

THE MAN

"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more" (Luke 12:48). God has placed men in a position of authority but also of great responsibility. As this passage suggests, the more God gives you the more He expects from you. I Corinthians 11:3 states the God has placed man as the *"head of the woman."* Fathers are also commanded to bring up their children *"in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"* (Eph. 6:4). Only men are allowed to teach publicly (1 Tim. 2:12) and only men can be leaders in the Church: elders (1 Tim. 3:1) and deacons (1 Tim. 3:12).

Before we men begin to stick our chests out with pride at the "position" we have been given, we need to consider the consequences of this "gift." God was well pleased when Solomon asked only for wisdom to be a good leader for God's people (1 Kings 3:10). The Old Testament is filled with examples of kings whose pride became their downfall, beginning with Saul. Humility, as Jesus so often pointed out, is the key to a successful leader. How desirous are you of being a good leader at home and in the Church? Will we be held accountable for how we exercise our authority and how well we fill the positions of responsibility God has placed us in? Absolutely. We will be judged based on the kind of leaders we have been both within our families and in the Church.

What are a man's responsibilities in the Church? That depends on what he is capable of doing. I have often heard men criticized because they do not preach, or because they do not lead singing, etc. In Romans 12, Paul talks about the different things men can do and many of those are not public parts in the worship service. He introduces this thought by saying, *"For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office"* (verse 4). This tells us that not every man is supposed to preach or to lead singing, etc. Every man will have to be honest with himself as to what he is capable of doing. In the end, just as with the parable of the talents (Mat. 25:14-30), every man will be judged by how he used the gifts that God did give him.

At home, men have been made head of the house. This does

not mean a man should indulge all of his selfish whims while neglecting the needs and desires of his wife and children. Much to the contrary, men are told to "love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). Paul tells us that Jesus' treatment of the Church is a model for how husbands should treat their wives. Christ sacrificed Himself so that His bride could have life. Notice too how He behaved towards God's people during His ministry. He was firm yet compassionate. He was intolerant of disrespect and disobedience of the Father all the while teaching and showing the Father's love. He gave of His time and energy and asked only submission to the Father.

How should a man behave at home? It can all be summed up in one word: Love. In I Corinthians 13, Paul talks about the characteristics of love. I believe these sum up the attitude and behavior of a good Christian husband. Love suffers long, and is kind; love envies not, vaunts not itself, and is not puffed up. Love does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not its own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil, rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never fails (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

Many people mistakenly confuse love with infatuation or lust. This happens when someone speaks of love at first sight. Infatuation and lust can occur at first sight, but the deep intimate love that a husband and wife share after years of marriage cannot. Love causes the Christian husband to be kind, patient, empathetic, compassionate, and forgiving.

A Christian husband also sets a good example of obedience to God and encourages his wife and children to follow His lead. The husband is ultimately responsible for the spiritual education of his children. Yes men, we are to study the Bible with our wives and children. Not everyone is called to speak publicly, but we are all called to study and teach privately. Peter said that we are to "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" (1 Pet. 3:15). Who is it more important to give that answer to than our wives and children? A man that does not study the Bible with his wife and children is not a good Christian husband. The most

important thing a man can do for his family is to do everything within his power to help them have a strong and lasting relationship with their Creator. It may be a man's responsibility to provide for his family materially, but his ultimate responsibility is to provide spiritually.

"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered" (1 Pet. 3:7). In what ways is a wife weaker than her husband? This is almost always true physically, but it is also typically true emotionally. God gave women the tender emotions of a submissive wife and a loving mother. In times of trouble, the man is supposed to be a source of strength for his family and to take care of and protect his wife. No, men are not made of iron, but we are generally better equipped to handle emotionally trying times with our wits about us than women.

In good times and bad, God has established that men are to lead. Unfortunately some men, even in the Church, fail to walk in the path God has established for them. Sometimes this is because the wife is not very submissive, and sometimes it is because the husband is not much of a leader. Some women have a harder time being submissive than others. In such cases, a husband must be patient, and through study and prayer they can both learn to live as God would have them to. It is imperative, however, that men realize their intended role and do their best to occupy it. It is very difficult for even the most well-intentioned woman to submit to a man who does not even bother to try to lead. Husbands show your wives you care about them: Lead!

One area of the family that is crying out for good leadership today is the area of dress. Modest dress is a must for both men and women. It is bad for an unmarried woman to dress immodestly. It is doubly bad for a married woman to do so. The same is true for a woman with short hair (1 Cor. 11:3-16). Not only is she showing a lack of concern for righteousness, she is also demonstrating that there is a leadership crisis in her home. Either she is in rebellion against the authority of her husband or they are both in rebellion against the authority of God. If her husband does not care that she dresses inappropriately or cuts her hair too short, then he is failing in his primary mission to be the spiritual leader of the house. If, on the

other hand, he sees her sin for what it is and tries to persuade her to change (no pun intended) and she refuses, then she is not just in rebellion to her husband but to God as well. A man cannot force submission, but must, through love and patience, try to show her the error of her ways and bring about her repentance.

A man's reputation takes a lifetime to establish. It can be very quickly eroded however, by a wife who dresses or behaves improperly or by children who are undisciplined. This is why an elder should be *"One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity"* (1 Tim. 3:4). A man shows his ability to lead by the submission of his family to his leadership. God does not expect men to be perfect leaders, just to do everything we can to lead our families and to help lead the Church.

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APOLOGIA

Editor's note: These questions and answers are an excerpt from a letter in response to a brother in Malawi.

QUESTION: Some churches which when conducting their services during prayers, they use the words 'hallelujah' and the gathering answers them, 'Amen.' What is the meaning of these words?

Hallelujah is the English translation of the Greek word "alleluia" found four times and only in Revelation 19:1-7. Alleluia means "praise to God" as evidenced by the descriptive words used in this passage: glory, honour, praise our God, and give honour to Him.

Amen is a word found 22 times in the Old Testament and 51 in the New. In 1 Chronicles 16:8-36, David gave a psalm in praise and thanksgiving to God. Then after hearing this psalm, *"All the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord."* They were agreeing with David and used the word Amen to express their agreement. The word Amen thus means "we are in agreement" or "let it be so." Other Old Testament passages express this same thought.

In 1 Corinthians 14:16 Paul is writing about speaking in tongues. He says that if one prays in an unknown tongue which cannot be understood, then *"How shall he that*

occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" This verse clearly shows that in the New Testament one says "Amen" when he desires to express agreement with what has been prayed.

Although it is not as freely expressed by voice in our day as much as I feel it should be, numerous passages show that Amen is perfectly in order to be expressed after something is said or prayer is made with which we are in agreement: Deuteronomy 27:15-26, Nehemiah 5:13, Psalms 106:48, Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 24:53, 1 Corinthians 16:24, and Revelation 19:4.

QUESTION: Matthew 6:3 says, "*But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.*" Is it possible in the family for a woman to give something to someone without telling a man, or the opposite? Or what is the Bible talking about?

This beautiful passage is not restricted to our personal family. It is simply telling us to not do or give something to anyone (whether husband or wife or anyone else) with the intent to obtain self-glory by so doing. By, "*Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth,*" Jesus is saying that whatever we do should not be done for the purpose of being seen. Let any glory be to the Lord.

QUESTION: Explain 1 Corinthians 9 about leaders receiving something from the church.

The subject of 1 Corinthians 9 is found in verse 3, "*Mine answer to them that do examine me is this...*" He was answering those who were questioning his being an apostle with the right to receive something material (kwacha [money] or something else) in support of his work. In verses 4 through 14 he gave illustrations of where he had authority to be supported, but in verses 12 and 15 he says that he had not used that privilege, "*Lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.*" In 2 Corinthians 12:14 he wrote, "*I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you,*" and in 2 Thessalonians 3:8-9, "*Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us.*" To the Ephesian elders Paul said, "*Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to*

them that were with me" (Acts 20:34).

Paul had the right to receive financial or material support from the Corinthian brethren, but he chose not to do so. To the Philippians he wrote, *"No church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account"* (Philippians 4:15-17).

But Paul was an apostle who moved from place to place in doing the Lord's work. Being on the move and involved as he was in numerous and uncertain engagements, he of necessity needed support from brethren at various places to sustain him. Brethren who labor in their immediate surroundings can obtain secular jobs or engage in farming and thus support their families. Never in the New Testament among the Lord's people do we read of a local clergyman or local preacher who controlled the local congregation and received pay for it. This is a practice begun by the Roman Catholic Church and adopted by the denominations.

HARRY COBB
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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Manasseh and Ephraim received an inheritance of land beginning at the Jordan and heading west. Joshua says that they were the descendants of whom?
2. Ezra offers a census of the Jews who decided to leave Babylon with Zerubbabel. Not including slaves, how many were there in all?
3. According to the book of Lamentations, Jeremiah said that the people who remained in Jerusalem were doing what?
4. What did Matthew say John the Baptist's diet consisted of?
5. In Galatians, about what hypocrisy did Paul confront Peter and Barnabas?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. What did God provide for the Israelites when they complained about the manna? FLOCKS OF QUAIL (Numbers 11:31)
2. Which prophet did king Hezekiah's assistants approach, regarding the dilemma with Assyria? ISAIAH (II Kings 19:2)
3. Who threatened to kill Jeremiah for prophesying in the house of the Lord about the fall of Judah? THE PRIESTS, PROPHETS, AND PEOPLE (Jeremiah 26:7-8)
4. In Acts when Stephen was brought before the council, he presented a history of God's involvement with the Jews, beginning with whom, and ending with whom? ABRAHAM, SOLOMON (Acts 7:2,47)
5. According to Paul what had made the Philippians unique among the churches? THEIR FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PAUL (Philippians 4:15)

GOSPEL MEETINGS

DATES

February
5 – 7

PLACE

Taylor's Cross Roads
Roanoke, AL

SPEAKER

Kevin Mills
(Newnan, GA)