that is very simple. Our Lord said in John 14:15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Then He said in John 14:21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." If fathers really and truly love Christ, they are going to keep His commandments. One of His commandments is that they are not to provoke their children to anger and discouragement, but positively to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Does that mean that the father has to do absolutely everything? The answer is no. Your wife and the mother of your children may work with you, may work under you, and sometimes may even work for you, but the father is still responsible for the teaching, instruction, encouragement, and comforting of the children. That is why, in Ephesians 6:4, Paul begins, "And ye fathers." It is a paternal command directed specifically to fathers. Go back in your Bibles to Ephesians 6:4, because I want to begin with the second point, the essence of this command.

The Essence of the Command: Negative Aspect

The command has two parts, the negative and the positive. We are covering the negative aspect today and will cover the positive next Lord's Day. But notice verse 4 of Ephesians 6: "And ye fathers,

provoke not your children to wrath." That is a mouthful in and of itself. It is a negative injunction, a negative command: here is something God commands fathers not to do. The positive is that we are to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, but today I am dwelling on the negative. Look again at verse 4: "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath."

The Greek word for "provoke" is *parorgizo*. The word *orge* means wrath or anger. It literally means to anger, to provoke to wrath, to rouse to wrath, to provoke, or to exasperate. It is interesting that, although the word in the Old Testament is Hebrew, Israel repeatedly provoked God. How they exasperated Him! Several times He told Moses, "Step aside. I want to kill all these people and I'll raise up of you a great nation in their stead." Moses would fall on his face and say, "Lord God, remember your promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Lord, don't do this. The Egyptians will say, Lord, you brought them out here in the wilderness just to kill them."

At other times Moses himself became so provoked and exasperated that he said, "Lord, kill them all." God would say, "Moses, remember now." As someone aptly said, "If God and Moses ever got together, there wouldn't have been one of them left." But they provoked God.

"Fathers, provoke not your children to wrath." What God is saying is that fathers are not to irritate and anger their children beyond measure.

God is not commanding fathers never to make their children angry, never to do anything that would displease them, or never to disagree with them. Certainly, your children are probably going to be angry with you to some extent if you discipline them biblically, if you do not allow them to have their way, or if you do not let them do their thing. God is not telling us, as fathers, never to anger our children, never to displease them, and never to disagree with them. He is saying that we are not to provoke them to unnecessary, needless, and useless anger and discouragement.

That is why He said in Colossians 3:21, "And you fathers, provoke not your children to anger and discouragement." Anger and discouragement can also go together. The Greek word for

discouragement is the word athumeo, which means to be discouraged. It means to be disheartened, dispirited, or, as we would say, broken in spirit—a whipped dog, so to speak.

Paul realized that since the husband and father was the head of the house and the head of the wife, his authority toward his wife could be misused, abused, and perverted. That is why he said, "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it." But that same authority as head of the family and head of the home could also be misused and abused toward the children. Therefore, Paul directs this specifically to the fathers: "You fathers, provoke not your children to wrath."

He is saying, fathers, listen to me: You do not rule your children in a fleshly, carnal way. You rule them according to the word of God and according to the Holy Spirit. The rule of the father toward the wife and toward the children is to be one of biblical love and biblical principle.

Colossians 3:21 adds discouragement. Let me spend the rest of my time talking about how we can provoke our children. I usually joke when I read Hebrews 10, where we are told to be careful that we provoke one another to love and good works. Usually, what we do is simply provoke one another; we do not provoke one another to love and good works. When God says, "Provoke not your children to anger and discouragement," we must realize that there can be immediate anger and discouragement, but there can also be delayed anger and discouragement. Therefore, when God forbids us to provoke our children to unnecessary, needless anger and discouragement, this includes not only immediate anger and discouragement, but also delayed anger and discouragement.

Ways Fathers Provoke Immediate Anger

How do we as fathers provoke our children to immediate anger and discouragement? First, we may do so by the unreasonableness of our commands. When we expect our children to follow, obey, and accomplish that which is unreasonable, we build up bitterness, anger, resentment, and discouragement. How can we expect children to do that which is beyond their ability, whether physically, mentally, or emotionally?

It would be one thing for me to look at Tripp, who is sixteen, and say, “Unload that feed for me,” when it comes in eighty- to one-hundred-pound bags. It would be another thing to look at a little seven-year-old child and say the same thing. If I came back an hour later and found the feed unloaded but spilled everywhere, why would I get upset with a seven-year-old who cannot lift a hundred-pound bag?

We can be unreasonable in what we expect of our children. We should not expect a child to act like a teenager, or a teenager to act like an adult. One of my teachers used to say, “Good men are always reasonable.” If we are going to be good men toward our children, we must understand that they expect us to give them reasonable commands. We have to emulate God, our Heavenly Father, when we rule over our children. Does God ever require or expect us to do that which is unreasonable or unjust? No. Whenever God commanded someone in Scripture to do that which seemingly was beyond his abilities, God supernaturally empowered and enabled that individual to accomplish what He commanded.

If we are not going to provoke our children to immediate anger and discouragement, we cannot be unreasonable with them in our commands. We must act as reasonable fathers, reasonable husbands, and reasonable individuals. If we expect our children to do that which they cannot do, we must be there to help them do it and to show them it can be done with the help of their father.

Secondly, we can provoke our children to immediate anger by the harshness of our rule. Fathers are not to be cold-hearted tyrants, demanding that their children bend, bow, and obey every demand—or else. Have there ever been times in your life, even as an adult?

Remember now, God is our heavenly Father. We are to emulate Him and His fatherhood toward us. Psalm 103:13–14 says, “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust.” Like as a father does what? He pitieth his children. So the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. Why? He knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust. In other words, there may be times when we are not

able to do things that we normally could do and would do, although we had the ability to do them, because we were too sick.

We cannot act as a tyrant and simply say, “You will do this or else.” We have to understand that our children are flesh and blood as well, and they are weak at times. One of the problems we have as fathers is that many times we are quick to discipline and quick to whip, but slow to show love, compassion, and concern. We cannot punish a child just because we want to be feared and just because we want to demonstrate how demanding we really are.

When was the last time you showered your child with hugs and kisses? When was the last time you told them that you love them and appreciate them? A child is willing to receive discipline from someone when that child knows that someone really loves them, really is concerned about them, and really has their best interest at heart. I will deal with this later on.

We can be so demanding at times. I remember as a child, I got two whippings, and I could not figure out why I got a whipping. In one instance, I said a word, and my daddy jerked me up with me, but I was in a barber shop. The barber was teasing with me, and I was teasing with him. We were saying words that rhymed, and I said one that rhymed, but I did not know what it meant.

My dad certainly whipped me, and I never could figure out why. He did not tell me what I had said was a bad word; he whipped me for saying it. Another time my father whipped me, it was two o'clock in the morning. On the farm, we had to get up at two o'clock many times during the summer, work in the barn until daylight, and then work in the fields until dark. All I remember was my mother shaking me and saying, "Your dad's coming in here with a switch to whip you. He's been in here three times to get you up." I never knew it. He never woke me up.

He may have thought he did. By the time I jumped up, pulled on my pants, and ran outside, he met me with a switch. I thought, Why is he whipping me? He should have awakened me. I was willing to obey him. Thankfully, after the second swat, the switch broke, and I never really got a whipping. I just had to get on out there and go to work.

You can be unreasonable and extremely harsh, and that is what God is saying: Do not provoke your children to needless and unnecessary anger. Thirdly, we can provoke our children to immediate anger by showing partiality. Have you ever noticed that some people will whip one child for doing something, and then, when the next child does it, that child is not disciplined or whipped?

Why would a parent do that? If you asked the parents, "Do you love Lacey more than Tripp?" what would Dean say? No. What would Tripp say? A father and mother are going to do exactly what they are going to do, usually for each child. But what governs fathers and mothers, particularly when it should not? Their feelings and emotions.

You can be on edge or stressed out as a father or mother, and your child can do some little thing, and you will jerk him up and punish him because of your own feelings—not because that child has really done something worthy of being spanked. Sometimes you can be in such a good mood that nothing affects you, and the child can do something wrong, and you let it go. When you have already whipped one child for doing that same thing but let it go with another child, the one who was whipped says, "Uh-huh, my dad loves that one more than me. Or my dad favors that one more than me."

You are going to find that the child becomes quickly angry and quickly discouraged. All I am going to say right now is this—I will cover it later: discipline cannot be based upon our feelings or our moods. It has to be based upon the Word of God. Period. It is principles that count, not our feelings.

Fourthly, we provoke our children to anger and discouragement by inconsistency in our examples. I could sit here and preach all day on this, but let me give you an illustration. We try to teach our children the value of truth, how important principles are, and how precious truth really is. Then a circumstance or situation comes in our lives, and we deny the very truth we have been trying to teach our children. We become pragmatic.

Some parents say how absolutely necessary it is to worship the Lord and be faithful to the house of God, yet when it is inconvenient for them to attend, they willingly stay out—sometimes to watch a ball

game, go fishing, hunting, or do something else. You are trying to teach your children one thing, but they look at you and see something entirely different. We teach our children to tithe, to be generous and gracious, and to share. Then what do they see us do? They see us unwilling to tithe, unwilling to share, and willing to give.

They think, "Dad and Mom really do not believe what they are teaching us." They see the inconsistency in our lives. We try to teach our children to forgive each other, to kiss and make up. I remember as a boy, I hated having to kiss my sister; I would rather take a whipping. But we try to teach our children to forgive, to kiss and make up.

Then they see Mom and Dad mad at each other day after day, refusing even to speak to each other. They begin to think, "They are just hypocrites; they do not really believe what they are teaching us." So we can provoke them to immediate anger and discouragement by inconsistency in our examples.

Fifthly, we provoke them to immediate anger and discouragement by inflexibility in our rule. Let me explain what I mean by inflexibility.

Oftentimes, we try to portray to our children the idea that we are never wrong and that we are right in every instance. The truth of the matter is, we are often wrong. As parents, we are often wrong, and sometimes, especially as fathers, we let our mouths overload our brains. We say things that we should never have said. When we are wrong, we need to correct it, apologize, and make things right.

Most of you know that I have identical twin girls. I confess that I have flipped the wrong one. My wife has whipped the wrong one, and I have whipped one of my daughters when she was telling me, "But Daddy, I'm not Leah; I'm Laura." I said, "Yeah, yeah, I know better than that." I had whipped the wrong one. Secretly, I said to myself, "Well, I'm just getting you for something I don't know about, because I'm sure you've done something." But I still had to apologize and say, "I'm sorry, sweetheart. I really thought you were the other one."

Do you understand that when we are wrong, our children know it? If they are not little, tiny children, they know when we are wrong.

The right thing to do is apologize and ask their forgiveness. When we do what is right, we will earn their respect. But if we pretend that we are never wrong and always do that which is right, we will provoke them to anger and discouragement. When we confess, apologize, and make things right, we teach them how to handle things when they are wrong.

When we try to be inflexible in our rule and say, “I’m the parent; I’m always right,” we provoke them to anger and discouragement. No, we are not always right. Sixthly, we can provoke them to anger and immediate discouragement by neglecting them.

Let me cover this momentarily. Do you realize that most parents neglect their children? I am not talking about failing to feed or clothe them. They neglect their children for their work, their friends, or their own entertainment. We often let those things interfere with our children. I understand that work is absolutely necessary, but many times we use it as an excuse.

It was funny when I was grown, but it wasn't funny when I was a child. One summer I went home to visit Mother and Dad. Dad was still farming. I arrived, I suppose, in midmorning, and Dad came in from the field. “Well, son,” he said, “come on. I want to take you fishing this afternoon.”

I was taken aback. “What? You mean you took off work to take me fishing?” Remember, I was already grown, married, and had children of my own.

“Yeah,” he said. “That's what I did—took off work to take you fishing.”

“Well, that's great. I want to go,” I said. “But I have one question to ask you.”

"Why couldn't you have done this when I was a boy?" I said, "Why do we have to work all the time?" Of course he said, "Well, we had to work hard then so I could have it now." I said, "Yes sir, I understand, but I still went fishing with him."

The point I'm trying to make is that many times we don't have to do a lot of things; we do them because we want to do them—entertainment, friends, and other things. Let me simply say

this: I know not everybody here has small children. Some of you are going to have small children in the near future. But we only have one opportunity to teach our children.

If we lose it, someone else will teach your children, and you will not be pleased with their education. You're going to look around one day and wonder where all your children are. You will find out that your children are grown and gone; they're married. You've got one opportunity to enjoy your children, and you had better enjoy them. You had better make the most of it, because soon—too soon—they'll be grown and gone. Alice can tell you I've looked at her numerous times and said, "Where in the world have all the years gone?" It seems like just yesterday we were married and had little children. Now the youngest grandchild is fourteen going on twenty. I mean, come on.

You understand what I'm saying? Let's not neglect our children. I'm sure there are plenty of other ways that we can provoke our children to immediate anger and discouragement. Those are just some of them. But very quickly, let me give you two ways that you can provoke your children to delayed anger and delayed discouragement—what I mean by delayed anger and delayed discouragement is that it will probably only come to pass after they're grown.

Ways Fathers Provoke Delayed Anger

The first way you can provoke your child or children to delayed anger and discouragement is by failure to discipline them—a failure to discipline them. Interestingly, children that have never been made to mind, shoulder responsibility, and are not consistently corrected usually grow up to be shiftless, irresponsible, worthless individuals. The Bible refers to such a child as a child left to himself. If you look in your Bibles to the book of Proverbs, chapter 29 and verse 15, here's what the Bible says. Listen carefully now.

Consider a failure to discipline. The Bible says, "The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." A child left to himself would much rather have his own way than the way of discipline, correction, and responsibility. He would much rather play than work, and would prefer almost

anything to discipline and responsibility. Children left to themselves become demanding, unruly, ill-tempered, and manipulating adults who connive, banter, and agitate to get their own way.

They can make their husband's, wife's, or family's life a living hell on earth because they were never disciplined. No one wants to be around a selfish, demanding, impudent child, and no one wants to be around an adult with those same characteristics because that adult was never corrected and disciplined as a child. When such children grow up, they realize that they know nothing about self-discipline and self-government. Their lives are basically ruined.

There will be delayed anger and discouragement against their parents. They will say, "My parents should have disciplined me. They should have taught me. They should have corrected me." They will become extremely angry, bitter, resentful individuals. Secondly, you can provoke your child to delayed anger and discouragement by failing to teach him to work.

We must learn the importance and necessity of work. Work took place before the fall; Adam had to work the garden. Work became onerous and difficult because of the fall, when the ground was cursed for man's sake. One of the main losses in today's society is the loss of a biblical work ethic. Everybody wants a paycheck, but nobody wants to work. The welfare system in this country has taught this generation that it is possible to get money without honest labor.

If you do not teach your child the value and honorableness of work, the rewards of work, and the rewards for diligent and faithful labor, then you have failed in your task as a parent. The old scholars used to say that a man who will not teach his child the law—that is, God's law—and a trade teaches him to be a liar and a thief.

Now stop and think about that. A man who will not teach his son or his child the law, God's law, what God's law says, how he is to live, and a trade—that is, teaching him to work—teaches his son to be a liar and a thief. We have a whole generation of individuals like that. Let me show you what the Bible says. Turn in your Bibles to the book of Proverbs, chapter 10.

Let me take you through several verses. The Bible emphasizes this so heavily. Notice in Proverbs 10 and verse 4 what the Bible says

about diligence and work. Proverbs 10:4 says, “He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.” What is it that makes a man poor? Slackness, being a sluggard, being lazy, being indolent. “He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.” In other words, there are rewards for honest labor.

Look in Proverbs 12 and verse 24. Proverbs 12:24 says, “The hand of the diligent shall bear rule. But the slothful shall be under tribute.” Have you ever noticed? People who work at jobs usually take one or two attitudes. The majority attitude is, “Well, I'm here, and I'm going to get a paycheck, and I'm going to do what I need to do just to get by.” They are not going to do anything special. They are not going to go out of their way. They are going to do what they need to do just to maintain their job and get that paycheck. Others are going to be diligent. They are not only going to do their work; they are going to do it well. They are going to go over and above and beyond what they are required to do. And guess what? Pretty soon those men are made managers, or something else.

What does the Bible say? Look at it again. Proverbs 12, verse 24: “The hand of the diligent shall bear rule. But the slothful shall be under tribute.” Look in your Bibles to Proverbs 12 and verse 27. Proverbs 12:27 says, “The slothful man roasteth not that which he took in hunting, but the substance of a diligent man is precious.” This always gets me. What does God say about a man who will not even take care of the game that he has killed? If you are too lazy to take care of game that you kill, you should be too lazy to hunt. In other words, the diligent man will take care of whatever he kills in hunting, making sure that he gets the most out of it. Look in Proverbs 13 and verse 4.

“The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing. But the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.” In our town, as well as every town I have ever been in, there is a section where you can go by any time, day or night, and find men and women sitting around doing nothing. They may be drinking or smoking, with a garbage can there for a fire in the wintertime, but they are there all day and most all night.

You know what they will do? They will sit there. “I’ve never hit a lick at a snake.” Then they will let a nice car go by and say, “I sure

would like to have a car like that." But he will never have one. You know why? He is too lazy to work. "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing. But the soul of the diligent shall be made fat."

Proverbs 21:5 says, "The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness. But of everyone that is hasty only to want." In other words, the diligent man is thinking and planning ahead. Proverbs 22:29 says, "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings. He shall not stand before mean men." What is God saying? The man who is diligent, who has a biblical work ethic and knows how to think and plan, is going to stand before kings. In other words, he is going to be a man of importance and position. He is not going to stand before mean men.

Proverbs 27:23 says, "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks and look well to thy herds." A diligent man is going to take care of his animals. He is going to know their state and everything about them.

I am trying to show you what God says about a biblical work ethic. Let me give you a firsthand illustration. One who has been taught to work, to value work, and to enjoy the labors and rewards of his work is someone who usually labors honestly and diligently. He appreciates everything that God brings into his hands. Since I was raised on the farm, I had to work, and I had to work hard.

When I was a boy and a teenager, it was, "Johnny, get your gun before daylight and during the summer until dark." During summertime, it does not get dark until about eight or nine o'clock, and we were in the fields until then. Consequently, I never played football or basketball, or any of those games. The reason was that I always had to go home and work.

I was on the track team only temporarily, but work cut that short as well. I had a school friend in the same grade whose father was a farmer, as mine was. He lived only a few miles from us. This man's son was captain of the football team, the baseball team, and the basketball team. He was captain of anything and everything. He stayed after school, played, practiced, and was always away at the games.

One day I called his father and asked how his son was able to play all these games, stay after school, and take part in all these extracurricular activities. “I know you’re a farmer,” I said, “and I know you need help.” I felt, because of my own father’s expectations, that I wanted to know why he could do all this. I will never forget what his father told me. He was one hard-working man, but he said, “When I was a boy, I had to work all the time. I never got to play or do anything I wanted to do. I just had to work. So I made up my mind that when I grew up and had a son, if my son wanted to play, he could play whatever he wanted to play, and I was going to let him do it.”

That was music to my ears. I went to my father and told him what his friend and neighbor had said. I will never forget what my dad did. He just shook his head, looked at me, and said, “Son, you can live your whole life without learning to play. But you can’t live your life without learning to work. Work is more important than play.”

"And I need you to help me here. And you need to learn to work, more than you need to learn to play." As a teenager, I did not appreciate that answer because I had much rather played than worked. However, since I'm an adult, I understand what my dad was saying. Years passed, and I met my school friend again and had a conversation with him.

He was captain of the football team, captain of the baseball team, captain of this, captain of that. I discovered my friend had been married and divorced, I don't know how many times. He could not keep or hold a job. The job he had when I met him was quickly terminated because he stole $10,000 from the city and ran off. It is amazing how much, since I've been grown, I have observed the wisdom of my father.

I didn't think he was too wise when I was a boy, but now that I'm grown, I understand exactly what he was saying. Here's a perfect illustration of someone who learned to play but never learned to work. I understand the importance of rest and relaxation, but you've got to understand this: there is a time when work becomes far more important than play.

"He that gathereth in summer is a wise son, but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame." What is he doing? To use the old adage down south, he's making hay while the sun shines. He's getting the fruits of his labors while he can get them. You can rest and relax later, when what needs to be done is done, but it's not the time to rest and relax when the harvest is coming in. There's a time to work and there's a time to relax, but the time to work takes precedence over the time to relax.

"Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction, but he that regardeth reproof shall be honored." So if you don't listen to your parents, you get poverty and shame. Here is the result of a child that's never been disciplined and never been taught to work: "He that wasteth his father and chaseth away his mother is a son that causeth shame and bringeth reproach."

How many of you know families with grown sons and daughters who can't work, who won't work, and all they do is try to spoil and take everything their parents have ever earned and worked for? How can you provoke your children to delayed anger and discouragement? By failing to teach them to work, and by failing to discipline them so that they can have the discipline required as an adult.

Applications and Conclusion

Two quick applications. First, if you observe our society, fathers have not taken this command seriously: "Provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord." Fathers have not taken this command seriously. They neglected their children and, in doing so, needlessly provoked them to anger and discouragement. As fathers who have done that, we must repent; we shall repent.

And seek the Lord’s forgiveness and correct anything that we can correct. In our day and time, we see the absolute result of failing to discipline our children and teach them the biblical work ethic. If you do not have self-discipline or self-control, if you do not know how to work, you simply cannot function in society. Period. We must teach our children discipline and work if we are to raise thankful, productive Christian children.

“And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.” Here is the positive—and our Lord will cover it next week: “raise them in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord.”

Let us pray.

Father, we ask in the name of Jesus Christ for Your grace and mercy in our lives. Help us obey this command. Help us see where we have failed and help us repent. Lord, help those young men and women who are not yet married or fathers and mothers to learn these principles now and embrace them in their hearts, so that they may raise fruitful, productive Christians who will honor and glorify Thee and Thy Word. Give us Your grace and mercy. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray, Amen.

CHAPTER 11

The Family

Part 11

Introduction and Review

Ephesians chapter 6 gives us the foundation: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, that it may be well with thee and that thou mayest live long on the earth. And you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

We have been looking at the biblical doctrine of the family. God ordained the family as an instrument of dominion. We considered the creation differences between men and women, seeing that they are not simply physical differences, but judgmental and emotional differences as well. We also looked at God's intentional order in creation and in the family: God, Christ, man, and woman.

Then we began to examine the individual roles. The role of a wife is submission, because her submission pictures the submission of the church to Jesus Christ. The role of the husband is love, because

the husband's love reflects the love that Christ had for his church. The Bible says, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.” These things are inseparably bound to each other: as the wife is to submit, the husband is to love. You cannot have one without the other.

The Bible gives children two basic responsibilities. The two key words are obey and honor: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord.” “Honor thy father and thy mother.” We are living in a day when each of these concepts is despised. One reason our children are so rebellious and disrespectful is that they have not been taught to obey; neither have they been taught to honor. Rather, they have been neglected and abused and left in visible biblical ignorance.

The Bible then says that fathers are not to provoke their children, but to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:4 is a very simple, straightforward statement: “You fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord.” There are two thoughts: one is negative, and the other is positive. Last week I showed how fathers can provoke their children to wrath and discouragement. There can be an immediate anger and immediate discouragement, but there can also be delayed or long-term anger and discouragement.

Delayed anger and delayed discouragement result when there is a failure on the part of the father, first, to discipline the children and teach them discipline, and, second, to teach the children to work. In other words, there must be a biblical work ethic. We must understand the value of work, the need of work, the necessity of work, and also the rewards of work. You can fail your children by not giving them discipline and by not teaching them a biblical work ethic.

Another major area of delayed anger and frustration could be a failure to secure for your children a sound biblical education. Education, in one sense of the word, does not mean much to a child while he is a child. For instance, if I were to ask every adult in this room, “How many of you went to a government school?” probably every hand would be raised. When you and I went to school, there

was not much emphasis on homeschooling or on Christian education or anything like that. In fact, when some of us went to school, we still prayed in school, read the Bible in school, and did things like that. There was still morality and ethics taught to some degree.

Children do not usually think about education, but as they mature, education becomes ever present in their minds. Many of us can identify with the old gospel song "Wasted Years." We think back now as adults on our education, especially in the government school, and consider it wasted years. Part of the chorus says, "Wasted years, wasted years, oh how foolish." I can assure you that every mature adult in this room, every Christian adult in this room, now wishes that he had received a very sound, biblical education.

You do not value that as a child. But as you mature, you learn it is something to value. There is a twist, really, on verse 4 in one sense of the word. When the Bible says, "You fathers, provoke not your children to wrath," it is usually the children who provoke the father. But the shoe can be on either foot. The children are not to provoke the father, but the father is not to provoke the children as well.

Ephesians 6:4 has a negative and a positive. Since I dealt with the negative last week, we are going to deal with the positive this week. The negative is, "You fathers, provoke not your children to wrath." Here is the positive: "but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The Positive Command: Nurture Them

There are three things under this positive commandment. First, the task described: nurture them. Secondly, the means by which this task is to be accomplished: chastening and admonition. Thirdly, the sphere in which it is to be accomplished: in the Lord.

Let us look first at the description of the task: nurture them. You may be in for a surprise, because when you get to the positive in verse 4, the Bible says, "...but bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord." Fathers are not to provoke their children, but rather they are to nurture them. What does it mean to nurture? The word nurture actually occurs in another word in that verse. The word nurture in verse 4 can also be translated another way. Look at

the little word “bring”: “but bring them up.” Literally, that is the word, nurture them up. So actually it says, nurture them up.

In the nurture and in the admonition of the Lord. The word for “bring” here is the Greek word ektrephō, and it literally means to nourish, to bring up, to nourish up to maturity, and to mature. Ektrephō is made up of two words. The first is ek, a preposition meaning “out of” or “from,” sometimes “with” or “on,” and the second is trephō. The word trephō literally means to feed, support, fatten, nourish, and bring up. Thus, ektrephō literally means that we are to be continually and constantly nourishing and bringing up our children. It is a present tense in the Greek, meaning that this is something to be done constantly and continually.

The interesting thing about this word ektrephō, “bring” or “nurture,” is that it occurs only one other time in Scripture. Look in your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 29. Here is the same word: “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord does the church.”

Now, let us look at these two illustrations and ask, first of all, how does a man nourish his own body? He nourishes his own body by providing everything necessary for its normal, useful development and sustenance. In other words, a man takes care of himself and sees that everything he needs is acquired. If he needs food, he gets it; if he needs medical attention, he gets it; if he needs to be educated in a certain area, he acquires it; and if he needs training, he gets that as well. He seeks it out. In other words, the man who nourishes his body does everything he can to sustain and provide for his body. He does not do one thing to harm or hurt his body.

There is another illustration in verse 29: “even as the Lord the church.” How does the Lord nourish the church? The answer comes back: He provides for the church life, strength, and perfection, or maturity. In other words, there is not one thing the church needs that Jesus Christ does not provide. He is our head. He treats us kindly, liberally, graciously, and mercifully. He provides for His body as a man provides for his physical body.

The word “bring,” or “nurture,” refers to a kind, gracious, liberal treatment. John Calvin, commenting on Ephesians 6:4 and the word

nurture, says: “Kind and liberal treatment has rather a tendency to cherish reverence for their parents and to increase the cheerfulness and activity of their obedience, while a harsh and unkind manner rouses them to obstinacy and destroys the natural affections. But Paul goes on to say, let them be fondly cherished, for the Greek word which is translated ‘bring up’ unquestionably conveys the idea of gentleness and forbearance.”

The Bible is saying that Christ commands us as fathers to provide for our children physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and developmentally. We are to bring them into a position where they are prepared to face and deal with the totality of life in every sphere, in all its dimensions and demands. In other words, fathers are to nurture their children to be mature, well-equipped, intelligent, well-rounded, and biblically educated. Just as a man takes care of his own body, and just as Christ takes care of His own church, we are to nurture them.

The Father's Total Responsibility

It is not enough that we are the biological cause of our children’s existence. It is not enough that we are the material cause of their continued existence—that we work and bring home the bacon, so to speak. God says we are required to be the instrumental cause of their development in every area. We are to be the total sustenance and nourisher of our child in every area of life. We are to teach our child how to think, reason, act, and work; how to treat a young lady or young man, a wife or husband; how to help; how to love, honor, and respect the elderly; and how to accomplish his task. In short, fathers are the primary agents in the total overall development of their children.

That is what God means when He says, “Bring them up,” or “nurture them up.” As a father, your children will, in all probability, turn out exactly like you—in practically every area.

Now, the question is, will that please you? Can you be satisfied with that? Look at verse four again. I want to emphasize this: “And you fathers.” Remember, I told you this is a specific word. It means fathers and fathers only. “And you fathers, provoke not your children

to wrath, but bring them up, nurture them up in the nurture and in the admonition of the Lord."

The point I am trying to make is this: the task in verse 4 is not assigned to Mama. It is not assigned to the pastor. It is not assigned to the church. It is not assigned to the school. It is not assigned to the neighbors. It is not assigned to the university. The task is yours as a father, and God holds you accountable and responsible for the children that you sire.

You are not to provoke them, but you are to nurture them up in the nurture and in the admonition of the Lord. On the one hand, negatively, you are not to discourage and anger them needlessly or uselessly. But on the other hand, God is holding you positively responsible for the totality of their education: mentally, physically, spiritually, emotionally, in every way whatsoever. Now, that is your task. Probably, if most of us had understood this when we were single, we would probably still be single, or we would be married without children.

Can you imagine that? If you can imagine that this is the task that God has assigned the fathers, can you imagine how many fathers are neglecting, abusing, misusing, and perverting that task, as well as denying it? Well, that brings us to another question. If God has assigned fathers this task of nurturing their children, how do we accomplish it? God certainly does not leave the task up to our whims, desires, plans, and schemes. No. If God has assigned us the task, He has also assigned or given to us the means whereby that task may be accomplished. The means are revealed in verse 4: "And you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but nurture them up in the nurture or child training and admonition of the Lord." The very first positive means by which the task is to be accomplished is child training. You know what I have heard parents say? I have heard fathers say this specifically when I tell them that the Word of God says the fathers are responsible to nurture their children.

The Means: Child Training (Paideia)

The first objection that I get is this: "But I don't have a college education." The truth is, many fathers never even graduated from high school. Well, let me ask you a question. The book of Ephesians

was probably written between 60 and 63 A.D. When Paul addressed this to the fathers in 60 to 63 A.D., how many of them do you suppose had a college education?

And the answer is none. The point I'm trying to make is God's command here has absolutely nothing to do with your level of education, but it does indeed have to do with your level of knowledge in the Word of God.

Now, when the Bible says in verse 4, “bring them up in the nurture,” the word nurture there is actually paideia. That's the word we get for child training. It is variously translated in our Bible as chastening or nurture or instruction and chastisement. When you hear the word paideia, it refers to the whole training and the whole education of children.

It involves the cultivation of the mind, the cultivation of morals, and it employs for this purpose commands and admonition, reproof and punishment. This word is used generally in the Bible. It can be applied not just to children, but also to adults as well. It refers to the entire education of the child.

Acts 7, verse 22, says concerning Moses: “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was mighty in words and deeds.” When you get to the word “learned” in Acts 7 and verse 22, it is the Greek word epaideuthē, which is a verb, same word idea as the noun. The Bible is saying that Moses was instructed, Moses was child trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.

What does that teach us? That Moses was instructed, trained, taught, and molded and caused to learn everything that the Egyptians had to offer. That's how he was trained as a child. He had all the wisdom of Egypt. Look in your Bibles to 2 Timothy chapter 2. Second Timothy, chapter two, and verse 25, here's the same word idea again. Second Timothy, chapter two, and verse 25. In fact, let's read verse 24 just so that you can see the context. "And the servant of the Lord," that would be the pastor, "and the servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing or child-training those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them repentance to the

acknowledging of the truth." Isn't that interesting? Do you realize that child-training is even applied to the pastoral relationship?

Well, is it not true that when we're first converted, we're babes in Christ, and then we go from babyhood to young men and from young men to fatherhood? Yes. So there's child training involved even in the ministry. And if you look in 2 Timothy 3, verse 16, you'll see the word again. Look at it. 2 Timothy 3, verse 16, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction or child training in righteousness."

So here it is again. In other words, the word paideia gives us the whole scope of what you and I would call positive educational instruction. So when the Bible tells us that we're to bring our children up, we're to nurture them up in the nurture, that is, we're to nurture them in this child training, which would involve everything in education. But the Word of God is not only using paideia in a general sense, it also uses it in a very specific sense.

The Specific Use of the Rod

I want you to look in your Bibles to the book of Hebrews chapter 12. And I want to just read verses 5 through 11, and then let me come back and comment on this, OK? Look at Hebrews chapter 12, beginning there with verse 5. Let's read through verse 11. Hebrews 12, verse 5. "And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children." Whoa, stop there. Now, is Paul writing to children? No, he's writing to adults. He's writing to believers. He says, "And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If you endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. For what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not? But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards and not sons."

Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live? For they verily for a

few days chastened us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness.

Now, no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless, afterwards it yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.

I want to go back and reread this, but I want to use the word paideia, child training. Watch carefully verse 5: "And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the child-training, the paideia of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth, he child-trains, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." "If you endure child-training, God deals with you as sons. For what son is he whom the father child-trains not? But if you be without child-training, whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards and not sons?"

Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, who child-trained us, and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days child-trained us after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no child-training for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless, afterwards it yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby.

Every time you see the word chastened, chastening, chasteneth, or corrected in this passage, it is the same Greek word, paideia. What does the word refer to in this passage? It refers to the intelligent and purposeful application of a rod or a switch for punishment and correction. It is the use of the rod to enforce a lesson. Look in verse 6: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and"—what?—"scourgeth." Scourgeth. In other words, chastening is parallel with scourging.

Now, no child training for the present seemed to be joyous, but grievous. How many of you ever laugh when you have gotten a whipping and said, "Thank God I'm getting a whipping, this is wonderful"? No. If you got it right, you did not rejoice. The specific

application of child training is not just education in general, but education by use of the rod.

Ephesians 6:4 says, “And you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath”; that is the negative. Here is the positive: “but bring them up, nurture them up in the child training and admonition of the Lord.” The command is to bring children up in both child training and admonition, not merely to avoid provoking them to wrath.

Child training is a general word that would include overall education, but specifically the use of the rod. Then the verse says, “and admonition.” Admonition deals with verbal instruction. The word nurture, or child training, is set here in opposition to admonition. Admonition is verbal instruction, but child training or chastening goes beyond verbal instruction, warnings, and advice, and includes the use of the rod.

God has given us two things for nurturing our children: admonition, verbal instruction, and the use of the rod. We should deal with our children the way God deals with us. God deals with us in two ways. First of all, He deals with us through and by His Word. There is always verbal instruction. He gives us His Word so that we may listen to Him, obey Him, heed it, and do that which is right. If we fail to heed that verbal instruction, then the rod comes along. The rod is therefore not a substitute for instruction; it follows the failure to heed instruction.

Hebrews 12:6 says, “For whom the Lord loveth, He child trains, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth, if ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. For what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?” How many of us usually get the rod at one time or the other in our lives? All of us. Does God chasten His own? Yes, He does. Why does God chastise us? Is it because He hates us? No, it is because He loves us and wants us to listen to Him, obey Him, heed His Word, and do that which is right.

Micah 6:9 says, “The Lord's voice crieth unto the city. The Lord's voice,” that is, His words, “crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name. Hear ye the rod in him who hath appointed it.” The Lord's voice cries to the city through His words,

and the man of wisdom is to hear the rod in Him who has appointed it.

What does God do first? God sends His Word. What does God do second? He sends His rod. The Word is first; the rod is second. If we wish to be spared the rod, we must obey his word. The sanctified use of the rod toward our children must always be governed by the word of God. I am certainly going to lay that out in the next lesson. It must be used only as God uses his rod. God does indeed use the rod, and I will point this out more next time we meet. Some parents say that they object to the use of the rod and that they would never use a rod on their child. They have never whipped their child. I am not being ugly, but I am showing you what the Bible says. Someone says, "Well, I've never used the rod on my child, I've never whipped my child."

Look in verse 6, Hebrews 12: "For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If you endure chastening God dealeth with you as with sons. For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if you be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are you bastards and not sons." What is a bastard? It is an illegitimate child, a child who has no father. It is a child who had a biological father, but he never cared enough for the child to nurture him and raise him. Lack of chastisement is not a manifestation of love; it is a manifestation of hatred. Lack of chastisement is even a denial of sonship. "For what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" A man who will not whip his child does not love his child if the child needs whipping. A child who has a father who will not correct him is no better off than a child who does not have a father.

That is what the Scripture says. The point I am making is simple: fathers have been given the means of verbal instruction and the sanctified use of the rod. Some children do not need as much correction as other children. When you are willing to do what is right, you do not need the rod. It is just that simple. I hardly ever had to whip Rebecca, for which she is thankful—three or four times in her whole life.

But now, my twins, that was a horse of a different color: sometimes every week, sometimes several times a week. God deals

with us through His word and by His rod; we are to deal with our children through our word and by our rod. In other words, if they do not want the rod, they need to hear the word. Just as we as Christians, if we do not want God's rod to fall upon us, we need to hear His word.

In Ephesians 6:4, I want to show you the second means God has given us to accomplish this task of nurturing. He says, “And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture,” that is, the child training, “and then the admonition of the Lord.” I will deal with the sanctified use of the rod next time.

The Means: Admonition (Nouthesia)

The word admonition is very emphatic and very specific, and we should understand it. It is the Greek word nouthesia, made up of two Greek words, nous and tithēmi. It is usually translated in our Bibles as either admonition or exhortation. Nous, N-O-U-S, is the Greek word for mind, and tithēmi is a verb meaning to cause to stand. What, then, is this admonition or exhortation? It is verbal instruction that causes something to stand in the child's mind. It is so specific and so emphatic that it stands out in the child's mind, so that the child cannot forget it. It is like tying a string around your brain; you simply do not forget it.

First Corinthians 10:11 says, "Now all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." The context is Israel in the wilderness. Verses 1 and 2 speak of Israel's deliverance from Egypt and how they crossed the Red Sea on dry land. Verse 3 tells how God provided for them, and verse 4 how God gave them water out of the rock. Verse 5 tells how God killed them in the wilderness because of their sins and rebellion. In verse 7 they were idolaters and fornicators, and once again God killed many of them. In verse 9 some of them tempted Christ there in the wilderness, and once again they were destroyed. In verse 10 they murmured and were destroyed. Then verse 11 says, "Now all these things happened to them, for example, that are written for our admonition."

How can you forget thousands of people dying? How can you forget God killing someone because of their fornication and their

idolatry? How can you forget someone complaining and murmuring, "God, we don't have any flesh to eat," and God sending quail into the camp, while they gorged themselves and, while the meat was still in their mouths, God killed a whole bunch of them? How do you forget things like that?

That kind of thing stands out in your mind, doesn't it? That is what God is saying right here: You do not forget how He deals with sin. That is what admonition means—an exhortation or instruction that causes something to stand in the mind and cannot be forgotten.

Now, we are talking about admonition—verbal instruction that stands out in the mind. Look at Romans 15:14. Here are some qualifications, some characteristics that should be in our lives if we verbally instruct our children. Paul writes, “And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another”—able also to cause something to stand in each other’s mind.

But notice the requirements. Did Paul say, “I am persuaded of you, my brethren, that you are all college graduates and all have a degree in counseling”? Is that what he said? No. He said, “I myself am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge,” that is, biblical knowledge, “able also to admonish one another.” Therefore, fathers, we have to have knowledge. We have to have goodness in the sense that we are seeking the best for our children.

Look in your Bible at Colossians 1:28. Here you will find the same word again, translated a little differently. Usually it is admonish or exhortation, but here it is translated warning: “Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” To warn is to confront nouthetically, causing things to stand out in the mind of every man, and to teach every man in all wisdom so that we may present every man perfect, or mature, in Christ.

Here is what he is saying about admonition: admonition is required for maturity. You do not get to maturity without being admonished, without learning something. Look also at Acts 20:31,

and you will discover the heartfelt attitude that is to accompany this admonishment. Look what the Apostle Paul said.

Paul says, "Therefore, watch and remember that by the space of three years I cease not to warn"—that is, admonish and confront—"everyone night and day with tears." When Paul verbally instructed and caused something to stand in the minds of these Christians, he said, "I did it with tears." His heart was broken; he had genuine, heartfelt love and compassion for them. I remember a lot of the destruction that my father gave me, but the one time he wept over me stands out in my mind, and I have never forgotten it.

God expects us to use verbal instruction first. That instruction is needed and necessary, but it must be presented in such a way that it stands out in the mind. If we are full of goodness, knowledge, and compassion when we teach and instruct our children, they will listen. Admonition is verbal, but it still has to stand out in the mind.

A good example of biblical admonition is the Book of Proverbs. Proverbs are pithy, barbed statements that stand out in your mind and cannot be forgotten: "A little slumber, a little folding of the hands, so shall poverty come upon a man." Proverbs addresses laziness, the work ethic, economics, the family, wicked women, the attire of harlots, friendship, and work. It is full of pithy, barbed statements that stand out.

The problem is that most of the time we do not genuinely take the time to instruct our children verbally. We assume that they understand exactly what we mean or want, when in reality they do not. Many fathers think, "I don't have a college education. I don't have book learning. How can I teach my children?"

Most of us have been through the school of hard knocks. You have heard the old adage, "Experience is the best teacher." Actually, I believe the Word of God is the best teacher, but most of us have had experiences that we can relate to that teacher.

You heard the story about the man who was a wealthy mine owner. He sent his son off to college. The son earned an engineering degree, brought the diploma back, and his father put him over one of the mines. The first thing the son did was fire the foreman, who had been with the company for more than thirty years, because he did

not have a degree. When the foreman called the boy's father and told him he had been fired, the father said, "Don't worry about it. You're still on the job and still on the payroll. Just take a long vacation until I can work it out." He had simply let the boy have his way.

Finally, the mine started leaking, and the son could not stop the water from coming in. He called his father and asked, "What shall I do?" His father said, "Son, take your diploma and stick it in the hole." The son replied, "That won't work." His father told him to rehire George, the foreman he had fired, and let him fix it. You get the gist? You could have all kinds of degrees behind your name and not have a lick of common sense.

Experience, especially experience coupled with biblical principle, is worth a hundred doctrines. I never will forget what Lester Roloff said. When Bob Jones University offered him an honorary doctorate, he turned it down. They asked him why. He said, "Well, that's just kind of like putting whipped cream on onions. You just don't do it."

What does God use? He uses His Word, and He uses His rod. What does our Lord use? In Revelation 3:19 He says, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

As many as I love, I rebuke and I chasten. I give the word and I give the rod. If you listen to the word, the rod will not fall. But if you do not hear my word, you will hear the rod. In Ephesians 6:4, the sphere in which this is to be accomplished is given: "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up, nurture them up in the child training and admonition of the Lord." Clearly, the realm and sphere in which both admonition and chastening are to take place is the biblical realm.

The Sphere: In the Lord

We are not to follow man-made, naturalistic, or humanistic reasoning, nor are we to follow "my mate's right." We are rather to follow the Word of God. Many parents of the last generation raised their children according to Spock instead of according to the Word of God. Before he died, Spock had to confess that he had led that generation wrong and that he was wrong. It was too late for many of those people.

But the Word of God is not wrong, and God will never have to apologize to anyone for what He puts in His Word. His Word is truth. Fathers, we need not only to follow the principles of the Word of God; we need the power of God's grace to accomplish the task God has assigned to us. It should be evident that God desires that the children of Christians should be brought up as Christians.

Applications and Conclusion

I must act as a Christian with regard to my child and not otherwise. I must discipline my child according to the Word of God and not otherwise. My actions and attitudes must flow from the Word of God and from His grace.

God holds fathers responsible for the education and discipline of their children. Fathers must accept that responsibility and seek to fulfill it according to the Word of God. If a father does not teach his child truth, someone else will teach him error. The young unbeliever whom the child meets in school or the neighborhood, the artful infidel, the hater of God, the unprincipled stranger—someone is going to teach that child. It is far better for the father to teach the child truth than for a stranger to teach him error.

The second application is this: like our Heavenly Father, we must first learn to use the word of admonition. We must make sure the word stands out in the mind, that our children hear it and grasp it. Only after that do we use the rod if they refuse to hear the word.

Let me point out something that children do not believe. I remember my father and mother telling me, as they whipped me, or right before they whipped me, "Now this is going to hurt me a whole lot worse than it hurts you." I thought they were lying like a dog. But when you get to be a father and a grandfather, it does hurt. You know what the Bible says in Lamentations 3:33 concerning our Heavenly Father? "For he doth not afflict willingly or grieve the children of men."

God is not some mean old rascal just sitting up there, waiting with a rod to beat someone half to death. That is not God. God uses the rod only because He has to use it. Fathers use the rod only because they are forced to use it, because the admonition will not stand out in

a child's mind. Therefore, the rod comes along to enforce that admonition. If children would listen and obey, they would never be whipped. Are you listening? If we as Christians would listen and obey the Word of God, then the rod of God would never fall on us either.

When we whip our children, it is not because we hate them, but because we love them. When God whips us, it is not because He hates us; it is because He loves us and wants us to do right and to be right. “And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath,” either immediate or delayed, “but ye nurture them up in the child training and in the admonition of the Lord.”

Give them the biblical principles. Make them stand out in their minds. If they refuse them, then the rod must enforce those principles.

There are rules. There are regulations, directives, and commands in the Bible concerning the right use of the rod.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask today for your love and grace to be in our lives. Lord, we do pray that you would teach us, help the fathers specifically, Lord, to nurture their children, child train their children, using the admonition of the Word of God and, if necessary, the rod of the Word of God.

But Lord, I pray that you would grant us an awakening in this country, a reviving, and especially, Lord, an awakening and a reviving of the family. Get us back to where we ought to be and should be. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 12

The Sanctified Use of the Rod

Introduction and Review of the Family Series

Psalm 94. We come today to the last installment on our study of the family. This will be number twelve, and we will be looking at Psalm 94, verse 12. The title of the message is "The Sanctified Use of the Rod." David makes this statement: "Blessed is the man whom thou chasteneth, O Lord, and teacheth him out of thy law." Note that statement: Blessed is the man whom thou chasteneth and teacheth him out of thy law.

Let me review everything that we have covered so far and try to tie it together. The first two messages were on the dominion aspect of the family, demonstrating from Scripture how God ordained the family to be an instrument of dominion. Then we looked at creation differences between men and women, how God had created us differently, not only physically, but also emotionally and judgmentally as well. Then we looked at God's intentional order in marriage and showed from 1 Corinthians 11 that it is God, Christ, man, and woman.

Then we began to look at individual roles. We looked at the role of a wife, saw that the key word was submit, and expounded on that in two separate messages. Then we looked at the role of a husband and found that the key word is love: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it.” Then we looked at the role of the children in distinct messages, and there were two key words for children.

The first command was to obey, and the second was to honor: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor thy father and thy mother, which is the first commandment with promise.” Then we considered God’s role for fathers. Ephesians 6:4 says, “And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord.”

God gives both the negative and the positive: do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and chastening of the Lord. This is a simple, straightforward statement; it does not require a giant intellect to understand it. Yet a father may provoke his children either to immediate anger or to delayed anger, and there are several ways this can happen.

When God says, “Bring them up,” the Greek word for nurture is paideia, referring to chastening, or child training, and to the admonition of the Lord. We dealt with child training from Hebrews chapter 12 and with admonition. Admonition involves verbal instruction, while chastening refers to the rod.

You remember Micah 6:9: “Hear ye the rod and him who hath appointed it.” But before that, the Bible says that the Lord has spoken. His word comes first. If we refuse to hear His word, then the rod always follows.

So God is teaching us that even in our lives, not only as children but as adults, that same principle holds true. In fact, the rod has been appointed for a number of reasons, but one of them is found in Proverbs 13 and verse 15. Let me quote it, because there the Bible says that the rod enforces a particular lesson, and that is this: the way of the transgressor is hard. The ways of the transgressor are hard.

The Rod as God's Instrument, Not Man's

In other words, if you sin, then you're going to suffer. Now, there are principles laid down in the Word of God which control the use of the rod. The rod is not to be employed upon our whims, our desires, our emotions, and our dispositions. It is to be employed only upon the principles of the Word of God. We need to maintain in our minds and remember that the rod is an instrument and not an end in and of itself.

Before we even begin looking at Scripture, let me give you some key statements. First of all, the rod is an instrument and not an end in and of itself. Listen carefully now.

A violin applied to the backside of a child will no more make him a musician than a rod applied to the backside of a child will make him holy. It is not just the instrument. It is true that the instrument must be used, and it must be used correctly—by that I mean biblically. But it must also be used with the blessing of God upon it. And when the blessing of God is upon that rod, then the child upon whom that discipline is exercised will learn the simple lesson that he who sins must suffer. The rod, then, is to be used to conform the child to the will and the Word of God.

Now, the interesting thing is this: there are examples in the Bible of fathers who did not chasten, discipline, or restrain their children. If you are not able to restrain your child when he is a child, you are certainly not going to restrain him when he is an adult. Let me show you. Hold Psalm 94, but look in your Bibles to 1 Samuel chapter 2. Notice, beginning there with verse 29. In fact, let us begin reading with verse 27, just so you can see the context. Look at what the Bible says.

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Samuel 2:29 (KJV)

Biblical Examples of Fathers Who Failed to Restrain

> "And there came a man of God unto Eli, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Did I plainly appear unto the house of thy fathers, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to offer upon mine altar, to burn incense, to wear mine ephod before

> me? And did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?"
>
> "Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded to my habitation, and honorest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people."
>
> The boys were stealing God's offerings. The law of God required that when the offering was boiling, they could take a flesh hook of three prongs and reach in, and whatever they brought up belonged to them. But the priests were sending their servants to the people before they offered, saying, "You give it to us now, because the priest will not have it sodden, but raw."

In other words, we want a steak to put on the grill. You give it to us now, and if not, they took it by force. God just simply says that you're honoring your sons above Me. In 1 Samuel 3 and verse 13, the Bible clarifies this even more. God says to Eli, “For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile,” and, “he restrained them not.”

Evidently, Eli did not restrain them as children, and certainly did not restrain them as adults. Remember that Eli was the head honcho at that particular time. God says He will judge him because he restrained not his children. In 1 Kings 1, we are reminded of David, who was called a man after God's own heart. Although David is often held up in Scripture as a man who wanted the things of God, the truth of the matter is this.

He was pretty much a failure as a father. In 1 Kings 1:5, we read: “Then Adonijah, who was David's second son after Absalom, then Adonijah, the son of Haggith, exalted himself, saying, I will be king. And he prepared him chariots and horsemen and 50 men to run before him.” Verse 6 adds: “And his father had not displeased him at any time, in saying, Why hast thou done so? And he also was a very goodly man, and his mother bare him after Absalom.”

Note what the Bible says about Adonijah: his father had not displeased him at any time. David simply let Adonijah have his way. Both Absalom and Adonijah were wicked, undisciplined men. In all

probability, some of David's other children turned out the same way. Yet the same David who did not restrain Adonijah and Absalom learned, later in life, the simple lesson of Psalm 94:12. Let me quote it again.

David says, "Blessed is the man whom thou chasteneth, O Lord, and teacheth him out of thy law." I think of David, and I think of ourselves. Sometimes we learn the truth, but we learn it too late. You often wonder whether, if David had learned this truth previously, his children would have turned out differently.

Look in Psalm 119, because David gives this same information in the same light. In verse 67 he says, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy word." Before I was afflicted—that is, Lord, before You got a hold upon me—I went astray. But after You got a hold upon me, now I have kept Your word. In other words, I learned that he who sins must suffer.

In verse 71 David says, "It is good for me that I've been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes." It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Why? That I might learn Your statutes. In verse 75 he says, "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hath afflicted me."

If David had known these truths earlier in life, his children may have turned out differently. But he learned these things probably much later in life. Remember that these things were written for our admonition and learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scripture might have hope.

The Rod Is God's

Seven Principles for the Sanctified Use of the Rod

The rod is God's and does not belong to man. Since the rod belongs to God, that means it is to be used according to God's terms. It is to be used in accordance with God's law. The discipline of children is sanctified and regulated by the Word of God.

Now, I hinted at this truth previously, but let me say it now very plainly. There are individuals who try to say that it is unchristian to whip or discipline a child physically, and that we should merely love

them. I've heard that argument, and you've heard that argument. But let me ask a simple question: Is God the Father our example in all things? You know the answer is yes.

I could ask the same question another way: As Christians, shall we not conform the discipline of our children to the Word of God? The answer is yes. Those who say we should never, ever physically discipline our children, but should just love them, do not know what love is—not the biblical definition of love. Certainly, they do not know how to apply biblical love. Let me show you. Turn in your Bibles.

Scripture shows that the rod is God's and that God does use a rod. Deuteronomy 8:5 says, “Thou shalt also consider in thine heart that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.” Does God chasten us? Yes. Does God use a rod? Yes. The passage plainly teaches both truths.

In 2 Samuel 7:14, God speaks concerning Solomon: “I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men.” Again, the truth is unmistakable. God declares that He will chasten Solomon with a rod and with stripes. Thus, as a man chastens his son, so the Lord thy God chastens thee. The rod is God's, and He expressly uses it in chastening those whom He deals with as sons.

Does God use a rod? Yes. Does God chasten? Yes. Everyone knows the truth of Job's suffering. Look at Job's request in his prayer to God: "Let him, that is God, take his rod away from me and let not his fear terrify me" (Job 9:34). Was God using a rod upon Job?

Well, of course He was, and Job was asking God to take it away. In Job 21, Job is asking a question, and this question will be pointed out later from the New Testament: "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, or mighty in power?" Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. "Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them."

Why in the world is the rod of God not upon the wicked? The truth is, they are not God's children, which we will find out a little bit later. The rod is God's, and God does indeed use a rod. He says, "If

they break my statutes and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with a rod and their iniquity with stripes" (Psalm 89:31–32). This is God's own declaration concerning those who break His statutes and keep not His commandments: He will visit their transgression with a rod and their iniquity with stripes.

Does God use a rod? Yes, He does. The Bible says, "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world" (1 Corinthians 11:32). Thus, when we are judged, the Lord chastens us so that we should not be condemned with the world.

When we are judged, we are chastened, we are whipped of the Lord, that we might not be condemned with the world. David said in Psalm 23 and verse 4, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.” If a rod is used for discipline, how could a rod comfort him? The answer is found in Hebrews 12 and verse 8: “But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.” The rod comforts us in the fact that when we are whipped for sinning against God, we know that we belong to God.

It is just like this: if we know that we do wrong and God whips us, we are His. If we can sin against God and get by with it, then we do not belong to God. It is that simple. So how can the rod of God comfort us? The rod of God comforts us in the sense that when we are whipped, we belong to God. God does not whip the devil’s children. He whips His own. So, first of all, the rod is God’s rod.

Secondly, the rod is not to be used in anger. Does God chasten us in anger? If He did, there would not be many of us left, would there? “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are but dust.” Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. What does that mean? It means He knows exactly what we can take and what we cannot take. God does not chasten us in anger.

David prayed in Psalm 6, “O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O

Lord, for I am weak. O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed." Notice his words: "Rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure." Then, in Psalm 38:1, David asks the same thing: "O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure." If God does not chasten us in anger, then we are not to chasten our children in anger.

The problem with child chastening in this day and time is that many children never get chastened, while the few who do are usually chastened only because they made their parents angry. Humanly speaking, when you and I get angry, we have already lost control. If God lost control while He chastened us, what would be our end? No. Remember what David said in Psalm 119:75: "I know that thou in faithfulness hath afflicted me." God did not afflict David in anger; He afflicted him out of faithfulness.

Our discipline should be done in faithfulness to the principles of the Word of God, in faithfulness for the good and benefit of our children, and in faithfulness because we desire to see them become mature, gracious, kind, and obedient children.

We do not whip them because we are angry. How do you avoid anger in disciplining a child? Certainly, you must control your emotions, but that is only part of it. Most parents have not understood that we need to be able to speak one time, and the child obey. If the child has heard us, understood us, and does not obey, then the child should be disciplined at that point. You should not continue speaking until you become angry enough to whip the child. You do not whip the child out of anger; you whip the child for a violation of the Word of God. Listen to children today and hear how they talk back to their parents.

Sometimes even cuss them out. I talked back to my father one time. I can count on one finger how many times I talked back to him. That was it, and I learned a very valuable lesson: you do not do that, not if you want to grow to be mature.

I heard a story years ago that is so apropos today, about two little boys who were out playing in the yard. Their mother stepped onto the porch and called, "Johnny, supper's ready; come on in." The little boy continued playing and ignored his mother. Finally, she stepped

out again and said, “Johnny, supper’s on the table; come on in.” He kept playing.

His little buddy asked him, “Didn’t you hear your mother?” He said, “Of course I heard her.” “Why don’t you go on in?” “Oh,” he said, “I’ve already learned I don’t have to obey her until she puts her mean voice on.” In other words, he did not have to obey her until she became angry, because he knew that when she got angry, she would whip him. Until then, he could disobey her and it would be all right.

The point is this: when we allow our children to disobey and to continue disobeying until we get angry, we are basically teaching them to disobey. We are teaching them that the only time we will whip or chasten them is when we get angry. No, we do not chasten them because we get angry; we chasten them because they violated a principle in the Word of God.

Remember, the rod is God’s. It is not to be used in anger, but in accordance with the law of God. Thirdly, God’s rod is to be used diligently and consistently. Diligent, consistent use of the rod is an expression of genuine love and concern for your child. The Bible says in Proverbs 13:24, “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” The Hebrew word for “betimes” is shakar, and it literally means early, earnestly, diligently, and consistently.

You know what one of the biggest problems for parents is? Consistency. So many of us are ruled by our emotions rather than principle. If we are on edge and our child does something wrong, we will jerk him up and whip him. If we are having a good day, feeling good, and the child does exactly the same thing again that is wrong and wicked, we will let him get by because we do not feel like whipping him.

God is saying that he who loves his child chastens him consistently, earnestly, and early. In other words, he does what needs to be done, not simply because he feels bad or good. There is a principle involved. When we allow our children to be whipped for doing something one day and not another, they learn that we lack not only consistency, but conviction for the truth and an

understanding of the principle of the Word of God. They learn that truth and reality do not really matter; what matters is how we feel.

God says, consistently. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 4:2, "Moreover it's required of a steward, that a man be found faithful." Everyone here would confess that children have been given us as an inheritance of the Lord, and we are merely stewards over them. God requires us to be faithful in disciplining our children; we must be diligent. The rod is to be used consistently.

Fourthly, the rod is to be used in season, while there is hope. Proverbs 19:18 says, "Chasten thy son while there is hope. And let not thy soul spare for his crying." The Hebrew word for hope is tikvah, translated as hope, an expectation, the thing that I long for, an outcome, or a ground of hope. God is saying, chasten thy son while there is a ground of hope, while there is an expected outcome.

To chasten thy son while there is hope means that you chasten him in a timely manner, when he can be molded and influenced. Remember, the object of chastisement is to educate the will by making it malleable and bringing it into conformity to the will and the Word of God. There are times when discipline will do no good. That is why God says, "Chasten thy son while there is hope."

Let me give you several illustrations that I know of personally. One concerns a father who is now dead. He had a teenage boy who was belligerent, disobedient, and ugly. I attended the same church as this father, and the pastor preached a wonderful message on discipline. The father went home and said, "Boy, that's what my son needs. He needs his fanny whipped because he's been disobedient." He told his son, "I'm going to whip you because you've been disobedient." The big teenage boy said, "You're not going to whip me."

The father said, "Oh, yes, I am." He drew back with a switch to hit the boy, but the teenage boy blocked it, knocked his father down with his fist, and left the house.

Now, let me ask you a question: Do you think there's any hope for that boy? No, not apart from the supernatural grace of God. "Chasten thy son while there is hope," because there comes a time when it is almost impossible for you to do anything with a child.

Let me give you another illustration. This happened many years ago, but Alice and I both saw it with our own eyes. We had some dear friends, and our oldest daughter, Wendy, was three or four at the time, maybe five. They invited us over for supper. Wendy said, "I don't want to go." I asked, "What do you mean?" She said, "Kyle always comes up behind me and pushes me down on the floor."

She said, "His daddy never does anything about it." "Well, I've never seen him do it. I mean, you know, the kids went playing, and we just kind of didn't see it." I said, "Well, sweetheart, let me tell you what. We're going to go. But if Kyle comes up behind you and pushes you down, and his daddy doesn't whip him, you get up, ball up your fists, and hit him as hard as you can right between the eyes." She said, "Yes, sir."

We went to the house and had supper. After supper, we took a cup of coffee and went into the living room. We all sat down and were talking. Lo and behold, right in front of all four of us, Kyle came up the high and windy and pushed her down on the floor. I mean, he hit her and pushed her onto the floor. As soon as she hit the floor, she jumped up and said, "Kyle, my daddy said, if you did that to me and your daddy didn't whip you, to do this." Pow! She rocked him back on the floor.

"Oh, here, I'm just drinking my coffee. My daddy said, if you and your daddy didn't whip you." Oh, Lord, have mercy. When Johnny heard that, he got up, went outside, and got a switch. This little boy was about four years old and wore a little pair of shorts. Johnny said, "Kyle, apologize to Wendy." He said, "I'm not, Daddy." Johnny was an ex-Marine and an ex-Army man. When he came out of the Marines, that wasn't enough; he went into the Army and became a ranger.

He took that switch and whipped that little boy, and he whipped him good. The little boy did not cry or shed a tear. When Johnny finished, he said, "Kyle, apologize to Wendy." "I'm not, Daddy." Johnny leaned into him again. This time, big ol' welts came up on his leg, but the little boy still did not cry. Johnny whipped him a third time, and the welts began to show blood. Still, the little boy had not cried. The fourth time, blood was flowing down his legs. In the middle of that fourth whipping, Kyle looked up at his daddy and

said, “Daddy, you can stop now.” “I’m ready to apologize.” And he did.

Before you say, “Oh, that’s so awful,” as far as I know, Johnny never had to whip that boy another time the rest of his life. The child probably never got another spanking. Why? He learned. He grew up to be a fine young man. He is now married, and we are still wonderful friends. But that is what God means when He says, “Chasten thy son while there is hope.”

One of our daughters had done something—I do not know what it was—but her mother had told her something and she disobeyed. As small as Alice was by this time, the girls were as big as she was. I was sitting in the front room reading when I heard Alice say, “You come on back here. I’m going to whip you because you disobeyed me.” They went back into the bedroom. The way Alice had to whip them was to tell them to lie across the bed, because the children were so big.

She told the daughter to lie across the bed. “But, Mama,” I heard her say. Alice replied, “Am I going to have to get your father to come in here?” When I heard that, I got up, walked in, and looked at Alice. I took the switch away from her and said, “Tell her to lie across the bed.” She told her, and the girl said, “But, Daddy.” I put her on the bed and whipped her. When I finished, I looked at Alice and said, “Tell her to lie across the bed.” She told her, and the girl said, “But, Mama.” I put her on the bed and whipped her again. After the fourth whipping, I said, “Alice, tell her to lie across the bed.” Alice called her name and said, “Lie across the bed.” She answered, “Yes, ma’am,” lay across the bed, and handed Alice a switch.

I said, “Now go ahead and whip her for whatever you will whip her for.” When she finished, I asked, “Sweetheart, how many whippings did you get?” “Five.” I said, “You never would have gotten one if you had obeyed mother the first time, nor the second one if you had obeyed her. You disobeyed four times in a row and got five whippings.” Next time Alice told her to lie across the bed, she said, “Yes, ma’am. Yes, ma’am. Yes, ma’am.”

"Chasten thy son while there is hope. And let not my soul spare for its crying." God is saying, chasten while there is hope. When God

says, "Let not my soul spare for its crying," it is not merely loud crying and wailing that He wants. It is tears of repentance, or at least a willingness to submit to the Word of God.

My sister and I used to cry and wail every time Mother got hold of us with a switch. The louder we cried, the sooner she quit whipping, and we knew that. We would put on a show, and when she quit whipping, we would go out and laugh about it—until the day she stepped into the pantry and heard us laughing. When she called us back in to whip us again, we did not have to pretend.

Chasten thy son while there is hope. Crying and wailing cannot replace tears of repentance. They cannot replace a will that is malleable, moldable to the Word of God. So the rod is to be used in season, while there is hope.

Fifthly, if you look in Proverbs 22, verse 15, the rod is to be used to drive away foolishness. The Bible says, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." Notice that foolishness is bound in the heart of the child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him. Scripture does not say that childishness is bound in the heart of the child. You do not whip a child simply for being a child or because he cannot function as an adult. It is not childishness that needs correcting, but foolishness.

Why would you take a little child who is learning to eat and punish him because he takes the spoon, puts it in the applesauce, and slaps it upside his head? Next time, perhaps it is on his nose. Finally, he gets it to his mouth, and by then it is all over him. You do not whip a child because he is a child and can function only as a child.

There is a great difference between a child who is learning and messing up and a child who sits with a glare in his eyes, takes the jar of baby food, slings it across the room, and has a tantrum. These are two totally different things. It is not childishness that you are trying to correct; it is foolishness. The Bible says that foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child. What does that mean? It is not lying on the surface, where it can be easily disposed of. It is bound up. In fact, the Hebrew word literally means to be bound fast or tied up. Foolishness

is tied up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

I believe there is great significance in the fact that the Bible speaks of a rod of correction. My father usually used a rod on me—a peach tree limb. We had a peach tree behind the house. It never did bloom until after I left home, and it never had any peaches where he lived.

Many parents use their hand to spank their child or use a belt. I believe a rod is spoken of in Scripture for a reason. Your hand is an extension of yourself, and your belt is an extension of yourself. You do not want the child to hate you; you want the child to hate the rod. God said that the rod of correction shall drive foolishness far from him.

If you use your hand, usually you cannot whip a child the way you ought to whip a child, if the child needs whipping. You can use your hand, or even a rod, and hit him lightly, merely tapping—just enough to make him mad. Then he will hate you and despise you.

There are two ways you can whip a child. First, you can tap him lightly with your hand or with a rod, just enough to make him mad. He will hate you and despise you. Or, second, you can whip him until there are tears of repentance, or at least until his will is malleable and broken, and he will love you and respect you.

If a child has done something serious enough to be punished, he should be punished seriously. If you discipline your child only because you are upset with him, because he has angered you, then you are wrong. But if your child has done something serious enough to be punished, you should be serious enough in your punishment. I will be absolutely honest: I did not want my father to whip me, because when he got hold of me, he did a very thorough job.

I have only had to whip my grandchildren occasionally. Lacey is the only one I have ever whipped. When I whipped them, they never wanted to be whipped by me again, because I tried to make sure it was done right.

Our oldest grandson and two of his cousins were at the house with us. I was studying in my office, and the last time I had seen the children, they were playing in the hay. Then my telephone rang. A 911 operator asked what the emergency was. I told her there was no

emergency and that I had not called. She said there had been a call from this number, and then it dawned on me. I assured her that there was no emergency, but that I would take care of the situation, and I hung up.

I walked out to the library just in time to see the three grandchildren coming out. Casey, who then lived in Tampa, had already called 911 there once, and the responders had come to the house. His mother and father took him in and talked to him very seriously. They told us that he had learned his lesson and would not do it again. So when I saw the children coming out of my library, I knew what they had done. I asked, "What did you do?" They answered, "Oh, nothing. We were in there playing."

"Did you use the phone?" "Oh, no, sir." I said, "Listen, the 911 operator called me. I know you called." I explained the seriousness of it. "Suppose they had sent an ambulance out here, and someone on the other side of town was dying. The ambulance could not get to them because they were coming out for this false alarm. Who would be responsible for the death of that individual?" We would.

I said, "Let me tell you what you have done. You have not only done something seriously wrong and wicked; you have now lied to me." The two cousins said, "But we didn't call." "No, but you encouraged him to call, and you knew he was calling and did not stop him." After I got through with them, neither of them ever called 9-1-1 again.

The lesson was thoroughly impressed upon their minds. My oldest grandson will be twenty this summer, and every time I see him, I ask him, smiling, "Have you called 9-1-1 lately?" He laughs and says, "No, Papa, I haven't." If a child has done something serious and needs to be punished, he needs to be punished seriously. Let him learn: he who sins must suffer.

The sixth point is that the rod is to be used to give wisdom and understanding. Proverbs 29:15 says, "The rod and reproof give wisdom. But a child left to himself, bringeth his mother to shame." What is used to give wisdom? The rod and reproof.

The word reproof refers to rebuke, correction, argumentation, chiding, punishment, and chastisement. It is verbal, and it is also

with a rod. The rod and reproof give wisdom. Wisdom comes not only through admonishment and reproof; it also comes through the rod. What do you learn when you get the rod? He who sins must suffer. The way of the transgressor is hard. The Hebrew word for wisdom here is kokmah. It is the word used all throughout the book of Proverbs concerning the wisdom we should have and learn. God says reproof will give wisdom when the child will hear. But when the child will not hear, the rod will give wisdom.

The seventh and last point is simply this: the rod may be used, under the blessings of God, as an instrument in a child's conversion. The rod may be used under the blessings of God as an instrument in a child's conversion. Proverbs 23:13 says, “Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with a rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with a rod, and thou shalt deliver his soul from hell.” Note the command: “Withhold not correction.” The word beat means to smite, to whip, to punish. You must note that constant, consistent, biblical application of the rod does not and will not result in death.

If it does, you are not using it biblically and rightly. There were times when I thought my father was killing me, but he never did. I never died, and I never had to go to the hospital for a whipping. God said, “If thou beatest him with a rod, he shall not die.” The sanctified use of God's rod does not produce death; it produces life. What does He say? “Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with a rod, he shall not die.”

Corporeal, or physical, chastisement is not child abuse. I do not care what DFACs says, what the state says, or what the court system says. Physical chastisement is not child abuse. God says, “Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.”

The word hell is sheol, referring to the grave, hell, the pit, and the underworld. What is He saying? Those who have been disciplined, biblically speaking, learn self-discipline. They learn obedience and respect for God and His law. It is the child left to himself who bringeth his mother to shame. But understand this: the use of the rod must be with the blessings of God. It is not merely the

instrument. I must use the means God has ordained, while seeking God to bless those means and make them effectual. Without the blessing of God, the means are useless.

The Rod Must Be Accompanied by God's Blessing

God says, “Withhold not correction from the child.” You do not discipline a four-year-old the way you discipline a ten-year-old or a fifteen-year-old. They must be taught that he who sins must suffer, and that the way of the transgressor is hard. God gives us regulations and rules for the sanctified use of the rod.

Applications and Closing Exhortation

First, contrary to Dr. Spock, God does use the rod, and He expects us to emulate His chastisement in correcting and disciplining our children. We may be politically correct and lose our children, or biblically correct and save them. We must determine whom we will follow: God or man.

That does not mean we should not use wisdom in disciplining our children. Today's politically correct attitude, revealed in DFACs and other state and federal departments, is diametrically opposed to the Word of God. If you are reported for chastening your child according to the Word of God, they will charge you with child abuse. In reality, the Bible and God charge them with child abuse for not permitting His correction according to His Word. Biblically speaking, they can be charged not only with child abuse, but with parental abuse.

The real Supreme Court meets up here, signed God. I can assure you that is true.

The third thing I would urge you to remember is this: the use of the instrument alone is not sufficient. We cannot trust in the rod; we have to trust in the God who gave the rod. Say, “Lord, we are using this rod according to Your Word and Your regulations, and we are seeking Your blessing upon it to make it effectual. You teach them. You open their eyes.”

You say, “Brother Weaver, what can I do? My children are grown.” The only thing you can do is commit them to the Lord and say, “Lord, You will have to correct them. I can no longer chasten them. I

taught them as best as I could. I taught them Your Word. They know Your Word. Now, Lord, they are in Your hands. Work in their hearts."

I have news for you, folks: if they belong to the Lord and are doing wrong, they will be chastened. No one can sin against God and get by with it, whether he is a child or an adult. You had better learn to hear the rod and Him who appointed it. When God says, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but nurture them up in the chastening or the child training and admonition of the Lord," the child training refers to the sanctified use of the rod.

"For whom the Father loveth, he chasteneth." When we are whipped for sinning against our Father, we know that we belong to Him. Therefore, that rod is a comfort to us.

Let us pray. Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we are thankful today for Your love, mercy, goodness, and kindness. All of us as adults can say, "Lord, we are thankful for all the whippings and chastisement that we received as children." We certainly did not appreciate it then, but we understand and appreciate that chastisement now. Lord, we pray for our children, for their salvation, those who are still tender and young and those who are grown. Help us to understand that You treat us as Your children, and we too must obey or feel the rod ourselves. Give us grace that we may serve Thee acceptably with reverence and godly fear, and bring our lives into conformity to Your Word. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask and pray. Amen.

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