

# THE HOME IN CRISIS

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## PREFACE

Our world today is extremely complex. It is fast paced and we are pressured to become involved in a wide variety of activities. Occupational, community and social demands pull us in several directions at the same time. The result is extreme fragmentation. And in that fragmentation, it is difficult to sort out our priorities and be sure that we are really giving adequate time and attention to those things that are really the most important things in our world.

Our homes are among the most important things which suffer from our fragmentation. We try to do so many different things that little time and energy are left for this important aspect of our lives.

Social pressures also threaten families. We are an up-rooted society. Many families move from well paying job to well paying job, only to realize that the money that such enterprises bring does not replace that which is lost in families deeply rooted in a community.

"Throw-away marriages" seem to be the order of the day. Many of the people living about us seem to think "If this one does not work, we will try another."

"The Home in Crisis" is surely one of the most pressuring issues facing the church of our Lord today. The Abilene Christian University Lectureship approaches this vital subject in the hope of speaking words of power from the word of God which can stabilize our homes in a time of upheaval.

CARL BRECHEEN  
Lectureship Director

## DEDICATION



J.D. Thomas is Professor of Bible and retiring Head of the department at Abilene Christian University, where he has taught since 1949.

For eighteen years, he was director of the annual Bible Lectureship at Abilene Christian University, and he has directed numerous Elders' Workshops on the campus.

In grateful appreciation for many years of outstanding leadership and service, this sixty-first lectureship volume is affectionately dedicated to this great man of God.

## Main Speeches



# “HOME (NOT) FOR SALE”

Jack Evans

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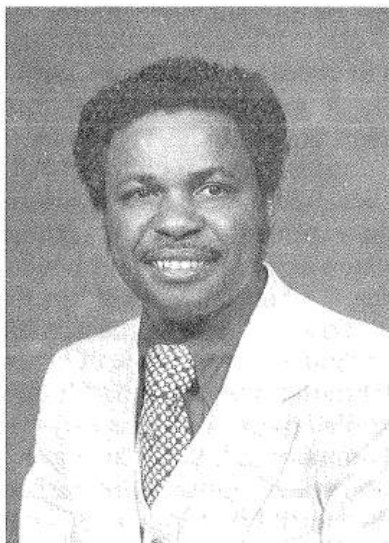
**Education:** Southwestern Christian College, Bachelor's Degree from Eastern New Mexico University in 1961, M.A. from the University of Texas at El Paso.

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Jack Evans has spoken on all the major lectureships of Christian colleges and in special seminars and meetings on other college campuses. He conducts meetings in churches of Christ throughout the nation, and has participated in a number of religious debates.



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“The best things in life are free” is a statement of truth which implies that the most qualitative needs of life cannot be purchased with money. And one of the best things in life is the home as God would have it. Thus, for one to say that he

has bought a home is for him to make an error. For one can purchase a house with money, but a home cannot be purchased with money. It must be built by God-controlled people on the spiritual foundation of His word.

God, Himself, is the architect of the Christian home. And His word provides man with the plans and specifications of the home that cannot be purchased with money. As architect, He provides His plans, specifications and supervisory services "free of charge." All He requires is that man follow these plans and specifications, and give Him total supervisory control. And He assures man that He will give him a place of love, joy, and peace that "passeth all understanding," which all the gold in Fort Knox cannot buy.

"Home," as the masses understand it, is a relative term, meaning "one's place of birth or place of residence." But the Christian understands "home" as a family unit that is controlled by God. This is why it is said that "it takes more than a hammer and nails to make a house a home." The God-controlled home is the basis of society. It was ordained and structured by God at the beginning of the human race, and has always served as the unifying force of the family unit and microcosm of the kingdom of God.

### **The "First Family"**

The first chapter in the first book of the Bible describes the first family — the crowning achievement of God's creation. "And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female, He created them" (Genesis 1:27). God then ordained marriage. He made the man and the woman to be perfectly compatible with one another — the perfect team — mentally, physically and spiritually. Adam, the first man, said regarding his wife, Eve, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man" (Genesis 2:23). This divine origin of marriage was confirmed

by Jesus Christ four thousand years later when He said, "But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh; so that they are no more two but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man separate" (Mark 10:6-9).

The Genesis record reveals that God instructed Adam and Eve as to what they were and were not to do in man's first residence, the Garden of Eden. Being the component parts of the first home, they were to obey all of God's commandments, and be responsible to Him for all that He placed in their care. The Genesis account states, "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, 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" (Genesis 1:28). It is obvious from this verse that Adam and Eve had a joint responsibility in the maintenance of the first home. Thus, togetherness was a primary trait of the first family. Together they were to keep God's commandments, have control over their home and replenish the earth. Neither one was complete without the other. Conversely, however, together they sinned against God and together they were driven from the Garden.

The failure to follow God's law in the first home resulted in spiritual death for Adam and Eve on the day that they sinned, and physical death for all their progeny. Hope for mankind was restored some four thousand years later by the coming of the second Adam, the Lord Jesus from heaven. And it is under His guidance, as shall be seen in this message later, that the Christian home is ruled and regulated.

One of the children of the first family, which had fallen because of sin, was the world's first "juvenile delinquent," Cain, who slew his brother, Abel. Had Adam and Eve con-

tinued in their obedience to God, sin would not have entered the world, and this violent crime of murder by their son would not have been committed. But the behavior of Cain is a typical example of the waywardness of some children when their parents fail to keep God's commands and to set for them the proper example for life.

### **Dispensational Home Life**

Although the first family failed to maintain the home as God would have it — in complete submission to Him — God, nevertheless, in each dispensation, continued to give His instructions for the regulation of home life to His people. The Patriarchal dispensation was built squarely on the home. This is why it is called the Patriarchal dispensation. The father, the patriarch of the family, was primarily responsible to God for the rearing of his family. It was his duty to see that his family remained faithful to the commandments of God. During this dispensation, God's communication with His people was done through the head of each family. And His dealings with Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are examples of this fact. In reference to Abraham, God said, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment . . ." (Genesis 18:19). Here we find a typical expression of God's expectation of the father in the family. Abraham was to "command his children and his household after him," and they were to "keep the way of the Lord . . ." Thus, the key to building and maintaining an unpurchasable home, as seen during the Patriarchal dispensation, is to remain faithful in keeping "the way of the Lord."

During the Mosaical dispensation, God continued to stress the importance of the family's knowing and keeping His commands. He told His people, the Israelites,

Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house and on thy gates (Deut. 6:4-9).

It is obvious from this passage that a family-knowledge of God was essential during the Mosaical or Jewish dispensation. Numerous instructions regarding family relations and parental responsibility are found throughout the books of the Old Testament. And in each instance, the responsibility is placed squarely upon the shoulders of the parents, with the father's having the primary responsibility for the spiritual atmosphere in the family unit.

A good example of one of God's men demonstrating his acceptance of his responsibility for setting the spiritual tone of his home, during the Jewish dispensation, is that of Joshua. Although Joshua was the spiritual leader of all Israel at the time, he realized that, in regard to serving God as a family unit, he could only speak for his household. After instructing the Israelites in what they should do toward God, and reminding them of His bountiful blessings bestowed upon them, Joshua said, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). The world needs more men like

Joshua; fathers who can speak decisively for themselves and their households regarding service to God. And this kind of home cannot be purchased with money; it is built on mutual concern for each other and service to the God of our being.

The Christian dispensation is described in the Bible as "the last times" (I Peter 1:20; 1 John 2:18). And it is during these times that the Christian home, which is the foundation of society, is needed more than ever in the history of the world. There seems to be, however, attempts by the evil forces of our own country to dismantle the home as God would have it. Some of these attempts are seen in the efforts of those who support the so-called Equal Rights Amendment, which is a misnomer, the women's liberation movement, and the Gay Liberation Movement. These efforts are diametrically opposed to the instructions of God for the home during the Christian dispensation. Let us give our attention to those God-breathed instructions.

God set up the structure of the human race and related that structure to His own divine being. Paul said, "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (I Corinthians 11:3). Paul further shows why the man is head of the woman in God's structure by saying, ". . . but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman for the man" (I Corinthians 11:8-9). Paul then emphasizes in verses 11 and 12 of that same chapter that the man and woman in the Lord recognize their mutual dependence on God and their own interdependence. And from this kind of union of a man and woman "in the Lord," the Christian home is born. In this home Christ is supreme. And all things that are done by members of the family unit, by word or deed, are done by the authority of the Lord Jesus, with the members giving thanks to the Father by Him.

**Christian Home Relationships**

The uniqueness of the Christian home is seen in the internal relationships of its members. Sealed together by a mutual love for Christ and each other, the members of the Christian home are "laborers together with God" in the building and maintenance of their family unit. At the head of the Christian home is the husband. The term "husband" is derived from the words "house band." The literal significance of this is that the husband is the supporting "band" surrounding the home — its stability depends upon him. God says that the husband is the head of the wife, just as Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 6:4). Thus God defines the role of the man in the Christian home as that of controller, supporter, nurturer, and admonisher. And the man assumes all these roles in the spirit of love for his family. The love of the husband for his wife in the Christian home is like that of Christ's love for His church (Eph. 5:25).

In the Christian home, the husband and wife are one — one flesh, one mind, one spirit. And this oneness cannot be paid for with money. It can only be developed through love. This is why Paul said that a man who loves his wife loves himself. He reinforces his statement by saying, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh" (Eph. 5:31). The oneness of two can only exist when there is a third party involved. And the third party necessary for the oneness of two is God. And God cannot be bought with money!

The woman in the Christian home realizes that her liberation and equal rights are in Christ Jesus. She, therefore, has no need to demonstrate physically for something that she already has. The woman in Christ knows that all freedom is within limits, and that her freedom, like that of the man's, is limited to her assigned role in the Christian home. She was not assigned to the role of head of the home. Her role is defined by God as that of being a helpmeet (suitable or

appropriate helper) to the man (Genesis 2:18). The Christian woman accepts her role and fulfills it. She is submissive and shows reverence to her husband because of her love for him and for God. She does not feel threatened or less esteemed by her husband's role; but protected and highly honored by it. She helps him to achieve what God wants done. And she realizes that when he achieves, she achieves; for she is a part of him. Someone has aptly stated: "God did not take woman from man's head that she might rule over him, nor yet from his feet that he might trample upon her. God took woman from man's side that she might be his companion and helper throughout life."

The Christian woman helps to show the difference in a house and a home. Paul commanded the older Christian women to teach the younger women how to develop their homes. He said, ". . . that they (older Christian women) teach the young women to be wise, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands . . ." (Titus 2:4-5). The maintenance of home life, then, as observed in this passage, is the chief role of the Christian woman. And she lovingly fulfills this role because of the pride that she takes in it and derives from it. Her creed is as follows:

I believe that the home is woman's natural environment.

I believe that there is as much art in making a barren house a glistening, comfortable home as there is in painting a picture or in writing a poem.

I believe there is dignity and beauty in service, but as a career for women, homemaking offers greater opportunities for leisure, for growth of mind and spirit, for exercise of the body, than any other occupation. I believe that one who has the intelligence to keep her

home in order is wise enough to be a force in any community.

It is my desire to be one of the countless women of the world to make life sweeter and better because I live and do my work well.

Adapted

Children are the extensions of the parents. And through God's instructions, parents of the Christian home know the value of training up their children "in the way that they should go." Thus children in the Christian home are not "raised," but are "reared" by their parents. To "raise" is to feed and let grow up; but to "rear" is to provide a sturdy foundation on which to build for the future. The rearing of children is indeed an awesome responsibility for Christian parents. For children are either trained by their parents toward a fixed goal and destiny, or they are trained by other forces in spite of the parents. Parents do not have the alternative of deciding whether their children's minds will be full or empty. They cannot be empty; they will be filled with something. Passions, television, movies, streets, radio, comic books — all of these contrive against a perpetual vacancy in the minds of children. Like a little octopus, their arms are reaching out either for food or poison. And what they receive back from their parents, whether food or poison, will be what they imbibe.

One of the great tragedies of today is that some parents themselves are so often without any moral and spiritual standards to offer for the guidance of their children. They have the sextant but no fixed star, the technique but no destiny, the material but no blueprints, the means but no ends. On the contrary, however, the Christian parents, starting at the appropriate time, seek to provide the moral and spiritual standards for the needs of their children. It is said

that Napoleon was once asked, "When does the education of a child begin?" He replied, "Twenty years before its birth — in the education of its parents."

I took a piece of plastic clay  
And gently fashioned it one day;  
And as my fingers pressed it still,  
It moved and yielded to my will.

I came again when days were passed;  
The bit of clay was hard at last.  
The form I gave it still it bore,  
But I could change that form no more.

I took a piece of living clay  
And gently formed it day by day,  
And molded with my power and art  
A young child's soft and yielding heart.

I came again when days were gone;  
It was a man I looked upon.  
He still that early impression wore,  
And I could change it nevermore.

Adapted

The apostle Paul said, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord . . ." (Eph. 6:1). Obedience of children, however, must be taught to them by their parents. As previously stated, fathers are instructed to bring their children up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4). The word "nurture" means to "nourish or give sustenance for promoting development or growth;" while "admonish" means to "counsel, caution, and warn." Christian parents, therefore, are told to not only counsel, caution, and warn

their children by word of mouth, but to also give them sustenance for their growth and development.

Since children cannot be isolated from the evils of society, Christian parents seek to insulate them against such evils by instilling in them the principles of God. Daniel Webster said, "If we work upon the sand, it will perish; if we work upon marble, time will efface it; if we rear great temples, they will crumble into the dust; but if we work upon immortal minds, if we imbue these minds with principles and a just fear of God, we engrave upon those tablets that which will brighten to all eternity."

A young man in the Bible by the name of Timothy is a good example of one whose mind was imbued with the principles and just fear of God so necessary to the perpetuation of a spiritual life. Paul, after reminding Timothy of the worsening conditions of the world, told him,

But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus (II Timothy 3:14-15).

Christian parents are "baby sitters for God." This means that Christian parents are responsible to God for their own children, since children are gifts from God. Therefore, we handle them carefully and prayerfully; for they are fragile. Alexander Pope said, "'Tis education that forms the common mind; as the twig is bent, the tree is inclined." Thus Christian parents are "twig-benders," pointing their children in the right direction — toward Jesus Christ. And this kind of parents, directions, and goal in life for children cannot be bought with money.

**The Best Things In Life Are Free**

Money can buy the good and better things of life. But the best things of life cannot be purchased with money. Money can buy sex, but it cannot buy love. Money can buy pleasure, but it cannot buy joy. Money can buy medicine, but it cannot buy health. Money can buy fear, but it cannot buy respect. Money can buy associates, but it cannot buy friends. And money can buy a house, but it cannot buy a home. For the best things of life are free! And these things are found in the Christian home.

The blessings of God are given to Christians freely. Paul says, "Now we have not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (I Cor. 2:12). Christians, therefore, have God's holy spirit dwelling within them. And the characteristics of this indwelling spirit are reflected in our lives by the things that God freely gives to us. These things are called the "fruit of the spirit." And they cannot be bought with money. They are developed from within. And it is these characteristics that distinguish the Christian's home from the sinner's house. Paul lists the fruit of the spirit, which is borne only when we walk in the spirit. He says,

But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,  
Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.  
And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lust.  
If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the spirit (Gal. 5:22-25).

The family that lives and walks according to the directions of God's holy spirit is fulfilling God's original expectation of the first family, Adam and Eve. The peace and tranquility of the first home in Eden were lost by the first Adam because of

disobedience (I Cor. 15:45-49; Rom. 5:17-21). But in the obedience of Jesus Christ, the second Adam, the possibility of having a God-centered home, with love, joy, and peace abounding, has been restored. And this kind of home is not on the real estate market for sale. For it cannot be bought with money; it's free! It was paid for by the blood of Christ when He died for His church.

# FAMILIES IN CRISIS

Kenneth G. Dye

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He is Executive Director of the Institute of Family Strengths,  
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A few months ago a father was summoned to the police station in a small middle west town where his youngest son was being charged with possession and sale of hard drugs. Walking out later, shaken and devastated, he said to his wife: "I've had it with life; the first half of it is ruined by your parents and the second half by your children."

This is as sad a commentary as we might hear on modern family life. It denotes tragic failure at the point of both initial relationships out of which human life comes. Agony seems to be on all sides. Children are unhappy with their parents. As one youngster stated: "They are too bossy and too busy. My father has an answer for everything, but he is never around to listen to my questions." And parents are unhappy with their children, finding them ungrateful and lacking in respect of authority.

It was her voice, tear-filled, shallow, almost a whisper, that immediately indicated the severity of the problem. "Ken, I need to talk to you . . . right now," she said. "What seems to be the problem?" I asked. "He left me," she went on to say, hardly able to speak a word, "He just walked out, and after twenty years. I never suspected that he was unhappy, he just left. We had made plans for our vacation next month and last week was such a joy. Today he just left a note while I was out shopping. He's gone and I don't know what to do."

They were such a beautiful couple. Always together, happy and struggling to maintain a healthy relationship — then he was gone. "How do you survive after your husband of 49 years dies?" she asked. "What will I do?"

These and many other instances I could describe illustrate the various developmental stages in which our church families find themselves, stages which too often they have never considered, thought about, planned for, or even discussed. This comes as a result of the American family undergoing substantial changes. A few years ago most families were

largely self-sufficient agricultural units. All family members — from young children on up — played an important productive role within the household. The children were essential to the survival of the family. They were economic assets. Today, as a result of many changes, children are no longer the economic assets they once were; instead, they are an enormous financial liability. However, couples continue to have children despite their economic cost.

Another major change in our family systems is that education has been removed from the home. Today, for a total of at least fourteen to sixteen years, the average child spends the better part of most weekdays away from home, in the presence of teachers and other children.

In addition to these possible circumstances you may fall into the category of between 35 and 55 years old, belonging to the "caught generation," caught in between the demands of youth and the expectations of the elderly. The respect you were taught to give your parents may have been denied you by your children. Because of the depression, you greatly appreciated what little your parents did for you, but your own children little appreciate the many things you do for them. As a child you were taught to accept and respect the authority of your parents, but as a parent your authority is openly defied and your way of life derided.

You learned early the dignity of work, the necessity of saving. Now you are caught in between the two generations. For the older generation you feel an obligation to supplement their dwindling resources. For the younger generation, your children in their late teens and early twenties, you may continue to provide at least the necessities of life, while they criticize your attitude toward the work that makes it possible for them to do their thing.

As a child your parents might have threatened to withdraw their love to keep you in line; now your child may use the same technique to keep you in line. As a child you were to be

seen and not heard, and now as a parent you may feel you are to be neither seen nor heard.

Parents in this age groups have never been able to relax. Having successfully applied scientific methods in the technological revolution, our country then applied scientific methods to the study of human relations generally and child rearing specifically. Middle class parents have been indoctrinated with the notion that unless they are obtuse, evil, or stupid it is possible to rear the perfect child. This places tremendous pressure on the parents, resulting in considerable feelings of guilt for failure to meet these expectations.

Confronted by children who insist on rights and privileges together with permissiveness, parents are doubly defeated by feelings of guilt when they should have been able to rear close-to-perfect children. Missing is the precious freedom to err.

The built-in expectation that adequate parents should rear problem-free children fosters the parental inability to ever quite give up and launch their children. Thus we see an increasing pattern of today's parents continuing to make sacrifices to support their married children in college, even if they have two or three children. Parents try to alleviate this guilt, compensating for their purported failure by continually helping their children. It would be far more reassuring to parents were they to accept the fact that one can never really know how youngsters will turn out. Some are models of behavior at 20, and a mess at 40. Others seem hopeless at 20 and are pillars of society at 35.

Interlaced with all of this is that parents have been indoctrinated to assume too much credit — hence, too much blame — concerning their influence upon their children. We forget that between the ages of six and eighteen, the child's wakeful time is spent in contact with or under the supposed supervision of adults other than his parents.

In the light of these shifts in families, marriage still seems

to be important to most of us, as 90 to 95% of Americans marry at least once. The average age of marriages has been dropping since the seventeenth century. Then, men were twenty-five to twenty-seven years old, women were twenty-one to twenty-two. In 1974, men were twenty-three and women were twenty-one. It is also interesting to note that marriages that last are lasting longer. And those lasting longer will have more time to themselves, as only about 18% of their married lives will be spent in raising young children, as compared to 54% a century ago.

Happiness in marriage seems to be greatest before children are born and after they leave home. From all the research done it does not seem to indicate that raising young children provides the greatest satisfaction in married life. Of course, divorce and remarriage continues to increase. In 1975 we went over the one million divorce mark. It is now estimated that four out of every ten children born in the 1970's will spend part of their childhood in a one parent family, usually with the mother as the head of the household.

In every direction we see our society affecting family life to the extent that families everywhere are hurting. With hope we look to our congregations for healthy, well-adjusted, successful families functioning and being prime models for following; but even there we too see our own families hurting. Why? In all of the world the one place we should see healthy families should be in the church, but even there the dilemma seems to be the same. Are our congregations contributing to some of the problems of crisis in today's families?

Undoubtedly, within our membership are families hurting from all types of problems, ranging from husband-wife relationships to guilt and sin. But in our highly organized, promotionally-oriented systems of today's churches, we are just too busy to notice. However, if a family becomes dysfunctional and it fragments before our very eyes, we are

alarmed, concerned, and wonder why. But without this trauma we seem not to care. If only we had taken time to simply view what was happening, we would have seen, but we were too busy to see, really see.

Through the years, as we in the church have become more aware of educational processes and the developmental process, we have segmented and organized into better learning age groups. Perhaps in doing this we have fragmented the family. Children of differing ages go in all directions from their parents and perhaps the only times parents and children are together is in the automobile on the way to worship.

Churches quite often give the impression that the family orientation is only for strong families and not dysfunctional ones. Once a family meets crises and reaches out for help, these same churches give the impression that they are not as acceptable as they once were. Divorce, premarital pregnancies, adolescent rebellion with drugs, and even known marriage problems cause them to be suspect. "If they were real Christians" or "if they were closer to the Lord these problems would not be there" we think; so immediately, at a time when they need the greatest help, they are rejected or ignored.

In our preaching, we have given people the impression that since Jesus is the answer to all our problems, upon our acceptance of Him our problems are then over. Having accepted Him as Savior we then expect the problems to dissolve; when they do not we start asking, why? Am I being punished for my mistakes? And like Job, we begin wondering why, when we have done our best. At the conclusion of the thought process quite often comes the decision that, "I was duped into this Christian thing. Before I became a Christian I had tremendous problems and still do. Jesus has made no difference."

In quite a number of churches we have not spoken to the family's needs. Remember, a church is nothing more than a

collection of families. We are quick to speak to the spiritual needs, but what about the practical and physical?

Jesus initiated His ministry with the practical aspects of His teaching.

You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles, Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Matthew 5:38-42

As a church, how do we exist within the confines of a society as ours — changing, moving — and still maintain the environment within which strong families can exist? A great many of the things we have been doing represent poor strategy. Strategy is the art of applying effort at the point where it will be most effective. Small armies have won great victories through sound strategy, and large armies have suffered calamitous defeats through unsound strategy.

The first principle of good family strategy is to concentrate on marriage. It is the foundation stone and you can not build a sound structure on an unsound foundation.

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain

or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church — for we are members of his body. 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and will be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the church. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Ephesians 5:22-23

Paul intentionally shifts from Christ — Church relationships to husband — wife relations. They are similar relationships. Therefore, our central focus is to be upon it. A weak relationship can only produce weakness in the remaining links of the family. As Peter stated:

Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

1 Peter 3:7

This relationship will have its effect upon our spiritual communication with God in prayer.

Next, for this better strategy to be implemented, we must begin looking at our own families first, then others. Often, our families in the church look to the needs of everyone else first and their own last. Our world desperately needs good models and these can come from our congregations. If this is

to happen, we must first strengthen our own. This is usually the more difficult, but most necessary. For too long our own have gone neglected. This trend must cease. We first focus on our own.

Another aspect to consider is that we must concentrate on the preventive rather than the remedial. The major exasperation of the minister or marriage counselor lies in the fact that by the time his help is sought, the relationship is often in an advanced state of deterioration. Invariably it turns out that the marriage has been in trouble for a long time, possibly for its entire duration. The passage of time has led to increasing alienation and the attrition of motivation to repair the relationship. By the time a counselor becomes involved, his utmost efforts often bring about very little improvement.

Already we have begun to improve on this through our marriage enrichment seminars, marriage encounters, effective parenting seminars, family symposiums and all the other family activities conducted in the church. However, for prevention to accomplish what we so desperately need, these family activities must not and cannot fall into the realm of just another "fad" in our congregations. We are projecting for future generations, not just immediate perplexities and frustrations. With a longitudinal approach we shall become more serious with regard to curriculum, training in our Christian colleges and preparing people to just live with one another.

In research done by Oklahoma State University within the state of Oklahoma on the concept of what makes strong families, the following results were identified which should help us prevent many of the current trends, if we begin to initiate the results in our own relationships.

Strong families express appreciation to each other often. They give sincere compliments and they let each other know "you are important to me."

Another outstanding characteristic of these strong fami-

lies is the great amount of time they spend together. They work and play together. Many indicated they enjoyed being together even if they were not doing anything in particular. This study found that these families intentionally cut down on the number of outside activities and involvements in order to minimize fragmentation of their family life.

Good communication was another essential. It was not just communication per se, but that so much of their communication was of a positive nature. Other research indicates that happily married couples more often discuss conflict situations, while unhappily married couples more frequently avoid discussing the issue.

These strong families were very religious. They not only worshipped together at some church, but did religious things together in their homes. Religion was more than just participating in activities.

A quality which consistently appeared in these families was commitment. They were committed to helping and making each other happy. Their actions were geared toward promoting each other's welfare.

I once heard a story about a lad who lived so far out in the country that when he was twelve years old he had never seen a real live circus. Thus you can imagine his excitement when a poster went up at the schoolhouse one day that the traveling Ringling Brothers Circus was coming to a nearby town the next Saturday. He could not wait to get home to tell his family the good news, and then came the inevitable question: "Daddy, can I go?" The family was relatively poor and did not have much money for this kind of experience, and yet they sensed how important this was to the lad, and so the father said: "All right, I'll strike a bargain with you. If you will get your Saturday chores done ahead of time, I will see to it that you have the money to go to the circus." Come Saturday morning, all the work was finished and the little boy stood expectantly by the breakfast table dressed in his

Sunday best. His father reached in his overalls and pulled out a dollar bill — the largest amount of money this lad had ever had at one time in all his life. He was instructed to be careful and sent on his way. He ran at a trot the whole distance from his farm home to the town, so excited was he by the prospect that lay ahead. And as soon as he got to the outskirts of the village he found crowds lining both sides of the street. He worked his way through to where he could see what was happening, and lo and behold, coming up at a distance was an incredible spectacle — the circus parade. As it came by where the little boy was standing, he could hardly believe his eyes. Here were the clowns, the bands, the cages with the various animals, and as each part of the parade passes by he was more and more enthralled. Eventually, the tail end of the parade came in sight. Bringing up the rear traditionally was an old clown with floppy pants, droopy eyes, and rubber nose, and as this one moved past where the little boy was standing, an unusual thing took place. The little boy reached in his pocket, got out his precious dollar bill, gave it to the clown and turned around and went home. What had happened? He thought he had seen the circus when he had only seen the parade!

# FATHERPOWER

Gary Beauchamp

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**Education:** B.A. and M.S. — Abilene Christian University. He has done doctoral studies at Baylor University.

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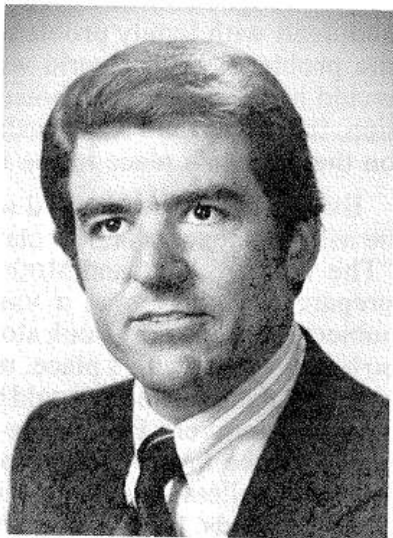
**Ministry:** Gary has held over 200 gospel meetings in 30 states and has appeared as a featured lecturer on 18 college lecture programs.

**Other Fields of Special Interests:** (travel; publications; professional and civic work)

**Author:** *God Loves the Single, Too; Instilling Spiritual Concepts in Youth*; he is also a regular contributor to 20TH CENTURY CHRISTIAN, POWER FOR TODAY and GOSPEL ADVOCATE.

Gary has been active in community affairs, having served in the past as president of Rotary, director of the Ranger and Waco Junior Chambers of Commerce, City Commissioner, and Head of the Community Development Council.

He has been a weekly radio and television speaker for the past 15 years.



I have a confession to make . . . to my wife . . . to the congregations on whom I teathed as an upstart preacher, full of knowledge but little experience. In those years I observed and dealt with family problems from one perspective — all the problems in the world would be solved if the women would just “submit.” To bolster and confirm my ideal solution, there was (and is) a startling emphasis in religious print on the woman’s place in the home, church, and society.

Everywhere I was invited to hold a meeting, I would also be asked to teach a ladies’ class on the “Woman’s Role” or “The Woman, Wife and Mother.” It was a simple lesson to prepare, for there was a vast wealth of material on the subject. Entering any book store I would encounter thirty or so books on the wife’s place, teaching her how to be submissive and obedient so she could be assured her husband would love her forever. By chance there *might* be in the same section three or four books to husbands. They were generally poor sellers, except to the wives who bought them for their husbands. One or more of these three would be “How to Make Your Wife Be the Proper Kind of Companion.”

This strong emphasis on the woman’s role came about partially because it appeared the majority of Christians who were concerned about improving the well-being of the home were women, and the men were content to have it so.

As a primary promoter of this persuasion, I acknowledge my part and do so confess my lack of perspective.

Through research, counseling, and observing I am beginning to believe that the problem in the home, the church, and the society is *not* just rebellious women; but is also and perhaps mostly renegade husbands and fathers.

In *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, Rousas J. Rushdoony says this about the abdication of male leadership in the home:

Today men, having abdicated extensively their masculinity, are less concerned with order and more with gratification. As a result, women, because their security and that of their children is at stake, become involved with the problem of social decay and law and order . . . . Matriarchal power then develops as a substitute for a normal law-order.

The . . . . trend towards a matriarchal society is in evidence in Western culture today. It should be stressed that contrary to popular opinion, a matriarchal society is not a society in which women rule, but rather a society in which men fail to exercise their dominion, so that women are faced with a double responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

Rushdoony in essence is saying that women's liberation is a product of masculine decline and to that statement, I must agree.

The greatest single failure of any man is when a woman, at the marriage altar, lays her life down at his feet and he doesn't have enough understanding or spirituality to pick it up. It lies there for years and finally in frustration, confusion, and hurt, she picks up her own life and begins to go her own way. Then he can't lead her anymore and in his insensitivity and ignorance yells, "You are a rebel, woman!" (I heard about a man who told his wife she was a rebel and then didn't see her for two weeks. After two weeks he could see her a little out of one eye!)

The effects of renegade fathers is evident in our generation. Let us place this in a larger context of what is happening in our world today. The failure of fathers is causing a battle against the Kingdom of God and this battle is raging on four fronts:

1. *The Social Front*. Secular society is trying to move us toward an egalitarian society. I am talking about "Equal Rights" that allow a worker to say to his boss, "I feel like

drinking coffee rather than working, and if you try to fire me, I'll call the American Civil Liberties Union; or the wife who draws up a marriage contract setting Mondays-Wednesdays-Fridays as her day to care for the children and clean house, and Tuesdays-Thursdays-Saturdays for the husband to do these duties, and alternate Sundays; or the homosexual demanding legitimacy as a couple or a parent. These are representatives of a spirit that is destroying respect and responsibility for the sake of "rights."

2. *Hostility to All Authority*. There is a general disrespect and "pulling down" of any man who is in authority, whether a teacher, a policeman, a senator, a president, or a man of God.

3. *The Inadequate or Absentee Male*. There seems to be a concerted, determined attack on maleness, and particularly fatherhood. Have you noticed how many television programs are about homosexuality and one-parent families? Commercials especially represent the man as an idiotic moron who can't remember to take his vitamins, doesn't know what to wear, doesn't know what to wash his hair with, or what to take for a backache. He needs his wife and children to mother him and take care of him so he can cope with life. The message is clear: we don't have real men, real fathers anymore.

4. *Future of Faith*. A child develops his image of God and authority from the father. If the father can be eliminated from a child's life as a strong formative force, do you realize what that means to the potential of a child's relationship with the Lord? It lays the foundation for a generation of young people who will have no accurate image or respect for God. If this trend is to continue we could be enjoying the last generation of peace, democracy, freedom, and faith.

In the times of the ancient Old Testament the world was a degenerate mess. Cults, perversion, female goddesses, child sacrifice, and all kinds of abominations ran wild. It was a

dangerous time. Do you remember what God did to clean it up? He called a father. He said, "Abram!" (That means Exalted Father.) "Get out of your father's house into a land that I will show you. I am going to make you a channel of blessing for all the earth. I am going to make you a father to many nations" (Gen. 12:1-3, 17:1-6). Abraham (Father of a Multitude) was a strong leader who knew how to father his family. His children changed the course of history not only in the Middle East, but in the whole world. His sonship passed through Isaac to David to our Lord Jesus.

God's answer for the world 3500 years ago is the same as it is for the leadership crisis in the world today — FATHERS! The only way we can win the battle against God's Kingdom is to let God's love and fatherhood come into this world — through men who will dare to rule and father.

It is no accident that the Messianic passage in Isaiah 9:6 refers to the Lord Jesus as a Son upon whose shoulders the government would rest, and as the "Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the *Everlasting Father*." Clearly, the government on His shoulders and the peace of His Kingdom were to be linked with an everlasting fatherhood.

To understand what fatherhood is, there's no better place to look than Jesus and His Father. Jesus was the Son, but He came to reveal the Father. He said, "I and the Father are one." He said, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father," because Jesus clearly revealed that the source of His life was the Father. Fatherhood is rooted in the very nature of God. We are told to pray to Him as, "Our Father." When God is properly taught, seen, and experienced as a Father, we have a pattern for all leadership. God governs His family as a Father. He sets the human family on the earth as His governmental seat of authority, with the Father as its head. God is a Father who rules through fathers.

Unfortunately this concept of the family is foreign. We are undone by men who are by nature either passive and irre-

sponsible or domineering and insensitive in their leadership in their homes. This was not the pattern initiated or programmed by God.

The line of authority for the man of God was rooted in the family, went to the clan, then the tribe and then to the nation. *All* authority came out of the father. This enabled the Jewish nation to maintain its identity and strength through two millennia of persecution. It's the "Papa" who held not only families together, but a whole religion.

### Home—Training Ground for Leadership

God's fatherpower was forcible as it was seen in the Old Testament. In the New Testament it takes on an added dimension of leadership. This is what the New Testament says to men who want to be leaders (Elders, Deacons, Ministers) in the church:

He must be one who manages his own household well keeping his children under control with dignity. But if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God? (I Tim. 3:4-5)

We avidly attend seminars, workshops, and lectureships on leadership techniques, when one of the vital things any man aspiring to leadership needs to learn is that he is *married to his education*. The Word of God is clear: all valid leadership in the church must come out of a solid, secure home, and from a father who knows how to function in his fatherhood.

Leadership in the church should not begin with "professional ministers." We have had enough cold, staid "professionals." Do you know where God trains his leaders? At home! My seminary is Deanna, Greg, Betsy, and Katie. The Lord says, "If you want to know whether you've got what it

takes to lead any of my people, find out if you can bring peace and order to your own kingdom."

Almost without exception, every adjustment in my character and life preparing me to lead and be something to God's people came through my learning to be a husband to my wife and a father to my three children. If I can't do it in my own home I've got no business teaching others how to do it. I don't want to be preached to about "How to . . ." anything by men who have gained certain personal success but have lost their children, any more than I want my heart operated on by a doctor who flunked medical school. If we have strong fathers in the home, we will have strong leaders in the church.

Here is a New Testament concept we have overlooked. Paul was a father to Timothy — he raised him in the Lord. Part of the weakness of the church has been the absence of real men who have the authority and courage to really father people in the Lord. I have two brethren for whom I feel a keen responsibility as that of a "father" in the Lord. One is a rising young preacher, Ron White in Oklahoma. I had the privilege of baptizing Ronnie, December 1971, and of watching him grow and mature as a Christian toward the desire of preaching. The thrill of Ron preaching the Gospel is one of the great satisfactions I have in the Lord's work. Another brother is one of my associates, Jim Miller, who came to our staff six years ago and has grown by tremendous strides every year that we have worked together. Do I feel responsibility for these men? Yes, like a father, and I feel a father's joy in watching their accomplishments. I believe the church needs to be called upon to get some "Fatherpower." We need to fill a vacuum in the lives of many "young" Christians who never received the strength, the impartation, the identity as sons of God from a natural father. What a concept if the church could realize the potential power in future leaders if some mature Christian adopts an aspiring leader in the church to encourage, to bolster, and to guide.<sup>2</sup>

### Qualities of Fathering

Whether the men of today accept the fathering of newborn babes, or a young Christian in the faith, there are six qualities of fathering that have been lost or under-developed in many husbands and fathers today. These can be regained or developed if a man will embrace his God-given role and learn what it means to exercise his Fatherpower.

1. *Loyalty*. One of the first things a father learns is to be faithful to his covenants and commitments, even when it is difficult. He learns to be loyal to the marriage covenant: to cherish and love his wife, even when she seems impossible to live with. He has a covenant with his children and learns how to be faithful even when the kids are running in all directions.

Do you know what brought the prodigal home? A father who knew how to be faithful to a covenant with his son. When that kid came to the end of the road, he remembered the place waiting for him in his father's house. He understood the covenant faithfulness of his father.

2. *Communication*. Fathers learn to hear and receive what his family has to say. He is not insecure when his wife disagrees, he hears her out. He doesn't blow up when his children want to tell him where he's wrong, he listens and understands. He learns to hear hurt when anger is expressed; he hears the frustration of growing up behind the hysteria of a cheerleader. He hears the cry for love in his son's seeming indifference and rebellion. As an effective father then he responds to the needs he perceives in his family's conversation.

3. *Displaying Strength with Wisdom*. Today's father must be a master at handling rejection and controlling manipulation. When his wife speaks her mind, he doesn't sulk in a corner. He tries to understand her feelings, what prompted them, and helps her work through this mounting crisis with patience and kindness.

When the child says, "I'm running away from home 'cause you won't let me watch TV!" father knows he has earned the right as a loving father to judge what is best for that child and is not threatened, nor bends to pacify defiant behavior.

When the daughter coos, "Daddy, you're going to buy me that new sweater, aren't you?" he replies, "No, dear, I said we weren't buying any more clothes this month."

Fathers know about manipulation and rejection and learn to handle it. That is a valuable lesson to learn at home — and in leading a congregation of people.<sup>3</sup>

4. *Vertical Authority and One Will.* A father can rule his home by the Will of God and allow His authority to be the reigning guide of every decision. Over the years I have seen many families whose children had an extra special quality of kindness, respect, and love, and have asked the parents in each case — how? In every home God was the vertical authority of the home and the father on earth was a man of faith who stood for what he knew to be truth and right. He didn't need to threaten, yell, coerce, or manipulate his family. They wanted to follow that kind of leadership. The children were a beautiful and controlled product of that kind of fathering.

5. *Keeping Priorities in Balance.* There is nothing like a growing active family to teach you the pain and pressure of priorities. At 7:45 on a critical night of Monday Night Football, you wife just had a study with a neighbor lady and she needs to talk about it. Priorities!

Your son says, "Dad, you've got to be there Friday night." He may get to play one quarter or two plays of the game, and you have an Elder's meeting. Priorities!

"Priorities" means my family comes ahead of sports, hobbies, friends, work, ministry, counseling and the house. My family is my most important ministry, and while others can fill my place in a golfing foursome, or even in the pulpit, no one can fill my place with my children and my wife in my

family. Learning to hold a proper balance will stretch a leader.

6. *Maturity in Crisis*. I am convinced this is when God decided to create one of each sex. Every crisis needs two elements present, emotional concern and mature decision-making. The two are not usually found compatible in the same body. When the situations suddenly arise:

“Dad, the toilet is running over.”

“Honey, the stove is on fire.”

“Daddy, the dog is in with the baby chicks.”

This is a job for Superdad! These situations may seem comical but they are a real part of God’s training of a man in leadership. Whether in the home or in the church a man will meet crises which require mature, calm, logical, diplomatic leading of God’s people.

### **Fatherpower**

When we see men meeting the challenge God has given them to live as Fathers, we will see strategic effects in the home and in the church.

First, Fatherpower will foot us in reality and permit us to mature in safety. Almost two decades ago child experts were telling us that children needed to be raised free, uninhibited, being able to let it all hang out when they needed a release. It created the age of the “Hippie” — years of rebellion and riot that ended in destruction of many institutions and death for many young lives.

As a result, today’s experts are talking more about children needing to grow up with some solid boundaries. God told this to fathers centuries ago.

When I was a son with my father, tender, the only one in the sight of my mother, he taught me, and said to me, “Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments and live.” (Prov. 4:3-4).

Children need to experiment and learn to think with a receptive, creative mind, but they also need "commands to live," to keep them from killing themselves and destroying other lives. That's a father's job.

I once read a letter from a father to a daughter in which he said, "I loved you enough to tell you 'No' when I knew at that moment you would hate me for it." Statement of love! Statement of Fathering!

I remember many times walking up and down the street at night with Katie. She was a croupy baby, and every cough went into her throat. The doctor recommended that when she really became desperate for a breath, to carry her outside and walk with her in the nighttime air. The cool humidity would relax her throat and allow her to breath again. One time when she could breath once again and relaxed in my arms, she looked up in my face and said, "You won't let me go, will you, Daddy?" Mothers have special privileges of holding, petting, and sympathizing. They get to say prayers at night and read bed-time stories; but it is the wonderful claim of Fathers to be the rock, the reality, the safety that allows the family to grow strong and, eventually, confidently leave to establish new homes.

Secondly, Fatherpower brings belonging and identity.

One summer while on vacation we took the family to Washington D.C. Deanna took the children into all the Smithsonian Buildings and I generally sat and watched the people. Unaware they were being observed, they were displaying some amazing facets of family life. After I had observed many frustrated, tired, and over-heated problems, one man capped up much of what I was seeing. Son was walking rapidly ahead of Father, who was walking rapidly ahead of Mother. Son had hands jammed into his pockets trying to ignore Dad, who was saying, "You stupid Klutz! Why don't you grow up?" "Klutz!" Identity. We as fathers give that to our children. It alarms me as a father to know the

degree to which homosexuals are produced by weak, insipid male figures, dominated fathers.<sup>4</sup>

We produce identity. What image are you giving your children?

When Jesus came to a critical place in His ministry, the Father wanted to say something to His Son that was vital and meaningful. It's interesting to me that though Jesus was the Son of God, He needed the approval of His Father. And the Father knew how important it was for the Son to hear Him confirm their relationship from heaven. Three times He said, "This is My Beloved Son" (Matt. 3:17; Matt. 17:5; John 12:28).

You might say that was for the multitudes. It was, partially. But even more I believe that when God said those words, something leaped up in Jesus and said, "Hallelujah, Father! I'm glad You know Me, and I'm glad You let Me know that I've pleased You." God said it for Jesus' benefit, because He knows how necessary approval is to a person.

Haven't we all faced a time in walking with God when we desperately needed someone to believe in us? At such times of need, it's a part of a father's role and responsibility to provide the encouragement and approval we all need. As fathers, it's vital for us to know when to give approval, when to give identity, when to let someone know, "I'm pleased with you. This produces confident, strong individuals who can handle life's problems with security and a strong faith in self. This identity factor is extremely critical in today's society of escapism: drugs, drink, divorces.<sup>5</sup>

Where identity has been established and security has come because of a father's ministry and a father's relationship, it will stand the test. It will carry us through even when we may feel there is no redeeming purpose to our dilemma. Jesus' last words indicate that even in the midst of His darkest hour when He felt completely forsaken, He had confidence in what He had known of His Father, for He said,

"Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit . . ." (Luke 23:46).

Third, Fatherpower permits authority to be workable.

God administrates His government through His family, His body. We learn to obey Him by obeying our own father. How similar our responses to father and to Father.

People today are scared of authority because it is used often by people who aren't fathers and don't have a father's heart. That must have been the reason that God, as a Father, won't let anyone lead His people until they have proven they can manage their own household. Authority in the hand of a man who is a good father is not frightening or dangerous. Too often, however, we have seen the church led by men who use their authority as a whip, who serve with iron, not love. The Power is there, the ingredient missing is the Father.

The other side of this coin is the father who has his role confused and will not accept the authority. In counseling, this is looming as a major problem in marriages. The husband is feminine in his leadership in the home. I do not mean gay or homosexual. I mean their emotions, reactions, and perspective is that like a woman. Essentially, then, there are two women trying to live together and it doesn't work.

Emotionally, men who are feminized always need to be approved by those they are leading. A man makes people respectful when he leads, but he doesn't play the middle or tiptoe through the tulips to get approval. When I see a man turn to his wife and say, "Well, what shall we do, Honey?" after she has sat and yelled at him for an hour, I want to say, "For Jesus' sake, man, pick up the responsibility yourself." Lord, make us men!

It is said of Boswell, the famous biographer of Samuel Johnson, that he often referred to a special day in his childhood when his father took him fishing. The day was fixed in his adult mind, and he often reflected upon many of the things his father had taught him in the course of their fishing

experience together. After having heard of that particular excursion so often, it occurred to someone much later to check the journal that Boswell's father kept and determine what had been said about the fishing trip from the parental perspective. Turning to that date, the reader found only one sentence entered: "Gone fishing today with my son; a day wasted."

Fathers, there are no wasted days. We cannot afford the luxury of wasting the precious few years we are given as a pure gift of time from God with the precious lives which have been placed into our hands to mold, shape, and eventually return to Him.

Fatherpower — a gift from God, the Eternal Father. A training ground equipping us for the lofty responsibility of serving God's people, leading His children forward in a world that is crying for help to cure its societal ills. And as an answer to this cry God cries, "Fathers . . . ."

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Rushdoony, John Rousas, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (The Craig Press, 1973), p. 203.

<sup>2</sup>Mumford, Bob. "Fatherpower," *New Wine*, April, 1978, pp. 6,7.

<sup>3</sup>Andelin, Aubrey. *Man of Steel and Velvet* (Pacific Press, 1972).

<sup>4</sup>Billar, Henry B. *Father, Child, and Sex Role* (D.C. Heath and Company, 1971).

<sup>5</sup>Dobson, Dr. James. *Hide or Seek* (Fleming H. Revell Company, 1971.) pp. 94-102.

# BRIDGING THE GENERATION GAP

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Someone has written, "Our youths love luxury. They have bad manners and contempt for authority. They show disrespect for their elders. They love to chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants not the servants of their household. They no longer rise when their elders enter the room. They contradict their parents. Chatter before company. Gobble up their food and tyrannize their teachers."

Do you know who wrote that? Socrates, 400 years before Christ.

So when we talk about the generation gap, we're talking about something that has been around a long, long time. It's nothing new and yet it's still with us. There has always been a generation gap of one degree or another.

The specific term, "generation gap" is a cute one that was coined by the advertising media and the magazine writers to give us a handle to get at something that is a common experience in most of our homes.

The use of the phrase was at its peak in the 60's when the angry young rebels were the ones who served as models for a distressingly high number of teenagers in our society. But we can be thankful that after a decade of being branded as self-centered, rebellious, and irresponsible, American young people are now turning back to traditional values in huge numbers. They are setting high standards for themselves and for millions who are their peers. All across the country, teenagers are once again applying themselves to hard work in schools and jobs, helping others and generally trying to improve conditions around them. From the widespread youth rebellions that seemed to threaten the survival of many traditional American values just five or six years ago, today's young people seem to have made almost a complete about-face.<sup>1</sup> They have learned from that. Today's

youth is different from his counterpart of a decade ago.

We can be thankful that the generations are closer together now than they were in 1969 when Columbia Broadcasting System published its extensive survey of college students which was significantly entitled "Generations Apart." But there will always be some kind of generation gap, and learning how to bridge that gap as Christian parents and teenagers is what we want to talk about.

A look at the Bible will verify the fact that there has always been a gap between generations. Consider, for example, the relationship between David and Saul in the Old Testament. David represents the best of what a young person can be: respectful of older people, reverent, obedient to God, brave, and loyal. Saul, the "establishment," represents the worst that older people can become. He was paranoid, suspicious, repressive, jealous, murderous, and eventually, self-destructive. He alienated the loyal David, the one who could have helped him the most with the people, slew the priesthood, became estranged from Samuel the priest, and was rejected by God. There was a true generation gap between Saul and David. David's unswerving loyalty and constant respect of Saul could not bridge that gap.

The picture is turned around in the relationship of David and Absalom. David is now the "establishment"; Absalom, his son, is "youth." Absalom is full of vanity. He has no understanding of his father's love for him. Absalom is a rebel; he tries to take his father's kingdom away from him. In battle with David's forces, Absalom is killed as he hangs in a tree. When the messenger comes to report victory of David's troops, David has no interest in regaining the kingdom, in the victory of the soldiers, or in the security of his own life. He asks only, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" When the messenger tells David that Absalom is dead, David cries, "Oh my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, oh Absalom, my son, my son!" (II

Sam. 18:33). David represents the best that older people have to give to the young. Absalom represents the worst that is sometimes characteristic of the young.<sup>2</sup>

The generation gap is also clear in the story Jesus tells of the prodigal son who asks for his part of the inheritance because he was "cutting out," leaving home. He had all he could take of his father and his brother. I think there must have been some kind of generation gap when Cain killed Abel, for neither Cain nor Abel nor Adam and Eve understood exactly how to reach out and love each other in that situation.

So some kind of generation gap seems to be inevitable. What can we do, as Christians, to keep that gap manageable and to keep it from getting out of control and blasting our families apart? I would like to suggest six steps that, hopefully, will help.

Suggestion No.1 — We can bridge the generation gap by communicating.

In the past few years I've had teenagers tell me a lot of things that they really wanted to tell their parents, but felt they couldn't. In these same years, I've had parents tell me a lot of things they really wanted to be able to tell their teenagers, but felt that they couldn't. We don't have much effective communication going on between parent and teenager. Real communication involves both listening and talking. We must talk to our teenagers, but we must also be willing to listen as they talk to us. Many teenagers find it difficult to talk to their parents. Perhaps the communication gap is as much a fault of the parents as it is of the teenager.

One study showed that on a nationwide average the American husband over 35 years of age spends on the average only seven minutes per day communicating with his children.<sup>3</sup> This does not count the time spent in watching television or in doing other family endeavors, but simply the time that a father spends talking to his son or his daughter

and listening to them as they talk with him. Seven minutes per day. It's no wonder we've got a communication problem. We don't have any communication. You just can't build a stable family relationship on seven minutes a day. That simply is an impossibility.

Typical comments of teenagers that I've heard are these, most of which have come from those in the church. "How can I tell my father my problems? He brings home work every evening." Or, "Dad's not the type who sits and listens. He sits and tells you how it is." Or this one, "We rarely discuss anything important at home. We used to talk at dinner, but now that's out. Dad bought a portable television and put it in the dining room." Or this one, "I can't ask my mother any questions about sex because right away she fires back, 'What do you want to know for?'"

Now, parents, if we're going to improve the situation with our teenagers, the solid place to begin is in our own families, by encouraging our young people to talk freely about the problems that confront them. When subjects like sex, morality, drugs, and religion come up, the parent may become tongue-tied and self-conscious, but that parent must realize that these are vital, significant, overriding concerns to their teenagers which deserve communication on a one to one level. Without that type of bedrock communication, we will continue to grow generations apart.

We parents may have to learn a new vocabulary to be able to understand what our teenagers are saying. Parents, how many of these words do you know the meaning of: Lifestyle, plastic people, concrete people, pad, rap, cool, heavy truck, boogie, jelly head, cop-out, alienation, tuned-in, uptight. If you don't know the meaning of these words, go home and ask your teenagers what they mean and they'll tell you. These teenagers know these words and they're using them in their communication and we need to know their meaning,

because effective communication begins with careful listening.

A Jacksonville, Florida high school student summed up his impressions of the current mood of society when he said succinctly, "Everyone is yelling, but nobody's listening."

There's no way for us to understand our youth without listening carefully to what they are saying. And we parents need to listen behind the words for the real meanings. A word is not defined just by the dictionary alone. It's defined by the feelings and the emotions behind it. Whenever your child chooses to open his soul and pour out his deepest innermost feelings to you, thank God for that; you're a fortunate parent. If he doesn't talk tonight, that's alright. He may talk tomorrow night or Friday night or maybe not at all. But, if he does talk, listen! Listen to the feelings behind the words as well as to the words themselves. Remember that what he wants is not confrontation, but communication, at a very deep level. To answer the issues is not enough. Listen behind those words to the feelings involved and you'll hear what is really being said.

The best advice is given by James when he says: "Don't ever forget that it is best to listen much, speak little and not become angry" (James 1:19). Listening is hard, but it's not nearly so hard as picking up the pieces of broken family dreams. If you would be a listener, start early with your children, but if it's too late for that, just start.

Suggestion No. 2 — We can bridge the generation gap by loving.

In I Peter 4:8, Peter says, "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers a multitude of sins." The apostle Paul echoes the same sentiment in Ephesians 4:2: "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." Faults look different in those whom we love because we look on them in a different light. In a context of love a depth of communication is possible that is never

possible in a spirit of hostility. We just can't get through. When parents and young people love each other the generation gap will never be severe.

Some of us need to go home and forget all about the little nitpicking stuff that we've got all involved in and just start loving each other. Our children are going to get our attention one way or the other. If they don't get our attention through our love, they're going to get it by stealing a car or by getting high on drugs or by doing something else that demands our attention. Some very young children would rather be spanked than simply ignored. This problem and concept continues right on into adolescence and into the teenage years. I'm not saying that loving will solve all of your problems, but I am saying that by the grace of God it will get your foot in the door.

On the other side of that coin, teenagers, one thing your parents are saying to you is, "Why can't my children love me for what I am rather than what I can give them. Why can't they just accept me, as out-of-step and as out-of-date as I am." Now, of course, your parents are more articulate. They don't say it just like that. Here's where you need to listen behind the words for the feelings. They usually talk about honoring your father and mother and obeying your parents. But this is really what they are saying.

Love sometimes comes out in funny ways. Love sometimes comes out in strong restrictions because your parents don't want you to get hurt. Love can also come out with too much advice. Your parents are afraid that you're not hearing them and so they say it over and over and over until you think you're going to climb the wall. But that's just an expression of their love for you. What they're really trying to say is, "We love you."

Love can make one possessive. It is difficult for that one who bore you in her body and who fed you your first meal and who took care of your every need to see you develop into

one with a brain and a mind of your own and to see you begin to exercise your judgment in opposition to hers. That one who protected you from the neighbor's dog and the hot stove and came running to you in the middle of the night during an electrical storm because you were crying — this same one is not going to let you get into some hot, souped-up automobile and dash yourself to bits. It just can't work that way because they love you too much for that. You may be thinking that they're putting you in a straight-jacket, but the truth is that they love you too much to let you destroy yourself. They want you to have your experiences, but they want you to have the right kind of experiences.

One father tells of his frustration relating to his teenage son's attitude. The boy was making a case for the experimental use of sex and drugs and several other things. The father was, of course, protesting vigorously. But the clincher came when the boy said this, "Well if any of us messes up, we can just go and pay a couple of trips to the psychiatrist and we'll be alright again. If the girl gets pregnant, she can have an abortion or adopt out the baby. We'll take care of that."

Now what that father was afraid of was that this young man would ruin his life or the life of someone else before he got mature enough to see how naive and silly those types of arguments are. Every minister of the gospel and a host of elders can point to a score of people who have completely ruined their lives by that type of logic. The human body is something that's a great deal more intricate than a television set and when it goes on the blink you don't get it repaired by putting it in the shop over the weekend. It's just not that simple. A life that's once messed up with this type of thing will probably never really be what it could otherwise be. It can be overcome to a large degree through the help of God and His cleansing grace and His forgiveness and the right type of Christian nurturing from that point on, but the damage is still done.

Young people, what your parents are really trying to say to you is, "We love you." Strangely enough that's really what you're wanting to hear, yet, you haven't stopped long enough to really hear it. It's hard to grow up, but it's harder to watch your children grow up.

So, young people, in your home there's a couple of folk, a little square, maybe gray, maybe balding, but who love you a great deal. There's one thing that would make them glow inside more than anything else that you could do and that is for you just to come up and say three little words, "I love you." You don't have to say, "I thank you." You don't need to say, "I love you, but . . ." Or, "I love you, if . . ." Just leave off all that and just say, "I love you." That'll do them more good than anything else that you could do. Then you and your parents can begin to build on this foundation. I guarantee that exciting things will begin to happen.

Suggestion No. 3 — We can bridge the generation gap by trying to understand.

The old Indian was right when he asserted that we have no right to criticize another man until we've walked 14 days in his moccasins.

Frankly, if I were offered the opportunity right now to be eighteen years of age again, I wouldn't take it. I simply don't want to go through that type of experience again. I especially don't want to go through it in a world as different as our world is from what the world was when I was eighteen. The frightening prospect of having to do all of that over again in this type of new world is simply more than I wish to face. Today's teenagers face a world that's been shaped by space-ships, and hydrogen bombs, bursting technology, and exploding population. Mix into all of that the surging social unrest, the break down of our cities, the corruption of the ecology, the revolution in moral and spiritual standards, and you have something to tally unlike any type of world that we've ever been exposed to before. Both generations have

been young. But our generation has never been young in a world like theirs. We who are older must really try to understand what it's like.

On the other hand, teenagers, your parents want desperately to be understood. They think sometimes you don't really understand them. While teenagers are going around saying, "My parents don't understand me," parents are saying, "My children don't understand me." We've got our gap.

Several years ago, an article written by a Wisconsin minister, John Bouquet, entitled "How To Raise Your Parents,"<sup>4</sup> began to make the rounds. The author suggested six steps for teenagers trying to cope with their parents. Here's his six steps:

1. Don't be afraid to speak their language. Try to use strange sounding phrases like, "I'll help you with the dishes," and "yes."

2. Try to understand their music. Play Glenn Miller's "Moonlight Serenade" on the stereo until you are accustomed to the sound.

3. Be patient with the underachiever. When you catch your dieting mom sneaking salted peanuts, don't show your disapproval. Tell her you like fat mamas.

4. Encourage your parents to talk about their problems. Try to keep in mind that to them things like earning a living and paying off the mortgage seem to be important.

5. Be tolerant of their appearance. When your dad gets a haircut, don't feel personally humiliated. Remember it's important to him to look like his peers.

6. Most important of all, if they do something that you consider wrong, let them know it's their behavior you dislike and not themselves.

Remember parents need to feel that they are loved.

Suggestion No. 4 — We can bridge the generation gap by showing respect.

I'm convinced that we're seeing the most remarkable gen-

eration of young people in all of human history coming into maturity. The idealism and the zeal that this group of young people have will lead them to accomplish things that our generation did not even dream were attainable. Today's youth, nonetheless, is undoubtedly the most adult youth in history. The stepped-up educational pace grows young people older at a speed that often overtakes the adult generation. In facing a problem like this the scriptures once again give some great advice. There's a great balance in the scriptures. Notice this beautiful balance as it relates to youth and age in the scriptures. Young Timothy, who may have been a late teenager at the time that Paul wrote to him, was told: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young . . ." (I Tim. 4:12). Yet in the very next chapter, Paul turns right around and provides the balance when he says to the same Timothy, "Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father" (I Tim. 5:1). There's the balance from God's own recommendations. When that type of balance is used, the problems between the generations tend to melt away.

Suggestion No. 5 — We can bridge the generation gap by living consistently.

Teenagers are greatly affected by what they regard as the hypocrisy of our age. They see wide inconsistencies between what their parents demand of them and what their parents themselves practice.

When Art Linkletter was asked in an interview if it was hypocritical for a father to tell his son not to smoke pot while he sits with a drink in one hand and a cigarette in the other, Linkletter replied, "It certainly is. I would like to see every kid in America go to his parents and say, 'Mother and Dad, I give you my solemn word I will never smoke marijuana or try any other drugs, if you will stop smoking and drinking.' " Linkletter then concluded, "Then we'll see how serious parents really are."<sup>5</sup>

Can we blame our young for insisting that it's hypocritical for parents to act one way and talk another?

Another matter that teenagers do a lot of thinking and talking about is the dominance of material things in our culture. They are thoughtfully insisting that material things simply do not bring self-realization and self-fulfillment. And, of course, they are right.

Dr. John C. Stevens has written: "I cannot dismiss all the questions that bright young people are asking about our values and about the difference between what we say in class or preach on Sunday and what we do at the polls or what we do at the marketplace or what we do in recreation on Saturday night."<sup>6</sup>

Finally, we can bridge the generation gap by praying for wisdom.

In James 1:5, there's a precious promise from God: "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."

Every parent who has any semblance of conscience knows that there is a ton of bewildering, confusing, and complex decisions that must be made in regard to the life of his child. God has promised to help, if we will ask Him. Pray to God and ask for wisdom, James says, and God will give it generously. Pray for wisdom and God will grant it. The generation gap will shrivel when both Christian parents and teenagers can pray together to God in a family meeting for wisdom in working through their problems.

So we are actually back where we started: we're back to God and His Word. When we start honoring the teaching of God's will in our lives individually and as families, we're going to find that we're being granted the victory over the problems that concern us and that keep us distraught.

Whether we are dealing with the problems of teenagers, the problem of morals, the problem of the generation gap, or the problem of salvation from sin, the Bible gives the only

answers that are valid.

Let us heed the advice of Solomon when he says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make straight your paths" (Prov. 3:5, 6).

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>*U.S. News and World Report*, November 14, 1977, page 87.

<sup>2</sup>These illustrations borrowed from Bert L. Mercer, "The Generation Gap," *Firm Foundation*, August 25, 1970.

<sup>3</sup>Prentice A. Meador, Jr., tract, "Needed: Better Families."

<sup>4</sup>*Christian Chronicle*, December 14, 1970.

<sup>5</sup>*20th Century Christian*, December, 1970.

<sup>6</sup>*Horizons*, Spring, 1970.

# THE INGREDIENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN HOME

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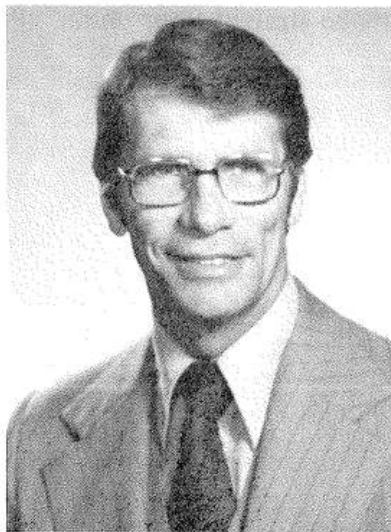
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Israel, God's favorite people, forgot God — their creator. As punishment, God allowed a generation to die wandering

in the wilderness, never entering the promised land. God instructed the second generation how to avoid repeating the sins of their fathers — sins that crippled the nation. Called the “repeated law,” Moses tells them the only hope to preserve the nation lies in how well they teach their children the law of God.

Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deut. 6:4-9).

On the last day of his life Moses makes one final appeal:

And when Moses had finished speaking all these words to all Israel, he said to them, “Lay to heart all the words which I enjoin upon you this day, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. For it is no trifle for you, but it is your life, and thereby you shall live long in the land . . .” (Deut. 32:45-47).

According to Moses, the family was Israel’s central agent for teaching future generations. It was to be the basic unit for indoctrination. Even today, Sunday school teachers or the minister cannot substitute for teachers in the home.

As the responsible one, or “head” teacher in the home, God designated the father (Eph. 5:21bb). The father may delegate some responsibilities, but he must never delegate

the leadership role. Some husbands back out of the leadership role, leaving their wives to rear the children alone. This creates a vacuum, an abnormal condition. The husband becomes a "bump on the log." Any reason he gives to dump his role on mom is a "cop out."

### *Priorities*

Family indoctrination, according to Moses, "is no trifle; . . . it is your life." Deuteronomy 32:47 denotes dire necessity. Too often families are caught up with the urgent instead of the important. What seems urgent may be only trifles; telephones, doorbells, car pools, washing and cleaning. The important things may be pushed aside: quiet time with God, reaching, really living, talking, listening, laughter, fun times together, doing for others. Urgent things tend to hit us in the face and shout for attention, while important things are seldom demanding.

We will only put the important things at the top in our family living by standing up against Satan like the Rock of Gibraltar, because Satan makes sure that important, truly "life" giving things will *not* demand our attention.

To impress upon the Israelites how vital Biblical teaching is, Moses instructed them to "bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deut. 6:8-9). The "frontlets" were little leather cases containing special scriptures, tied to their left hand (close to their heart) or "between their eyes" (close to their minds). However, Moses' teaching was probably not meant to be taken so literally. Simply tying scriptures to the body is not "pure and undefiled religion" (see James 1:27).

A pagan once addressed a missionary: "Sir, tell me about your god." The missionary began to tell the man about Jesus, but the pagan interrupted him: "Sir, I do not wish to know about Jesus. I want to know about that god on your wrist."

The missionary in consternation replied, "That is no god! It is my watch, a timepiece." "But," the pagan replied, "you do nothing without consulting your little god."

There are many "little gods" we Americans follow. From morning to night, they are "tied to our bodies," just as the Jewish phylacteries were. They are our watches, our wallets, and our "daily reminders" or calendars.

### *Time*

It takes time — much time every day — to help our families become all God wants them to be.

At graduation time, I hear parents say, "It seems like only yesterday when John started school." The song "Sunrise, Sunset" from *Fiddler on the Roof* expresses the emotion a parent feels after his child has grown up so quickly. Our children live with us about seventeen years; much of the last six years of that time is taken by public school activities and dating. We really don't have much time to rear children.

Because of the desire to move up in our nation, our time with children is down. For a son to become a "chip off the old block," the "old block" must be around to be chipped on. Some parents say they "can't find time." Of course not, nobody can — there is no extra time hiding behind a door. Instead, parents must *take* time from something they are doing that is less important than children. So we look at our schedules and decide what to put aside for the moment. It is hard to persuade fathers to give more time to the children. If husbands would allow wives to plan more of their agenda, they might be surprised how much this would help. Most wives know their husbands far better than the husbands think. Gladys (my wife) has almost absolute veto power over my speaking engagements. I need her in that role to keep a better balance in our family life. A wife can see her husband's schedule from a more objective view.

How many hours the father spends at work each day

matters less than how many hours he *prefers* to spend there. Even when a father has to work ten hours a day, six days a week, if his wife and children know he is eager to get home to them, he can still be an exciting father. But if his profession or anything else fascinates him more than his family, his priorities are out of order. He should not have chosen to marry and bear children. Making the challenge of family life an exciting adventure requires time, but time alone means very little — the motivation and desire must be there. Outside interests can draw us away from the family unless they include or relate to the family. A newspaper column commented recently that the more associations and committees men and women are involved in, the more unhappy the marriage is.

In business today, a promotion and a raise often means moving to another location. Is it worth moving to get a few hundred dollars more? What if your family doesn't want to relocate? Does the husband's job always have priority over the family's desires? Are there times when the husband needs to turn down a promotion? I say *yes*. The family outweighs the promotion, even if the husband is forced to find another job. But in such cases the family must be willing to tighten the belt, *without complaint*!

American business seems to care less and less about the family. More than ever, divorced executives are accepted. Actually, divorce is encouraged in many cases to give the business a "full time" employee, undistracted by family worries or interests. Furthermore, they can move him around with less hassle and cost.

John Laird, in his book, *I Ain't Well — But I Sure Am Better*, tells of a brilliant young executive who decided not to accept a promotion if it meant relocating. His wife and he had decided it would be too costly to the family. This unusual response caused the company no little problem. Finally, the company decided that the man must either accept the pro-

motion and relocate or resign. With regret, the young executive resigned. After his supervisor had given him the word, his immediate boss called him into his office and said: "Al, you have the guts to do what I should have done years ago, but I didn't have the courage to do it. I have position, power, and money, but I have lost my soul, my family and my God. I envy and admire you."

A friend of mine, an excellent computer programmer, left a university position to work for IBM, but after a while decided to become a fireman for the good of his family life. At the time, many felt he was "different." He took a large cut in pay, but he is happy in his work and has time off to spend with his family, his church, and his dreams. I admire his courage to break the "American mold" of materialism. It needs to happen more often.

In America, there seems to be four ways to achieve success, four gods we serve: Money; Beauty; Intelligence; Athletic Ability. We are bombarded from all sides with subtle and direct influences to conform to these "gods." Jesus never taught that any one of these, or any combination of the four, would lead to success.

Ultimately, our children are more impressed by how we live and what we *do*, than how much we make. When they see us say "no" to financial gain and tighten the belt for the family, that speaks volumes. When they see us turn down a promotion for greater family emphasis, that spells love.

### *Love*

*Agape*. The New Testament introduces a new form of love, not naturally characteristic of man. Human love is a personal desire (*eros*), tender affection, or family love. But Jesus created another kind of love called *agape*. Human love tends to be selfish: "I need you." *Agape* love is "other oriented."

*Agape* love "turns the other cheek" and "goes the second

mile." It is not like cotton candy — sweet to the taste at first, but then evaporates, leaving a mess. Christian loves *stays* sweet, and stands by to clean up when an ugly mess occurs. *Agape* love is unselfish love, ready to serve. *Agape* love is not something that exists so much as it is something you DO, then something you BECOME; finally; it is something you ARE.

Abraham Maslow once said, "We must *understand* love, we must be able to *teach* it, *create* it, *predict* it or else the world is lost to hostility and suspicion." *Agape* love is the *only* form of love that can be understood, taught, created and predicted. Perfect *agape* love is seen in Christ Jesus (Phil. 2:5-9, 2 Cor. 4:15, Eph. 2:4).

Only those who seek God can learn *agape* love. By ourselves, without God's empowering, it is impossible to love that way. For example, it is beyond man's natural ability to "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you . . ." (Matt. 5:44). According to modern psychology, only a masochist would "rejoice in his sufferings" (Rom. 5:3)! Unnatural characteristics become natural to the Christian through supernatural power: "*God's love* has been poured into our hearts *through the Holy Spirit* which has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5) (Emphasis mine).

The Christian home, with this extra dimension of love, has the best chance of any to be a happy home. This super quality of love makes having a family, with all its turmoils, worth it all.

*Acceptance.* Christian love accepts us as we are — "warts and all." Even at our very worst, *agape* love accepts us. Should an unmarried daughter announce to her mother that she is pregnant, a loving mother will accept the daughter *AND* the pregnancy. Christ died for us while we were still sinners (Rom. 5:6-8), accepting us in our imperfect state. We must learn to do the same.

Sometimes the most difficult persons to accept are those

closest to us. If a customer chooses the wrong color, we allow them to return or exchange the merchandise . . . even if the package has been opened. But if our wife does it, she "ought to know better." If your neighbor's daughter takes a quarter from your coffee table, you forgive her and find a way for her to earn the quarter. But if it is *your* daughter who takes a quarter from a neighbor's table, how do you react? "Don't you know that stealing is wrong? You march yourself right back and apologize to the neighbors for stealing . . . and if I ever catch you doing that again . . . " Actually, it's *our* ego that makes it such a big issue. If they steal, we tend to over-react. "What will the neighbors think?" Our image in the community take spriority over what is best for our children.

One of Jesus' unusual qualities that the religious world of his day could not understand was His unconditional acceptance. He could accept prostitutes, adulterers, crippled, poor, uneducated, prejudiced, tax collectors, even those who killed Him. No one was too sinful for Christ's capability to accept. This unique way of life drew people to Him like a magnet. None of us can earn God's love, and few of us can even be worthy of the love of our fellows. So all of us must learn to accept others, just as Christ accepted us, no matter how unworthy.

### *Example*

The examples Mom and Dad set have tremendous impact. The key is to model the role you desire your children to follow. Remember — "like father, like son," "chip off the old block." Admit to your children when you are wrong, ask their forgiveness, then get back to the task of becoming the best example you can. The ideal husband leads his family by being a follower — a follower of Jesus, the perfect example of a loving servant/leader. The combination of a godly father and mother sets a "normal" tone of unified harmony for the

children to follow.

Children remember actions much longer than words. My father was a man of few words, but his character is unforgettable. I never heard him curse or use a vulgar word. I never heard him raise his voice or use sarcasm. When I sin with my mouth, my father's silent testimony comes to my mind and judges me far more effectively than anything critical he might have said.

### *Goals and Purpose*

Victor Frankl developed an entire field of psychiatry around the concept of "meaning" to life. To have no purpose for living undermines mental health, leaving one aimless, disoriented, and wandering. In turn, this creates frustration and anxiety. When one sets goals, deciding what is important in his life, meaning and purpose are clarified — life "makes sense." Goals must be chosen in accordance with Hebrews 11:13-16, where we are twice reminded that God's people are not seeking a permanent home on this earth.

When I ask troubled couples about their goals and purposes in life, they usually give one of three responses: to rear their children successfully; to provide for their families' financial security; we have no goals; we live from one day to the next. While it is good that couples want to provide intellectual, physical, and social development, and financial security for their families, these goals are incomplete. There is a devastating hole waiting to be filled with the ultimate of all goals: to be like Jesus. When things come undone at the seams, and the Christian comes to the end of his rope, he ties a knot in the end and hangs on. His goals and aspirations continue. He knows there is no end — except in the arms of Jesus.

### *Discipline*

"The reproofs of discipline are the way of life, to preserve

you" (Prov. 6:23). Many families don't seem to realize that discipline makes life beautiful. Children, for example, hate practicing scales on the piano, but disciplining themselves to do so will pay off with beautiful music in later years. As in other arts and sciences, discipline and precision are not a hindrance to good things — they are a blessing. Who wants a surgeon or an auto mechanic who was not disciplined in school and just "made do"? "Whoever loves discipline, loves knowledge; he who hates reproof is stupid" (Prov. 12:1).

One of the differences between man and animals is man's ability to restrain himself from abusing his freedom. This quality does not come naturally, but from working at it. Self-discipline is our defense against Satan. "A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls [defenses]" (Prov. 25:28). In our plenteous environment, it is difficult to discipline ourselves to refrain from overeating and overspending. We often wish that self-discipline would come more easily. Maybe that is why it is so highly prized by God.

The book of Proverbs frequently mentions the need for parents to discipline their children. "Discipline your son while there is hope; do not set your heart on his destruction" (Prov. 19:18). By nature children do what they *want*, not what they *ought*. So parents are told to discipline them until they can discipline themselves. The phrase "spare the rod and spoil the child" is a good quote, but it is not an exact quote from the Bible. The text is actually much stronger: "He who spares the rod hates his son" (Prov. 13:24). To neglect discipline is to hate the child, because he will grow up without one of the qualities that makes life beautiful. Furthermore, undisciplined children make life miserable for others. Lack of discipline is double injustice, to the child himself and to mankind in general. Witness the upbringing of men like Charles Manson and Lee Harvey Oswald. In the

long run, discipline produces pleasant qualities. While "painful for the moment," those who have been disciplined later yield the "peaceful fruit of righteousness" (Heb. 12:1).

But how much discipline? How far do you go? Most people agree physical punishment doesn't work very well with children over twelve. Denial of privileges works better. In cases of serious discipline, be sure both husband and wife agree and are aware of possible consequences. Be consistent. If a child violates a family rule for which discipline has been promised, be sure to follow through. A child does not interpret lenience as "grace" like parents often think. Rather, a child may see himself as victor. "I won that one." "By mere words a servant [or son] is not disciplined, for though he understands he will not give heed" (Prov. 29:19). Discipline must "get his attention," hurt in some way — or it has no effect. The action taken must be strict enough to cause the child to "think twice" when he is tempted to do the forbidden again. If not, the child has won another "victory." It is terrible for parents to be harsh on children, but this is rare compared to the number of parents who allow their children to go without punishment when they desperately need it.

But the foundation for all discipline is love. Any discipline, no matter how mild, is out of order if it is not obvious *to the child* that both parents love him deeply. It is almost impossible for loving parents to over-discipline! Love disciplines only for the child's wellbeing, never because of impatience, resentment, or selfishness on the parent's part. No matter how many rules a child breaks, parents should never call attention to more faults than positive assets. In short, a parent must not criticize more than he compliments. After years of observations, I have noticed families with well-adjusted children really emphasize the positive, spending as much as 90% of their time complimenting behavior, building up the child's self-image. This means they spend large

amounts of energy *looking* for the positive. To summarize: strong, consistent discipline without an even stronger, consistent pattern of praise has little effect in rearing children.

### *Devotional Time*

Surprisingly, the traditional family devotional each evening for Bible reading and prayer is probably not the most effective tradition. But a lot of families feel guilty if they do not have a regular devotional each evening. I would like to relieve some of that guilt.

The traditional evening devotional time usually works well for children from the sixth grade down, but when children start Junior High school they usually start a "reversal syndrome." At about this age, the adolescent phase of their life begins, which is a trend away from parents' rule toward complete independence. At this time, we may need to loosen our hold a little, letting them "find themselves" and develop independence in their spiritual lives, too. Remember the promise, "train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6).

To demand family devotional attendance often works against what God emphasizes as effective methods of influencing their lives. In addition to the "reversal syndrome," children at that age develop strong interests outside the family. School activities grow numerous and tend to exclude the family. Football, basketball, chorus, band, and out-of-town trips throw a family schedule into such pandemonium that even a computer could not work out a time when all could gather for a family devotional.

*The Biblical Method.* The superior, and more Biblical, method, educators call the "teachable moment." But long before the phrase "teachable moment" was coined, the Bible was telling us how to create them. Most of us know what a "teachable moment" is: a time when the student is ready or ripe to learn. The Bible goes a step further and explains *how* to create a teachable moment.

Picture a young Jewish son watching his family eat unleavened bread for seven days; then the family has a luxurious feast. They do this regularly, year after year. Some day the son finally asks his father, "Dad, what are we doing this for?" The Jewish passover feast (Ex. 13:3-16) was so unusual that it created fantastic curiosity. Questions came naturally, creating for the father a "teachable moment." Then the father would answer, "It is because of what the Lord did for us when we came out of Egypt" (Ex. 18:8).

This is just one illustration; there are many more. "Dad, why is that blood sprinkled on the door?" (Ex. 12:7-13). Curiosity provoked the question; again the father has the opportunity to explain. On another occasion, Junior sees his father killing a beautiful calf, a strange thing indeed! Questions begin to pop: "But why, Dad? If it wasn't sick, why did you kill it?" Again, the father has a teachable moment. "And when in time to come your son asks you, 'What does this mean,' you shall say to him . . ." (Ex. 13:14ff).

A Jewish boy walking along the Jordan river comes to a stack of plastered stones with writing on them. That evening he says to his father, "Dad, I was by the river today and saw the strangest thing." "What was it, son?" "Well, it was a stack of rocks that had been plastered together with some writing on it." "How many were there?" "Well, as best I could count, there were about twelve." Now the father can go back to the history of the boy's forefathers. He explains how that stack of rocks was a memorial of thanksgiving and dedication to God for his help in crossing the Jordan River in flood stage. He tells how God helped them conquer the promised land when they were greatly outnumbered. "When your children ask in time to come, 'what do these stones mean to you?', then you shall tell them . . ." (Joshua 4:6-7).

The Israelites had all sorts of memorials, reminders and traditions that created *spontaneous* devotionals. They were not confining or monotonous, but rather occurred naturally

while they "sat in their house," when they "walked by the way," when they "lay down" and when they "arose" (Deut. 6:7ff). We need to put more emphasis on creating the teachable moment. Without the curiosity being stirred, without the teachable moment, there really isn't much learning. Too often planned teaching is just plain boring. Older children will call it "forced religion."

Curiosity is still alive in the church today. "Daddy, what does baptism mean?" "Yes, but why are they putting him under the water?" "Is there any other way to baptize?" "Mom, can I have some of that cracker and grape juice?" Too often parents say: "Hush, child, get your hand off that tray. Sit back and behave yourself." They could have said: "That is a good question . . . after the service I will show you some 'cracker.' It is also called unleavened bread for a very special reason and I will tell you why." Such an occasion is perfect for a spontaneous devotional.

Devotionals don't have to be just prayers and Bible reading. They can be studies as well. Nature studies are fantastic ways to provoke curiosity, teach lessons, increase faith, and inspire devotions. Jesus, as master teacher, used nature repeatedly: "Consider the lilies of the field . . ." (Matt. 6:28), birds (Matt. 6:2); seeds (Matt. 13:1-9, 24-30); sheep (Lk. 15:3-7); trees (Matt. 6:2); grass (Matt. 6:30); moths (Matt. 6:19-20); and dogs (Matt. 7:6).

Solomon knew how to create curiosity from nature studies. More interested in wisdom than academic knowledge, Solomon provokes curiosity when he says, "Go to the ant . . . consider her ways and be wise . . ." (Prov. 6:6). "Things that are wonderful . . . the eagle in the sky, the way of a serpent on a rock . . ." (Prov. 30:19). "The badgers are people not mighty, yet they make . . . , the locusts have no king yet all of them . . . , the lizard you can take in your hands, yet it is . . ." (Prov. 30:25-28).

I grew up in a home with no *formal* devotionals, but my

mother *caught* me for Christ as she taught me about God through nature. She pointed out the marvels of God by calling attention to the stars (Psalms 18:1,2). (By the way, she started studying the constellations after she was sixty-five.) She sang hymns to herself and encouraged the entire family in singing devotionals. As a nature lover, she walked with us through the parks calling attention to all the beauty and creations God put there. Even today, in her eighties, she is still teaching me about the birds, their traits and habits, and reminding me to “feed the sparrows” because “God loves them just as much as He loves the blue jays and redbirds” (Matt. 10:29).

The point is, there are a world of things that will provoke children’s curiosity. The wise parent will begin looking for ways to conduct devotionals that are natural to children, that are interesting to them, and that make them *want* to learn more about God.

As for the evening devotional, our family has found that as each child goes to bed there is a “gentle moment” when parent and child can have a short positive talk ending in prayer. Some of the sweetest prayers I have ever heard have come from our children at such a time. This time also serves as special, private time with each child, building strong relationships between parent and child.

### *Quiet Time*

Parents cannot build strong families without giving God first priority daily — NO WAY. God must have *choice* time each day — not because God needs it, but because we need it. We need him daily for wisdom in making decisions. We need Him for balanced living, for comfort and grace when things go wrong, for encouragement when events are depressing — we just need Him! I must confess that every time I foul up and am disappointed with myself, I can look back to several days of failure to give God choice time.

An hour daily is ideal. If you need some structure to help you learn to use your time, buy Stephen Olford's little pamphlet *Manna in the Morning*. The most important thing is DO IT.

Also, keep a notebook of your meditations, prayers and reflections. This spiritual diary will be a blessing in several ways. As you read back over your prayers, you will be reminded of your commitments and will be able to see progress in your growth. It will remind you when you miss days of quiet time with God. This notebook is a recording of your prayers and will help you remember some of the thrilling days with Christ in private devotion. Write them out; sign your name. Your motivation to live for Christ will increase. Record your reflections or short observations about the reading for the day. Record your positive and negative reactions to life's circumstances yesterday, and your intentions for today. Writing things down somehow imprints them on the mind.

Make quiet time simple: reading, praying, reflecting. Generally, reading the Bible first will set the tone for your prayers. Do not use this time for reading any other book. No book can speak as directly to your heart. Christians need to read many books in order to maintain maturity and growth in Christ, but they must never let any other book have precedence over the book of God. You can't share the Word spontaneously when you "walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up" unless you *possess* it.

### *Respect for Individual Differences*

No two children are alike. Like fingerprints or snowflakes, each child is unique. We must never allow ourselves to expect a child to have the same characteristics or abilities as big sister or to be "cut from the same mold" as big brother.

Look at your hands. Each finger is different, especially the little finger and the thumb. The fingers don't fight each other

for superiority. The “ring finger” doesn’t lord it over the other fingers because he wears the ring. The four “alike” fingers don’t outvote the thumb because it’s an oddball. Each one is needed; each one is wanted. We wouldn’t try to change any one of them. You wouldn’t want your little finger to be longer and the middle shorter. You wouldn’t want your thumb to bend backwards. You are happy all the fingers cooperate as different parts of the same hand.

So each individual in the family is equal in terms of worth. No soul is worth more than any other — but they are different and have different roles. The father bears the ultimate responsibility; the wife has immediate responsibility under him. The older child usually assumes more responsibilities than the others. Boys have different job descriptions than girls. Each member has a different job, but all are *equally loved*. Fussing over respective roles dissipates energy uselessly. We must channel that energy to higher purposes, and mature within our roles, “Bloom where you are planted.”

Parents who believe each child should be given the same privileges, same opportunities, same birthday gifts, *everything* the same, have a basic problem: they don’t realize children are not exactly alike! Their sex is different. Their age is different. Their maturity, their personality, their interests and their rate of physical, mental, and spiritual growth are all varied. Wise parents study the individual traits of each child, learn to discriminate individual uniquenesses, and meet specific needs of each one with an individual plan for growth in Christ — never trying to push him beyond his capability, never favoring another child over him, loving him where he is.

### CONCLUSION

God has given us our families as a gift of His love. The possibilities for companionship, nurture, growth and fulfillment are marvelous. To see these families as an exciting

challenge and to focus mountains of attention and energy on them produces some of the richest experiences of our lives. God has designed our lives together in families to be the avenue through which some of His richest blessings come. May we never take lightly His purposes for us with regard to those who are most precious to us in this world.

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# BUILDING POSITIVE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

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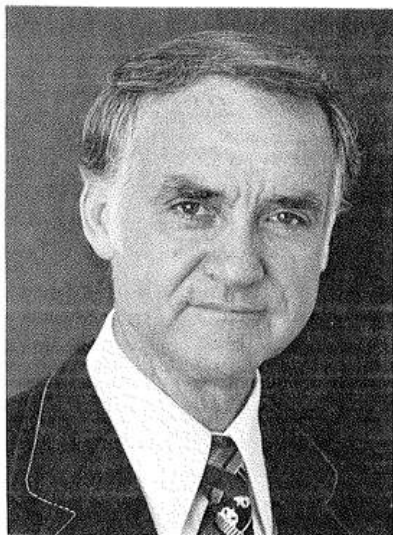
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None would deny that many homes in the United States are in serious trouble. One in three marriages ends in divorce. At present more than one million couples divorce per year, affecting more than two million children. The crisis is so great that some are forecasting the death of the traditional family arrangement. Toffler in his book *Future Shock* devotes an entire chapter to consideration of alternate arrangements which he says may replace the nuclear family.<sup>1</sup> Some of the options which he and others are mentioning include group marriage, homosexual marriage, open marriage, contract marriage, polyandry, and polygamy. In addition, there is a campaign presently in the media for the promotion of singleness.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that if marriage is in trouble, its product . . . children . . . will inevitably reap lethal results. Such is in fact the case! A recent article in a popular magazine stated that last year American school children, while at school, committed 100 murders, 12,000 armed robberies, 9,000 rapes, and 204,000 aggravated assaults against teachers and each other. In addition, they are responsible for 270,000 school burglaries, and vandalized over \$600,000,000 worth of school property. The article reported an increase in juvenile crime of 245% during the past 13 years. Locker searches have revealed knives, hand guns, stilettos, ammunition, and dynamite. One New York school group was even found to have bazookas. Not all violence is directed toward other students, teachers, or property. Suicide among teen-agers has made a dramatic upward surge and is presently the third leading cause of death in this age group. In commenting on the causes for this discouraging scene, one prominent reason given was the deterioration of the family. The writer joins a

chorus of thought leaders who are pointing at the decline of the family as a major cause of expanding juvenile violence.<sup>3</sup>

While the media appears to evidence a rather general awareness that things are not going well with the family, and something should be done, the solution is not equally clear. As indicated, some see the ideas of marriage and the family as bad ideas, ideas that have failed, or at best, concepts not suited to our times. The Christian, instead, points to the fact that marriage and family are God's ideal . . . that our problem is one of implementation rather than concept. It is not that the home as a divinely appointed institution has been tried and failed, but rather that men have failed to follow the instructions as God has given them in His Word. This is in fact the thesis that I would like to affirm in the following development of this subject. If the home is going to be successful in our time, then we must go back to the norms the designer had in mind. Only then will its products be good, only then will the relationships of parents to children be the kind that produce good Christians and good citizens.

First of all, the purposes for which God created the family need to be reestablished. It is axiomatic that something created for a purpose will fit that purpose better than any other. When people enter into marriage for reasons different from those given by God, or when they enlarge some particular aspect of God's design out of proper relationship to other aspects, the results will inevitably be off target. As the psalmist said, "If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"<sup>4</sup> When marriages do not function properly there is a domino effect, and generation after generation suffers. Conversely, properly functioning homes also tend to reproduce themselves. That is perhaps part of the essence of God's avowal in the giving of the ten commandments that he visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation, while extending love to thousands through those who love and honor Him.<sup>5</sup>

What, then, are the purposes of the family from our Lord's viewpoint? As indicated at the very beginning of human existence on the earth, one important part of the design is the unitive aspect of marriage. Two persons become one flesh. It is not good for man to live alone.<sup>6</sup>

Male and female complement each other . . . each brings something the other lacks so that from the separate parts now comes a new wholeness. God is praised by that union and served, too, in an unusual way. Later, when the Holy Spirit guided the Apostle Paul in giving us an understanding of the unity of Christ with his church, he chose the marriage bond as an example.<sup>7</sup> The second fundamental reason is that of procreation.<sup>8</sup> It is from the loving union of two lives that children are produced. Notwithstanding our population problems, when properly functioning homes bring children into the world, adults not only fulfill a part of their destiny, but they also make a tremendous gift to the world. If there is any real hope that the unfortunate trends of these times will be reversed, it will be through the influence of Christian homes which produce well-adjusted, God-centered leaders for the future.

Not only does the Bible project the home as a place where children are to be produced, it also dictates the type of environment where children can grow to be strong and beneficial in their lives. A very important aspect of this environment is the emotional climate that is to be provided. Love is to be the native soil in which children are to be conceived and within which they are to grow.<sup>9</sup> While not used in the passage just indicated, a very central Greek word for love is AGAPE. It appears repeatedly in the New Testament as it relates to the family context. While I would not take the position that emotion is unrelated to AGAPE, AGAPE is first of all a decision. It is for this reason that Christ could command that we love our enemies.<sup>10</sup> In my opinion, we are too laden with attention to feelings in much of modern psychology. Feel-

ings are usually influenced by many factors which are not at the level of conscious awareness. To be led by one's feelings may mean the endocrine system, or diet, or even forgotten past experiences may be dictating present action. God has given us a higher control center, so that if necessary we can even act against our feelings. Control of emotions is possible only in an indirect way. Bonhoeffer, in his book *The Cost of Discipleship*, suggests that if one does not have faith, he should do what faith would demand, and faith will come.<sup>11</sup> I would suggest that if one does not have the proper feeling toward a spouse or a child, then he should do what that feeling would demand, and the feeling will come. All of us have experienced how, by choosing to act, we eventually can decide how we will feel. The fruit of AGAPE will include commitment, loyalty, and support . . . all necessary ingredients in a warm, nurturing, emotional climate. AGAPE will enable the parents to give of themselves for the benefit of the child, rather than using the child for their own emotional needs.

There has surely never been a period of history when people have been so tightly scheduled. It seems to many of us that we have less of time than of any other life commodity. However, every day still has twenty-four hours, hours that we allocate according to our priorities. Statistics show that parents, and especially fathers, are not doing a very good job of reserving adequate time for their children. One child said, "I know my mother loves me because she has time for me." There is no substitute for the giving of self, and all gifts calculated to make up for our failure to spend sufficient time with our children, fail miserably. They only succeed in making children feel cheated, of little value, and ultimately may make them very opportunistic. Some children may decide that if they are not going to get the emotional support they need, they will try to get all the material gusto they can get. After all, the world of commercial advertisement is trying its

best to make us thing-centered rather than person-centered, anyway!

Closely allied to giving of time is the provision of the basic needs of children. Children need to know they are loved. A great deal of their eventual sense of self-worth will be related to the presence or absence of love. They need to feel they are capable. "That was good," "you can do it," should be constant refrains in children's ears. Some parents are so anxious that their children do well, that they unconsciously become fault-finding and picky. As a consequence, many children grow up convinced they cannot please their parents, that they never quite measure up. This affects their view of themselves, and their attitude toward coping in life. Children also must have their material needs adequately provided for. The Bible takes a dim view of those who refuse to provide for their own family.<sup>12</sup> Children need to be stimulated intellectually. Some sources indicated that more than half the homes in the United States are educationally deprived. Parents should provide educational experiences within the home involving intellectual conversation, good reading materials, and educational experiences outside the home such as visiting museums, attending concerts, going to the zoo, or just visiting the countryside to learn to appreciate God's creation. Children need help in their social development. In my opinion, an increasing problem of our time is the continual quest for homogeneous arrangements and relationships. Children do need ample opportunity to relate socially to their peers, but they also benefit greatly through extensive contact with people of all age groups, and from many walks of life. So far as the public aspects of education are concerned, parents should be aware of the school experiences of their children, should seek contact with teachers, and remain current as to textbook content and general school environment. Some aspects of personal education, including sex knowledge, should come, at least primarily, from the par-

ents. Many good materials are available to aid parents who may feel uncomfortable in this sector, and yet do not want to entrust this important phase of learning to the public school, or to the kids on the streets. In my many years of administering psychological testing and counseling, I have come to be more impressed as to the general truth of Solomon's statement.<sup>13</sup> When children are brought up in a context where the basic emotional, physical, social, and intellectual needs are met in a devoted and loving climate, they tend to be adjusted, trusting, hopeful, secure, calm, assertive, risk-taking, and happy. One other need that I should not neglect mentioning is the need to be productive. From the very beginning, children should be given responsibilities that are commensurate with their ability to respond. In research designed to probe the differences between high achieving and low achieving students, one of the important finds was that mothers of high achievers demanded more independence and mastery at an earlier age than did the mothers of low achievers.<sup>14</sup> The Bible presents as a general principle that those who do not work should not eat.<sup>15</sup> Small children naturally want to be included in everything. They should certainly be wisely included in tasks designed to aid the home in its functioning, and they should continue to be so occupied until they depart the home. Some of us are presenting children to the world who have always been served, and they will go out with that expectancy. They are bound for disillusionment, and they may be terribly penalized in our competitive world. They may also find it hard to experience the happiness that comes from giving.<sup>16</sup> It is my conviction that people who have too many things done for them suffer a significant erosion of personal dignity and self-respect in the process.

One of the most powerful contributors to positive parent-child relationships is proper discipline. Thank the Lord that we have about worked our way out of a long and difficult

period in which the main thrust from child psychology was that of permissiveness! The Hebrew writer said "For the Lord disciplines him whom he loves."<sup>17</sup> Today there is increasing recognition of a very substantial bond between loving your children and wisely disciplining them. It appears that even children tend to equate discipline with care and concern, and the failure to discipline may be seen as an indication that their parents do not really love them. There is some evidence that children will sometimes act out just to prove to themselves that parents do care. I would like to present some important principles related to discipline.

Discipline should be seen as a learning or training process rather than as punitive. The word itself has the meaning of instruction or learning. Parents who are primarily punitive risk establishing a bond between discipline, anger, and impatience, thereby frequently arousing anger and resentment rather than positive learning.<sup>18</sup> Generally, there should be as few rules as possible, clearly understood and consistently enforced. Children become confused if they are expected to follow rules not understood, or if they are allowed to get away with something several times, and then are descended upon when anger or impatience sets in. Parents should be united in discipline. If there is disagreement, it should be settled out of sight and hearing of the child. Children are very prone to play one parent against the other if they see that is possible. Motives for discipline should clearly be for the benefit of the child though the household gains through the process.<sup>19</sup> When an over-indulgent parent plays to the whims of the child, the child may become insatiable, spoiled, conflicted, and savage.<sup>20</sup> Discipline should be tailored to the particular child. It is simplistic to think that one approach to discipline either fits all children or even fits the same child on all occasions. Timing is important in discipline, both in terms of being clearly connected with the crime, and also being undertaken to the degree and at the level necessary for the

age of the child.<sup>21</sup> Ideally it begins at birth and progresses until the child eventually leaves home. The goal of discipline is to enable the child to become self-disciplined, therefore as a general rule, the older a child becomes, the less discipline should be necessary.<sup>22</sup> In a sense, the whole household should be under discipline. Parents also should have rules and conduct that are agreed upon, and should be open to correction when that is indicated. Parents who show themselves under discipline have an easier time of it in their efforts to control and train their children.

From birth it should be the design of parents to lead their offspring to an eventual position of autonomy and independence. Adults may well feed their own ego needs by tying their children increasingly to them, but this certainly is not beneficial to the child. While we cannot admire the decision of the prodigal son in leaving his father's house to go to a far country, we can appreciate the father leaving his son free to make this decision.<sup>23</sup> If parental oversight is working, it can be progressively withdrawn as the child grows older. Actually, I believe both parents and children are generally agreed that a child should have opportunity to experience independence in growing proportions. The problem often arises from a difference of judgment as to where that independence should occur. The child might want to be free to go where he wants to go in Dad's car, or free to associate with whomever he chooses, while the parents might be much happier for him to begin mowing lawns so that he can cut himself off from his allowance.

The final and most important of all aspects contributing to positive parent-child relationships is the spiritual feeding that is intended by God to occur within the home. While the failure to adequately nurture and exercise the spiritual side of a child might not show in physical appearance, the developmental imbalance is certainly visible in the life that child will lead.

The beginning place for spiritual training is found in the examples of the parents. Parents who are obviously and consistently devoted to the Lord, to the study of the Word, and to the life of the church have a head start in the spiritual training of their children. Training in the Word should be continual . . . as Moses says,

“And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”<sup>24</sup>

In preparing for this lecture, I have come across a number of good articles in various periodicals which suggest ways of going about the instruction at home of children in the Word.<sup>25</sup> They recommend good supplementary reading materials in addition to the Bible, as well as concordances, dictionaries, and commentaries. The memorizing and reciting of Bible passages is good. Homes should be filled with the singing of songs and hymns which tell of God's love and spread the message of Christ. Home should be a place of worship where children learn to pray and show devotion to God.<sup>26</sup> In every way, stress needs to be laid upon loving and serving the Lord above every other love, so that children will never accept any personal idea of success or excellence which does not have God at the center. When the church functions as it should, it is a great aid to parents in teaching their children. Not only should parents be regular in participation in the work and worship of the church, but they should be positive and reinforcing of the church and its people in their attitudes and conversation at home. Children who are reared in this kind of atmosphere will desire to commit themselves to Christ. They will aspire to be Bible school teachers, evangelists, and missionaries. It will be

natural for them to gauge every activity and vocation in terms of its potential for service to Christ. Heaven and eternity will rejoice for such children.

Consistent with the thesis for this lecture, parents are primarily responsible for the establishment of positive parent-child relationships. When they function as they should, children will grow to be strong and good and productive in their lives. Children have many needs, and loving, responsible parents will earnestly work to fulfill them all. Charlie Shedd in his book, *Promises to Peter*, concludes with a prayer for Peter and all the sons and daughters of men. I believe a portion of that prayer is a fitting conclusion to this presentation:

“Lord, I want to remember that my children are not my children. Let me let them manage themselves at the right pace. May they have the self-respect which comes from a growing self-government. Free them from unnecessary resentment that they may think cool.

“From infancy up, may they know how to love because they have seen love at its best. Here in our home may they be taught that they are children of God. And may they sense the Divine in others also.

“May they know the joy of work well done. Early may they learn what they need for discipline and staying power. As they tie in to the problems of society, may they be angry when they should as they should.”<sup>27</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Toffler, Alvin, *Future Shock*, (New York: Bantam Books, Inc., 1971), pp. 238-259.  
See also Cogswell, B.E. “Variant Family Forms and Lifestyles,” *The Family Coordinator*, October 1975, p. 391ff.

<sup>2</sup>Newsweek, Sept. 4, 1978, p. 76ff.

<sup>3</sup>TWA Ambassador, September 1978, p. 25ff.

FOOTNOTES

<sup>4</sup>Psalms 11:3

<sup>5</sup>Exodus 20:5-6

<sup>6</sup>Genesis 2:18, 21-25

<sup>7</sup>Ephesians 5:21-33

<sup>8</sup>Genesis 1:28

<sup>9</sup>Titus 2:4

<sup>10</sup>Matthew 5:44

<sup>11</sup>Bonhoeffer, Dietrich, *The Cost of Discipleship*, (New York: The MacMillan Company ((paperback), 1963), pp. 70-77.

<sup>12</sup>1 Timothy 5:8

<sup>13</sup>Proverb 22:6

<sup>14</sup>Murray, Edward J., *Motivation and Emotion*, Foundations of Modern Psychology Series, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 101.

<sup>15</sup>2 Thessalonians 3:10

<sup>16</sup>Acts 20:35

<sup>17</sup>Hebrews 12:6

<sup>18</sup>Ephesians 6:4

<sup>19</sup>Wakefield, Norm, "The Positive Discipline of Your Children," *Moody Monthly*, May 1978, 78:55. See also Proverbs 29:56.

<sup>20</sup>Stierlin, Helm, "A Family Perspective on Adolescent Runaways," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, July 1973, 29:56.

<sup>21</sup>Proverbs 19:18, 22:6

<sup>22</sup>Proverbs 22:6

<sup>23</sup>Luke 15:11-24

<sup>24</sup>Deuteronomy 6:6-7

<sup>25</sup>*Christian Bible Teacher*, Vol. 21, No. 7, July 1977, pp. 270-271. *Moody Monthly*, April 1978, 78:41f, June 1978, 78:38-39, August 1978, 78:39f.

*Eternity*, June 1977, Vol. 28, No. 6, p. 26f.

<sup>26</sup>*Christian Bible Teacher*, January 1978, Vol. 22, No. 1, p. 15f.

<sup>27</sup>Shedd, Charlie, *You Can Be A Great Parent!*, (Waco, Texas: Word Books, Inc.), pp. 146-147. Used by permission of Word Books Publisher, Waco, Texas.

# WHAT PRICE SUCCESS?

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**Address:** 727 South National, Springfield, MO 65804.

**Family:** Wife — the former Barbara Morrell. Three children: Lori Ann, Mark, Kimberly Lynn.

**Education:** B.A. — David Lipscomb College, M.A. — University of Illinois, Ph.D. — University of Illinois.

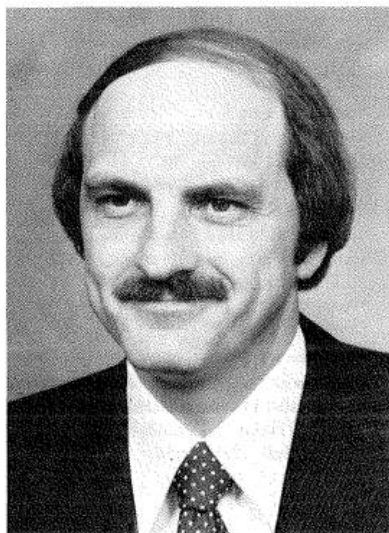
**Work:** Currently minister of South National Church of Christ, Springfield. He served on the faculty of the University of California, Los Angeles from 1963-1971. In 1971, he accepted a position on the faculty of the University of Washington, Seattle.

**Ministry:** Prentice and Barbara are especially active in team marriage counseling. He has appeared on numerous radio and television programs, and currently is heard twice daily on "Break-through," which airs over radio station KTXR-FM in Springfield, and appears twice weekly in a news feature on KMTC-TV, the ABC-TV affiliate.

**Other Fields of Special Interests:** (travel; publications; professional and civic work)

He has authored books entitled: **PREACHING TO MODERN MAN; WHO RULES YOUR LIFE? A STUDY OF THE PARABLES OF JESUS.** He serves as Assistant Editor, *Power for Today*.

Dr. Meador is a member of the Chancellor's Council, Pepper-



dine University, and has served on numerous boards of directors in behalf of Christian education, business and industry. He speaks many times each year to church and university audiences and has spoken in Europe, the Middle East, Canada and South America.

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Train a child in the way he should go,  
And when he is old he will not turn from it (Proverbs 22:6).

A wise son brings joy to his father,  
But a foolish son grief to his mother (Proverbs 10:1).

I have been reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also (II Timothy 1:5).

But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus (II Timothy 3:14-15).

In the film, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, a dramatic scene takes place in the Frank family. Hiding from the Nazis, the Franks live in a tiny attic. After many months of close living in the attic, their family life begins to develop deep trouble. The life of their family is threatened. During one of the family crises, Mr. Frank comments, "If we continue going the way we are, we won't be destroyed from the outside. We will destroy ourselves."

Similarly, the family life of many members of churches of Christ may not be destroyed by outside enemies: a changing

moral climate, increased mobility, and a materialistic success syndrome. While these enemies challenge us, something else, quiet and subtle, is at work. Our greatest threat seems to come from an *inside* pressure — a pressure so deep and pervasive as to threaten the life and future of many congregations. This subject is not optional. The time for discussion has come. What is this problem? A hardworking elder expresses it in a letter which he recently sent me:

*I am very concerned, in my own life, and in the lives of others, that we do not know how to balance our duties to our families and the service we give in the life and work of the congregation. Many are overworked and it is possible that this condition turns off some of those whom we are trying to get involved because they don't desire the life they see us living.*

Another sincere and committed elder describes this inner pressure, this lack of “balance” between our family life and our church work as “probably existing in every congregation.” The outer edges of our families appear strong, but the center is weak.

I speak this evening with sympathy and understanding as a husband, parent, and full-time worker in the Lord's church. I deeply love my family. I also love the people of the church. In no way do I claim to be an outstanding example. Like you, I learn through my mistakes. I want this evening to come to this problem as honestly and clearly as I am able. Let's rivet our attention on three questions.

1. What is the problem?
2. What are its causes, its results?
3. What can we do to survive in our families and in the church?

As we consider each of these in turn, let's stay in the framework of God's Word.

### **Sacrifices on the Altar of Service**

*The problem — families of dedicated, hard-working servants of God are often sacrificed on the altar of service.* While committing their lives to the service of God, some parents have observed their children grow into faithless adults. As some of God's most effective people have reached out to others, they have somehow failed to reach into their families. Some of our families have failed to be repositories of faith. Some confuse service to others for passing on faith to their children.

This is not a new problem. It's the problem of Eli, who teaches and trains Samuel, who works hard in the service of the tabernacle. Eli dedicates his life to God. But tragic sentences begin to describe Eli's sons Hophni and Phinehas.

Eli's sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the Lord. . . . This sin of the young men was very great in the Lord's sight, for they were treating the Lord's offering with contempt. . . . Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all of Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting (I Samuel 2:12-17, 22).

It's the problem of Samuel, the great prophet of God. Absolutely no one can question the integrity, commitment, and dedication of Samuel. But the Bible also describes the major problem of Samuel.

When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as judges for Israel. The name of his first born was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. But his sons did not walk in his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice (I Samuel 8:1-3).

It is the problem of David, "the man after God's own heart." David's service to God, his authorship of some of the *Psalms*, and his obedience to God, make him a man of faith. But David's own son, Absalom, leads a conspiracy against his father: "So he stole the hearts of the men of Israel" (II Samuel 15:6). It is the problem of Hezekiah who "walked before God faithfully and with wholehearted devotion" (II Kings 20:3). Hezekiah tore down the high places of idolatry, as well as the brazen serpent. But while re-establishing God in the life of the nation of Israel, he apparently fails to establish God in the heart of his own son, Manasseh. Manasseh

did evil in the eyes of the Lord, following the detestable practices of the nations the Lord had driven out before the Israelites. He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah had destroyed; he also erected altars to Baal and made an Asherah pole, as Ahab King of Israel had done, . . . and has done more evil than the Amorites who preceded him and has led Judah into sin with his idols (II Kings 21:2-3, 11).

Today, the cultures, the languages, the the covenants have changed. But the problem walks through the centuries into our own times. The issue is just as clear. Today, it's the problem of a hard-working minister who never has time to play with his children or talk with his wife. He believes, "That's the price of success." He faithfully serves God and helps many people, but he sacrifices his family on the altar of service. It's the problem of the sincere elder who spends more time with others than his own wife. He believes "I must give my life to others." So he does and others greatly benefit from his effort, time, and energy. But his wife grows lonely and resentful, and longs for some of his time, effort and energy. It's the problem of the dedicated Christian who teaches on Sunday morning, works in the bus program,

serves on a visitation team, attends mission committee meetings, teaches in Vacation Bible School, and gives one or two nights each week to teaching non-Christians. He believes "It costs to serve Jesus." And so it does! While working hard in various ministries, this dedicated Christian loses his family.

### Causes of the Problem

Trying to "balance" our responsibilities to our families and our service in the life and work of the church is one of the most important and one of the most difficult things to do. There are at least five major foes, or things working against this "balance."

*The first foe is the lack of priority that has been given to the family.* Subtly and over a long period of time, many Christians have become convinced that they are thoroughly "Christian" when they are actively involved in major and important ministries. Apparently, they have failed to understand that a person has never been more "Christian" than when he is faithful to his marriage partner, lovingly trains his children, and gives his family major portions of his time, effort, and energy.

*A second foe is our living in pressure-cooker life styles.* A typical Sunday morning in an average Christian home is a busy affair. There's a great deal of hustle, bustle, and rush. Often a family arrives just a minute before worship is to begin; they are almost exhausted and without any real mental preparation for worship. During the week, we live lives that are harried, hurried, and overstimulated. We work hard. We live on tight schedules. We're exhausted in worship, have a high incidence of heart disease among leaders, and a high dropout rate of full-time Christian workers. If Satan can continue to increase our pressure-cooker lifestyles, he may damage our capacity to be on the spiritual cutting-edge.

*A third foe is our moving towards "success" in church*

*programs*. Because we love a "winner," we want to be "successful." We associate certain abilities with "success" — planning, decisiveness, concentration, seizing new opportunities, solving problems, adjusting to new situations, etc. But the worship of "success" as an end itself places intense burdens on our families. A wife takes second place to a husband's work. Children grow resentful as their own needs take a second place to a life preoccupied with church work. Frequent absences build alienation in the family. Dr. Roy Menniger places his finger on the pulse of the problem:

Many of us discover the cost of achievement is progressive distancing from our wives and families . . . [We] have substituted personal achievement for the capacity to feel and to share [our] feelings with others, especially [our] families.<sup>1</sup>

Aboard the bandwagon of "success" some leave the families behind.

*A fourth foe is our increased mobility.* Vance Packard in his book, *A Nation of Strangers*, draws the conclusion from U.S. Census figures and from American Telephone and Telegraph in the early 70's that "At least a fifth of all Americans move one or more times each year; and the pace of the movement in America is still increasing."<sup>2</sup>

By 1975, Atlas Van Lines surveyed 300 companies who moved 19% of their personnel during that year. One year later, the same companies moved 41% of their personnel.<sup>3</sup>

"Pack and go" also applies more and more to members of the church making deep relationships virtually impossible *within* and *without* a family. Those who have studied mobility and its effect on family life, conclude that mobile families grow up to be outwardly facile and capable in superficial relationships, but have a reduced capacity for sustained and close relationships. This has great significance for the future

of the church if the rate of mobility continues to increase among members of the church. Constant moving permanently damages family life.

*A fifth foe is the way giving to other people drains us.* We've all experienced this. We communicate love, understanding, and concern to others and when we go home, our family feels we've given most of our love to other people. Resentment builds; communication breaks; misunderstanding grows. Frankly, it takes a great deal of energy to teach, counsel, and work with other people. If we become emotionally detached and inaccessible to our families, they feel cheated. If we do not achieve some sort of balance in our "giving" to others, we may train a Samuel, but rear a Hophni and a Phinehas.

### Tragic Results

What happens when families of dedicated, hard-working servants of God are sacrificed on the altar of service? The results are such that we cannot overlook them.

*First we lose our own children to full-time ministries in the church.* It is amazing how many Christian young people are growing up in *empty houses!* Their parents, sincerely motivated, are off during the week serving the needs of other people. So one Christian teenager tells me "Christ doesn't mean anything to me even though I am a Christian, because it doesn't work in our home." Christian parents who are too busy to play with their kids, fish or hunt with them, spend evenings with them, or talk to them cannot expect their children to be attracted to their religion. I'm afraid we are losing some of our most talented young people because they are deciding they don't want a religion that keeps children from having parents.

*Second, the church suffers at the leadership level.* In the last five years, I have known of a number of elders and

deacons who represent congregations in various parts of the United States and who have resigned from leadership. They have decided that if church work means being away from their families most every night of the week, they simply can no longer be church leaders. Some feel they live in a fish bowl. Very quietly and tactfully they resign. The church loses their leadership skills and talent. Furthermore, we experience a high dropout rate among ministers, who for various reasons, decide to invest their energies elsewhere. Again, capable Bible teachers spend large blocks of their time and energies in a number of very creative activities (teachers' meetings, seminars, workshops, etc.), but their family sees less and less of them. Many of them decide to resign and the Body of Christ is hurt. So in several communities, a leadership crisis has developed in the Lord's church.

*Third, widespread tension and discouragement grips many members.* Part of it is part of the culture. For instance, Dr. Roy W. Menninger, President, The Menninger Foundation, estimates that depression characterizes as much as "70% of the population."<sup>4</sup>

One of our nation's news journals calls "depression," the disease of the 70's. As more and more families find themselves trying to walk a tightrope between their family life and life in the church, deep inner stresses and tensions increase. Not finding the proper balance, some members grow very discouraged and even depressed. The tension, depression, and discouragement exacts a heavy price in the church.

*Fourth, sacrificing our families on the altars of service creates a credibility problem for the church.* We are spending great amounts of time, effort, and money in teaching others, in reaching out to the real needs of real people, and in being more concerned about the lost of the earth. For this, I am truly grateful and believe that we should step up all of our efforts to reach the lost. But if we make even "superhuman" efforts to save others, while at the same time losing our own

families, we have created a credibility problem for ourselves. Those who are potential Christians will question our believability. They see, of course, that if we cannot convert and retain our own family members, that our own message maybe suspect. As Lynn Knight of Michigan Christian College mentioned to me: "What profit is it to evangelize the whole world and lose our own families. Our families are part of that world."

*Fifth, when we sacrifice our families on the altars of service, we kill the future of the church.* The Bible lays down a very basic principle — strong families and strong single people make a strong church. Equally true is the converse — weak families and weak single people make a weak church. There are no exceptions to this! So when God calls upon His people to choose their leaders, He first requires that they be leaders in their own families: if anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's Church? (I Timothy 3:5). God's plan is to develop strong families out of which will come a strong church. Whenever we sacrifice our families, we immediately tamper with the future of the church.

### **Preventing Loss of Our Families**

While living in the Pacific Northwest, we noticed that as large lumber companies began to cut down evergreens in the Cascade Mountains, they replenished what they had cut down by planting seedlings. One of the major lumber companies, for example, plants ten seedlings for each tree which they cut. They have learned that prevention of the problem rather than treatment of the problem is really the most effective and the simplest way to deal with it.

In a similar way, we can do a great deal to *prevent* "imbalance" by taking some very specific and practical steps.

**Suggestion No. 1**

*Let us give our homes high priority.* The most crucial and significant decision that any person will ever make is the decision of how he will relate to God through Jesus Christ. Much of the teachings of Jesus Christ is calling for total commitment — a complete and wholehearted giving over of one's self to following Jesus.

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters — yes, even his own life — he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:25-27).

But to understand the statement of Jesus as meaning that our families are to be of low priority is to misunderstand this passage. In fact, the Bible teaches that the second most important decision that a person makes in his life is the decision of marriage and subsequent decisions that relate to his family. After I have become a New Testament Christian, God prioritizes my ministries: (1) He gives me my wife; (2) He gives me my children; (3) beyond them, He gives me others. Others share my responsibility in the church and in the work of the church. But no one else shares my responsibilities in the family. I believe that we must capture husbands and fathers in the church and train them and teach them to give their homes high priority. Older women need to train the younger women. Parents must train children and instruct them in the teachings of Jesus. The issue is really not whether we love Jesus *more* than our families. It must be that we love Jesus so much that we teach our families.

Think for a moment of Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth. Both gave obedient service to God, but both reared a John the Baptist. Among the many effective Christian parents I

have known are Dave and Ruth Floyd, now living in Arkansas. We knew them in Los Angeles when Dave served as a deacon and Ruth served as a dedicated Bible teacher. In addition to their fine service to the Lord and His church, they raised five Christian children who now faithfully serve God. If it is not out of place to mention it, I pay tribute to my own father and mother who have for years served in the Lord's church. He has served faithfully as an elder and she as an effective Bible teacher of children. But they also passed on the torch of faith to their two children.

Sure, it will require greater effort, more time, additional planning, and hard work to give our families high priority. But there is no worthwhile activity for which preparation, planning and work are not needed.

### **Suggestion No. 2**

*Let us enjoy our Christian families.* Some of the most tragic battles which take place today are not in foreign battle fields, but around the kitchen tables, in the dens and living rooms of our homes. Arguments, criticisms, and silence leave casualties filled with wounds and hurts. While the Bible clearly pictures families in conflicts, it provides families with spiritual power to work through those conflicts, to build relationships and to enjoy one another. I'm afraid that we assume that our families will be enriched simply by our presence, but it doesn't just *happen*. I know this is not what our culture tells us. For our culture believes in shortcuts, "magic push buttons," and "ten easy steps." But if we are to enjoy our families, we must effectively plan times of enrichment.

One of the traditions in our family life is a Monday evening family night. Typically, our family night consists of a Bible teaching, prayer, singing, discussion of family matters, games, and a special dessert which Barbara has prepared for

us. We also believe that we should enjoy our meals together and that they should not be times of dissension and argument. About three years ago, I heard a man describe how he remembered his father. Two things have stayed in his memory about his Dad: that every night he prayed to God and that frequently they wrestled together in the middle of the living room rug. So Edith Schaffer says in her very fine book *What Is A Family?*, that a family is a "museum of memories." What kind of memories are you building into your family?

### Suggestion No. 3

*Affirm your family.* Are we tempted to affirm others, even those who are strangers, before we affirm our own family members?

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. . . . Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Ephesians 4:29,32).

You are not being "phony" or "counterfeit" when you genuinely commend your marriage partner or one of your children. Guess what happens when we affirm the *behaviour* of one of our family members? Why, they do everything possible to do it again! Let's give one another positive reinforcement. God did that for each of us.

### Suggestion No. 4

Use your gift as your ministry. When we understand and practice the great Biblical doctrine of gifts and ministries, we will be able to achieve the proper "balance" in our lives. The Bible teaches that "we have different gifts, according to the

grace given us" (Romans 12:6). A survey of these "gifts" shows them to be what we normally call "abilities" or "talents." For example, there is the gift of "serving," "teaching," "encouraging," "hospitality," and many, many other gifts. As each Christian discovers his own gift "each one should use whatever spiritual gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms" (I Peter 4:10). No room for jealousy or envy in God's Plan, for "God has arranged the parts in the Body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be" (I Corinthians 12:18). The exercise of each Christian's ability becomes his ministry or work of service. Each Christian is to use his own gift in his own ministry "so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the son of God and become mature" (Ephesians 4:12-13).

There is so much more to be said about this very basic doctrine which operates in the life of the church. In fact, Wendell Broom of Abilene Christian University has an outstanding message on this subject and I am especially grateful to him for what he has taught me about it. My point is that balance takes place when I know my gift and use it as my ministry. It is when I am unsure of my gift and find myself doing many things for which I have no talent that I begin to lay my family upon the altar of service and lose them.

I believe that the churches of Christ are a reservoir of untapped abilities and talents. Let us discover our gifts, exercise our ministries, and achieve balance between our family life and church life.

### **Suggestion No. 5**

*Trust the Lord to work in your family.* Our lives pivot upon faith — a reliance upon a Power beyond us. As we trust God to work in our missions, our evangelism, and our benevolence, let us trust Him to also work in our families.

Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain (Psalm 127:1).

I am especially grateful that the future of my own family does not rest in my own ingenuity, intelligence, and ability. I simply stumble too many times and have to return to them with my repentance, apology, and request for forgiveness. Aren't you grateful that you and I can trust the Lord to work in our family — to bring His power, strength, and wisdom to bear upon each member of our families?

It is true that "without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to God" and that includes trusting God to work in our families. When we do what He has asked us to do and leave the rest in His hands, our families are safe and secure. The future of the church is secure. And God is honored.

More than anything else in the world I want my family to go to Heaven when they die. I know you want that for your family. And so we come to the same conclusion Wallace Nutting reached in his autobiography when he tells of Dr. Smith Baker. One day Dr. Baker guided a five-year-old down a busy street. Holding her hand and preoccupied with other thoughts, Dr. Baker practically dragged her across an intersection. When they reached the other side, she said, "Stop! Dr. Baker, you know, you would be a very nice man, if you would only wake up." And I believe that we will be a very great church if we will only "wake up."

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>"Many Executives In Trap, Doctor Says," *Los Angeles Times*, Circa, 1976.

<sup>2</sup>Vance Packard, *A Nation of Strangers*, (McKay Publications, New York, 1972), p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>*Business Week*, August 23, 1976, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup>*U.S. News and World Report*, May 1, 1978, p. 80.

# Student Lectures

# PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

Jack Evans

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A beautiful wedding is not always indicative of a beautiful marriage. For a wedding is planned over a period of weeks or months and is executed within a matter of minutes or hours. But a marriage is quite different. It is not designed to last for a few hours or days, but for a lifetime. Therefore, the most plans and preparation must be made for "after the wedding," the marriage itself.

Marriage is a holy union between two persons, male and female, having been instituted by God in the Garden of Eden. God saw that it was not good for man to be alone. And He, therefore, gave him a companion as a suitable help to him. The joining of Adam and Eve in marriage made them one flesh before God, and served as an example for all such relationships of their progeny.

Marriage, however, is not only the joining of two bodies, it is the joining of destinies. After the ceremonies are over, sorrow for one will become sorrow for the other and good fortune for one will become good fortune for the other. If the husband becomes a failure in his work, the wife will share the consequent economic burden; if he becomes successful, she will share in the joys of that success. Marriage also has an effect on the eternal destinies of the marital partners. For one spouse, because of his or her attitude toward spirituality, could cause the other to be spiritually strengthened or weakened. For example, the actions of Eve in the Garden affected Adam. Paul said, "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (I Tim. 2:14). And though Eve was deceived, Adam was as guilty as she. This example illustrates the fact that it is well for both persons who are contemplating marriage to understand, before marriage, that their two destinies are joined in marriage, even to the point of eternity.

It is also necessary for marriage partners to understand, before marriage, that marriage always exacts a price, for both partners give up a great deal when they unite their two lives. The woman usually, though not always, gives up many of her personal, professional goals. She is likely to be handicapped, both physically and economically, by childbearing and by child-care. Her place of residency, regardless of her preference, will largely be dictated by her husband's vocational interest. And while the woman must give up much of her individuality, the man must also give up much. His marriage means that he is no longer free to use all that he earns for his own life, he must share it. He can no longer give his entire attention to his work or profession, for a wife, and eventually, children, necessitate the expenditure of time as well as money. Thus, the selfishness of the individual must be abandoned in marriage. And one must realize this in preparing for marriage.

Preparing for marriage also involves the understanding that marriage is not a mere contract, it is a commitment. The commitment includes the acceptance of the family relationship as unconditional. The spouses' responsibilities to each other are not dependent on the health, success, or character of the other, for they must pledge "for better or for worse." One partner may become ill, but this is not an "escape clause" for the other, for they must pledge "in sickness and in health." Economic difficulties may be encountered, but a part of the commitment is "for richer, for poorer." And to show the permanency of their union, a part of the commitment is "so long as we both shall live." If marriage were a mere contract, it would have an "escape clause." Thus the binding nature of marriage makes it imperative for the young to begin preparing for it at an early age.

The Christian young person has a great responsibility in preparing for marriage, because of what marriage means to the Christian. Because of the fact that marriage is a matter of

choice, the Christian understands that he or she cannot choose just anyone to marry. He or she must choose a prospective life's partner of whom God approves. Dr. Zelma Green of Harding College, in her book entitled *Christian Male/Female Relationships*, gives the following outline as a list of characteristics that are essential in Christian marriage partners:

1. No other marital ties (Matt. 5:31-32).
2. A believer (similar values — II Cor. 6:14).
3. Free from crippling characteristics (drug addiction, alcoholism, temper fits, mental illness, and sex deviation — I Cor. 6:9).
4. The woman must respect the man enough to obey him (Col. 3:18).
5. The man must love his wife (Col. 3:19).
6. The man must be able to provide for his family economically (I Tim. 5:8).

Dr. Green also points out that the time for one to determine the kind of partner he or she will marry is before he or she becomes emotionally involved with a companion. Once one becomes emotionally involved with another, it is much easier for him or her to rationalize and compromise the basic qualities for which he or she has been looking in a prospective marriage partner.

Why should a young Christian marry? While the biological need of sex is a part of the reason for one's marrying, it is by no means the most important, as many people think. The body does not lead the spirit in the Christian, the spirit leads the body. Therefore, a Christian does not marry for "love-making," he or she marries for love. And this love means not to own and to possess, but to be owned and to be possessed. It must be a selfless love, like that of Christ's for His church. The social, cultural, and economic ends found in the Christian's marriage are only by-products of the Christians' true love for each other. This kind of love in marriage will

culminate in companionship of minds, bodies, emotions, and spirits, where each has time, concern, and a sense of responsibility for the other. Therefore, if a person is not ready to love and be loved, and be a companion in all aspects to another, he or she should not marry.

A Christian young person should marry when he or she is willing and ready to leave the security of home and parental care and, by faith, begin the development of his or her own home and security. Jesus said, quoting God's original marital proclamation, ". . . For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh" (Matt. 19:5). Thus, "leaving and cleaving" are basic essentials in marriage. A woman must be able to sever her home ties and accept the needs, interests, and decisions of her husband in preference to that of her family. She must be mature enough to give up her selfish desires for the total good of her husband and family. She must be willing to assume the maternal responsibilities of homemaker and child-care.

A Christian man must be willing not only to "leave and cleave," he must be ready to accept financial responsibility for his wife and eventual family. He must be able to be the "house band" around his family, setting the moral and spiritual tone for his household. The Bible says, "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Tim. 5:8). The Christian man is guided by this admonition.

In summary, to prepare for marriage, a couple should communicate candidly about their respective views on such matters as religion, money, childbearing and rearing, friends, entertainment, likes and dislikes, family relations, goals in life, and what they each expect of marriage. These things have no bearing whatever on having a "beautiful wedding," but they are of utmost importance in having a beautiful marriage.

# LOVE THAT LASTS

Gary Beauchamp

"... And they married and lived happily ever after." Wouldn't it be wonderful if every love story could work out that way? We live in a devastating time marriage-wise. With a divorce occurring approximately every 2-1/2 marriages, there is great cause for alarm. There has to be a reason for this dilemma, and there must be a solution.

I believe the reason and the solution are bound in the simple fact that young people today are not entering marriages prepared for the responsibilities and the life-style they are going to have to accept after the ceremony and honeymoon become a lovely memory.

Before you marry, then, let us consider some basic facts which may help you be a person better equipped and prepared for the union into which you shall be entering.

## Is Marriage For You?

The Bible has many passages which speak both in favor of and against the marriage state. Paul especially (I Cor. 7:26, I Cor. 7:32-35, I Cor. 7:39-40) makes a plea for some to remain single. The total Biblical picture is this: For some, God's gift is marriage, and He can best be served through the marital state; for others it is to remain single, for this state also produces great works for the glory of God. To marry or not to marry is an individual matter between you and God. No one else can decide it for you, and you can't make up another's mind. There are some factors which you should consider in determining whether, at this point, marriage is for you:

I. In marriage one experiences a loss of personal freedom. This is difficult for many to accept. You have studied and striven for your chosen career; would you be content if marriage meant giving this up? These restrictions of freedom

are explicit. I Corinthians 7:4 mentions your forfeiture of control over your own body. The wife is instructed in Ephesians 5 to submit to her husband as to the Lord. The husband is given the responsibility to love this woman and care for her as for his own body.

II. In marriage one forfeits a private, independent nature. All single people have lived unto themselves for many years and have developed some fairly set patterns of living and modes of behavior. Any person who enters marriage with the attitude "I dare you to change me" is asking for serious marital problems, because the attitude must be one of total sublimation of "my will to yours" from both partners.

III. In marriage, one compromises individuality. *Compromises*, not "giving-up." Marriages are made of a series of compromises. "I love antiques." "You love all-chrome, black and white living areas." "We" learn how to adjust these desires so both are comfortable in "our" home.

### Whom You Marry . . .

Being truly realistic, I readily acknowledge that after knowing all the above considerations to be true, there is that chemical, mystical, uncertain reaction that is experienced with a member of the opposite sex that says, "Whatever the cost, I'll pay."

Please consider this factor about the one you choose.

Your mate in marriage plays the one singular most influential role in your life. Spiritually, emotionally, financially, physically, mentally, your married partner determines your effectiveness in each of these areas. Therefore, there are some important questions to consider.

Is it well for my soul to marry this person? On what does this person base his guidance for life? Many persons meet the "right one," teach them the basics of the Christian obedience plan, baptize them while the spirit is willing, and then

are thrilled to “marry a Christian.” A Christian they may be, granted, but if you are a person who has matured in the Lord, who has a deep commitment to His cause and a strong belief in the Biblical plan for salvation and life, can you be satisfied to serve life with a “babe in the Lord?” I believe of all the counseling I do with young “Christian” couples, this is one of the most prevalent problem areas. They dated, argued religion occasionally, he or she consented to be baptized, they married, and now the partner wants to revert to his or her old religious or non-religious state. They may hanker for some of the “good old days” with former buddies, or decide that Sunday is the only day they have off and want to sleep in Sunday morning through Bible study, maybe worship also — and want you to stay with them. CONFLICT, with capital letters. At times, loss of respect, etc.

For the ladies, it means a difficult conflict being expected to submit to a husband like this. To some degree, you are going to have your whole life shaped by his decisions. Does he let God show him the right direction for his life? What kind of authority-figure is he going to provide for your children?

Men also have a difficulty here. No Christian man wants to father a child who will be influenced daily, from birth to death, by a mother who doesn't place her trust and faith in the Lord, teach God's love when she rises and when she walks in the paths of life.

I don't believe any person can decide what path is best for his or her life without first turning it over to the Lord to add His part to the decision. So often, we pray to God asking for Him to direct us and then provide Him with all the facts lined up to support an already-achieved decision. This is like the story of Paul about the potter and the clay. It is laughable to imagine clay telling the potter what to do with its form, but it is no more ridiculous than man trying to tell God what is best for his life. God made us. God knows what place we fill in the

scheme of things. Go to Him as you prepare for marriage, and pray that He will guide you to the right person for your soul; and make you the right person, too.

### **Considering Needs Before Marriage**

One of the most attractive aspects of the single life is filling only one's own needs. The married life is quite different. Sharing life with another person means being aware of and responsible for the needs of one's mate.

#### **Needs of a Husband**

A husband needs a wife whose one desire in life is to please him and make him a successful husband. This is a wife who not only obeys him, but is submissive to him. Her attitude toward him is one of reverence and respect. She sees him as God's hand in her life, molding her, and she is yielded to God's purpose in him. She shows her submission by being creative and anticipating his needs before he expresses them.

A husband needs a wife who reverences him as God's authority in the home. A husband needs the support of a wife who recognizes his position and who is willing to acknowledge that God has put him in a particular place in the home. This is his place; he has responsibilities that must be taken and shouldered.

A husband needs a wife who trains the children to be loyal and loving to God and to their father. Many wives wound the spirit of their husbands by not training the children to be loyal to their father. The wife uses the children as a means to obtain revenge against her husband. She shares with the children her husband's faults and failures, thereby training them to take sides and be disloyal. The husband needs support as the authority in the home.

A husband needs the physical love of his wife. The hus-

band needs to know that he is the only man with whom she shares the victories and the defeats of life. He needs the physical comfort that God has designed to go into marriage. A wife who is creative can meet her husband's physical needs with a joyful attitude.

These are not all the needs of a husband, but at least they will get you started.

### **Needs of a Wife**

A wife needs a husband who accepts his responsibility as spiritual leader of the home. If most women are honest they would admit that they want a spiritual leader more than they want a successful husband. They want a husband who is not ashamed to take the initiative and come closer to God. They want a man who is willing to admit when he is wrong. He is willing to make restitution, when possible, for his failure. They want a man who will go on his knees before God in order to find God's direction for his family. No wife is pleased with a self-deceived husband who thinks he is in charge, but in reality is a failure because he has not made God a vital part of his life.

A wife needs a husband who loves her with sacrificial devotion. She needs to know that he is willing to sacrifice anything: his job, his career, his ambitions, his pleasures, his other friends, in order to meet her needs, (if absolutely necessary).

A wife needs to know that her husband is a one-woman man; not only that he is not sharing physical affection with other women, but she is the only woman in his life with whom he shares his victories and defeats. He is totally committed to her and there are no other women with whom he shares. A wife needs communication. A wife needs to talk, she needs to communicate with her husband, and she needs a husband who is willing to be open enough to communicate with her. Husbands need to realize that the point of view of their wives is different from that of a husband. While

the husband sees a broader prospective than his wife, the wife sees a point of view that is mostly concerned with the home and its relationship. Husbands needs take special care to allow their wives to talk to them and learn how to communicate not only in word, but also in spirit.

A wife needs genuine praise. Wives need to be appreciated. They do many little things that are taken for granted, and their spirits are easily wounded. A wife needs a husband who is sensitive and thoughtful enough to appreciate her and express that appreciation openly.

I would suggest that if you make it a goal in your married life to meet the needs of your partner creatively, your motivation for life will turn from wanting to giving, and you will experience genuine love for your partner in a way greater than you ever thought possible.

### **The Spiritual Unity of Marriage**

The night I knew my wife and I were destined to a life together was when we sat alone in a car and solemnly vowed that the most important goal in our lives was first to go to Heaven, secondly, to go there together. Up to this time we had played the games people play; experienced the usual break-ups and subsequent make-ups; generally handling our relationship as frivolously as a yo-yo. But something happened this night (it had been developing all along, only we were too immature and self-centered to notice) that took our one-as-one relationship, and changed it into a one-on-one-on-One commitment.

We were suddenly awed by the knowledge that God, who placed the solar system into being and keeps it from flying apart, was also holding our lives in place at the core and if He would remain there, would keep us from flying apart. We didn't know then what a heavy impact this knowledge would have on our lives, on our life together. We had not learned the bedrock principle out of which the greatest degree of

intimacy and love in marriage would evolve. Unfortunately, many couples in and most out of the church never learn this key of keys to marriage at its best. I want to share it with you, although you are single at this moment, because if there ever is a time when your condition will be subject to change, I pray you will keep this principle as a prerequisite for marriage. A married couple must be held together at the center by a holy love which is stronger than their own. Charlie Shedd, noted marriage counsellor, said it this way: "That couple who understands that their union is for Someone greater than the two of them has discovered the secret gate to marriage at its best."

At its human level, marriage is a uniting of two persons into a bond of oneness. They become one in purpose, in interest, in flesh, in economics, in a familiar group, in name. The intimacy which is enjoyed by this couple interlocks their beings into a bond which overcomes their separateness. This horizontal union is a beautiful thing. If you can make a visual picture of a man and woman joining hands, you see a horizontal, unbroken line. All the interaction and communication which flows back and forth along this line is necessary and essential for them to maintain a healthy marital situation.

At any point, however, one or both of them could break this line by refusing to keep the harmonious giving and taking continuous. For example when a husband and wife communicate fully about all activities of their day, they stay current and knowledgeable about the other. If, however, one partner decides to withhold a part of his experience, the line weakens at one link. If that is a volatile area, like perhaps finances, or sexual feelings, the consequences of that weak link could become a break in the line. A deep commitment between two lives will not stand long with a break in this line before the relationship suffers or fails. If I had to name the one factor that accounts for more marriage break-ups than

any other it would not be infidelity, sexual incompatibility, money problems, or religious differences. It would be lack of communication. The horizontal line that binds a marriage together is the blending of thoughts and feelings which are openly expressed by each person in the relationship.

A couple who exist, however, solely for their own gratification, even if it is based on an unselfish interest in the other, is not experiencing a full and complete life together. The horizontal line is vital and must be maintained, but in the fullest expression of their intimacy, there is a vertical dimension that leads to the Heavenly throne of God. No single factor does more to give a marriage joy, or to keep it both a venture and an adventure in mutual fulfillment, than a shared commitment to spiritual discovery. I believe that one single most important and necessary element of marriage is spiritual intimacy. I mean the sense of a vital relationship with that which transcends our brief, fragile existence, that which finds value and meaning and love at its ultimate best.

If you will recall the visual image mentioned at the start of this section, of two people with joined hands forming a continuous horizontal line; I now ask you to add to that picture a line extending from Above which joins God's hands with the other hands of the couple. Now the couple is complete, the communication between the partners now adds a new vertical dimension which enhances their bond and completes the circle of love.

So deeply personal is the life of the spirit within us that when we are able to share this aspect of our life with another we are sharing the most tender and precious kinship we experience. So delicate is the life-line of union, *The Prophet* said: "Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping. For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts." When we can safely place our trust and hearts — into the hands of God, then we have taken the step that will bind us for eternity.

Perhaps it is this element of trust that is the greatest by-product of life of spiritual intimacy. Knowing that I hold fast to the hand of God and my mate means that I have no need of fear. I John 4:16-18:

“God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. Love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The man who fears is not made perfect in love.”

Dag Hammarskjöld described the experience of trust in marriage this way: “To let go of the image which, in the eyes of this world, bears your name, the image in your consciousness of social ambition and sheer force of will. To let go and fall, fall — in trust and blind devotion. Toward another, another . . .” Having a source of regular trust which is renewed in one’s spiritual life provides a steady foundation for trustful human relationships. Vertical trust is particularly helpful in periods of marital stress when horizontal trust is weakened. A couple which shares a robust spiritual vitality feels undergirded with faith and the strength of God’s presence; this stabilizes their relationship when it is buffeted by fate and tragedy. This trusting intimacy is difficult, if not impossible, without a spiritual center and source.

How do you maintain this vertical element in marriage? The same way you sustain the horizontal line — communication. Communication with God. It is an old cliché, but one that is true: “The family who prays together stays together.” A man and woman who never talked to one another could not consider themselves as being one and as being intimate creatures; neither could a couple consider their relationship with the Father a healthy, loving bond without communicat-

ing with Him. The links that bind our Triad of Unity are all dependent on this one factor: I must be willing to give of myself openly and fully to my mate and to my God; I must be willing to receive openly and fully God's presence and love and that of my mate.

I like to recommend to couples who come to me for initial counselling that they make a contract to set aside some time each day when they can look God-ward together. I do not necessarily feel this needs to be a time of praying aloud together — some people are not comfortable with that — but a special time when we can close out life's mundane, nagging problems and regain our spiritual peace and unity, and keep the marriage on the Heavenly plane where it belongs.

I hear some sociologists asserting that one solution to the increasing marital breakdown of our times is to make divorce harder. That is not the answer. It is to make marriage what it should be. And what it should be is a sacred triad relationship between the Lord and you and your mate forever.

When you find the person who makes you want to give up your singleness and become a couple, remember to look first for the spiritual unity of your souls; then God's richest blessings will flow on you and yours abundantly.

# A FUNNY THING HAPPENED TO SEX ON THE WAY TO THE 20th CENTURY!

Prentice A. Meador, Jr.

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We live in a sex-saturated society. According to the "Today Show" (NBC-TV), an issue of Newsweek on "Sex and TV" has become a best selling copy. Our society shows great interest in sex. The ten leading sexually oriented magazines — so called "skin" magazines (*Playboy*, *Penthouse*, *Hustler*, *Oui*, *Playgirl*, *Club*, *Gallery*, *Chic*, *Genesis*, *High Society*) — will make about \$475 million this year. Add to that two million Americans each week spending an average of \$3.50 a ticket to see films in the 780 adult film theaters which will gross over \$360 million. Americans spend another \$100 million on what Duane Colglazer, head of the Pleasure Chest chain of sex shops, calls sexual toys: lubricants, creams, vibrators, massagers and other devices.<sup>1</sup>

Students of our age decipher three results of our sex exploitation: sexual revolution, moral relativism, and the breakdown of marriage.<sup>2</sup>

Many of us in our generation remember when movies were rated on how good they were, not on who was allowed to see them. Audiences for pornographic movies are typically people over the age of 35, though more and more singles and married couples in their middle to late 20's are attracted to "skin flicks."

What shall the people of the church do? Shall we be confused, scared to get involved, out of touch, backward, or reactionary? Or shall we be open and deal with it? In the midst of such confusion and exploitation, we need to consider the Biblical view of sexuality.

### **The Bible and Sex**

*The Bible is a window through which God sheds light on our sexuality.* Let's notice two large panes which make up this window.

#### **WINDOW PANE NO. 1 — *Genesis 2:23-25*:**

Here is a magnificent comment on the meaning of sexuality.

The man said, 'this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man. For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame (Genesis 2:23-25).

As Adam catalogues God's creation, he realizes that there is no one like him. A star, a snake, an ocean, a bird — none of these creations is capable of sustaining a relationship with a human being. So after looking at all of God's creation man feels *lonely*. "The Lord God said 'it is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'" (Genesis 2:18). God creates an appropriate companion, different from man, but capable of relationship, communication, and commitment. Together with God, man and woman make a life long covenant. One God plus one man plus one woman equals one life. Though both were "naked," they felt no shame."

This great window pane sheds light in two ways on our sexuality. *First, it teaches us that maleness and femaleness are no accidents, but central to being "human."* Created in the image of God, human beings are capable to relationships, communication, and commitment. So sexual love is related to our creation in the image of God.

*Second, sexual love takes place before man's fall into sin.* Oh, I know that religion has sometimes said that the fall of man created sexual passion. But that is not Biblically true! The fall of man does not take place until Genesis 3 and sexual love is present before man and woman's disobedience of God's will. Man's fall did not create passion but distorted it. In the heart and language of God sexual love is pronounced along with all of God's creation as "good."

So in the very beginning, sexual love is a part of a strong, personal, mutual, relationship. There is nothing cheap, ugly, nor dirty about it. It is God's creation and He says "it is good."

**WINDOW PANE NO. 2— *Song of Solomon*:**

I think we may have often missed the point of this great book because we are not able to look it in the face. How many sermons have you ever heard based on *Song of Solomon*? Why have commentators tried to rationalize the very clear statements of *Song of Solomon* as it openly discusses a beautiful and meaningful sexual relationship between husband and wife?

*Song of Solomon* is a poetic commentary on the truths of Genesis 1 and 2. The light it sheds upon sexuality makes very clear three basic truths.

*First, love is mutual.* I know our culture tells you that a woman exists for the pleasure of a man, but that is not what *Song of Solomon* teaches.

LOVER: How beautiful you are, my darling!  
Oh, how beautiful!  
Your eyes are doves.

BELOVED: How handsome you are, my lover!  
Oh, how charming!  
And our bed is verdant.

(Song of Solomon 1:15, 16)

Here is a reciprocal commitment and longing for one another. Husband and wife are lovers. Sexual love is a two-way street with no manipulation, no cheapness, no phony-ness.

*Second, love is total.* That is, sexual love is a commitment of one person to another person. They become "one flesh." There is a fusion and completeness.

BELOVED: All night long on my bed  
I looked for the one my heart loves;  
I looked for him but did not find him.  
I will get up now and go about the city,  
through its streets and squares;  
I will search for the one my heart loves.  
(Song of Solomon 3:1-2)

LOVER: How beautiful you are, my darling!  
Oh, how beautiful!  
Your eyes behind your veil are doves.  
Your hair is like a flock of goats  
descending from Mount Gilead. . . .  
All beautiful you are, my darling;  
there is no flaw in you.  
(Song of Solomon 4:1, 3, 7)

Now if you tell the one you love that her "hair is like a flock of goats descending from Mount Gilead," you may be in trouble. But that sight, as seen even today in Palestine, stands for the grace and symmetry of beauty. He is completely in love with his wife.

*Third, love is loyal.* There is an exclusive attachment which love brings about.

Place me like a seal over your heart,  
like a seal over your arm;

for love is as strong as death,  
its jealousy unyielding as the grave.  
It burns like a blazing fire,  
like a mighty flame.  
Many waters cannot quench love;  
rivers cannot wash it away.  
If one were to give  
all the wealth of his house for love,  
it would be utterly scorned.

(Song of Solomon 8:6-7)

Here there is the strong commitment of love. The entire book of *Song of Solomon* shows us that sexuality in marriage is wholesome, right, sanctified, and pure. Here there is clarity without pornography, warmth without promiscuity, and truth without crudeness. It is light!

### BLURRED WINDOWS

What has happened to the Biblical windows through which God has shed His clear light on human sexuality? What has happened to the Biblical view of sexuality? To the warmth, clarity, purity, and pleasure which God says is a part of the sexual relationship in marriage.

*A funny thing happened to sex on the way to the 20th Century!* Yet it's not so funny! For after the Bible is completed, "sex" has a dreary, discouraging, and dark history.

Dwight H. Small, in his book *Christian: Celebrate Your Sexuality* ably traces this history. He begins by recasting the delightful story of Ashley Montagu by placing Montagu's story in a church setting in the 5th Century of the Christian area.

There we can see a local cleric returning from a solemn assembly to report to a fellow monastic (he would not likely have had a wife to report to): Dear brother, I hate to so say, but that controversial bishop of Hippo,

Augustine himself, declared to our solemn assembly that man is a sexual being. Where upon the fellow cleric, duly taken aback, exclaimed, "man a sexual being! Do pray God it is not true! But if it is, let us earnestly beseech Heaven that it will not become generally known."<sup>3</sup>

Small points out that "dualism" makes sexual relationships dirty, cheap, sinful, and this creates an atmosphere for celibacy.

As sex moves towards the 20th Century, church leaders clearly reveal they believe sex and sin go together. Origen regards all sex as sin.

Tertullian "We do not reject marriage, but simply refrain from it."

Jerome "I do not condemn wedlock. Indeed, I should like everyone to take a wife who cannot manage to sleep alone because he gets frightened at night."

Ambrose considers marriage "a galling burden."

Peter Lombard warns that the Holy Spirit leaves the room when a married couple engages in sexual intercourse.<sup>4</sup>

By the time of the middle ages, the Catholic church derogates sex. It commands abstinence to be maintained on five of every seven days. In fact, Small writes, "The church also specified the number of days each year when the sexual act could be legitimately performed."<sup>5</sup>

Intercourse is not to take place on Thursdays (in memory of the arrest of Jesus) on Fridays (in memory of the death of Jesus), on Saturdays (in memory of Mary) on Sundays (in memory of the Resurrection), on Mondays (in memory of the faithfully departed). Add to that 40 days of Lenten, 40 days before Christmas, and 3 days before attending communion and any period of penance. In addition, "newly married couples must refrain three nights after their marriage".<sup>6</sup>

No wonder Small entitles his chapter "Don't Blame The Puritans!"

By the Victorian Period, William James, in two volumes of his famous *Principles of Psychology*, writes only one page on sex and ends that page with this sentence, "These details are a little unpleasant to discuss . . . ."7

By the 1970's, the inhibitions are gone. Manipulation, permissiveness, "open" marriage and "fooling around" — these are all part of our sexual culture. In confusion, misunderstanding, ignorance, we try to walk through our time without clear light on sexuality. So we need to return to the Biblical windows of sexuality. Please consider these suggestions.

**SUGGESTION NO. 1:** *Increase your knowledge.*

Carefully read the many Old and New Testament passages on sexuality. Add to that some of the very fine books and tapes based on accurate understandings of our body and personality. Don't mistake permissiveness for understanding. Many, many people have a very inadequate knowledge of sexuality which comes out of our history, from our culture, and from people who have been taught sexual error.

**SUGGESTION NO. 2:** *Model sex after Christ and the church, not the culture.*

Ephesians 5 gives the most practical, beautiful, and useful model of sexual relationships. He calls upon husbands and wives to model their relationship after Christ and the church. It is not that the world has tried this model and it has failed. To the contrary, most people have never really tried it! Most listen to the alluring voices of our culture rather than to the original marriage manual.

**SUGGESTION NO. 3:** *Recognize the great differences in human sexuality.*

The Bible makes clear that every one of us is unique,

stamped in the image of God, and not a carbon copy of each other. There is "maleness" and "femaleness" which suggest great differences. I know our culture cries "unisex," but the Bible points out that there are very real physical and emotional differences between a male and a female. A healthy sexual relationship is based upon the recognition of and a utilization of these differences.

**SUGGESTION NO. 4:** *If you marry, communicate with your marriage partner on sex.*

The Bible proclaims sex as "good." But in some marriages, it is the great unsaid subject, never to be discussed and thought of in rather cheap and shoddy ways. Silence is ambiguous. Your relationship with your marriage partner is as strong as your communication. Talk with your marriage partner about sexuality, your relationship, your feelings, your own fulfillment. You will build a strong marriage through your communication.

**SUGGESTION NO. 5:** *If you have children, train them with a healthy sexual education.*

Where will your children get their sexual education? Off the bathroom walls or from the Word of God? If you remain quiet on this all important subject, you will pass on to your children a vacuum which will be filled by the culture with all of its darkness and discouragement. If you will train your children, they will love you. Give the Biblical view of sex and you will lead them into human happiness and eternal life.

In conclusion, people are in frantic search for sexual meaning. For instance, in her penetrating look at sexuality in the 1970's, Elizabeth Hardwick, an advisory editor of the *New York Review of Books*, writes, "The sadness, the corruption, the meaningless of all this is one aspect of the 1970's."<sup>8</sup>

I believe the people of the church have the "good news,"

including the subject of sexuality. The time is urgent! The need is obvious! The answer comes from God.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>*Forbes*, September 18, p. 81

<sup>2</sup>Elizabeth Hardwick, "Domestic Manners," *Daedalus*, Winter, 1978, pp. 6-11.

<sup>3</sup>Dwight H. Small, *Christian: Celebrate Your Sexuality* (Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming Revell Company, 1974), p. 46

<sup>4</sup>Small, *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 52-53, 62-63.

<sup>5</sup>Small, *Ibid.*, p. 79

<sup>6</sup>Small, *Ibid.*, pp. 79.

<sup>7</sup>As quoted in Small, *Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>8</sup>Hardwick, *Daedalus*, Winter, 1978, p. 7.

# Exegesis of Difficult Passages

# HUSBANDS, WIVES, AND THE CHURCH

## An Exegesis of Ephesians 5:21-33

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In a day when major attacks on the home and marriage constitute an onslaught, it is necessary that Christians do more than merely decry the situation. With the number of annual divorces in the United States passing the one million mark for the first time in the mid-1970's, and with alternate life-styles being aggressively advocated and openly practiced, Christian marriage needs to be vigorously defended.

The greatest help possible lies in setting forth the beauties and satisfactions inherent in the ideal plan of Christian marriage, as presented in the Bible. Both a full explanation of Christian marriage and a true demonstration of its ideal qualities are needed.

At a time when many within the church are questioning the traditional views of marriage, divorce, and remarriage, a careful study of the teachings of the scriptures on this subject is also imperative. Are these calls, from very sincere and highly respected brethren, a result of unrecognized influence from the permissiveness of modern society, or are they more accurate interpretations of the scriptures? A valid answer to this imperative question can only come from a thorough re-study of the scriptures. Accordingly, we rejoice that the Abilene Christian University Lectureship has as its theme this year the challenging subject: "The Home in Crisis." We further rejoice in the assignments of this three-day class devoted to the exegesis of three vitally important passages: Ephesians 5:21-33, Deuteronomy 24:1-4, and Matthew 19:3-12. I personally appreciate the privilege of studying

with you Ephesians 5:21-33 as the beginning study in this series. Let us now begin.

### **The Principle of Submission**

Verse 21: "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ" (RSV). At this point the apostle Paul turns from the contrast between Christian and pagan morality to the application of Christian principles to personal relationships. This verse, included as the final statement of the preceding paragraph in the American Standard Version, is more logically included as the opening statement of the following paragraph, as in the Revised Standard Version. Actually, it introduces one of the basic principles of Christianity: mutual submission or subjection, based on reverence for Christ. In succeeding verses instructions are given concerning three classes of people who have reciprocal obligations. These include wives and husbands (verses 22-23), children and parents (chapter 6, verses 1-4), and servants and masters (verses 5-9).

This basic Christian principle of submission deserves additional emphasis before we go into more detail in our study of the specific verses of this text. Submission is one of the cardinal principles of Christianity. Among the passages which show that Christ was submissive to the will of God is John 14:10, 31, "The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does his works . . . I do as the Father has commanded. . . ." Similarly, in the garden, Jesus demonstrated his total submission to God when he prayed, "Father, if thou art willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

As one reads the scriptures it is also obvious that we must be in submission in many phases of our lives. First, there must be submission to God: (1) In identifying the greatest commandment Jesus said, ". . . You shall love the Lord

your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30). (2) We must also be submissive to Christ, for he said, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). (3) We must also be subject "to the governing authorities" (Romans 13:1). Peter added, "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, or to the governors as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right" (I Peter 2:13-14). (4) We must likewise be submissive to our elders or overseers in the church, for the writer of Hebrews said, "Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account" (Hebrews 13:17). (5) In the Ephesian passage under consideration we are admonished to submit to our fellow-Christians. In all of these relationships it is obvious that the Christian attitude is not one of demanding one's rights, but rather one of humble submission. What appears to the world as cowardice and weakness was demonstrated in Christ as strength and power. Jesus overcame the Roman legions not by calling upon legions of angels, but by submitting to the cross. This concept of submission is basic to Christianity.

The King James Version uses verse 21 to conclude the preceding paragraph, letting the participle "submitting" stand parallel to "giving thanks" earlier in the passage. The Revised Standard Version is more correct, however, in treating the participle as an imperative "be subject" and in putting the phrase at the head of the section which follows. Actually, this imperative is required to complete the thought of verse 22, which in Greek contains no verb at all.<sup>1</sup>

A.T. Robertson agrees, "It is possible to start a new paragraph here and regard *hupotassomenoi* as an independent participle like an imperative."<sup>2</sup>

The motivation for this mutual submission among Chris-

tians is "out of reverence for Christ." Alternate translations put it, "In the fear of God" (KJV), and "in the fear of Christ" (ASV). The submission which is urged upon Christians is based upon duty to Christ. Peter's way of saying it was, "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution" (I Peter 2:13), and Paul put it, "As is fitting in the Lord" (Colossians 3:18).

Mutual subjection is fundamental to the whole Christian conception of social relations and is the antithesis of the spirit of self-assertion and insistence on one's own rights. Jesus said to the apostles, ". . . whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26-28). Paul wrote concerning Christ that he "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant . . ." (Philippians 2:6-7).

### **The Responsibility of Wives**

Verse 22: "Wives, be subject to your husbands . . ." The verb is understood from verse 21. The root *hupotasso* comes from an old military figure meaning "to line up under." In every organization someone must be the head. This is true in the animal world, for we see it in colonies of ants, in hives of bees, and among other animals. It is also true among human social groups of all kinds. My former major professor, Dr. Ray K. Immel, of the University of Southern California, used to say, "If you hire two carpenters to build a simple one-car frame garage, you had better make one of them foreman." This apparently is what God has done in the family from the beginning of creation. The male is normally physically larger and stronger, possibly even in these qualities indicating his role of leadership. Throughout both Old

and New Testaments husbands are given the responsibilities of being head of the family.

There is no question but that wives are spiritually, intellectually, socially, legally, and otherwise equal to their husbands. Only in the responsibility of serving as head of the home is the husband above the wife. Nothing in this scripture requires the wife to do anything unrighteous or sinful. Nothing is required inconsistent with Christian character.

“. . . As to the Lord.” This does not mean that the wife is to give the same deference and loyalty to her husband that she gives to Christ, but that she is to submit to her husband as a duty owed to the Lord. Paul’s statement in Colossians 3:18 makes the matter a bit clearer, “as is fitting in the Lord.” Certainly the wife’s subjection to her husband is not unconditional, as is her subjection to the Lord. In some cases the wife’s submission might be compared to David’s respect for King Saul in the Old Testament, when he was fleeing for his life from jealousy-crazed Saul. Even though Saul was unworthy of respect, David spared his life “as God’s anointed.” The requirement that wives submit to their husbands is based not necessarily upon the worthiness of the husband, but upon the responsibilities placed upon wives by the teachings of Christ. It is interesting to notice that in I Peter 3:1 wives are to be submissive to their husbands even when the husbands are not Christians, and in that case the reason given is that the husbands may be won to Christ by the reverence and chaste behavior of their wives.

Verse 23: The apostle Paul here introduces his analogy: as Christ is to the church, so the husband is to the wife. This is somewhat parallel to his statement in I Corinthians 11:3, “I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a woman is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.”

“Savior.” While it is clear how Christ is the Savior or Redeemer of the church, it is not as clear how this fits into

the marriage analogy. F.F. Bruce comments, "The implication seems to be that the husband is the protector and defender of his wife."<sup>3</sup>

Verse 24: "... in everything . . ." It is understood that the wife is to be in subjection to her husband in everything that is compatible with the teachings of Christ. Christianity elevated the status of women above that among the Jews and even more especially above that among the pagan nations of the apostolic era. In view of what is to come in the further statements of this text woman's role of submission is not a burdensome or degrading thing, but rather a beautiful and intimate union with her husband.

### **The Responsibility of Husbands**

Verse 25: "... as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her . . ." This makes all the difference. This is the wonderful new element, not found in Colossians 3:19, which lifts the love of the Christian husband for his wife to the highest possible plane. The husband's love is not one of passion in this text, but one of the spirit. It must be self-forgetful, even self-sacrificing. After all, Christ did die for the church, because of his great love for her. The implication for husbands are great. Chrysostom, the "golden mouthed" preacher of ancient Greece, wrote concerning this text:

Wouldst thou that thy wife should obey thee as the church obeys Christ? Do thou then care for her, as Christ for the church, even if thou must lay down thy life for her — shrink not, shouldst thou suffer even this . . . Her that is the partner of thy life, the mother of thy children, the spring of all thy joy, thou must not bind by terror and threats, but by love and gentleness.

Verse 26: "That he might sanctify her . . ." The primary emphasis is upon Christ's relationship to the church. The

attention is drawn to Christ's consecration of the alien sinner to God's service at the time of his conversion. It is not clear how this portion of the analogy applies to husbands and wives.

" . . . having cleansed her by the washing of water . . ." The reference is obviously to Christian baptism or immersion. "This can scarcely be anything other than baptism; that is what the language would most naturally have conveyed to the original readers."<sup>5</sup>

This passage does not imply "baptismal regeneration," but rather that God applies his grace to the sinner at the time of his baptism. G.R. Beasley-Murray, the noted English Baptist scholar, comments, "Baptism is the occasion when the Spirit brings to new life him that believes in the Son of man."<sup>6</sup>

It may well be that Paul intended his analogy to include here the parallel between Christian baptism and the bath of the bride before marriage, followed by her being clothed in beautiful garments, as she was presented to her husband.

" . . . with the word . . ." Michael R. Weed has summarized the literature on the particular phrase as follows,

Reference to "the word" (*rhema*) may indicate a caution against separating the rite from its purpose (cf. I Peter 3:21) and has been taken variously as the gospel preached prior to baptism (cf. Romans 10:17; I Peter 1:23-25), the pronounced formula over the one baptized (cf. Matthew 28:19), the confession of the one baptized (see Colossians 3:17; cf. I Corinthians 1:2; Romans 10:9), or God's word of promise attached to baptism (I Peter 1:25).

At one point Christ said, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you" (John 15:3). Perhaps it is not out of place to point out here that we Christians are

begotten by the preaching of the word (I Peter 1:23 and James 1:18), my own personal preference among the possible interpretations.

Verse 27: “. . . that he might present the church to himself in splendor.” Alternate translation “a glorious church.” This should be rendered as a predicate in keeping with the Greek word order — Christ presents the church to himself clothed with the glory or splendor that he has given to her.

“. . . without spot or wrinkle . . .” Some have thought that “spots” refer to the indiscretions of youth, while “wrinkles” refer to the carelessness and decay of age.

“. . . holy without blemish.” The language suggests the idea of sacrifice, implying that the church is to be separate from that which is profane and worldly and that it is to be dedicated to the service of God. Both positive and negative purity is suggested. Christ earlier had suggested the idea of perfection, when he said, “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Perfection is not of man’s achieving, but comes only when he is in Christ as indicated in Colossians 1:28, “Every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

Verse 28: “. . . as their own bodies.” The adverb here is retrospective implying something like “with such a love as Christ had for the church” husbands ought to love their wives as being their own bodies. The idea is not that they should love their wives as they love their own bodies but that the wives should be considered parts of themselves. The closeness and intimacy of Christian marriage is truly the “one flesh” of which Adam and later Christ spoke. With this kind of oneness, it is difficult to see how Christians can put away their partners and marry someone else. It is totally out of keeping with God’s intentions for marriage. The analogy suggests that just as the church is Christ’s body, so husbands and wives are complementary parts of one personality. Verses 29 and 30 carry out this same emphasis. Husbands

nourish and cherish their wives and in so doing care for themselves. “. . . Of his flesh and of his bones” are not in the most dependable manuscripts, though the exclusion of this phrase in no way affects the central message.

Verse 31: Paul here introduces the familiar quotation from Genesis 2:24, repeated by Christ in Matthew 19:5, which stresses the intimacy and permanence of marriage. The usage here indicates that the marriage relationship was from the first a type of foreshadowing of the relationship of Christ and the church.

### Of Great Significance

Verse 32: “This mystery is a profound one . . .” The King James translation is a bit unfortunate, for the adjective in this phrase should be the predicate. The emphasis is not on “great mystery,” but rather on this mystery is “of profound significance.” In New Testament usage a “mystery” is not an enigma, but rather something that has been hidden but is now revealed. The Interpreter's Bible expresses it,

Here the ‘mystery’ is the revelation of the nature of human marriage, the union of two persons into one flesh, as declared in the story of its institution; and the writer tells us that in his view it is realized fully and perfectly only in the union of Christ and the church. This is the . . . transcendental bridal of which human marriage is a shadow and an allegory.<sup>8</sup>

The Latin Vulgate mistranslates this passage “*sacramentum hoc magnum*.” James Macknight comments, “It is upon this sole basis that the Roman church set up the claim that marriage is a sacrament.”<sup>9</sup>

Hendriksen has added, “If the simple fact had been observed that *Mystery* is the word Paul used here, (such) a mistake would never have occurred.”<sup>10</sup>

Of course, it is true that marriage is exalted and sacred and hence is comparable to Christ's relationship to the church, but it is not a sacrament, which implies that some divine transaction takes place in it, as in baptism.

Verse 33: "fear." Our text concludes with a return from the deeper spiritual emphasis of Paul's analogy to a very practical summation of the responsibilities which husbands and wives owe to each other. The word "fear" comes from the Greek *phobetai* which does not imply a cringing, slave-like awe, but rather means love, esteem, respect, reverence and honor. The relationship between Christian husbands and wives is that of mutual love and confidence. Foy Wallace describes it, "It means *reverence* and *respect*. It is the kind of fear that the Bible so frequently calls on individuals to show before God."<sup>11</sup>

The husband's wish should be the objective of the wife; the wife's desire should be the rule of the husband.

### Conclusion

The total effect of this text upon marriage attitudes and practices in our time should be profound. When the relationship between husband and wife is compared with that between Christ and his church there can be no question of the deep, life-long significance of Christian marriage. Divorce is out of the question. Remarriage seems out of place. As suggested in the opening chapters of the Bible, God's intention in the beginning and the rule as stated by Christ is "one man for one woman for life, with one exception." As J.W. Shepherd comments,

Hence marriage is strikingly that unity with Christ — voluntarily initiated by the Lord, voluntarily accepted by us — which yet so supercedes all natural ties that it is said: "If any man come to me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and breth-

ren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26). When a man selects a woman to be his wife, she becomes the complement of himself — that which is needed to make a complete man, so the two are one. It takes both to make one being as originally created. This union must be indissoluble in the sight of God.

Burton Coffman also summarizes the impact of this passage well, when he says,

The sacredness of marriage is seen in God's design of it, from the very beginning, to be a figure of the union of Christ and his church; and the glorious importance of the church appears in the fact of its having been in the design of God from the very beginning.<sup>13</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>See Beare, Francis W., *The Interpreter's Bible*, (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1953) Vol. X, p. 716-717.

<sup>2</sup>See Robertson, A.T., *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1931), Vol. IV, p. 544.

<sup>3</sup>See Bruce, F.F., *Answers to Questions*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1972), p. 114.

<sup>4</sup>See Schaff, Philip, Editor, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1889), Vol. XIII, pp. 143-52.

<sup>5</sup>See Foulkes, Francis, *Tyndale N.T. Commentaries, Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1963), p. 158.

<sup>6</sup>See Beasley-Murray, G.R., *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1973), p. 278.

<sup>8</sup>See Beare, Francis W., op. cit., p. 726.

<sup>9</sup>See Macknight, James, *Apostolical Epistle and Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House), p. 346.

<sup>10</sup>See Hendriksen, William, *N.T. Commentary, Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967), p. 256.

<sup>11</sup>See Wallace, Foy, E., Jr., *Publications*, 1973, p. 445.

<sup>12</sup>See Shepherd, J.W., *A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles*, (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1939), Vol. IV, pp. 116-17.

<sup>13</sup>See Coffman, James Burton, *Commentary on Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians*, (Austin: Firm Foundation Publishing House, 1977), p. 229.

# "WHEN A MAN . . ."

## An Exegesis of Deuteronomy 24:1-4

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### Form

The regulation of Deut. 24:1-4 is stated in the form of a law which is known as casuistic or hypothetical law — the sort which Exodus 21:1 heads by the term *mishpatim* — “ordinances.” Such regulations in Hebrew are introduced with the particles *ki* (“when” or “supposed that . . .”; Deut. 22:13) or *'im* (“if”).<sup>1</sup> The persons concerned are spoken of in the third person. The law invariably has the protasis and the apodosis of a conditional sentence.<sup>2</sup> The form is very prevalent in the laws of Exodus 21ff. and is paralleled in the law codes of the Middle East — codes of Lipit-Ishtar, Eshnunna, Ur-Nammu, Hammurabi, the Hittites, and the Middle Assyrians. In this form of law, a hypothetical situation which is likely to be encountered in society is described, often with detailed conditions specified, and then the law governing that situation is announced.

### Where Does the Legal Enactment Begin?

A major question to be solved in the exegesis of Deut. 24:1-4 is simply that of determining where the hypothetical

case is being described and where the legal pronouncement begins. The English translations contribute to this perplexity. The K.J.V. and A.S.V. following the Latin Vulgate give a jussive force to the first three verses, considering that the condition is stated in verse 1a, and that verse 1b — the giving of the bill of divorce — is a demand of the law.<sup>3</sup> Hence, these versions are liable to the interpretation that divorce and the writ of divorce were being provided for. Furthermore, in this passage, in these versions, the woman seems given permission to marry a second man (verse 2); and finally, a third regulation prohibits her remarriage to her first husband. The R.S.V. and other modern translations more correctly consider that the hypothetical situation contains a series of conditions and that the legally binding pronouncement comes only at verse 4.

In Hebrew the section begins the protasis and then the subsidiary conditions are all added on with the repeated use of the conjunction *waw* ("and"). There are cases in Hebrew of the conditional sentence where the apodosis is introduced with *waw* followed by the perfect tense of the verb,<sup>4</sup> as the K.J.V. scholars seem to have taken verse 1; but having taken the *waw* as introducing the apodosis, those translators were left without a particle with which to introduce their second conditional sentence and had to supply "*if*" twice in verse three. There is no logical reason why *waw* should be taken in verse 1b as introducing the apodosis. It is more normal to take all the *waws* of the passage (vss. 1-3) as coordinate, setting up the situation that is to be regulated.

The law of Deut. 24:1-4 is not a law instituting divorce, nor is it prescribing the bill of divorce — Jesus' questioners notwithstanding (Matt. 19:7; Mark 10:4).<sup>5</sup> There is no permission given for the woman to form a second marriage. The divorce, the bill of divorce, and the second marriage are only parts of the description of the situation which had developed. The legal enactment is that the first husband cannot

take back the woman when these specified conditions exist. The protasis has multiple conditions stated. One may see in Exodus 21:1-6 another such lengthy protasis in the same sort of style, dealing with the Hebrew slave who does not want his freedom. Yet another law of multiple conditions dealing with flogging is found in Deut. 25:1-3.

In the situation described in Deut. 24:1-4 there are three conditions to be fulfilled before the law is applicable. First, the woman is divorced and is furnished with proper papers to establish the divorce. Second, the woman is remarried; that she can do so is assumed. Third, the second husband either divorces her or he dies. It would appear that according to custom she is legally free to contract a third marriage. But the specific law here announced prohibits her first husband from remarrying her; reunion with him is forbidden. The law is without parallel in the ancient world. Later Roman law permitted a man to remarry his first wife after she had remarried and had divorced her second husband.<sup>6</sup> Muslim law prefers remarriage with the former husband in such cases.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Origin of Divorce?**

Though the origin of marriage and its ideal are described in the creation story (Gen. 2), the origin of divorce, its rightness and wrongness, and the question of remarriage of the divorced are not directly discussed in the Pentateuch. In the post-exilic period the prophet Malachi states for the Lord, "I hate divorce" (Mal. 2:16); but the Pentateuch has no such direct statement.

No Hebrew law institutes divorce any more than it does polygamy and concubinage. The custom, which must be almost as old as the race itself, was recognized in Israel and is assumed everywhere.<sup>8</sup> The husband seems to have had unlimited right to divorce his wife. Abraham dismissed Hagar (Gen. 21:14). There are cases of forced divorce in the

O.T., such as those at the time of the return from exile (Ezra 10:3, 19; Neh. 13:1-3; 23ff.); however, the future marital status of those putting away their wives and that of the wives themselves is not discussed.

In the Pentateuch the priest and the high priest could not marry a divorced woman (Lev. 21:7, 14); other men likely did. Men forfeited the right of divorce for certain acts of misconduct. The man who falsely accused his bride of premarital unchastity could never divorce her (Deut. 22:13-21),<sup>9</sup> and the man who seduced a girl was required to marry her with no possibility for later divorce (Deut. 22:28, 29).<sup>10</sup> These laws restricted the husband's unlimited right to divorce his wife. The divorced woman was called *gerusha* ("one driven out"; Lev. 21:14; Num. 30:10; Ezek. 44:22). The divorced daughter of a priest who was without children could eat of her father's food (Lev. 22:13) just as she could have done had she been widowed. The divorced woman's vow was binding upon her; whereas the married woman's vow could be negated by her husband (Num. 30:6-9). Figuratively the Lord is said to have divorced Israel at the exile (Jer. 3:8). The second marriage for the divorcee is nowhere specifically sanctioned in the O.T.; but Deut. 24:1-4 assumes that such marriages take place.

The law does not envision the possibility of a woman's divorcing her husband. It likely was not done in early Israel.<sup>11</sup> The slave girl taken as a wife could gain her freedom if her master did not furnish her with food, clothing, and sexual needs (Ex. 21:10, 11). The details of how she established her case are not given. She likely would have to establish her claim before proper authorities; but it is her husband who grants her her freedom. Josephus informs us that when Salome divorced her husband, Costobarus,<sup>12</sup> and when Herodias divorced Herod Philip,<sup>13</sup> their acts were contrary to the custom of the Jews. Later Judaism did grant the woman right of divorce where the husband was a leper, was afflicted with

polypus (some offensive catarrhal affliction), or was engaged in a repulsive trade like collecting dog's excrements, smelting copper, or tanning hides. It was a debated question whether the woman could change her mind about the marriage if she knew of the occupation of her husband before marriage.<sup>14</sup> Later also, divorce was granted for inability or failure to perform conjugal duties; for depriving the wife of her liberty to work; for cruel and inhuman treatment; and for non-support.<sup>15</sup>

### The Conditions of the Law

#### *She Does Not Find Favor in His Eyes*

The expression "to find favor in one's eyes" (Gen. 6:8; 18:2; 19:19; etc.) occurs at least forty-five times in the Old Testament (A.S.V.) for pleasing God or man in various ways. It occurs in the negative — "to not find favor" — only twice (Deut. 24:1; Num. 11:11), and is used for the male-female attraction only here in Deut 24:1, though some element of that attraction is possibly in the background in three occurrences (Esther 5:8; 7:3; 8:5) in Esther's appeal to King Ahasuerus. The expression within itself casts no light on the details of the wife's lack of attraction for her husband that could contribute to the situation the law describes.

That divorce, for no other cause than that the wife did not please the husband, was tolerated may perhaps be inferred from Ex. 21:7-11 where the Hebrew slave girl who does not please her master is not set free as male slaves are, but she may be redeemed, and if the master does not furnish her her conjugal rights (food, clothing, and sex), she goes free without payment.

#### *Some Unclean Thing in Her*

The puzzling phrase, "some indecency" (*'ervath dabar*; literally, "nakedness of a thing;" LXX *aschemon pragma*;

Vulgate, *aliquam foeditatem*),<sup>16</sup> occurs twice in the O.T. (Deut. 23:14; 24:1); but the other occurrence, dealing with sanitation rather than a moral offence, does not furnish a clear definition for the term under consideration. Onkelos in the Targum gave *'averath pitgam* ("the transgression of a thing"), but *'ervath* does not come from the root *'abar*, "to transgress." *'Ervath* (from *'arah*, "to be naked") elsewhere describes shameful exposure of the body (Gen. 9:22; Ex. 20:26; Isa. 20:4; 47:3; Lam. 1:8; Ezek. 16:8, 36, 37, 23:29; Hos. 2:11 [9], illicit and abnormal sexual practices (Lev. 18; 20), and exposure of human excrement (Deut. 23:14). In this last case it describes what is unbecoming, not what is immoral.

Should we assume that the term suggests that the husband finds that his bride has been unchaste before marriage, we are reminded that death was the punishment for the woman for premarital unchastity (Deut. 22:21). Should we assume that adultery after marriage is spoken of, that crime also carried a death penalty (Gen. 38:24; Deut. 22:22ff.; Lev. 20:10; Num. 5:11ff.; cf. Ezek. 16:40; 23:47; John 8:15).<sup>17</sup> Bestiality (Ex. 22:19; Lev. 20:16; 18:23; Deut. 27:21) and incest (Lev. 20:11, 12, 14, 17) carried a death penalty. For men, homosexuality (or sodomy) carried a death penalty (Lev. 18:22; 20:13). Female perversion in this area is not specifically discussed in the Old Testament. Being childless was no doubt a particularly serious handicap for a wife (Gen. 16:1; 1 Sam. 1:5-7). Rabbinic rule recognized ten years of childless marriage as a basis for divorce;<sup>18</sup> Philo recommended divorce in such cases, but is willing to pardon those who out of affection continue in marriage,<sup>19</sup> but there is no convincing reason to link *'ervath dabar* with this condition. The term *'ervath dabar* would seem to describe anything, other than the punishable acts mentioned above, which the man finds distasteful in his bride.

The lack of specificity in *'ervath dabar* set the stage for the

later discussion of the schools of Shammai and Hillel who assumed that Moses was laying down the basis on which a divorce could be granted. The Shammaites considered that 'ervath must imply some sort of lewd behavior on the part of the woman;<sup>20</sup> however, in the sources extant they are not specific about just what sort of behavior must be involved. According to them the divorce is granted for causes of immorality. The Hillelites put emphasis upon *dabar* and took 'ervath, not in the sense of "lewdness," but in the sense of a "defect." They then said if she "burned his bread" he could divorce her. Some scholars have assumed that "burned his bread" is a euphemism for behavior other than defective cooking. Be that as it may, the attitude justified easy divorce. Rabbi Akiba later moved past both these words and centered attention on the phrase "if she find no favor in his eyes," concluding that if one found a more attractive woman, he could divorce his wife.<sup>21</sup> Philo of Alexandria (10 B.C. to A.D. 60) also spoke of divorce given "under any pretense whatever,"<sup>22</sup> and Josephus, who had himself divorced his wife because he was "displeased at her conduct,"<sup>23</sup> said, "He who desires to be divorced from his wife for any cause whatsoever and many such causes happen among men, let him in writing give assurance that he no longer wishes to live with her as his wife."<sup>24</sup> Despite these laxities, the general rabbinic attitude, while recognizing the right of divorce by mutual consent, decried divorce of the wife by the husband.<sup>25</sup> Interesting as these later developments are, they should be read back into the original law. We are without clear definition of 'ervath *debar*.

### *He Gives Her A Bill of Divorce*

It has been thought that divorces in Assyria and then much later (fifth century B.C.) in Elephantine required only an oral declaration.<sup>26</sup> The bill of divorce in Roman law has been thought to have been introduced only as late as the time of

Diocletian (A.D. 284-305).<sup>27</sup> We are without details as to the first origin of the custom, but the bill of divorce (*sepher keritut*; LXX *biblion tou apostasiou*; Vulgate, *libellum repudii*), later called the *get*, is likely of great antiquity and is not an innovation of Deuteronomy. It is here mentioned as a part of the protasis and not as a part of the apodosis — the enactment of the law. Its object was to make the divorce final, and to prevent the husband from reasserting his rights over the wife or of accusing her of adultery should she form another marriage (cf. Isa. 50:1; Jer. 3:8; Matt. 5:31; 19:7; Mark 10:4). It was very important in a society in which intercourse with a married woman could lead to capital punishment for adultery.

The one actual divorce paper we have from the Tannaitic period is that dating about A.D. 111 which comes from the caves at Murrabbacat in which Joseph, son of Naqsan divorces Miriam, daughter of Yonatan, who resides at Masada. he declares, "I divorce and repudiate of my own free will, you . . . who was my wife formerly, in such a way that you are free to go and become wife of any Jewish man that you wish." He attests that the bill is his letter of divorce; it is given to her; and it is signed by Joseph, himself, by the scribe, and by two witnesses.<sup>28</sup> In the Mishna, like wording is used for the bill of divorce. Rabbi Yehudah gave the form, "You have herewith from me a bill of dismissal, a document of release and a letter of freedom, that you may go and be married to any man you like." Later sources also used the phrases, "You are sent away" or "You are divorced."<sup>29</sup>

### *He Sends Her Out of the House*

In the Code of Hammurabi a woman could sue for divorce and if she won was allowed to take her marriage portion and return to her father's house (# 142); but if it was proved that she had been a bad wife, she was thrown into the water

(# 143). No provision is made in the O.T. for the wife to divorce her husband. The phrase "sends her out of his house" (Deut. 24:4) uses the *pi'el* form of *shalak* which is the customary term for divorce (Deut. 22:19, 29; Isa. 50:1).

### *She Marries Another Man*

The rightness or wrongness of a second marriage is not the point under discussion in this law. In a world in which woman's function and occupation was marriage, it is assumed likely that another marriage would be formed. We do not know whether or not there were people unmarried by choice in Hebrew society. Jeremiah seems in a unique category when the Lord commanded him not to marry and not to beget children (Jer. 16:2). Later rabbinic regulations shamed the unmarried man. R. Eleazar said, "Any man who has no wife is no proper man; for it is said, 'Male and female created he them and called their name Adam' " <sup>30</sup> — that is, only when the male and female were united were they called Adam ("man"). R. Eleazar made failure to propagate the race equivalent to shedding blood. <sup>31</sup>

### *The Second Man Hates Her*

*Sane'* ("hate") is used frequently in the Old Testament for a man's attitude toward a woman. Used also in Hammurabi's code (# 142) for the woman's hating her husband, it is not necessarily a violent aversion, but is simply the antithesis to love. It describes Jacob's attitude to Leah compared with that to Rachel (Gen. 29:31, 33). A man may have a loved wife and a hated one (Deut. 21:15-17); it describes the attitude of the man who slanders his wife's premarital conduct (Deut. 22:13, 16); Samson's wife and her father accused him of hating her (Judges 14:16; 15:2); Ammon hated Tamar after he had ravished her (2 Sam. 13:15); the hated (unloved) woman may get a husband (Prov. 30:23).

Israel in her exile is described as a hated one (Isa. 60:15).<sup>32</sup> In this law of Deuteronomy, then, the point in this detail is that the second man does not want the woman to continue as his wife. The particular cause is not important.

### *The Second Husband Divorces Her or Dies*

The hypothetical situation again assumes the possibility of divorce, with due papers being given to establish it, theoretically making the woman free for marriage again.

Death also dissolved a marriage. David was free to take Abigail when Nabal was dead (1 Sam. 25:39, 40) and Bathsheba when Uriah was dead (2 Sam. 11:27). David is not condemned for marrying a widow, but for his sin with her while her husband was yet alive. "A married woman is bound by law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies she is discharged from the law concerning the husband" (Rom. 7:2)

The various stipulations in Deuteronomy which we have surveyed have as their point the making clear that according to custom the woman was now available for marriage.

Complications in administering the law like those raised by later rabbis when they considered the status of the woman who, thinking her husband was dead, erroneously had entered a second marriage and then later had found that her husband was still living,<sup>33</sup> are not considered in the Pentateuch. Conditions of war in many periods of history have left women without knowledge whether their missing husbands are dead or alive. In the Code of Hammurabi, the woman deserted by her husband without support (# 134) enters another man's house and is free of blame. Should the first husband later return, she must go back to her bridegroom; but the children she has borne to the second man remain with him (# 135). However, the returning husband who "hated his city and fled" cannot seize his wife; she can remain with the

second man because her husband's act is considered blameworthy (#136).

### The Enactment

The apodosis of the law of Deuteronomy, taking the form of an absolute, permanent prohibition, using the negative *lo'* with the imperfect of the verb — *lo' yukal* — carries the strongest expectation of obedience.<sup>34</sup> The form is especially used in enforcing divine commands; for example, those using the second person pronoun in the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:3, 4, 5, 7, 10). However, the negative command with the third person (as here) is also possible (cf. Prov. 16:10). The prohibition announced is: He shall not take her back!

The passage grammatically displays anacoluthon<sup>35</sup> in that having started in the third person, there is then in verse four a shift to second person — “You make the land to sin.” This shift does not soften the prohibition.

In considering Israel's relation with God, Jeremiah raises a parallel question (Jer. 3:1).<sup>36</sup> Will a man take back a woman who has been divorced and has become another man's wife? Would not that greatly pollute the land? The prophet's answer is that though man may not do so, the Lord can do it with his bride Israel who has played the harlot with many lovers.

An apparent difficulty in the interpretation we have given arises from the Gospel statement, “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce’ ” (Matt. 5:31). Many have understood the phrase “it was also said” to be implying that “Moses said” — that is, that the Law demanded the giving of the certificate of divorce. However, in this passage Jesus is not giving a direct quotation from either the Hebrew or Greek Bible. We have already considered the structure of the Hebrew passage and have seen that the giving of the written divorce is only

mentioned as a secondary condition of the situation. The imperative, *doto aut' apostasion* ("Let him give her a bill of divorce") of the Gospel may be compared with the Septuagint of Deut. 24:1ff.: *kai grapsei aute biblion apostasiou . . .* ("and shall write her a bill of divorce"). Here the future indicative is functioning as a subjunctive. The Septuagint, like the Hebrew, considers that the sentence is a conditional one of numerous conditions creating the situation, and the enactment is only reached in the declaration at verse four — the first husband cannot marry her again. It seems clear that the equation "it was also said" to "Moses said" — making an imperative out of a secondary condition of the situation — is not a safe conclusion to draw. Later in the series in the Gospel of Matthew, the statement: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy' " (Matt. 5:43) is also not a statement from the Law of Moses.

### The Purpose of the Enactment

Some<sup>37</sup> have felt the law of Deuteronomy was designed to protect the first marriage by reminding the husband that should he hastily divorce, he might not get the woman back even if he wanted her.<sup>38</sup> But this can hardly be the purpose of the law. Psychologically, one is not going to be concerned about getting back a woman that he wants to divorce. Furthermore, the law puts no impediment in the way of remarriage if a marriage has not in the meantime been contracted by the woman with a second husband.<sup>39</sup>

Others have thought the law was designed to protect the second marriage.<sup>40</sup>

Had the husband divorced the wife in a fit of anger and she married another, they cannot rekindle the old flame. While it is true that in practice the law would not encourage the woman who was wanting to return to her first husband to act so that her second husband would be disgusted with her and

would divorce her, and though neither would it encourage the first husband and the woman to plot the death of the second husband that she might be free,<sup>41</sup> there must be other reasons back of this law which put a check on wife swapping.

Three reasons are given why the husband cannot take the wife again. First, she is defiled as far as her first husband is concerned. Under the Law, sex relations with one to whom one is not entitled — such as a neighbor's wife — defiles (Lev. 18:20), and the woman with whom such relations are had is defiled (Num. 5:13, 20). The passive, *hothpa'el* form is found in only a few cases in the O.T. (Lev. 13:55, 56; Isa. 34:6).<sup>42</sup> For the root *tame'* the *hothpa'el* occurs only here — *hutama'ah*. The *pi'el* and *niph'al* of *tame'* mean "make unclean" or "make oneself unclean" (Lev. 11:43; Num. 5:3). The phrase passes into Greek as *meta to mianthenai auten* and then into Latin as *poluta est*.<sup>43</sup> That is, the law has theological implications in addition to its strict legal ones. Some have thought that the implication of the prohibition is that her act is equal to adultery and that the law anticipates Jesus' declaration, "whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery" (Matt. 5:32);<sup>44</sup> however, this attitude overlooks the fact that no condemnation is specifically given of her marriage to husband number two; nor is it said that she is forbidden to number three — so long as he is not number one.

Second, for him to take her back is an abomination (*to'ebah*) in the sight of the Lord. *To'ebah* from the root *ta'ah* ("to be abhorred") occurs 116 times as a noun and 23 times as a verb in the O.T. It is 16 times in Deuteronomy and earlier was four times in the proverbs of Amenemope.<sup>45</sup> The occurrences cover a variety of acts ranging from food prohibitions (Deut. 14:3); idolatrous practices (Deut. 7:25; 12:31; 13:14); magic (Deut. 18:12); sex offences (Lev. 18:22ff.); and transvestite clothing (Deut. 22:5) to ethical wrongs (Deut. 25:14-16; Prov. 6:16-19). Common to all these usages is the

notion of irregularity. The act offends the accepted order, ritual, or morals. The law of Deut. 24 declares, then, that God is offended should the prohibited act take place.

Third, by the act, one makes the land to sin which the Lord gives you. The *hiph'il* of *hata'* occurs most frequently in the O.T. in connection with an Israelite king like Jeroboam who is said to have sinned and to have made Israel to sin (I Kings 14:16; 15:26, 30, 34; 16:26; 22:52); but is also used of Manasseh and Judah (2 Kings 21:11). The second person *hiph'il* occurs here in Deut. 24:4 and in oracles against Baasha (I Kings 16:2) and Ahab (I Kings 21:22). The land is being personified; hence, can be spoken of as sinning.

That God has given Israel the land (cf. Deut. 4:21) is a frequently encountered idea in the O.T.; and the idea that unchastity defiles the land is frequently stated (Lev. 18:25, 28, 19:29; Jer. 3:2, 9; Hos. 4:3). Murder (Num. 35:33f.); leaving the executed man hanging (Deut. 21:23); idolatry (Ps. 106:38); and contact with corpses (Num. 5:3; 19:13) also pollute the land. Like Deuteronomy, Jeremiah considers that marital perversity "pollutes" (Jeremiah uses *hanaf* instead of *tame'*) the land (Jer. 3:2).

### The Law Ignored?

It has often been asked if the case of Michal and David is not a transgression of Pentateuchal law. Michal loved David, and he betrothed her to himself at the price of a hundred Philistine foreskins (I Sam. 18:20-23; 2 Sam. 3:14); but after she helped him escape from her father, Saul (I Sam. 19:11ff.), Saul gave her to Paltiel (I Sam. 25:44). When David became king he demanded that Ishbosheth restore Michal to him. When she was taken from her husband Paltiel, he followed her weeping until he was driven off by Abner (2 Sam. 3:15, 16). Some writers have attempted to apologize for what seemed to them to be a transgression of the law by contending that David's marriage with Michal had not been

consummated when she was taken from him; others suggest that her marriage with Paltiel had not been consummated; but neither of these two cases is convincing. The conditions specified in Deuteronomy are not present in this case; hence the law is not applicable and is not flaunted. David had not divorced her; she had not been rejected by the second man, nor had he died. She had been given to another man, but she was still David's wife, and he claimed her.<sup>46</sup>

The same is true with the wife of Hosea (assuming that the woman of chapter one of the book is the same woman as that of chapter three). Her husband could overlook her waywardness and take her back. Isaiah (50:1) then can insist that in the case of God and Israel, there has been no divorce; hence, there is no impediment that would prevent God from taking wayward Israel back to himself.

Biblical law did not demand that the wayward woman be divorced. In Babylonian law (# 129), the husband decided whether to drown the woman with her lover caught in the act of adultery or to spare her. Later rabbinic law required that the adulterous woman be divorced, and that a remarriage of a man to a wife married to another in the meantime must be terminated.<sup>47</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Detailed exegesis of Deut. 24:1-4 suggests that the rabbis were on a wrong track when they conceived the passage to be stating the basis on which a divorce could be given. It also suggests that modern commentators are engaging in homiletics, not in exegesis, when they deduce lessons about divorce which were not the intent of the lawgiver. Rather than teaching about conditions of divorce, the passage is prohibiting remarriage with a divorced woman who has meanwhile been married to another.

It is little wonder that Jesus, without disputing in detail the presuppositions of his audience, moved back to the original

ideal for marriage announced in Genesis 2 (Matt. 19:8), and that Paul said, "the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, let her remain single or be reconciled to her husband) — and that the husband should not divorce his wife" (I Cor. 7:10-11; cf. Rom. 7:2).

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>E. Kautzsch, editor, *Gesenius; Hebrew Grammar*, 2nd Eng. ed., revised by A.E. Cowley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910), # 112 gg, hh. Hereafter cited in the paper as *G.K.C.*

<sup>2</sup>A. Alt, "The Origins of Israelite Law," in *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*, trans. by R.A. Wilson (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1968), pp. 112ff.

<sup>3</sup>R.C. Campbell, "Teachings of the Old Testament Concerning Divorce," *Foundations* 6 (1963): 174-178.

<sup>4</sup>Matthew uses the word "command" (*entellesthai*) for their question (v. 7), but *epitrepein* ("allowed") for the answer of Jesus (v. 8). Mark uses *entellesthai* for Jesus' question to them (v. 3), and has the Pharisees say that Moses "allowed" (*epitrepein*). Then Mark uses *entole* (which may be used for all legal regulations) for Jesus' characterization of Moses' statement.

<sup>5</sup>Boaz Cohen, "Concerning Divorce in Roman Law," *The American Academy of Jewish Research Proceedings*, 21 (1952): 9.

<sup>6</sup>*Koran*, Sura. 2:229ff.

<sup>7</sup>Evidence for the prevalence of divorce in the ancient Middle East is summarized in Jack P. Lewis, "From the Beginning It Was Not So," in T.B. Warren, editor, *Your Marriage Can be Great* (Jonesboro, Arkansas: National Christian Press, 1978), pp. 412, 413.

<sup>8</sup>By the first century A.D. the woman had the option of whether or not she would remain in such a marriage (Philo, *The Special Laws*, [14]. III. 82. The law was also modified to free the man from living with a demonstrated adulteress (Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.3; cf. Mishna *Ketuboth* 3:4, 5).

<sup>9</sup>See Mishna *Ketuboth* 3:5.

<sup>10</sup>The woman of Elephantine could initiate divorce proceedings, see Y. Muff, *Studies in Aramaic Legal Papyri from Elephantine* (Studia et Documenta VIII, New York: KTAV, 1973), p. 55.

<sup>11</sup>Josephus, *Antiquities* 15.7.10 (259).

<sup>12</sup>Josephus, *Antiquities* 18.5.4 (136).

<sup>13</sup>Mishna, *Ketuboth* 7:10.

<sup>14</sup>Mishna *Nedarim* 11:12; *Ketuboth* 5:5, 6; 7:2-7; T.B. *Ketuboth* 77a.

<sup>15</sup>David Daube, "Repudium in Deuteronomy," in E.E. Ellis and Max Wilcox, editors, *Neotestamentica et Semetica* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1969), pp. 236-230.

<sup>17</sup>See J.J. Rabinowitz, "The 'Great Sin' in Ancient Egyptian Marriage Contracts," *J.N.E.S.* 18 (1959): 73; W.L. Moran, "The Scandal of the 'Great Sin' at Ugarit," *J.N.E.S.* 18 (1959): 280, 281.

<sup>18</sup>T.B. *Yebamoth* 64a; *Ketuboth* 77a.

<sup>19</sup>Philo, *The Special Laws* [6] III.34, 35.

<sup>20</sup>Mishna *Gittin* 9:10.

<sup>21</sup>Mishna *Gittin* 9:10.

<sup>22</sup>Philo, *The Special Laws* [5] III. 30, 31.

<sup>22</sup>Josephus, *Life* 76 (426); cf. 75 (414, 415).

<sup>24</sup>Josephus, *Antiquities* 4.8.23 (253).

<sup>25</sup>D.W. Amram, *The Jewish Law of Divorce According to Bible and Talmud* (2nd edition, New York: Hermon Press, 1968), pp. 38, 39.

<sup>26</sup>R. de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, tr. by John McHugh (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1961), p. 35; R. Yaron, *Introduction to the Law of the Aramaic Papyri* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), p. 54.

<sup>27</sup>D.W. Amram, *The Jewish Law of Divorce According to Bible and Talmud* (2nd edition, New York: Hermon Press, 1968), p. 139, 140.

<sup>28</sup>J.T. Milik, "Acte de Re'pudation, en Arameen," in *Discoveries in the Judean Desert II, Les Grottes de Murabba'at*, par P. Benoit, J.T. Milik, et R. de Vaux (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), pp. 104ff.

<sup>29</sup>Mishna *Gittin* 9:3; T. B. *Qiddushin* 5b; See Z.W. Falk, *Introduction to Jewish Law of the Second Commonwealth* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972), pp. 138-142.

<sup>30</sup>T. B. *Yebamoth* 63a.

<sup>31</sup>T. B. *Yebamoth* 63b.

<sup>32</sup>Reuven Yaron, "On Divorce in Old Testament Times," *Revue Internationale des Droits de l'Antiquite Series 3*, Vol. 4 (1957): 117-128.

<sup>33</sup>See Reuven Yaron, "Mistake-Occasioned Polygamy," in *Studies in Jewish Legal History, Essays in Honour of David Daube*, ed. by Bernard S. Jackson (London: Jewish Chronicle Publications, 1974), pp. 203-226.

<sup>34</sup>G.K.C. #107 o.

<sup>35</sup>G.K.C. #167 b.

<sup>36</sup>J.D. Martin, "The Forensic Background to Jeremiah III.1," *Vetus Testamentum* vm 19 (January 1969): 82-92.

<sup>37</sup>W.G. Jordan, *Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy* (N.Y.: Macmillan Co., 1911), p. 172. See the discussion of Yeuven Yaron, "The Restoration of Marriage," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 17 (1966): 1-11.

<sup>38</sup>A man's wife being taken forcibly from him and given to another is the last and most bitter degradation which can be imposed upon him (Deut. 28:30; 2 Sam. 12:11; 1 Kings 20:3; Jer. 6:12; 8:10; cf. Amos 7:17).

<sup>39</sup>See Mishna *Eduyoth* 4:7; *Sota* 8:3.

<sup>40</sup>J. Morgenstern, "The Book of the Covenant, Part II," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 7 (1930): 157n.

<sup>41</sup>The Code of Hammurabi (# 153) prescribes impaling for the wife guilty of this act.

<sup>42</sup>G.K.C. # 54 h.

<sup>43</sup>Philo, *The Special Laws* [5] III: 30, 31, says he stamps on his character two of the greatest iniquities, adultery and pandering.

<sup>44</sup>S.R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1855), p. 272

<sup>45</sup>See Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 268.

<sup>46</sup>The Rabbis permitted remarriage after a divorce followed by illicit relations with another man, Mishna *Sota* 2:6.

<sup>47</sup>Mishna *Yebamoth* 4:2, 12; T. B. *Sota* 27b-28a; *Yebamoth* 11a-b; 49b. See Louis Epstein, *Marriage Laws in the Bible and the Talmud* (Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1942), p. 295.

# Matthew 19:3-12: An Exegesis

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The New Testament contains five passages with seven sayings of Jesus regarding the dissolution of marriage (Matthew 5:31, 32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; I Corinthians 7:10, 11). Four writers have recorded his sayings and several parallels exist between the accounts.

Jesus' exceptive clause in Matthew's accounts has made these texts especially crucial in discussions of marriage and divorce. Recent critics (e.g. R. Bultmann, *The History of the Synoptic Tradition*, pp. 132-5) suggests that the original form of Jesus' prohibition is found in Luke 16:18 and that Matthew has added the exceptive clause to the actual teaching of Jesus.

Reasons for the rejection of the exceptive clauses include: (1) the assumption by critics that Jesus would not have involved himself in a particular issue which would have detracted from the general principle that divorce was forbidden; (2) that the difficulty in explaining how Paul, Mark, and Luke would have given the absolute, unqualified form of the prohibition, while neglecting an exception made by Jesus himself, is greater than the difficulty in supposing Matthew added to the saying of Jesus; and (3) an alleged contradiction between reports of Jesus' sayings is removed if the exceptive clauses are removed from Matthew's accounts.

In response to these criticisms, the authenticity of the exceptive clauses is argued by: (1) the independent record of the discussion of divorce by Jesus in I Corinthians and in the synoptic gospels; (2) the simple note that the critical assumption is to be proved — i.e. that the most simple form of the statement is the most primitive, or that there is a contradiction involved in more or less complete accounts of the same conversation; and (3) such insertions in the sayings of Christ would jeopardize the historicity of the gospels. One of the grounds of our belief in their historicity is the factual, impartial way in which they are written — their restraint in praising our Lord or blaming his enemies, the absence of emo-

tional overtones in order to give an exact, objective account of the sayings and deeds of Christ.

### An Insidious Question

Matthew 19:2 records that great crowds followed Jesus as he left Galilee and traveled to the Judean district east of the Jordan. Once again certain Pharisees approached Jesus, testing him. (*Peirazo* is used of testing with hostile intent.) They asked, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"

D. Daube (*The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, London: 1956, pp. 141-150) has suggested that such treacherous questions were used in rabbinic dialectics. Such conversations followed a fixed pattern: (1) An insidious question, (2) a counter question, (3) an expected reply to the latter, (4) a half answer to silence the original questioner. Sometimes the rabbi's disciples would ask for further information afterward in private, and two extra stages would be added to the proceedings: (5) disciples' question and (6) full answer.

Daube illustrates with an incident from the second century A.D.: (1) a pagan asked Johanan ben Zakkai why Jews purify a person who has come into contact with a corpse, by water containing the ashes of a red heifer. (2) The rabbi countered by asking how pagans cast an evil spirit out of a man. (3) The pagan replied that they burn roots. (4) The rabbi silenced his questioner: "Just as you burn roots to cast out an evil spirit, we use water and ashes to purify a person." (5) His disciples came to him later and asked, "Rabbi, you pushed him away with a fragile reed, what will you answer us?" (6) He gave them a complete answer: "Uncleanness was not caused by a corpse, or cleanness by the water of purification, as if this were magical, but because God willed it so even though the Jews did not understand the reason."

Daube argues that Jesus used a similar procedure in his

discussion with the Pharisees concerning the washing of hands before eating. While the parallel is not perfect, the framework may be of assistance in outlining Matthew 19.

The Pharisees' question was to elicit a decision on a disputed text — Deuteronomy 24:1: "When a man taketh a wife, and marrieth her, then it shall be, if she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some unseemly thing in her, that he shall write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house" (ASV).

Several theories were current as to the meaning of this text. (1) Josephus says, "He that desires to be divorced from his wife for any cause whatsoever (and many such causes happen among men) . . ." (*Antiqu.* IV. viii. 23). (2) The Mishnah relates that, "The school of Shammai say: a man may not divorce his wife unless he has found unchastity in her. . . . And the school of Hillel say he may divorce her even if she find no favour in his eyes" (Gittin, ix. 10; Danby transl., p. 321). (3) The notorious affair between Herodias and Antipas may have been especially explosive if his audience included: (a) followers of John the Baptist, victim of Herodias' hatred; (b) Herodians, supporters of Herod and Antipas; (c) devout Jews angered by the flagrant adultery; and (d) especially if the question was asked in Perea (cf. Matthew 19:1) of the Nabateans, the daughter of whose King Aretas IV had been rejected in favor of Herodias.

### Answer To Adversaries

Mark records Jesus' counter question: "What did Moses command you?" (Mark 10:3) He also gives their expected reply: "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to send her away" (Mark 10:4).

Jesus then gave his "partial" answer to his opponents: "Have you not read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his

wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." They responded, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" And he replied, "For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery" (Matthew 19:4-9).

The Pharisees' attempt to entangle him by eliciting a definite statement on the question of marriage and divorce failed. Jesus replied to their question by referring them to Genesis and God's original law at creation. Man and wife "are no longer two but one flesh." He drew the conclusion, "What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder" (Matthew 19:6).

The Pharisees attempted to neutralize his answer by appealing to Moses' permission of divorce in Deuteronomy. Jesus replied that this was a concession to the hardness of the Jewish heart, and was contrary to what God designed from the beginning.

The crucial sentence follows: "And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9).

Shammai had interpreted the "unseemly thing" (Deuteronomy 34:1) narrowly and limited it to fornication. Hillel allowed divorce for trivial reasons, interpreting Deuteronomy almost frivolously. Akiba (c. 50 — c. 135 A.D.) an outstanding rabbi, went so far as to say that if a man finds a woman whom he likes better than his own, this is reason enough for divorce. According to the Targum Onkelos and Jerusalem I on Deuteronomy 24:1, any commandment transgressed by a woman is reason enough for divorce. Other reasons mentioned for divorce include childlessness, or a woman bringing shame on the husband. The only condi-

tions on which a woman could let her marriage be dissolved seems to have been illness (especially leprosy) or the profession of her husband.

The exception which Jesus mentions for divorce is expressed by the words, "except for unchastity" ("fornication" KJV, ASV). *Porneia* is rare in classical Greek. In Koine it denotes prostitution, unchastity, fornication, every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse (Arndt-Gingrich). The word occurs elsewhere in Matthew only in 15:19, where it is listed alongside "adultery" (*moicheia*), and obviously distinct from it. Etymologically, it means "prostitution, harlotry, whoredom." It is related to *porne* (harlot) and to the verb *porneuein* ("to act as a harlot.") It is used elsewhere in the New Testament of a variety of sexual activity: I Corinthians 5:1 (incest), 6:13 (prostitution), II Corinthians 12:21 ("immorality," parallel to "impurity" and "licentiousness," (cf. Colossians 3:5; Ephesians 5:3).

Fornication constitutes in itself the factual break up of a marriage. The basic ground of any marriage is violated by fornication and consequently this is the reason Jesus assigns for divorce. He upholds the significance of marriage as instituted by God from the creation over against the evasion of God's commandment by the arbitrary interpretation by the scribes.

### Jesus' Answer To the Disciples

Later, "in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter" (Mark 10:10). The disciples seem to have been shocked by the Lord's words on the indissolubility of marriage. They suggested that marriage was inexpedient in the light of the severity of matrimonial relations and faithfulness in marriage. Perhaps they were thinking of the many unhappy marriages which were dissolved for reasons other than fornication. Jesus' reply shows that it is not the pleasure nor the happiness of man which is all-determinative in mar-

riage. The kingdom of God is most important also in this aspect of our lives.

"This saying" (19:11) may refer to the will of God as expressed in the creation — one man and one woman joined together for life. Or it may refer to the saying of the disciples in the previous verse: "it is not expedient to marry." Jesus says that not everyone is able to forego marriage. Some can because they have been born impotent; others, because they have been made impotent by men; others, because they have accepted celibacy (e.g. John the Baptist, Paul) for the sake of the kingdom (cf. I Corinthians 7:7, 33-34).

Even enforced continence which may come when a marriage relationship is broken puts one in no worse position than those who are eunuchs either by force of circumstances or by voluntary continence "for the kingdom of Heaven's sake" (Matthew 19:10-12). It is not that this latter person cannot marry, but that he/she chooses not to marry and carries out that choice to the glory of God.

### The Exceptive Clause

At least four different interpretations have been placed upon Jesus' words, "except for unchastity." First, some have understood Jesus to refer to unchastity on the woman's part before she was married. *Porneia* involves the sin of an unmarried person (in contrast to *moicheia*). Deception in so important a matter as one's pre-marital conduct would invalidate the marriage. This interpretation that it is lawful for a man to reject his wife if he should discover that she had been guilty of immorality previous to their marriage has not gained many supporters.

A second interpretation would read Jesus' words as, "except in case of a false marriage." The reference would be to a case where no true marriage had ever taken place. God only joins those who meet certain essential conditions. An incestuous union (I Corinthians 5:1f), the union of a polygamist

with each of his secondary "wives," or a marriage of near relatives forbidden by the law (Leviticus 18:6-18) could be set aside, since it was not a genuine union. However, this view depicts Jesus as replying about putting away a false wife when the Pharisees had asked about putting away a real wife.

A third interpretation is that in the case of unchastity (immorality), separation is permissible but divorce is not. This seems to have been the predominant view in the second and third centuries, especially reflected in such writings as *Shepherd of Hermas* (c. 150 A.D.). J.T. Arendzen has concluded that before Nicea (325 A.D.) there is no evidence that the exceptive clause was understood to authorize the breaking of the marriage bond itself in the sense that the partners ceased to be husband and wife, and that the innocent person might remarry. These writers generally considered the second marriage sinful even if the first companion had died. Marriage was viewed as a lifelong, indissoluble bond between one man and one woman.

L. Sabourin notes that other patrologists (himself included) have reservations. Sabourin believes that the documentation of these early centuries shows that several writers maintain the possibility not only of separation but also of remarriage.

A fourth interpretation is that the natural meaning which a reader without any preconceptions would find in Matthew 19:9 gives to this clause the value of a true exception to the basic principle of the indissolubility of marriage. Marital infidelity can render ineffective or void the marriage bond. From a strictly exegetical viewpoint, this is the interpretation which best suits the Greek text. This view has long been current outside Roman Catholicism and it is now beginning to be adopted by Catholic interpreters, especially in Germany. The deluded partner may contract a new union after separation.

As John Murray notes, the main thrust of the passage is not the legitimacy of divorce for adultery, but the illegitimacy of divorce for any other reason. It is not the exception that is in the foreground, but rather that there is no other exception.

## Featured Classes

# THE CHRISTIAN MOTHER

Gwendolyn Marie Webb was born in Tyrone, Oklahoma, to Mr. and Mrs. E.F. Bruce on June 15, 1940. She graduated from Abilene Christian University in 1962 with a BSE degree in elementary education. She was a schoolteacher for five years, but delights in having changed her vocation to wife, mother, and homemaker.

Gwen's girlhood dreams and prayers to be a minister's wife were fulfilled when she married Kermit E. Webb, also an ACU graduate. Kermit is the minister for the Brighton, Colorado, Church of Christ. He hosts the daily Old Landmarks Hour, a thirty-minute radio program broadcast in three states. He is author of the book, *The Christ of the Exodus*.

Kermit and Gwen are proud to be the parents of three lovely and talented adopted children and hope to add another chosen one to their family in the near future.

Gwen is the author of the book, *Training Up a Child*, which was published in 1977. She spent seven years researching, observing, and gathering the information included in the writing. The book is intended primarily for new mothers and is designed to be taught as a course in classroom sessions. Over forty teachers throughout the United States are now teaching the TUAC course.

The *Training Up a Child* book has also been published in the



German language by the Christliches Verlagshaus book publishing company of Stuttgart, West Germany.

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We hear much talk today about people's rights. There are promotions for women's rights, minority rights, fathers' right, children's rights. Often the cries for fairness that go up from these various interest groups are justified, and changes should be made. On the other hand, the demands for change may be for wrong purposes and, if granted, would result in devastating consequences.

For the three days we have together, I should like to focus your attention on a "God-assigned right." I truly believe that if the "right" I am about to discuss with you had been demanded in each generation starting one hundred years ago, it would have been possible that the churches of Christ could in 1979 number twenty million strong instead of two million, and our homes would not now be in crisis.

What possibly could be a single requirement that God prescribed that could have made such a colossal difference in the strength of the Lord's army? And if this requirement could be implemented in 1979, would it make a difference in 2079?

The "God-assigned right" I am referring to is recorded in Titus 2:3-5. "The aged women teach the young women to be wise, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands. . . ."

Every new mother in every congregation around this globe has the God-given "right" to receive instruction on how to become the very best wife and mother this earth can produce. And who is to do the teaching? The young minister who has just come to work with the congregation? Or, better still, his little wife who is his bride of two years and has a three-month-old baby clinging to her breasts? Tragically,

that is what is and has been going on for generations all over this land. What minister's wife in this audience has not had the experience of arriving at a new work with her husband, a baby in her arms and two clinging to her side, and the first thing she is asked is, "Won't you teach our ladies' Bible class?"

God said the women with some age and experience are the ones to do the teaching! Where have elders' wives and the older women of the congregations been — lo! these many years? Why is it that year after year after year we receive the ear-piercing statistics that the church is losing over fifty percent of its young people? I am convinced that one answer to these questions lies in the fact that the older women have failed miserably in their teaching responsibilities, and consequently we have generations of untaught mothers. I cringe to remember the countless times I've heard in my *Training Up a Child* classes the deploring cry, "I would give anything on earth if someone had taught me these things twenty years ago."

Sitting down and lamenting the situation will do no good. We must set to work to correct the error. Classes for young women should spring up in every congregation. If necessary, house calls should be made to assist new mothers with early guidance in handling their children.

What are some basic principles that every young Christian mother has a "right" to learn at the feet of her aged sisters?

#### **NO. 1 —She Has A Right To Be Taught How To Train Her Child**

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). There is much more to training than merely conversing with a child. Training is a two-step process that involves three major activities. The first step is *teaching*; the second step is *discipline*. Teaching covers two of the three activities. The first

thing one does in teaching is to *show* what or how a thing is done. Then the teacher *tells* or explains the details of the lesson.

After a child has been taught by being shown and told, he is ready for the last step in training — discipline. The word discipline comes from the word disciple, which means “a follower of.” The child is now ready to practice for himself what the teacher taught. *For a child to be trained, he must follow what the teacher does and says.*

For example: Suppose you want to start training your two-year-old to put his toys away. First, you will show the child how to pick up the toys and how they are to be stored in the toy box. You will talk to the child as you go through the process of showing him all about putting his toys away. “Now, Jimmy, you put this toy away,” you direct him. The child goes and puts the toy away, following what he saw you do and heard you say. You have taken Jimmy through his first lesson in putting toys away. Jimmy will be trained over a period of months and years of following your procedure. Each time you ask Jimmy to put his toys away please, he will know exactly what to do.

We conclude, then, that training is *teaching* by showing and telling the way and then *disciplining* the child to make sure he follows your guidance. Show, tell, follow me, Jimmy. Show, tell, follow me, Susie. On and on we go, training a child in the thousands of lessons and skills he will learn over an eighteen-year span of time.

Here it is important to point out two types of discipline. (1) *Self-Discipline* — This is when a child follows you willingly, doing what you show and tell him to do. He does it because it is something he wants to do. His will and yours are in agreement. When a child exercises self-discipline, training is most enjoyable. (2) *Inflicted Discipline* — This is when a child decides he doesn’t want to do as he has been told, and you must compel him to follow your lessons. You will ac-

comply only by inflicting discipline upon him. (We will learn how to enforce discipline later on in the lesson.)

If you are a new parent, please don't get your hopes built up and form a false optimism that your child will always exercise self-discipline with regard to all of your teaching. Let me warn you: obedience won't just happen! There will be multitudes of times you will have to inflict discipline upon your little one in order to train him. Let me hasten to encourage you, however, that the sooner you inflict discipline to make him follow, the more quickly your child will develop and exercise his own self-discipline and good judgment.

## **NO. 2 — She Has A Right To Know The Essential Needs of Every Child**

A second portion of knowledge every Christian mother has a right to be taught is that there is more to rearing a child than simply providing his food, clothing, and shelter. She must be impressed with the fact that there is a vast number of ingredients which her child will need for proper physical, mental and spiritual development.

And what are these essential components that every child needs? (1) A child first of all needs two parents — a father and a mother. (2) From his parents he must receive abundant love. (3) He must be disciplined by them in order to learn obedience. (4) As growth proceeds, gradual portions of independence must be awarded. (5) In order for him to meet with favor and live peaceably with mankind, good habits must be enforced. (6) Work must be instituted. (7) The home must hum continually with good communication. (8) The family must unite, go places and do things together. (9) Daily prayer must be uttered and every child's name called before the throne of God. (10) And regular assembly with the saints to worship God must be a part of his week.

In the *Training Up a Child* course, we simplify the memo-

rization of these essential ingredients by repeating them in these three sentences:

Sentence 1 — Daddy and Mother love obedience.

Sentence 2 — Independence and good habits work.

Sentence 3 — Communicating together, we pray and worship.

The instruction would be incomplete if a Christian mother were not taught she must be *consistent* in providing these eleven needs. Spasmodic portions of love or discipline, for example, would greatly confuse a child. He must receive portions of each of them daily and equably. She should remember, however, that even though she must be consistent, she will not be perfect. *Consistency* is not perfection in applying the eleven principles, but it is a *constant willingness* to try to apply them.

### NO. 3. — She Has A Right To Be Taught God's Assigned Duties For Both Daddy and Mother

Another thorough teaching every little Christian mother should receive from her older sisters in Christ is God's decreed plan for fathers and mothers. Every child brought into this world has an automatic birthright to receive tender and supportive care from both a father and a mother. If either absents himself from the home, the child is going to be harmed.

But there is a responsibility that runs much more deeply for a father and mother than just being there in body. They must be alert to perform the duties assigned to their position.

When a man becomes a husband and father, what are his God-assigned responsibilities? Basically, there are four of them:

(1) *He is to be the head of his home.* Genesis is 3:16; I Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 4:23 & 24; and I Timothy 2:12) He's the king! He makes the rules. He says yes or no. His word is final. Sociologists and psychologists say, "If only

there were a strong male figure, the juvenile rate would plummet."

(2) *He is to be the protector.* When night falls and the curtains are drawn, every home should have the watchful protection of a strong daddy. For various reasons many homes are without fathers, and the women and children pay the consequences. Every Christian father should take a lesson from the prophet Samuel. He was so busy going, "... year to year in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh, and judged Israel in all those places," (I Samuel 7:16) that "his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment" (I Samuel 8:3).

(3) *He is to be the physical provider.* (Genesis 3:17-19; Exodus 21:10; I Timothy 5:8) It is Daddy's responsibility — not Mother's — to make the living for the family. Food, clothing, and shelter, the three necessities of life, are the things for which he is to be responsible. Luxuries? No! They can be and oftentimes will have to be done without.

(4) *He is to be the spiritual leader.* Every Lord's Day morning, Daddy is the one to lead the way to worship. Throughout the week, it is he who should call the family together for instruction from God's Holy Word. According to I Corinthians 11:3, "The head of every man is Christ. . . ." That says that a husband and father should be a follower of Christ. Also, notice the instruction God left for fathers in Ephesians 6:4. "*Fathers*, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

When a woman becomes a wife and mother, what are her God-assigned responsibilities? Again, there are basically four of them:

(1) *She is to be a helpmeet* (Genesis 2:18). To be a helpmeet means to be a helper fit for the man to whom she is married. Her duty is to concentrate at all times on amply supplying his needs. Now, since the man is stronger and is

head over everyone else, whenever would he be helpless and have to summon the help of his wife? All of the time! I tell each woman in my *Training Up a Child* classes that she must become a 3-A woman. She must learn to Attract, Adapt, and Appease her husband. She must Attract by dressing up and keeping pretty for him. She will Adapt by molding her life around his and granting him freedom to be himself (*never nag him out of his existence!*) She must Appease him by being his lover. She will love to (1) cook for him, (2) make love to him, (3) go places and be with him, and (4) TELL HIM DAILY what makes him the greatest man in the world.

(2) *She is to be in submission.* (Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18; I Timothy 2:12; Titus 2:5; and I Peter 3:1-5) Over and over again the Bible says, "Wives, be in subjection; wives, submit yourselves; wives, be obedient to your own husband; women are not to usurp authority over men; wives, be subject to your own husbands in everything." Now just what does that mean? (It is surprising how void of understanding many women become when those scriptures are read.) What it means, precisely and clearly, is that a wife is to obey her husband's decisions. She is not to argue and stubbornly shout him down, or to go on boldly and do as she pleases. If his decision for the weekly budget provides for sixty dollars to be spent on groceries, an obedient wife will comply with that request on her shopping tours. *Any final decision a husband makes, that would not openly disagree with one of God's precepts, should be obeyed by his wife.*

Now, Mother, God in His wisdom has very good reason for that ordained order. What is it? It is His way of keeping peace and order in the family. Someone has to have the right to say, "This is the way it's going to be; do it, and let's go on to accomplish something else." And, Mother, may you never forget that your example of obedience to Daddy is the pattern which you can expect your children to follow in their submission to you. What if a wife refuses to submit to her

husband's leadership? I believe her soul's salvation is in jeopardy. Just as surely as she must be baptized for the forgiveness of sins, she must follow her husband's headship in order to be pleasing to God.

(3) *She is to be a keeper at home* (Titus 2:5). Again, another of God's requests — that women remain in the home — is being rejected by millions. Half of American mothers are now leaving their children in the care of others, or in a completely unsupervised situation, in order to take jobs out in the world. This is a tragedy and a shame! And I am disgraced to say that our Christian sisters are no exception. We are as guilty as our worldly neighbors in going out to paw and scrape to hoard up worldly possessions. And what is happening in the process? Our children are being lost to the Lord in calamitous proportions.

What could possibly be more important than the constant care of our husbands, children, and dwelling? There is absolutely nothing that should take precedence, and God knew it. That is why He said to women, "Stay home!"

Aged women in the church, where are you? Why don't you speak up to the young women about this? You know very well you were not treated like that as a child. Yes, a Christian mother will stay in the home and guard and keep watch for the welfare of every family member. She will be her little ones' constant teacher and supervisor. When they come home from school, she will be at the door to greet them.

I was surprised recently at a report one of our daughters brought home from school. In one of her classes there was discussion of the pros and cons of the Equal Rights Amendment. When the teacher took the children's for-or-against vote, every child in the class voted against it! Their reason? "Because I like for my mother to be home when I get in from school."

(4) *She is to guide the house* (I Timothy 5:14). As a woman

is to keep watch over the home, meaning the individual family members, we also receive God's direction about who is to oversee the affairs of the house or dwelling place. God knew everyone's business is no one's business; so he assigned the inside affairs of running a house to the woman. He gave her a special touch that makes her a good manager, director, and organizer. She can and will do a superior job of taking care of the family's possessions. She is the one to guide, organize and see that all products are utilized and taken care of once they are purchased. If anyone knows where the clean towels are kept, what time supper will be served, or where we hang our coats, it will be the lady of the house.

#### NO. 4 — She Has A Right To Be Taught The Importance Of Being One With Her Husband

After a Christian mother understands her own and her husband's individual duties, there is more she must learn about their relationship. Every mother must be tutored on the importance of becoming one with daddy. *It is absolutely imperative that parents take their stands side by side and present a united front in all dealings regarding their children.*

There are four areas where a husband and wife must stand together as one:

(1) *They must be one in their teaching.* Mother needs to believe in the same things as Daddy, and Daddy needs to believe like Mother. Their value systems must match. Every Christian mother in God's Kingdom must start teaching her children, from the time they are thirty inches high, the importance of marrying a Christian. I know older Christian parents in the church (I call them "winners") who have told me that they made it a steadfast rule when their children reached the dating age that they would never take out or go out with a non-Christian. I think that is wisdom speaking.

Now, when it comes to showing differences in personal likes and dislikes, that is a different matter. It will never be detrimental for a child to see his parents show differences of opinion on things like what color of carpet, make of automobile, or style of furniture to buy. It is on the basic Christian values and morals of life that parents must stand united.

(2) *They must be one in their discipline.* Discipline, as we said earlier, is making sure that a child follows his parents' teaching. If he exercises self-discipline and follows willingly, that is terrific! But if he refuses to obey their instruction, that is serious. Action must be taken. Often young couples get into conflict over when, who, and how to exercise this constraint upon their little ones.

The point to consider now is not *how* parents are to inflict the discipline (we will cover that in a later point), but the oneness plane on which it is to be administered. If a child defies one of Mother's orders and she must discipline to get obedience, Daddy must stand behind her and support her decision. The same goes for Mother when Daddy's strong hand of discipline must be exercised. *Parents must never team up with the children and stand one against the other in the matter of disciplining.*

"But what if your husband is wrong and his discipline is unfair?" many mothers ask. You back him anyway! It is in the privacy of your bedroom and out of hearing distance of the child that you can air your concern about his unjust treatment. If he was in the wrong and corrections need to be made, it is his business to make them — not yours.

Why will parental disunity over discipline harm a child? Because the parents are refusing to cooperate with God. God put within the nature of every child two impelling drives that will make him comply with proper behavior. These two yearnings are (1) the strong desire to be loved and accepted, and (2) a strong hatred for isolation. When default has been pointed out to the child and the parents lock arms in to-

getherness, who is standing in an unfavorable and lonesome position? The child, of course. His nature will not allow him to endure it for very long. He will hasten to conform to Daddy and Mother's wishes in order to be welcomed back into their fellowship and good graces.

(3) *They must be one in their love.* Marriage partners need to be one in their love. I heard a statement on the radio recently that was thought provoking. It was, "When you love someone, you can't hide it; if you don't, you can't fake it." Parents must show their love, tell their love, and stay in love.

If you were in a position to choose one gift to be given to every child in the world, what would you select? Would it be a college education, freedom from fear, plenty of food, money, or fun? According to those who work with disturbed children and are in a position to know what troubles them most, they say *the most favored children in the world are the ones whose parents love each other.* The greatest thing a mother can do for her son or daughter is to love their father with all of her heart.

Children should see their parents be affectionate to one another. They should witness a good-bye kiss in the morning and a big welcome-home hug in the evening. And marriage, we must never forget, is "until death do us part." I am impressed with God's plan of oneness in marriage every time I turn back to the Old Testament and read the account of the worthy woman. Verse 12 of Proverbs 31 says, "She will do him good and not evil *all the days* of her life."

(4) *They must be one in their strictness.* Parents must have the strength of character to demand the best performance possible from each of their children. Emerson once said, "Our chief want in life is someone who will make us do what we *can*." If you set your child to the task of picking up his toys, making his bed, mowing the lawn, doing the dishes, or cleaning his room, and he does a slovenly job, make him

do it over. Teach him the principle that *anything worth doing is worth doing well*. Children are far more capable than they often are given credit for being. You know your child! Be smart enough to determine his capabilities, and strict enough to make him live up to them.

**NO. 5 — She Has A Right To Know How To Love Her Child**

At the introduction of the lesson on love, I remind my students that no couple has a right to bring a baby into the world until the Daddy-Mother relationship is working as God would have it. Volumes could be written on the devastating consequences children suffer because of the fighting, division, and turmoil that exist between many parents. Any child that has drawn its first breath of air deserves a better environment than that. Yes, a little mother is not ready to be taught how to love her baby until she first knows how to love God, herself, and the baby's father.

Have you ever questioned in your mind why God would give the order in Titus 2:4 that young women should be taught how to love? That portion of the scriptures used to bother me tremendously. After all, I reasoned, isn't it automatic in human nature to have love and affection for those dearest to one? I was thinking of love as being as involuntary as blinking your eyes or breathing, and the plain truth is that it is not. God, again, knew what He was talking about. *Human beings have to be taught how to love.*

Recently, my husband and I were discussing with our pre-schooler the behavior patterns of a mother bear. We were explaining to him how she would sometimes have to take her big strong paws and cuff her babies to make them mind and to keep them from danger; then, when they got old enough to be on their own, she would run them up a tree and abandon them. The mother bear's tactics struck him as being terribly cruel, and he expressed readiness to get his gun and ammunition together and put that mamma bear in her place. I

was amused at his whole reaction. I said in my mind, "Now, isn't that typical of human nature? That mamma bear knows more about loving her offspring than many human beings." We went on to explain to our little one that there wasn't anything brutal about it. The mamma bear has to do that for her babies' well-being. If she didn't awaken them to dangers and make them become independent of her, they would be stunted and short-lived.

Yes, aged women in the church, young mothers will have to be taught the difference between sentimentality and genuine love. I begin teaching my lessons on love by explaining that love can't be described in words. Poets, writers, and scholars have tried for centuries and have never been successful. I know I would be far less successful than they. But though it is impossible to put love into one cluster of words, it is within reason to try to explain different stages and growth of love as evidenced in life.

There are three levels of love. The first level is possessive. It is basically selfish (I call it the infant stage) and says, "I want you, and that is why I love you." The second level of love is conditional. It is also self-seeking (I call it the adolescent stage) and carries with it the idea. "I'll love you as long as you meet my needs." The third level of love is sacrificial. It is love on an unselfish level (I call it the adult stage) and says to its recipient, "You need me; therefore, I love you."

This sacrificial level of love not only is Jesus' agape love, but is as well the level of love we must seek to achieve as marriage partners and parents. It is love in its fullest maturity. This is the level of love young mothers must be taught. *Love is seeking the ultimate good of the loved one.* Once parents reach this degree of love, they will be ready to do whatever is necessary to bring about the best for their child.

I believe we can witness the development of the possessive, conditional, and sacrificial stages of love between marriage partners. A young man may observe many young ladies

on a college campus before a certain one takes his eye. He makes arrangements to meet her, because she has all of the charms that especially appeal to him. After developing an acquaintance, he decides she is just what he has always dreamed of in a wife. As their relationship grows, his love will graduate into a more mature state: "I love you, because I need you." He realizes more and more that he needs her to make his life complete. He can see all that she has to offer for his complete happiness.

Marriage usually takes place while both are at the conditional stage of their love development. She is thinking of all he can do for her, and he is thinking of the multitude of blessings she is going to bring him.

After they are married, and in order to remain happy, it becomes necessary for them to continue to grow in their love. They must attain the sacrificial — "You need me; therefore, I love you" — level of love. The success of their marriage will depend upon it. They must voluntarily begin giving of themselves for their partner's sake. She will give him marital love, not because she feels especially like making love tonight, or will fix him beef stroganoff for supper, not because it is her favorite dish, but these are favors he desires. He will take her out for dinner or home to see her parents, not because he delights in getting out for the evening or making a long journey, but because these are considerations that will promote her happiness and well-being.

*Parental love must be a love for the child's sake.* A pioneer woman of long ago was a living example of a mother who loved her children with a sacrificial love, love for the child's sake. The lady and her husband had settled on the prairie to rear their family and try to make a living.

The Lord had so far blessed them with healthy children and they were eagerly awaiting the arrival of another little one. The day came that she gave birth to a beautiful girl. A neighbor lady had come in a covered wagon to assist with the

birth and help in any other way she could. It was after everything was taken care of and the lady was cleaning the child that she noticed something was wrong with the baby's foot. One little foot was perfect, but the other was turned in a horizontal position.

Several days later the old country doctor was traveling through the area. He knew this woman was expecting a baby; so he made a special stop to see how she was getting along. When she showed him the baby's foot, he told her that, if she didn't want the child to be a cripple, there was only one thing she could do. She must start giving therapy treatments immediately. These were the instructions of the doctor: "Hold her in your lap and force her foot frontward one hundred times daily. Do this without fail."

While the little bones were pliable, that mother sat down to carry out the doctor's instructions. At the first turn of the foot, the pain was so intense that the baby gave a piercing scream. Bravely, the mother turned the foot again and again and again, counting as she went. As the baby writhed in pain, tears poured down that mother's cheeks, blinding her vision, but she didn't give up. Day after day she administered this painful therapeutic treatment. Weeks and months passed by, and she could gradually see the little foot beginning to straighten.

This mother's heart was gladdened and she received the rewards that accompany a sacrificial love when the day came that she looked out her kitchen window and saw her child running and playing in the sunshine as normally as the other children. Even though it had been heartbreaking for her to have to give the painful treatment, she accomplished that which was best for her little girl and her future life.

It must be pointed out at this time that love can produce results that are exactly opposite. It can cause excruciating pain, or it can bring exquisite joy. Suppose a child has an abscess that's producing poison in his system and is

threatening his life. The doctor prepares to lance the abscess, which is going to cause terrific pain, but a sentimental nurse grabs his hand and demands, "Don't you dare hurt that poor baby!" Which one loves — the doctor or the nurse? The answer is the doctor, of course. Even though his treatment resulted in pain, he did what was best for the child.

The pioneer woman who straightened her child's foot also experienced the two results — pain and joy — that can come from genuine love.

One way to determine whether love is present in a family is by witnessing the effects of its presence. Love reminds me of electricity. Just as I can't explain love in words, neither can I tell you what electricity is. I can't see electricity; but if it's present, I can surely see the effects of it. If I stick my finger in a plug-in, I can even feel the effects of its presence.

Love is like electricity in that it is a living, active power. If it is present, our children will witness it in more than one way. As we previously discussed, if Daddy and Mother are performing their duties, love will automatically be radiating to some degree. Daddy will be devoting his time to providing a living, and Mother will be giving of her time and talents to keep a peaceful, attractive, and loving home.

There is one last way that I would like to discuss by which our children will know the presence of our love. That is when we express it through our senses of speaking, hearing, and feeling. We would refer to this as communicating our love. We can give affectionate kisses; say, "I love you"; give words of praise, hugs, squeezes, caresses, and love-pats. All of this is to say, *'Be an affectionate family.'*

The idea of being affectionate is Biblical. Remember the story of Jacob and Esau? They were twin brothers who were apart for many years. When they were reunited, the Bible says, "*And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept*" (Genesis 33:40).

Jacob and Joseph were father and son and had also been separated for years. When they came together, the Bible says, "*And Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goshen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while*" (Genesis 46:29).

Again, the Bible tells of Paul's last time to be with the Ephesian elders at Miletus, and they were telling him good-bye. They knew they would never see his face again. Did they shake his hand and say, "Paul, it has really been nice to know you"? Of course they didn't! The Bible says, "*And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him*" (Acts 20:37).

On one occasion Jesus was eating meat in the house of a Pharisee. A sinful woman came in and wept, washed Jesus' feet with her tears, kissed them, and anointed them with ointment. The Pharisee was standing off condemning all this in his mind. He reasoned, "*This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner*" (Luke 7:39). Jesus, knowing the thoughts of the Pharisee's heart, rebuked him. He the same as said, "Here I came into your house, and you didn't even give me water to wash my feet; furthermore, you didn't kiss me." Jesus indicated to him that, by failing to show him these outward affections, he had sadly neglected being a good host.

At the end of the lesson on love, all TUAC students are given this assignment: Take an empty medicine bottle, make a written copy of the following prescription and paste it on the bottle. Put it in the refrigerator and apply three times a day. "From the Affectionate Pharmacy, No. 322912, from Dr. Dew Alittle Lovin, for Daddy Bee and Mother Bee — Three times a day, apply an affectionate kiss, hug, and squeeze to each child in the family. Accompany with an 'I Love You.' "

**NO. 6 — She Has A Right To Be Taught How To Get Obedience From Her Child**

After love, obedience is the next essential ingredient in the life of a child. Any Christian mother will be a failure as a parent if she fails to teach her child this lesson.

Obedience builds three essential ingredients within a child. It builds trust, respect, and responsibility. Without these ingredients, a child will be a social cripple, handicapped for life.

At this point in my TUAC classes, I encourage the young mothers to pick out older winning parents to observe and from whom to obtain counsel. And what is a winner? Winners are parents who have reared or are rearing obedient children. Their children respect and honor them; they show it in their speech, manners, and actions.

I have been trying to pick winners for a long time. Claude was an elder in a congregation where my husband once preached. He and his wife, Dorothy, were winning parents whom we had the opportunity to observe. They had three of the finest teenage boys I have ever known.

One night we drove out to their little farm. Their house was small — no big den or family room — and all three of the boys were stretched out on the living room floor, deeply engrossed in a TV program. As my husband and I entered the room, all three of them acknowledged our arrival by greeting us courteously. Then they settled back down to continue viewing their program.

We made ourselves comfortable and enjoyed visiting with Claude and Dorothy for a few minutes. The time arrived for us to get down to the serious business for which we had made the call. There were things that needed to be discussed that Claude didn't want the boys to hear. So, without further ado, he said to them, "Boys, shut off the TV and go to your room." Without hesitation, all three promptly got up and obeyed their father. There was absolutely no questioning,

backtalk ("Oh, Dad! Can't we just finish this program?"), or nasty attitude involved. They told us good night and went to their room immediately.

That is a demonstration of a winner at work. Claude had obedience from his sons. A response that is truly obedient has three aspects; it is (1) immediate, (2) unquestioning, and (3) involves doing exactly as one is told — no substitutions, additions, or omissions. Claude had all three of those reactions from his children.

I would estimate that out of the hundreds of women whom I have taught in my TUAC classes, approximately one-third have been non-Christian women. So it is at this point that I take the opportunity to reinforce the basic objective of getting obedience. Children must learn to respect their earthly parental authority in order to prepare them for reverence for heavenly authority. As parents demand obedience from their children, so does God expect adults to comply with His word. Adults can fail to obey God's word in as many ways as children can think up to disobey their parents. Portions of the scriptures can be omitted, substitutions inserted, or unauthorized decrees added.

Suppose I send my child on an errand to the corner 7-Eleven store. My instructions are: "Take these two dollars, get me a pound of butter, and bring back the change." My child goes to the store and returns with the pound of butter, some change, plus a popsicle. Did he obey? No! What did he do wrong? He *added* to my instructions, didn't he? Let's assume that upon his arrival at the store he decided the butter cost too much and he would save me money by purchasing a cheap brand of margarine. So he returns home with the margarine and much more change. Did he obey? No! What did he do amiss? He *substituted*. This time let's suppose he goes into the store, gets the butter, but at the cash register tells the clerk to keep the change. He come home with the butter but no change. Where did he default this

time? He *omitted* doing part of what he was told.

In these same ways adults can fail to carry out God's instructions. When the Bible says, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, . . ." (Acts 2:38), there are to be no additions, substitutions, or omissions to the command.

There are ten basic facts older women can teach younger women about getting obedience from their children. After a little mother has heard these precepts, the task of effecting this obedience will be left up to her.

Fact 1 — *To love and to discipline don't conflict.* The first fact to know in getting obedience is that in order to love a child you will have to discipline him. To love is to discipline. We just learned that the all-important definition of love is "seeking the ultimate good of the loved one." It is for the good of any child to have acceptable behavior and to be able to get along in the family, in the neighborhood, and at school. God says, "*He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes*" (Proverbs 13:24). A parent puts forth the effort to discipline, then, only if he loves the child.

Fact 2 — *Punishment is not always discipline, but inflicted discipline is always punishment.* It must be understood that there is a difference between pure punishment and true discipline. Punishment is pain or discomfort inflicted upon one. Now, if pain or discomfort is inflicted upon a child for his welfare and to make him a better and a more acceptable person, it is discipline. But if pain is inflicted on a child out of spite, anger, hate, or when a parent is in a rage, it is pure punishment.

The prisoners of war were punished. They were angrily beaten until they were unconscious. Their fingernails were pulled out by the roots. These acts were done in hatred, and were not for their welfare. This was pure punishment and had no resemblance to discipline.

I once knew a Christian couple that consistently punished their children. They were forever slapping and cuffing them around. During one worship service, you would witness them administering not less than a dozen blows to the children's heads. Needless to say, these children were very unruly, disobedient, and so unhappy they cried a great deal of the time.

Christian parents must inflict pain and discomfort to accomplish discipline, but must not administer punishment as a relief for their own frustrations.

Fact 3 — *A child's judgment takes years to develop.* Children are children, and it takes months and years of living for their judgments to develop. They do not need to be burdened with a lot of explanations, but simply furnished with concrete facts. Don't force a child to make decisions before he has the facts upon which to decide and the self-confidence to do so.

Many a mother gets into trouble by not knowing the immaturity of children. She will often expect her child to have mature enough judgment to choose his food or the clothes appropriate for a particular occasion. When the child tries, he fails, gets angry, and causes a scene. The mother should choose the apparel and menu and tell the child, "Here is what you are wearing today"; or "This is what you are having for lunch."

Fact 4 — *Every child needs to learn respect for authority.* Respect for authority is one basic lesson all children need to be taught. No matter what else you want your child to learn, he must learn this lesson first. Learning respect for authority will be the basis on which all of the hundreds and thousands of other lessons in life will fall into place. You may ask, "Where do I start teaching authority? There are the school authorities, police authorities, and many different authorities." That brings us to the fifth fact a Christian mother needs to know.

Fact 5 — *You are your child's first authority.* In a Christian family, God has delegated authority to rest within the hands of parents. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1). Again the Bible reads, "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" (Colossians 3:20).

The basic purpose in God's using parents to be a child's first authority is not to give the parents an avenue for boosting their own ego and exercising their power, but is, rather, to build a basis for the child's attitude toward all other people. The respect your child has for his first authority will be what he will transfer over when he is older and meets with the teacher at school, the Bible class teacher, the policeman on the corner, the store manager, the baseball coach, the cub scout leader, and most of all, God and Christ. He will follow others' instructions the way he learned to follow yours.

Now, if a parent is expected to be the child's authority, he or she must be taught how to be an authority. An authority (1) knows the subject better than the person he's addressing, (2) verbally gives his facts (once, never more than twice, unless he's asked), and (3) follows his facts with proof. A parent will follow those three procedures many times in a day. In order to get two-year-old Tammy to take a nap or eighteen-month-old Richard to stay away from a dangerous chair, a mother teaching respect for her authority must go through those steps.

Now it is absolutely imperative to make a special point here. There has never been and will never be a new mother of a normal child who will not run into difficulty with two-year-old Tammy or eighteen-month-old Richard. She can know Tammy needs a nap and the chair is dangerous to Richard; she can tell them so, and can follow step three by putting Tammy to bed and steering Richard away from the chair. *BUT* Tammy and Richard happen to have minds of their

own. In these early years, they will not obey Mother unless she insists upon it.

Fact 6 — *To discipline, you need a rod.* If Tammy won't stay in bed and Richard refuses to leave the chair alone, Mother will have to reinforce that her facts are true by furnishing further proof. She must make Tammy and Richard follow her teaching by using God's rod. God specifies in Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 23:13 & 14; and 29:15 & 17 that parents need to use a *ROD* on their children. And what is a rod? It is "a straight slender stick growing on or cut from a tree or a bush."

Fact 7 — *Start teaching obedience early.* One of the key points to remember in training a child is to *start early* on everything. Just how early should a new mother start insisting upon obedience from her child? No later than five to seven months old. Before I had ever had experience with a baby, and winning parents would tell me that, I was horrified. "What possible reason would you have to discipline a baby that can't even walk?" I questioned. They assured me I would learn. And I did. It is when you are diapering and the baby refuses to lie still, or when his excessive anger takes over, that you will have to give him a little spat and awaken him to your displeasure. Crawlers and toddlers must be taught obedience to the words "no," "hush," and "come to Mother." A tiny switch from the tree, used consistently, will help a mother accomplish these lessons.

Fact 8 — *Conquer your child's will and do it early.* This eighth fact of conquering a child's will and doing it early is a *must* for every new mother to know. The sooner she gets this accomplished, the more delightful her child will be.

Susannah Wesley has gone down in history as one of the most outstanding women at child rearing. She raised nineteen children, and her philosophy was to teach them to fear the rod, cry softly, and yield their will to hers. She said one couldn't rear children until their wills were conquered and

they were brought to an obedient temper. When a child's will is conquered, he will readily and willingly submit to his parents' desire when it conflicts with his own.

My mother reared six children, and I have heard her say many times, "There is a conquering time in the life of every child." She especially remembers the day she conquered me.

I was between two and three years old, and our family was seated at the table for lunch. I accidentally or purposely (the latter probably) dropped a piece of bread on the floor. My mother knew her subject and stated her fact. She said, "You get down and pick up the bread." I just looked at her. Since I was so young, she repeated her fact to be sure I understood. I looked at the bread and then at her, but I still refused to budge.

After beholding my defiant attitude and unwillingness to obey, she promptly removed me from the table and away from the family. She took me to the bedroom and disciplined me soundly.

We came back to the table; she put me in my chair and again stated her fact, "Now, you get down and pick the bread up." Through my tears, I still stubbornly refused to obey.

She removed me from the family table once again and administered another dose of firm discipline. She brought me back to the table, put me on my chair and again said, "Now, you get down and pick up the bread." I still would not do it. In my defiance, I looked at the bread and back at her and continued my challenge to her authority.

The majority of mothers would have thrown in the towel, given up, and said, "This isn't working. I will have to try something else." But I have thanked the Lord many times that I had a mother made of pure gold. She wasn't about to allow her baby to dictate the facts to her.

So she made a third, fourth, and possibly (she doesn't remember for sure) a fifth trip to the bedroom and disciplined

me. As she recounts the occasion, it was such a nerve-racking experience for her that she is surprised that I have no remembrance of it.

Finally, she conquered my will when she brought me back to the table, told me to pick up the bread, and I willingly crawled down from my chair, picked it up and placed it in her hands. She said that from that moment she never had trouble getting me to mind her.

Fact 9 — *Spanking is an event.* What I mean by this statement is that when you must discipline a child, it must be considered an important happening. There is more to it than a slight tap. To inflict discipline, here are the seven steps you will need to follow: (1) Get a rod. (2) Take the child to a private place. (3) Express disapproval of the action. (4) Administer the rod thoroughly on the bottom and legs. (5) Take the child back to finish your spoken word. (6) After sufficient time has elapsed and your child has a yielding spirit, take him into your arms and communicate your love. (7) Forgive the transgression and go on with living.

Fact 10 — *The switch also sweetens sour attitudes.* With any age child, and older ones especially, you may have to watch the attitude. Children can yield in body to your requests but express sarcasm and disrespect with a nasty attitude. They may slouch around, pout, slam doors, kick the cat, go into seclusion for an excessive amount of time, or who knows what. Don't put up with a defiant attitude. There is nothing that will sweeten a sour attitude any faster than a switch. Use it the same as you do when your child refuses to obey a physical request.

#### **NO. 7 — She Has A Right To Know That Children Must Be Rewarded With Gradual Independence**

We have just studied that obedience produces wisdom (Proverbs 29:15) and is imperative for children's protection, security, and well-being and for harmony in the home.

However, obedience alone will not produce a well-rounded and responsible person. If a child's instructions and orders are always dictated to him, he will be a helpless individual indeed. Little by little, he must learn to be independent, stand on his own two feet, do his own thinking and learn to make judgments when Daddy and Mother are not there.

Responsible independence, however, is not an achievement that parents can only hope for. It is a goal that has to be planned and worked toward.

What can older women teach the younger women that will help them be assured that each child will grow up to be an independent, responsible citizen, employee, Christian, marriage partner and parent? There are four ways I should like to suggest in which gradual portions of freedom can be given a child in order to help him toward a life of independence.

1. *Love Him and Make Him Obey* — Parents are already on their way to helping their child achieve independence if they are implementing our two previous lessons. Their love and demand for obedience will cause them to call their child into account day after day. He will be asked to give an account, "Why did you do this?" "Why didn't you do that?" Or, "You need a reminder to help you remember not to make that mistake again." All of this will build responsibility for his actions.

2. *Retreat! Let Him Occupy His Territory* — There are two areas of a child's development toward independence that parents must keep in mind. One is physical achievement and the other is mental. The physical independence runs ahead of the mental. For example: A child will master the physical skills of walking, dressing himself, or riding a bike long before his mental judgment is mature enough for him to go safely into the street, to choose proper apparel, or to know where and how far to ride.

When I say that a parent must retreat and let the child occupy his territory, I am referring to physical accomplishments. Once a child learns to walk, talk, feed or dress himself, care for the dog, throw the paper route, make his bed, milk the cow, gather the eggs, or whatever the task may be, Mother needs to get out of the way and allow the child to exercise his skill in every instance.

3. *Insist! Make Him Occupy His Territory* — It seems never to fail in the world of children that once the paper route, piano lessons, caring for the animals, helping Mrs. Jones clean house every Saturday morning, or washing the dishes gets old, they want to quit. Learning to milk the cow was fun, but it soon dawns on them that it is hard work and demands much time and effort. Christian parents must not let their children be quitters. They must *make* them occupy their territory, stick with their projects and see them through to the end.

4. *Use Your Head to Help Develop His Head* — Because of a child's curious nature and desire to try every new thing he sees his parents do, developing physical skills is relatively easy. It is the development of responsible mental independence that is a job much more difficult.

Apart from a child's being openly disobedient to your spoken word, there are many situations in which a child functions alone. He will be put in situations where he must make decisions by himself. Now, it must be understood that for open disrespect and disobedience, spanking is the first response and not the last resort; but on the occasions when a child is functioning alone and his mistakes are simply a result of his own poor judgment, there are other ways to teach him the consequences for bad decision-making.

Let's discuss five ways we can help our child to learn to use his head.

Suggestion 1 — *Use Environmental Control* — Exercising environmental control is an example of an ounce of

prevention preventing a pound of problems. By planning ahead, wise parents can remove dangers before they cause harm, or temptations before they are conceived in the mind of a child. Putting gates at the top of stairs, storing valuables, keeping loaded guns and medicines out of reach, and having appropriate toys to occupy play time will eliminate a child's being put in a position of having to make crucial decisions.

Christian parents should stop often to evaluate their home situations. If you find yourself having to discipline frequently for the same offenses, perhaps some change in surroundings is in order. If the children are forever coming to the table with dirty hands or spilling their milk at every meal, maybe you need to purchase a stepping stool for the bathroom sink and buy a different size and shape of drinking glasses.

Muddy footprints are exasperating on a clean, freshly mopped floor. Putting footscrapers and throw rugs at the entrances can save much cleaning and scolding. A night light will help a child who is developing fears of the dark and is frequently awakening you in the night with crying because of bad dreams.

Use your head and exercise good environmental control. Take inventory, study problem areas, and see what changes you might be able to make to alleviate any unpleasant conditions that exist.

Suggestion 2 — *Deprive* — Depriving is taking away a privilege when you must. Any time a child shows poor judgment or abuses a privilege, take away that privilege for a while. Give the child time to think about his error and at a later time give him a chance to prove himself again.

Example — Little Pete has physically learned to manipulate crayons. He has learned this physical skill and, for his age, can color very prettily. He has color books in which to color and drawing paper for his drawing. For some time the crayons have been located on a low shelf. He has access to

them any time he wants them, because he has always used good judgment in exercising his artistic skills. One day, while playing alone, little Pete gets overly ambitious and colors on the walls. What is his mother to do? She has shown confidence and trusted him with the crayons. Now she will have to deprive Pete of free access to the crayons. Give him a few days to do some thinking and, after a reasonable depriving time, give him another chance. Put the crayons back on the low shelf. As long as Pete uses good judgment, show confidence, trust him with the crayons, praise him, and silently rejoice.

Any time children display irresponsible actions and are made to pay the consequences of their carelessness, they will be more reliable when their independence is granted again. Children who are consistently dealt with in this manner and are made to exercise their freedoms with responsible behavior, will develop into young people who can be trusted to act wisely in any situation in which they find themselves.

**Suggestion 3 — *Isolate*** — Always remember that children are very gregarious, and to be set apart from everyone else is painful for them. They like to be in the middle of the activity for fear they will miss out on something. There may be other ways of isolating, but I should like to suggest three ways you can set children apart. A child can (1) be sent to his room, (2) set on a chair, or (3) stood in a corner.

If your four-year-old is in the back yard and is disrupting the children's play, you can bring him in the house and set him on a chair. To children, a thirty-minute stay on a chair is equivalent to about three hours. It does give them time, however, to calm down, think, and determine to behave better when given their freedom to try again.

If little brothers are not getting along, isolate them. Put one on a chair in one room and the other on a chair in another room.

**Suggestion 4 — *Let Natural Consequences Work For You*** — In our suggestions for using environmental control, depriving, and isolation, we have learned that we are going to have to do some planning ourselves. Exercising natural consequences is different. There is nothing at all difficult about letting this law work for you. "Natural consequences" means just what the words imply. You have little, if anything, to do, because nature is the one that takes over and sees that your child pays a price.

It is natural for all human beings to have to learn some things the hard way. All of the cautioning and warning in the world, from someone wiser, is simply not heeded. How many of us learned that the stove is hot and fire burns, without touching to see for ourselves? What child has been content to believe his parents when they told him, "The little green pepper will burn your mouth!"? He must try it for himself. Sure enough, it is hot! He gulps down a glass of water and isn't so eager for hot peppers the next time.

**Suggestion 5 — *Use Logical Consequences***— Logical consequences are altogether different from natural consequences. With natural consequences, nature constructs the end results. "Logical consequences" result when the parent draws up a choice of outcomes.

Dr. Haim Ginott calls this a "Voice and Choice" activity. You give the voice, and the child takes a choice. Using logical consequences is a good way to start little ones making wise decisions. You can give a child a choice between two facts. You could say, "Which of these two dresses would you like to wear today?" Or, "Which would you like to have for supper — a hamburger or fried chicken?"

Other examples of the voice and choice activity are, "Would you like a half glass or a whole glass of milk?" Or, "Would you like a half apple or a whole apple?" *The important thing to remember in using logical consequences is to make the child be responsible for the choice he makes. If the*

child chooses a full glass of milk or a whole apple over the half portion, make sure he consumes it and it isn't wasted. If it was too much and he was unwise in his choice, he must suffer the natural consequences. Through this means he will learn to have better judgment next time.

Example — Perhaps mealtime is always a headache. It seems that every evening when dinner is called, some member of the household isn't there. You have to scout the neighborhood, and the family sits down to a cold supper. It is now time to create a logical consequence for the latecomer. Different mothers may think up any number of ideas for giving the *Voice*. Here is an example of what you might say: "From now on, dinner is going to be served at six o'clock. Anyone who is not here will have to do without." Jack now has a *Choice*. He can choose to be responsible and watchful of the time, or he can continue in his late pattern and miss his supper.

It must be remembered that when parents create logical consequences, it is *imperative* that they carry through with their word and see that the child carries through with his choice. If you said supper is going to be served at six o'clock, you be sure that it is on the table at that time. On the days that you know there will be a delay or dinner will be earlier, let Jack know ahead of time. The choice is left up to Jack.

I call the lesson on Independence my soul-searching lesson. It needs to be handled as carefully as a medicine prescription. If you give too much too fast, it can be harmful. If you give too little too slowly, it can be just as harmful. We need to give the proper dosage of freedom at the proper time. And no one knows that dosage and time but the parents.

I should like especially to encourage us as Christian parents not to give too little independence too slowly. Those who work with disturbed young people say the failure to let children gradually mature is one of the greatest causes of teenage rebellion. We must let them physically develop and,

when they show good judgment, let go, trust them, and with God's help they will mature into responsible, well adjusted, and happy adults.

#### **NO. 8 — She Has A Right to Be Taught the Importance of Training Good Habits**

Christian parents who are interested in and concerned about the development and welfare of their children want them to like themselves and be liked by others. This can best be accomplished by training them to have good habits. When they touch others' lives, they will meet with a good and positive reception.

When Jesus Christ was twelve years of age, the Bible says, He "*increased . . . in favor with God and man*" (Luke 2:52). From this passage we learn that Jesus' childhood behavior met with approval in the eyes of the adult world. Since there are so few passages in all the Bible that mention His childhood, the fact that God included this information is an indication He considers children's behavior very important. "*Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right*" (Proverbs 20:11).

As Christian parents, we want our children to exert a good influence. If we guide them into a life of good habits, they will like themselves, be a joy to the family, and meet with favor in the big wide world. Good habits will build within a child a feeling of self-approval, self-confidence, and pride (the kind that will help him hold his chin up, but not stick his nose up.)

Any time an older Christian woman is teaching young women the importance of maintaining good habits, she must stress that they have to be *trained*. Teaching is not good enough. Remember back to our first precept — training involves the teacher's showing and telling the way and the student's following? If a new mother has the aspiration for her daughter to keep a clean bedroom with the bed always

neatly made, how does she go about training that good habit? By being slovenly and never making her own bed? Of course not! She has to set the example before her daughter. Now, will just mother's good example be enough to inspire the daughter to neatness? No! The daughter herself must be made to follow over and over and over again Mother's life style. Over a period of years she will be trained to be neat like her mother.

What are some good habits that will help make our children's personal lives better? Are there principles that will assist them in making their associations with family and friends more joyful and happy?

I should like to encourage Christian parents to invest their time and energy in the Bank of P's. This will pay rich dividends, not in penny profit, but in people approval. The children will receive benefits far more valuable than anything money can buy.

The following are six areas of life in which parents can train good habits:

1. *Train a Child Good Habits for His Person* — When a child is trained to take care of his person, it will help him be more conscious of his physical well-being. He will be healthier and, basically, a happier child. The Bible says, "*Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

In order to train a child to take care of his body, we can see to it that *he does* the following nine things: (1) Keeps a regular bedtime hour each night. (2) Eats three well-balanced meals a day. (3) Bathes and puts on clean clothes. (4) Washes hands and flushes the toilet after going to the bathroom. (5) Brushes his teeth regularly. (6) Dresses, washes his face, and combs his hair before play. (7) Keeps his body covered with modest attire that is proper and de-

cent. (8) Plays and exercises. (9) Washes his hands before and after eating.

2. *Train a Child Good Habits for His Possessions* — Training a child to take care of and respect the things that belong to him will assist in making him a thankful and appreciative person. A child should show deep gratitude when he receives a gift or an added possession. One way, however, to destroy a child's appreciative nature is to gift him with too many things and give him everything he wants. A girl with three school dresses will take care of them and be much more appreciative when she receives an occasional new dress than a girl with thirteen dresses she seldom gets to wear. Children who have a room full of toys will appreciate and care for them less than a family of little ones who have only a few things with which to play.

One key bit of wisdom for parents to remember about developing a child's good habits with his possessions is to provide him with the essentials of life and conservatively give him of the non-essentials.

Train a child to follow these seven rules: (1) Make up his bed. (2) Hang up his clothes. (3) Pick up his room and keep it orderly. (4) Pick up and put away his toys. (5) Feed and care for his pet. (6) Wake up to his own alarm. (7) Respect others' possessions and property.

3. *Train a Child Good Habits for His Pastime* — The story has been told about an elderly woman who had spent the major portion of her life rearing five sons. Her hopes and dreams had always been that they would enter the ministry. Much to her disappointment, none of them became a preacher. Each one went to sea. One day while she was entertaining a visitor and reminiscing about the past, she shared this disappointment with her guest. Later in the visit, the guest observed all the water scenes her hostess had hanging on her walls. Over the years, the boys had been

impressed with life near the water by the pictures they constantly viewed.

Perhaps that story can be a lesson to us to be careful of the things to which we subject our children in their pastime. The following are six suggestions as to how to supervise a child's spare time: (1) Supervise his TV time and programs. (2) Supervise his records, radio, and reading material. (3) Have your children's friends into your home for playtime and meals. (4) encourage getting homework at a designated time. (5) Know where your children are at all times, and insist upon promptness. (6) Encourage your children to exercise and develop their talents.

4. *Train a Child Good Habits in His Politeness* — A polite child is loved and appreciated by everyone. If a child is to be courteous, however, he must live with courteous parents. He will be polite to others because his parents are polite to him. In order for a child to show good manners, he must be taught to observe the following eleven kindnesses: (1) Respect others' privacy by knocking on their door before entering. (2) Say "please," "thank you," "you're welcome," and "pardon me, please." (3) Address older people as "Mr." and "Mrs." (4) Say "yes, ma'am," "no, ma'am," "yes, sir," and "no, sir." (5) Recognize a visiting guest or older person by speaking. (6) Do not interrupt when adults are speaking, (7) Boys should open doors, help with chairs, and let girls go first. (8) Ask, "May I be excused, please?" (9) Always serve your friends food before yourself. (10) Bad or unpleasant attitudes are not allowed. (11) Write thank-you notes for gifts received.

5. *Train a Child Good Habits in His Peacefulness* — Being a peacemaker is commended by Jesus in the seventh beatitude. As we look at the world, it is very evident that the easiest course to follow in life is to be at odds with someone or in a constant state of confusion. But peace is one of the fruits of the spirit — love, joy, PEACE, longsuffering, gentleness,

goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Galatians 5:22 and 23).

Before a child can be a peaceful person, he must be trained to exercise self-control in his daily life and to practice ruling his spirit. Parents can promote peace by insisting on the following seven guidelines: (1) No fighting is allowed in our family. (2) Always tell the truth. (3) Get permission before using someone else's property. (4) Forgive and ask for forgiveness. (5) Say, "I am sorry," and "I was wrong." (6) Talk to God in prayer. (7) As brothers and sisters, be content to play together or to be alone.

6. *Train a Child Good Habits for His Public Approval* — Every good habit that we have talked about thus far will improve a child's life, make family living delightful, and make a favorable impression on outsiders. As a direct help to you child in meeting with favor with the outside world, you can train him to: (1) Be prompt for appointments. (2) Have good telephone manners. (3) Be sure not to stare and point at people. (4) Let older folks have his seat. (5) Never yell or run in public buildings. (6) Cover his mouth when coughing and sneezing.

#### **NO. 9 — She Has A Right To Know That Children Must Be Made To Work**

I have never obtained counsel from any winning parent who has not been definite in his opinion that children need to be kept busy. They say it is imperative that young children have work to do! I can remember as a child hearing my mother repeat so many times the phrase, "Idleness is the devil's workshop," that I thought for a long time it was a passage from the Bible.

Training a child to work is no easy task. It takes a great deal of time and patience — two ingredients of which young mothers often run short.

From the four letters W-O-R-K, we can outline our sub-

ject. In order to train a child and instill within him the desire to work, it will take: *Wise Organization and Regular Keeping*.

There are five plays that I should like to suggest for parents to "wise up to" in the game of work:

Play No. 1 — *Children Play by Nature; They Work by Nurture*. A young mother must be wise to the fact that children will naturally know how to play, but they must be trained to work. A little boy can sit in his high chair and, with no tutoring, know how to turn a hot dog bun into a truck; or a little girl can transform a stick into a dolly. All the while adults are seeing tasks "piled to the ceiling," children are totally oblivious to the fact that there is anything needing to be done. So, if your child does not jump up and volunteer to do the work that to you obviously needs to be done, relax and don't think he is unusual. He is only being normal. You must be the one to point out individual responsibilities and delegate the assignments.

Play No. 2 — *Children Feel Useless If They Are Not Useful*. Now, it must be understood that basically a child does not remain happy in an apathetic condition. Children feel worthless unless they are made to become useful. A basic fact of human nature is that we all need to feel we are capable of producing and that we are good for something.

Play No. 3 — *Children Will Tag Along With a Tactful Trainer*. It is my prayer during this short study that you will not lose sight of the fact that you must be a *trainer*. You *show* and *tell*, and your children *follow* your example. Children are tag-alongs and, as the saying goes, are as "curious as a cat" when it comes to grown-up affairs. They will pursue you and want to try every new thing they see you do.

If you are a tactful trainer, you will take advantage of the times your children want to help. If you are washing windows or shining silver, and they want to try their hand at cleaning, move over and welcome their services. *As a Chris-*

*tian parent, learn to work along with your little tag-alongs.*

Play No. 4 — *Children's Own Perspiration Adds to Their Appreciation.* The fourth fact wise parents need to know in the game of work is a hidden truth that lies in the heart and mind of every child. That secret is that children always appreciate what they are able to do for themselves more than what is done for them by someone else. We learned in our lesson on independence that doing for ourselves is what we basically want to achieve. "Just leave me alone, and I will prove to you that I can do it without your help."

If your twelve-year-old longs for a ten-speed bike, let him mow lawns, throw papers, pick berries, or save his working allowance and pay for it himself. That bike will get better care than any of the trikes and bikes you bought him in his early childhood.

Play No. 5 — *Children Readily Respond If There Are Reason and Reward.* If you have a Christian family and are teaching your child to be *OBEDIENT*, he automatically has *Reasons* and *Rewards* for doing any work you assign. In God's command for a child to be obedient, his reasons and rewards are automatically built in.

Look how magnificently it works! What is an obedient child's Reason for working? Nothing more than the fact his parents told him what to do. The healthy fear of their discipline which he has learned, will inspire him to get the task done immediately. What is his Reward? He has not only one reward but two. When a child obeys his parents, he receives, firstly, an inward peace and feeling of love and acceptance from having parental approval. Through his cooperation, he also helps maintain a peaceful home environment, which is priceless.

Secondly, his obedience and respect for authority will result in his receiving a reward that is above all other rewards. That gift is from God. God's marvelous promise of abundant and protective care is directed to the obedient

child who honors his parents. "Children, obey you parents in the Lord: for this is right. 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" (Ephesians 6:1-3).

Parents should also amply supply the free rewards of a smile, kiss, hug, pat, a word of praise, a comment of "I appreciate that" or "I am proud of you." These gifts of the spirit are only reflexes that should naturally accompany parental approval.

After a child experiences heavenly approval and receives the free gifts of warmness, affection, and praise from his parents, are there other rewards he can receive for work well done? Yes, there are! Parents can appeal to the human side of their child, if they wish, and give material things as added compensation for good work.

The rewards parents can give, in addition to a child's regular food, clothing, and shelter, are as numerous and varied as their imaginations. The following are only a few suggestions that may serve as special rewards for a goal attained, if parents can and want to offer them: money, extra TV time, special family nights, a night to stay up late, attending a special movie, going out to eat or to the circus, a trip to the mountains to ski, inviting a guest for dinner or to spend the night, a special Baked Alaska, the privilege of sleeping on the silk sheets and pillow slips, or spending a night with grandparents or a friend.

After a mother gets *Wise* to the game of work, she must then prepare to *Organize*. The first thing you will need in order to start an organized work program for your children is an hour's time, a pencil, and paper. Sit down, take a sheet of paper for each child, write his name across the top of the page, and number one to ten. Think mentally through a day and list the main things for which you want each child to be responsible. Post your lists on a low bulletin board and

design a way that each chore can be marked as it is accomplished each day. For the pre-schoolers, pictures can be drawn to symbolize their job. For the older children, they can be written out.

After you have written and posted the children's work lists, the third thing you can consider is a tangible reward to offer at the end of each day and week. Giving allowances is a good idea. The children can then be taught to give to God and to save; the remaining portion of their earnings is theirs to keep for their own use.

The last major consideration in the game of work is to stress the importance of children *Regularly Keeping* their work. Just as Daddy goes to work regularly and Mother feeds the family daily, it isn't asking too much to expect the children to do their chores regularly. They will feel useful and have a much deeper appreciation of their home and family if they are busily involved in making things work and operate smoothly.

Children's work must be kept three ways: (1) kept by the children, (2) kept separate from play, and (3) kept well.

#### **NO. 10 — She Has A Right To Learn The Importance Of Good Communication**

To develop good communication is one more excellent reason young mothers must be taught to stay home with their children. In America, society is very alert and enforces many laws to protect the physically abused or neglected child. But what about the countless numbers of emotionally ignored young people? Every minute of every day children by the score are left unattended to roam, be alone, or come and go at their own bidding. Their parents will furnish them with an abundance of material possessions, but will not give them a moment of their time. It is far past time that parents learn that it is not "things" that make children happy. Your children want you! They want your guidance, your conver-

sation, your laughter, your embraces, your seriousness, and your fun. This all spells COMMUNICATION.

As Christian parents, let's immunize our children against emotional neglect. In addition to providing a properly organized parental relationship, love and affection, proper discipline, adequate independence, good habits and constructive work, we can further help our little ones by developing a splendid communication system with them.

God created verbal communication as a superior technique by which human beings can properly express their inward emotions of joy, excitement, disappointment, grief, fear, and anger. I am reminded of how God confused the language of mankind to thwart the building of the tower of Babel. All it took to frustrate the first Babylonians and force them to forsake their project was to prevent their understanding each other.

This same principle affects children. Living life naturally produces a vast mixture of feelings, and a child must have someone with whom to share them. If no one is there to understand or care, frustration will begin to mount. He can tolerate it so long, but after a time he must gain attention and vent his feelings in some way.

What are the necessities parents must have to achieve communication? Before I answer that question, let's consider what they do not need. Many people have the mistaken idea that, in order to be effective at communication, they must know good grammar, master clear and proper word pronunciation, possess a large vocabulary, and acquire a wide range of knowledge on many subjects. It is true that if we were competing for a position with a TV personality, it would help to be skilled in those areas. But we aren't! We are just down-to-earth parents trying to do a good job rearing our children. There isn't anything wrong with having an excellent command of the English language or a vast storehouse of knowledge, but these are not absolute prerequisites to com-

municating well with children.

There are nine things I should like to discuss as requirements for good parental communication.

No. 1 — *Good Communication Requires Good Listening* — As a communicating parent, the first thing we must be capable of doing is listening. One of the major secrets of communication lies in our ability to listen. Napoleon, the famous leader of France, was asked what he felt was the greatest need of his nation. He replied, "What France needs most is mothers! Mothers! Mothers!" If that same question were asked of an American, an additional word could be added. American needs *listening* mothers! *Listening* mothers! *Listening* mothers! Hearing is one of the body's five senses, but *listening* is an art.

No. 2 — *Good Communication Requires Good Eye Contact* — A very important piece of communication equipment God built within the human body is our eyes. It is through our visual sense that many non-verbal messages are received. Facial expressions, bodily posture, or a trickling tear are ways of revealing a message that only our eyes can receive. Our ability to look eye to eye with the person with whom we are communicating also tells much. It tells him that we are interested enough to give our full attention and that what he is saying (or, more important, the person himself) is of great importance to us. Our eyes are the windows of our souls. My father was born in the nineteenth century and was of the old school. I have heard him say, "There is something badly wrong with a man who cannot look you in the eyes." I am sure we have all had the experience of trying to converse with someone who would not look at us. His hasty glances from ceiling to floor made it difficult to carry on a conversation. When this happens, we are certain to get the impression that the individual feels uneasy around us.

To accomplish good listening and eye contact with a child will necessitate a mother's stopping the sewing machine,

mixer, or vacuum cleaner many times in a day. It may also require sitting down or performing some good knee bends in order for a five-foot-five-inch mother to have eye-to-eye contact with her thirty-six-inch-high pre-schooler. It is good exercise, and every mother should remember that it makes for very effective communication, to kneel down and be on the same eye level as her child when they converse.

No. 3 — *Good Communication Requires Simple Word Responses* — To learn how to use simple word responses, the parent must assume the role of a *receiver*, while the child is the *sender*. Pretend that your little one has joyfully come into the house to share with you an exciting experience or event. After you receive the message by stopping your work to make eye contact and by listening intently with your ears, what is the next response that is necessary from you?

Very little! It is so simple to be a *receiver* and help your child to release his inward emotions that no normal parent could possibly fail the test. All you have to know is a few very simple words and phrases. It takes no formal education at all to play the part of a receiver in communication. If you can utter the following simple words, you can clear the path to superb communication with your child as he comes to share his experiences with you: Oh! Is that right? How about that! Really? Uh-huh. That's interesting! You don't say? Terrific! I see! Great! Could you speak those words and phrases with enthusiasm and zeal? If you could, you are in fine shape. As long as you look and act interested, listen carefully, and give simple and short responses, your child will continue to send you messages until he has told you everything he has to tell.

No. 4 — *Good Communication Requires Much, Much Time* — Good communication takes your time and tests your temperance. As I teach points four through eight of good communication in my TUAC classes, I refer to a clock and the lesson we can learn from its features. Communicat-

ing with children is TIME consuming. It takes much, much time. As a clock is involved only in keeping time, we must be devoted in taking time to talk with our children.

Psychologists are frustrated at the growing mental health problems we have in our society. They say the family is failing in its task of communication. The most effective solution they have discovered for helping the mentally de-ranked is small group-therapy sessions. If the upset person can sit down with two or three other people and talk about his problems, it is of tremendous help to him. As a mother, spend that much-needed TIME listening to your little ones. You will be filling the communication needs of your child, and you can thus help immunize him against a future mental or emotional illness.

No. 5 — *Good Communication Requires Sending Words That Are Numbered* — As we discuss the next four communicating lessons, we will be assuming the role of the *sender*. This is when we are the one with a message for our child. As a clock has only a few numbers, good communication requires sending words that are numbered. Dr. Montessori, the Italian educator, had this motto on her schoolroom wall: "Let Your Words Be Numbered." It is a fact that the more you say, the less people remember.

We have covered the concept of limiting our amount of talking. In our lesson on obedience, we learned that an authority tells her fact once, never more than twice; and if need be, she will follow up her fact with further non-verbal proof. The word "no" is a short word, but of all the words in the parental vocabulary, it is the one that gets the greatest challenge. For many children, "NO" is their bugle call to action. They will become disagreeable and unpleasant, and will push and keep pushing until the pressure grows so great that the parents will give in and let them do as they please. And, sad to say, that is exactly what happens in many homes. This should not be so in a Christian home. In a home

designed as God would have it, the rule should be " 'No' means 'No' and that is that."

No. 6 — *Good Communication Requires Sending Words That Are True* — Everyone wants a clock that is a genuine timepiece. It is disappointing to view the beautiful hands and face of a clock and then discover that it has no mechanism inside. A counterfeit clock reminds me of a dishonest parent. An untruthful parent may look good on the outside, but a child's situation is hopeless if he has to depend on such a parent for guidance.

In so many ways I have already said to be truthful: Be consistent. Give a command once and mean it. If you threaten or create a logical consequence, carry it out. If you say "no," mean "no." I repeat these principles over and over; but how would you like to increase your children's respect for you to giant size? If you are interested, here is all you need to do. Learn to send the words, "I was wrong," and "I don't know." Children admire honesty and will respect you far more if you possess that rare quality. If you try to appear infallible and fake information, that is exactly what you become — a fake, and they know it. The moment a parent loses the quality of truthfulness, he clips his lifeline as a parent and becomes transparent.

No. 7 — *Good Communication Requires Sending Words That Are on Time* — Whatever we want our child to be as a teenager, we must start teaching him early. We have been inaccurate with our calculations if we think we can wait to give our eighteen-year-old son a two-hour lecture on the importance of marrying a Christian, after he has given a non-Christian girl an engagement ring. It is obviously too late. The time that the concept of Christians marrying Christians should have been implanted was at eight instead of eighteen. One communication problem for many parents is in the area of sex education. It has been reported that ninety-five percent of American parents fail to give adequate, on-

time, information to their children about sex. There is only a meager five percent who answer their children's questions about the sexual functioning of male and female.

God designed sex to play such an important part in the world that it is impossible to avoid the subject. A family cannot drive down a city street, listen to the evening news, or read the Bible together without its being brought to their attention. School systems have assumed the responsibility of communicating with young people about sex. This is a shame and a tragedy. Christian parents should realize that it is their job, not the school's, to teach sex education to their children.

The reason many young people will go to a teacher or another individual to learn the meaning of words such as rape, homosexual, virgin, adultery, harlot, eunuch, incest, masturbation, fornication, or circumcision (all Bible subjects) is that somewhere along the way their parents clipped the communication lines. The first rule young parents need to know about teaching their child about sex is to be honest and on time with their information.

No. 8 — *Good Communication Requires Sending Words That Are Beautiful and Soft* — The last lesson we can learn from a clock is to send words that are beautiful and soft. Everyone admires a clock with a beautiful chime and a soft tick. The only occasion when a mother should get her voice to a shouting pitch is if the house is on fire or some tragedy could be avoided by using it. Did you know that the louder you talk, the louder the children will be? Try lowering your voice with one or more children. As long as you keep your voice soft, they have to be quiet or they cannot hear you speak.

Perhaps more important than softness is the beauty of our words. We can keep our speech beautiful in saying beautiful things about others. Talk about the good you find in others and not about their trivial mistakes. Keep your words beauti-

ful, and don't use slang and cursing. Much teaching needs to be done about God's New Testament commandment (James 5:12). Slang and cursing can be like mud on our shoes. We can teach our children that they may not be able to avoid being where it is, but we don't have to bring it into our house on our feet. Let's keep profanity out of our hearts and keep our families' words soft and beautiful.

No. 9 — *Good Communication Requires a Mother Who Is Happy and Cheerful* — As I teach this last point of good communication, I use a thermometer as a visual aid. I bring it to remind young mothers that, just as a thermometer measures the physical temperature of the atmosphere, children measure the inner emotional temperatures of their homes. They do this by gauging their mother's temperament. One's temperament is his mood and disposition. It is how he feels within himself at a given time. Is he happy and are events going well? Is he sad and are things going terribly? Is he depressed, or on top of the world? The way a person is feeling inside will determine the degree of his temperament temperature.

Every home registers some degree of temperament temperature. Mother, for the most part, is the thermostat that controls the household temperature. If she is cold and icy in her disposition, her children will huddle together in fear and dread. A mother who is hot and steaming with anger and frustration will cause her children to flee to more pleasant surroundings. But a mother who is soft with her voice, has a smile on her lips and a song in her heart, will gather her children around her as a crowd gathers around a glowing fireplace on a cold winter evening.

**No. 11 — She Has A Right To Know The Importance Of Keeping Her Family Together**

The Gluecks were a husband and wife team which conducted a thirty-year study for the Harvard Law School.

They were assigned to go into a large eastern city and find out the determining factors as to whether or not a boy would be a delinquent. Over these many years of concentrated study, they isolated five critical factors in a child's home environment that would make the difference. They concluded that if a boy had the following ingredients in his life, they would provide him a protective shield from delinquency: (1) The boy must receive discipline from his father. (2) He must be supervised by his mother. (3) The father must show him affection. (4) The mother must show him affection. (5) There must be a cohesiveness in the family.

The first four needs — for a father and mother, who love, discipline, and supervise — have been well covered. The last need — that a family must stick together — is the subject we consider in this eleventh point.

With Daddy and Mother standing united, they must gather and keep their children around them. In this way the children will be exposed over and over to the ideals their parents want them to adopt for their own lives.

Normally when I teach this lesson, I use ten building blocks and construct a house. But since I have run out of time and space, I should like quickly to list ten things a family can do together in order to unify and strengthen its home and its relationships. (1) A family can worship together. (2) A family can work together. (3) A family can talk together. (4) A family can travel together. (5) A family can play together. (6) A family can plan together. (7) A family can pray together. (8) A family can share together. (9) A family can sacrifice together. (10) A family can choose companions together.

#### **NO. 12 — She Has A Right To Be Taught The Importance Of Prayer And Worship**

Basically, salvation is what rearing a child is all about. Why should we bother with trying to bring our children up

properly if heaven is not the prize we are striving to obtain for them and for ourselves?

This twelfth point that older women can teach the younger women is different from the others in that it takes them into the direct realm of their spiritual existence. Prayer and worship are vital spiritual activities. Any Christian family which prays and worships God will build within its children a living faith. The children's souls will be awakened to spiritual values. A child whose parents teach him to pray and worship will not only receive direction from God while on Earth, but will have a chance to live eternally with Him in heaven.

If you spank a child, you can change his actions. If you pray for him, God can change his heart. *Daily prayer is the hidden key that winning mothers have found to unlock the secret chambers of their children's hearts.* We can love, chasten, talk, and cry; but we fail if we neglect prayer.

We have spent much time studying how to be a Christian mother. But because we are subject to human weaknesses, there will always be times when we fail to express love when we should, or when we administer discipline when we should not. We can do our best to lay the bricks of our children's foundation for life as skillfully as possible, but only God can supply the divine mortar that will smooth out our imperfections as parents.

There was once a mother who spent thirty-six years of her life rearing six children. With the exception of the youngest, they had all grown up and were married or away from home.

One day when she was in town shopping with her daughter, she revealed her secret of successful motherhood. She said, "Darling, there has never been a day of your life and even before you were born that I have not prayed for you. Many times I felt inadequate as a mother, but I always tried to do the best I knew how and leave the rest to God. At night I would lay down my head on my pillow and call each of you children's names before God's throne. It has always been

my prayer that He would give each of you a special blessing and use you in His service.”

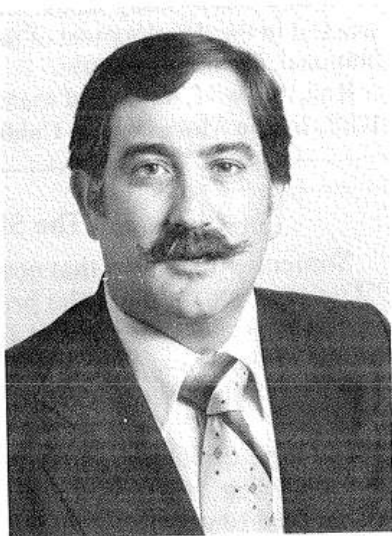
Yes, everthing will be all right if a child is blessed with parents who love each other, and love him enough to discipline him, give him proper portions of independence, teach him good habits, assign him work to do, communicate with him, do things together with him, pray for him, and take him to worship the Almighty God. This child's home will not likely ever end up in crisis.

(Adapted for this presentation from Mrs. Webb's book, *Training Up a Child*, Copyright 1977 by Gwendolyn M. Webb. The Old Landmarks, Publishers.)

# The Christian Father Survives

Ron Rose

After graduating from ACU (1969), Ron began working as Minister of Youth and Education at the Glenwood Church of Christ, Tyler, Texas. For one year during that time he produced and hosted a one hour weekly TV program called *Youth Speaks Out*. Then in 1972 he moved to Southern California to work as Minister of Youth and Education at the Northside Church of Christ, Santa Ana. During these four years he began to develop a specific area of interest — family life. He be-



came an instructor of Parent Effectiveness Training; he developed a daily five-minute radio program called, "Family Portrait," which ran for 18 months; and he piloted family ministry ideas within the local church, including writing a resource news letter, called *Questionletter*, to all the families in the church.

In 1977 Ron began preaching for the South County Church of Christ, San Martin, California. At the South County church he has developed an 18-hour Christian Parent education course. He has begun editing a regular article in *Christian Bible Teacher* called "Family Notebook." He has conducted seminars and workshops on: Family Togetherness, Communications, The Family and TV, Talkshop — Just for Dad, and Becoming an Adult. And, he has helped the South County church to develop a family policy for the supporting, nurturing, and equipping the families in its membership.

Ron also serves as a Christian Education Consultant for the Sweet Publishing Company. He has written the teacher's manual for a new adult study called *What Every Family Needs*; he has worked in the development of the new *Parenting Course* from the National Training Institute.

Ron, his wife, Lyn, and their daughters, Julie age 6, and Joy, 1-1/2, live in Morgan Hill, California.

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### The Situation

Someone once said that nostalgia is like a grammar lesson, "The past perfect and the present tense." Those words describe a number of current feelings concerning family and father in America. Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner of Cornell University paints a word picture of family life in the 70's:

— Once children not only saw what their parents did for a living, but they shared in the tasks. Today, parents are free to commute 40 miles or more to work and the children have no idea what the parents do to support them.

— Today almost 45% of the nation's mothers work outside the home. The children are shuttled away to a day care center.

— 50 years ago half of the nation's homes housed an extra adult and now less than 5% have extra adults.

— Today the divorce rate is approaching 1 in every 2 marriages.

— In the past, activities were family-centered and now each family member has his own schedule.

— Children today spend more time relating to the TV than they do to their parents (pre-schoolers up to 6 hours a day with the tube).

— In the past, the church and grandparents helped to

set standards for new parents. Today there is no standard for parenting and adults are turning to experts for advice.

— We have become a nation where parents delegate most of their parental responsibilities to institutions.

— Dads are running away from their parenthood, and mothers are breaking under the “head of the house” pressure.

And it goes on and on. It’s not hard to get the picture, and the situation looks impossible.

There is something about driving that brings out the hunter in me. No, I don’t drive as though I am trailing a herd of Mustangs, or tracking a Cougar, or even chasing a (VW) Rabbit. I simply allow part of my mind to go on an adventure much like a hunting expedition or a safari. It’s a most unusual kind of trip, a quest for understanding that takes me deep into the windmills of my mind. Everyone needs a thinking place, and mine just happens to be on wheels.

I remember one night driving down a lonesome stretch of Interstate somewhere in West Texas. For twelve undisturbed hours the miles had been clicking away. Though it was very late and I was tired, the plan was to drive straight through; so, on into the darkness I went. The radio was blasting full volume, the windows were all down, and every five minutes I slapped my own face (“thanks I needed that!”) just to keep awake. Then, without warning, the “drowsies” left me — now fully alert, my mind detected a previously unaccountable glowing within me. This new awareness pounded with intensity, “I am a father!”

I was a 15-day-old dad. So much had happened during those first weeks that I hadn’t fully appreciated the deep responsibility I now faced. I eased off the accelerator and pulled off the road.

In a sense, that night, somewhere between Pecos and El

Paso, I became a father, baptized in responsibility and thankfulness.

This new dimension of my life has matured and developed in many ways. Some things have helped and some things have hindered, but the quest begun that night has not faded. It has become a true-life adventure, sprouting from a growing commitment to be the best dad I can be.

### **The American Father**

A father is a man with children.

A true portrait of dad is difficult to find. Academic circles ignore him, feminists condemn him, and the media portrays him as dull and inept. Yet, for better or for worse, the American dad is still with us. Together with mom, he is called a "parent". He is judged successful or unsuccessful by cultural standards that are based on motherhood. And, to a great degree, dad is expected to perform as a "second mom."

He has little help or training for his task. Even the high school and college courses that deal with family life are understood to be designed for the girls. While the woman's magazines feature articles written to aid the wife and mother in coping with her family role, men's magazines feature fantasized trips into make-believe pipedreams of one kind or another. There seems to be no set standard for fathering. Only the Bible remains as a measuring stick for fathering, and it appears disguised with ecclesiastical jargon.

### **The Bible Father**

In the midst of all the uncertainty about fathering there is a criterion to be found in the Bible. The Old Testament is rich in tradition concerning family and fatherhood. The Hebrews have always been admired for their intensity of the family feelings. The strength of their nation lay in the depth, variety, and richness of the characters created in their homes;

likewise, their moral and spiritual values have arisen from within the families.

We could look at any of a number of Biblical families, but I want to bring the principles of God into a 20th Century example. The most famous Hebrew family of the 70's is undoubtedly that singing clan from "The Fiddler on the Roof." If you are familiar with the book of Deuteronomy, then you know that Tevye's traditions are based to a great degree on the words recorded there.

Tevye's definition of dad is built around Deuteronomy, chapter 6. Dad is responsible for the training and the nurturing of his children. He is a teacher. He understands that the feasts and the special days are intended to give him an opportunity to testify, to teach his children what God has done for "old dad" and what God can do for them. Now, Tevye is fully aware of his role and his responsibility. He knows who he is and what he's for. Because of his traditions he survives. The model Hebrew father, living according to God's plan, was doing more than providing bed and board. He was providing all he had . . . himself.

When the long-looked-for Messiah visited this dusty little ball we call Earth, He followed the same plan. He gave His very life. He provided Himself. And He said, "I am the way . . . to God . . . follow me."

### **The Struggling Dad**

The model for survival is there, but men fail to follow. With all the uncertainties facing dad in the 70's, it's little wonder dad hesitates. After all, he has inflation, unemployment, and suspicions about the future to deal with. "My family has to have a place to sleep and food to eat and money for this and that, or I'm not a 'good father,' " he alibis. He is afraid! He doesn't know God, and he doesn't know himself. How can he survive?

When a baby is born to a young mother out of wedlock,

one of the nurses inevitably questions, "Who is the father?" More times than not the answer is recorded, "FATHER *unknown*." Perhaps that answer is much more truthful than it is intended to be. Perhaps it depicts all of us, to one degree or another. Being unknown means spending most of our time groping for identity. And, man, do we grope!

In 1978 two of this country's major news magazines printed issues with special emphasis on the "family." Comments like the following were noted:

"Things we're trying to cope with today are just more complex than our parents had to deal with," says John Anderson, director of the Family Service of Detroit, and a father himself. "Parents have lost control over their families, they feel inadequate, overwhelmed — I know I do."

One of the outgrowths of our specialized culture is the craving for expert advice. Parents are turning eagerly to professionals who have tried to be helpful. (No matter what you believe, you can find an expert to agree with you!) But, their mountains of advice has had a debilitating effect. It has robbed American parents of some of their own selfconfidence. With the facts as they are, fathers have had to cope any way they can.

Not long ago I heard a man say that there are two types of men in America: the Foxes and the Oxes.

**THE FAMILY FOX:** He doesn't stay in the den very long. He has to be free to run. In 1977 there were 2.2 million women who were heads of households because of divorce and 1.8 million who were heads of households, but were still married (the man was absent). Some researchers are estimating that there are as many as 4.5 million women who are heads of households because the man is psychologically absent (He lives there, but doesn't lead there), making a total of 8.5 million women-headed homes.

In a recent study it was reported that 1 out of 6 families in America live without a father. That means, if your son or

daughter is in the 5th grade and there are 30 students in his class, then 5 of your child's classmates are fatherless. The American father is checking out . . . running like a Fox!

I saw a cartoon somewhere showing a motorist half-way underneath his stationwagon repairing a flat tire. It was warm and he looked exhausted. His children were peering out of the rear window giving dad advice. The tag line has the frustrated father answering his children with these words, "But, we can't switch channels. This isn't television. This is real." The truth is, there are 100,000 new runaway dads each year! I wish we could switch channels, but we'd find that the story is the same on all the networks.

**THE FAMILY OX:** He trudges away at the same old routine because he is trapped by life. One frazzled father confessed to a friend, "I've wanted to run away from home more often since I've had kids than when I was a boy." There seems to be something out there that is enticing enough to keep the oxen trudging, but not enough to break out of the rut. Another father cries out that family life is like being trapped in a tiny fish bowl; all he can do is swim around and dream of adventure. He can see freedom but never taste it.

Man cannot live with the boxed-in feelings, so he finds some way to escape. During the past five years the number of motorcycles licensed in the state of California has doubled. (The ad agencies are pushing their cycles with the escape theme; they know what will sell bikes.) Hang gliding, soaring, rockclimbing, kayaking, and skydiving (the list goes on and on) are becoming more popular everyday. Anything that promises an escape from the trap, anything to combat boredom and routine — anything helps, for the moment, anyway.

### **A Solution**

No matter how discouraging it looks, though, there is hope. Families can survive and are surviving. Dad holds the

keys. And his relationship with his God provides the power.

This may very well be the first class you have attended on how to survive as dad. It may be the first class you've attended on Fathering that was taught by a father, and designed specifically for fathers. I hope it challenges you to think, to explore, and to grow.

The underlying principle of this class is expressed very graphically in the following illustration. You're sitting in seat 15A on a San Francisco bound DC-10. Just one more hour and your cross-country flight will touch down. The stewardess picks up your empty dinner tray, and you ease back in your seat relaxed and lost in reflection.

Suddenly a terror-stricken voice shatters your dream world:

"May I have your attention? We have an emergency. Please remain calm. A would-be hijacker has forced his way into the flight cabin, and in an ensuing struggle he shot and killed the captain and the co-captain, severely wounded the navigator and then killed himself."

Desperately the flight attendant, in hopeful anticipation, asks,

"Is there anyone aboard who can fly this plane?"

The words echo in silence. The only thing you hear is a pounding heartbeat coming from inside your own body. "Surely someone in this plane can fly," you tell yourself, while feelings of uncertainty and desperation intensify to the point you can taste them. "Surely there's someone."

A mental flashback takes you to a recreational trip in a light private plane with a friend. There you are at the controls with your buddy telling you what to do. Maybe, just maybe, you could land this plane.

Oblivious to everything around you, you rush to the flight cabin convinced you can try the landing. In a very matter-of-fact way you pull the dead bodies from their chairs, pausing only a moment to glance at the engulfing white blanket of

clouds that seems to just roll away from the nose of the plane. How soft and peaceful they seem to be. The chair, too, is soft and comfortable, but awesome in responsibility. Then a tragic realization slaps you squarely in the face — you don't really know how to fly this thing! As you survey the gauges, switches, and controls, they yell back at you in bright red letters: "Hopeless." Sure, you have seen movies where someone on the ground talked a nonpilot down via radio, but you don't even know how to work the radio. There you are — sitting, sweating, searching. You reach for one of the levers out of desperation and your muscles tense and your mind flashes the message, "There's someone's hand on your shoulder." You whirl around, mouth ajar. Standing before you is a confident-looking man who smiles and says,

"I'm an aeronautical engineer for Douglas Aircraft; I designed this plane. I was in the washroom when the announcement was made, but I'll land this baby if you'll let me."

What do you do?

There are at least two possible reactions:

**MAN A:** He jumps up with a smile of relief, lets the man have the controls, and experiences a warm feeling of security. He takes a deep breath, inhaling hope and exhaling doubt. **MAN B:** He stubbornly sits there, letting his need for self-sufficiency push him closer and closer to disaster. He turns, fixes his eyes somewhere in front of him, and answers, "Buddy, I've got everything under control. I don't need your help!"

I know hundreds of dads across this country who are like Man B in the DC-10. They are struggling with their role as father. Many of them feel threatened, bewildered, untrained, especially as their children grow older and the pressures of fatherhood intensify. After all, there were no high school or college courses offered in "Fatherhood 101." In fact, informed sources tell us, "you'll know what to do when the time comes."

Well, for Man B in the DC-10 the time has come. He knows what should happen, but he doesn't know how to make it happen. His real feelings are locked up in a casket of phony self-sufficiency. And until he decides to give up the controls, fatherhood will be plagued with despair.

On the other hand, Man A recognized his need for help. He received a touch, a word, a look, an offer; and he accepted. He got up and let the designer have the controls.

Survival in the 70's depends on who has control of your life. And, survival for dad is what this class is all about.

### **There Is Hope**

It was a clear morning in Orange County, and I was on an outing with my three-year-old daughter, Julie. As we were stopped at a railroad crossing waiting for the train, Julie was standing on the front seat, her head jammed up against the windshield, telling me how she liked the train. I suggested we count the cars (a safe suggestion as long as it's a short train); but, by the time we got started, several cars had gone by, and there was no way we could go back and count them all.

That's the way it is with time. When time has gone by, it's gone forever. Jim Croce must have had a similar experience before he wrote the words to the song "Time in a Bottle." Croce sings, "If I could save time in a bottle, oh, but there never seems to be enough time to do the things you want to do once you find them." The following thought explores our priority use of time.

### **Time Assessment**

Most of us can look at our checkbooks and give an account of how our money is spent, but few of us can really account for how our time is spent.

Recently I conducted a workshop where each participant was asked to think of his life as a drama being performed on a

revolving stage. They were to draw a circle representing the stage, then they divided their circle into pie-shaped segments depicting how their time was divided. Most had a large pie-shaped piece labeled "work," others named "recreation," "church," "sleep," and "hobbies." Upon the completion of this task the participants were asked to list the entire cast of characters needed to present their drama. These names were to be listed outside the circle near the pie-shaped segment they would be involved in. For example, the time segment labeled "work" would have a list of co-workers written just outside the circle.

Next, each one involved was to select one word that would describe the anticipated audience response to his drama. Words like applaud, cry, boo, laugh, sleep, and yawn were used. Each one ended up with a picture of his own life. To pull this penetrating experience together, each one was to explain to his partner why the partner should come to see his drama. Then, in order to have something concrete upon which to reflect, the participants were asked to write a one-page radio commercial which was designed to get the public to attend the drama.

This little exercise proved to be of great benefit in helping everyone conceptualize his time schedule and trace his priorities. The information gathered on that day forms the basis for this chapter.

### **Dad's Work**

American man has all his identity tied up in his work. It seems that who we are is dependent upon what we do. Try telling someone about yourself without telling what you do for a living. (It's not easy unless you're unemployed.) One of the first questions asked of your children in school is, "What does your daddy do for a living (if there is a daddy)?" The majority of children today have no idea what their fathers do. The thing that seems to give dad a purpose for living culti-

vates uncertainty in the child. All the child knows is that dad is not home. He's at the office or at the plant or at the shop.

There is good reason for dad's being wedded to his work. He feels an intrinsic responsibility to provide for his family. So, he works and he is good at it. But, some men work, and work, and work so much that they become their jobs. They become what Wayne Oates calls a "workaholic." Oates claims that there is a great deal of similarity between an alcoholic and a workaholic. Their addictions are both destructive. The addiction may lurk in the shadows of perception for years before it's dealt with in a serious way. Whether you are aware of it or not, all of us are potential workaholics. Oates says that there are four early phases of workaholism. I found them threatening; how do you react?

### **Phase One**

"At a party the potential workaholic will inevitably tell others how early he came to work or how late he remained. Then you will hear how little sleep he has been getting.

### **Possible Reaction**

We react in a sympathetic way and compare this hard-working man with Albert Einstein or some other young genius. We admire the personal sacrifice.

### **Phase Two**

"The emerging workaholic makes comparisons in the amount of work he is able to get done with what others get done. He is a soloist."

### **Possible Reaction**

We praise the man for being so competent and talented. And, we make excuses for those that don't measure up.

### **Phase Three**

"The rising workaholic is unable to say 'no' to people who want his services or his time. He never knows at what point to level off the budget. He always feels he must have more. He is likely to say, 'But, if I don't do this, who will?' "

### **Possible Reaction**

We give him more and more to do because we can count on him. We tell him how much we appreciate his dedication and extra effort. Maybe a small raise is offered.

### **Phase Four**

"This crucial phase begins with the first collapse. A fresh examination of priorities is a consequence. Awareness surfaces, perhaps for just a moment.

### **Possible Reaction**

"When will he be able to get back to work?"

No doubt many fathers are on the edge of workaholism right now. Hopefully, this has hit home with you, like it did with me.

On the other side of the coin, there are hundreds of thousands of men in America who missed the first buttonhole in life; consequently, they have never managed to button up. Life never seems to come out right. Work, when it's available, is uneventful and meaningless. It seems to end up feeding depression. An old B.C. comic strip depicts this work condition effectively. One discouraged caveman turns to his co-worker and says, "We're wasting our lives just sitting here on this rock." "True," came the reply. "Well, let's do something about it," he suggested. In expressionless style the companion responded, "OK, let's sit over there." So, dad moves to a different job. But, he remains the same — it's just a different rock.

No matter what job I have, my attitude toward my work will significantly affect my home life. You may be an emerging workaholic or a depressed rockswitcher; or you may be somewhere in-between. Wherever you are, if you are like me, you need to re-evaluate your attitude toward "The Job."

### **Dad's Play**

God designed us all to need re-creation. I'm glad He did. The tension, the stress, and the pressure find a release valve

in playtime for dad. There is more and more talk these days about four day workweeks, designed to give dad yet another day for rest and relaxation. Advertisements tantalize our senses with thrilling, pleasurable possibilities for fun. And, they must be doing the job because the ads keep coming.

There is a great new play activity sweeping the country by storm. It's called TVING.

"Get ready, folks, for the hottest thing since shuffleboard. That's right. This growing national sport is the most popular form of relaxation and recreation in America. It's called TVing, and the latest polls show that 95% of the nation is skilled in the sport."

The professional TVers remain virtually nameless, but the competition records, called "Neilson Ratings," give the up-and-coming amateurs something to switch to. There are a number of different skills to develop in this sport. You really need a specialty in one of the following areas: contests, soaps, documentaries, news, dramas, specials, movies, comedies, or sports. TVing has something for everybody.

Most children dream of the day when they get their own equipment, their own TV set. The pre-schoolers of our nation are getting off to a good start. They are training for TVing an average of 6 hours per day. There is no doubt about it, America has the best TVers in the world. American adults have learned to live a regular life and still be involved in TVing. They have developed the skill of eating, discussing family problems, working out budget difficulties, and sleeping while avidly TVing.

Loving the sport as they do, the TVers are providing 12 billion dollars a year to keep the sport going. But, much, much more is given than just money. Marriages, families, jobs, and friends have been sacrificed. Many Americans won't leave to go across town or across country without a portable TV. The average number of hours of TVing for an adult is 26 a week. The great amount of time spent has had a

redeeming value, though; the values of the writers and the programmers have been passed on to the TVer. Thus, the TVers are the best looking, most popular, sweetest smelling, most sexy, and most satisfied people who have ever lived.

This 20th century sport has had such a profound impact on man that for the first time in history we have TVaholics, but it's not thought to be destructive. The coaches feel it is desirable if they are to have a winning team. The three big names in coaching include Alfred Baines Coffman (ABC), Charles Burford Smith (CBS), and Norman Bulwinkle Craine (NBC). They do all they can to motivate their TVers to train throughout the day and night. That's the game plan: train the receivers. Other sports are being abandoned in favor of Tving because of time, money, and the physical condition of the TVers. Who can tell what the future will bring for the sport of Tving, but this coming year promises to be a record year. For more information you may subscribe to a magazine entitled *TV Guide* which will help you pick a team and tune in. Just think, you may be the best TVer on your block.

Dr. Bronfenbrenner, of Cornell University, has this to say about TV:

As it's used today, there is not a doubt that TV is harmful to family life. It cuts down communication between family members. The problem is not so much what is on, but that watching television ends the talk, the games, the arguments that enrich the lives of everyone in the family.

With all of its problems, TV is still the most universal form of recreation that I know of. There are many more, and you probably have a favorite. That's great! We all need relax-

ation and renewal. Even Jesus had to get away and regroup. Without periods of re-creation we would literally go crazy. The tension comes when our recreation activities take priority over our families.

### Family Time

A young college freshman, hooked on acid, confessed, "The big thing is that my father makes more of his work than there is, and that leaves us the crumbs." What about those crumbs? Again, Professor Bronfenbrenner reports findings:

A study was made of middle class fathers who told interviewers they spent about 15 to 20 minutes a day playing with their toddler. In this study, microphones were actually attached to the children's clothing. The information gathered indicated that fathers were spending actually very little time interacting with their young children. The average was 37 seconds a day.

According to a recent Federal Study, the average American Dad spends about 12-1/2 minutes a day with his pre-teen. Dad leaves early, arrives late, and then many times disappears again like a mysterious phantom. Many fathers don't really see any role for them at home. Home is mom's place, right? Wrong! It's all a matter of priorities.

I realize the temptation to rationalize my situation and say, "that doesn't apply to me!"; but think with me for a few minutes about a discovery I made that might help you. I found an interesting list compiled by Dr. David Campbell, a nationally known vocational guidance administrator. He suggests there are at least fourteen different priorities common to American men.

1. Having an interesting job
2. Having a good marriage

3. Running your own company
4. Living overseas in a beautiful village
5. Spending time with interesting friends
6. Having a comfortable home
7. Living in a modern apartment resort in the heart of an exciting city
8. Having enough free time and money to travel
9. Making an important discovery
10. Getting to know your family
11. Staying in good physical condition
12. Having people come to you because you're an expert
13. Educating your children
14. Influencing what is happening in our country.

If you are like most men, many of the fourteen will appeal to you, and you will probably accomplish more than one during your lifetime.

The secret of dad's survival is a life of priorities based on the words and life of Jesus. When Jesus said, "Seek first the kingdom of God," he was speaking of a lifetime project. This continual seeking for God will help us put all the rest of our life in perspective. Jesus constantly re-evaluated himself by daily seeking God first. It's a formula, not a magic formula, but one that comes with a living guarantee that it works. "Put God first; let Him open the doors; be ready to step in."

Jesus followed the formula all the way. In order for Him to survive the hassles and pressures of His day He took time for evaluation and prayer. These times of refreshment were essential, for they provided insight on how He should spend His time.

Mac Davis has written about the same formula in his song, "Stop and Smell the Roses." Davis preaches a powerful sermon with this popular song of a few years back. More than anything else, the song calls for a re-evaluation of time and life.

Chorus:

You gotta stop and smell the roses.

You gotta count your many blessings every day.

You're gonna find your way to heaven is a rough and rocky road

If you don't stop and smell the roses along the way.

Hey, mister, where you going in such a hurry?

Don't you think it's time you realize there's a whole lot more to life than work and worry?

Lord, the sweetest things in life are free,

And they're right before your eyes.

Before you went to work this morning in the city

Did you spend some time with your family?

Did you kiss your wife and tell her that she's pretty?

Did you take your children to your breast and love them tenderly?

Did you ever take a walk through the forest,

Stop and dream a while among the trees? You can look up through the leaves right straight to heaven,

And you can almost hear the voice of God in each and every breeze.

There is a story told about an eagle that was raised on a chicken ranch. One day a hunter happened by and stood, stunned, staring at the eagle. Scratching and pecking, the chicken-eagle thought he was a chicken. He has been conditioned throughout his life to behave as a chicken. The hunter protested to the owner. The owner chided, "It's too late; he's been a chicken too long." But, the hunter wanted to try, so into the yard he went. After catching the bird, which was no easy task, he tossed the chicken-eagle into the air and down he came, "Thud." Once more the hunter caught the bird and tossed him into the air. Once again the landing was

chicken-like. The hunter then bargained with the farmer and bought the chicken-eagle and took him up to a mountain top. Away from the chickens the eagle began to question; seeing other eagles he began to wonder. When the hunter threw him up this time, the chicken-eagle fluttered a bit, then, realizing for the first time who he was and what was important to him, he spread his wings and soared and soared. Yes, he was really an eagle.

### **Dad's Authority**

What does it really mean to say dad is authority or he has authority? As a not-too-old dad I have a deep personal desire for my children to respect me and honor me. But, how does that happen? The Bible has some very significant things to say about dad's authority. In this class we will explore those things and apply them directly to real life.

In one of the early issues of *Family Life Today*, Dennis Guernsey reported on a workshop session he had attended at the National Council of Family Relations Conference in Portland, Oregon. Here is a summary of that article:

The question under consideration was, "What kind of parents raise children who have the following characteristics:

1. High self-worth
2. Respect for authority
3. Adopt religious views of parents
4. Identify with counter-culture groups (hippies, etc.)?"

The researchers found the two most powerful factors influencing children were parental control and parental support. Control, meaning the ability of the parent to manage behavior: support, meaning the ability to make the child feel loved.

When control and support were used as the variables, four different styles of parenting were produced:

1. Permissive — high in support/low in control
2. Neglective — low in support/low in control
3. Authoritarian — low in support/high in control
4. Authoritative — high in support/high in control

The findings were most revealing, but I was especially struck by two. Guernsey puts it this way: "Conforming to authority. In raising children who are able to conform to the authority of others the authoritative parents scored highest . . . in this same area the authoritarian parents rated the lowest . . . and in adopting the religious beliefs of parents the findings were again the same."

As I read the report again I thought of how much we have emphasized the control issue. (The talk of the 60's was parents are too permissive.) To me, this report was saying, — If you concentrate on merely being the boss and keeping the children under your control, they may turn out just the opposite of your hopes. In trying to manage behavior we may take for granted that our children will actually feel loved and supported. My response was a look at my own fathering *to discover where I might build both control and support.*

My examination took me to the words of Jesus. He spoke of authority (power) in a very special way. "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve . . ." Later on Jesus illustrates these words with unforgettable action. John tells it this way: "Jesus knew that the father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God, so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet,

drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him . . . I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you."

Jesus, in his teaching and in his life, redefined authority. Authority is not simply a right to power and control; authority is a sense of service. What Jesus has done for us is to combine the two variables from the NCFR study. Control and support are summed up in the concept of service. In a dynamic moment Jesus demonstrated one of the paradoxes of parenting. If dad wishes to be the respected leader of his family, he must serve. Control and support are developed through his service. He daily becomes a puller (pulling together) and ceases being a pusher.

Can the paradox be explained? It seems to many that it is the family that ought to be serving and loving, and dad's job is bossing the service. What seems to be may not always be what is. According to the NCFR study, that style fails. Developing this concept of servant authority in life is one of the major differences in a Christian family and a non-Christian family. In it, I have found the hope of my family.

In Jesus' own life he is declaring that authority is found not in the sign of a belt or a willow branch or military commands, but in the sign of a towel . . . a dirty towel. Now let's reach into real life.

A few years ago I heard Larry Richards discuss the concept of Christian leadership. In that discussion he drew a picture of a canoe drifting down a river toward a giant waterfall. He then placed stick figures at strategic positions on the bank, in the water, and in the canoe. This rough sketch served as his outline for a delicate presentation on styles of leadership. I have adapted his presentation and applied it to dad and authority.

High on a hill overlooking the river is a figure with a megaphone in his hand. He is yelling commands and advice down to the person in the canoe. What are you doing in

there? Get out of there, right now I told you to stay out of there. You're paddling too slow; hurry up." The concept of authority of the figure on the hill is power. He has to have a comment that leaves him on top, a comment that makes him the winner. In fact, he will win (pull a power play) no matter what.

Sitting on the bank right by the edge of the river is a figure trying to be very positive. "Now, everything is going to be alright. This is only a temporary problem. Think of it as an opportunity." This figure is really lost; he is not supportive (just talks a word game), nor does he have control. His world is almost all make-believe.

Wading out into the water is another figure. This one is really trying to demonstrate that he cares. He is seeking to understand. He wants to help. "Can you come over closer? I'll throw you a line. I want to save you. I love you." He wants to be supportive but the canoe won't come to him. He is limited.

Yet there is one more figure. One is in the canoe with the canoeist. Together they are seeking a solution to the problem. This figure doesn't do much talking; he's just paddling like crazy.

The figure in the canoe is demonstrating Jesus' definition of authority-serving. He is serving the real life needs of the canoeist (the child). The other figures are concentrating on control of words or telling how much they care, while the figure in the canoe has control and love combined in his service. Being the head of a family, I still have problems with authority (I act like the boss at times), but I realize the difference. The real diagnostic test comes with who actually has the authority or power of dad's life and how that authority is used.

### **Who Has The Authority**

I have heard many sermons from the pulpit and from the living room on "Children obey your parents" and "Honor

your father and mother.” The hidden message was: God commands it, so you obey, if you know what’s good for you. The dad who resorts to using these arguments to build up his power feels he has the right and the responsibility to do as he wants. (The Bible says so.) Does it?

In eight years of youth work in churches I constantly talked with teenagers who faced the “parental powerplay,” and usually the teens pulled some kind of “powerplay” of their own. “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger” and “love your enemies (that includes your kids)” and “how would you like for me to do to you like you do to me?” (The Bible is on our side, too, teens say.)

And, the fight goes on and on and on. Both sides are established in scripture; both feel they’re right and justified, both missing the point of the scriptures they are using. Earl Gaulke summarizes God’s plan in a meaningful way in his book *You Can Have a Family Where Everybody Wins*. “In quoting scripture to support their own positions, they fail to see that scripture as law (or command) always speaks to me, not to the other person.” My call as a father is to examine my own response to God’s plan for fathers and get in the canoe and paddle.

You see, to the Christian, God has the authority and the power. He is the Lord (boss) of all life. Dad has some responsibilities, but they are summed up in the word “serve.” From this service then, comes honor and respect and obedience in the lives of his children.

### **Dad The Listener**

Let’s listen in:

**John:** You’re really going to tell your dad?

**Sally:** Sure, my dad will understand!

**John:** How do you know?

**Sally:** Because he really listens to me. We've gone through some pretty rough things together.

**John:** Well, my dad yells his head off before he even gives me a chance to tell him what happened. So, I don't tell him.

**Sally:** Not mine; he really knows how to listen to my feelings. He's great.

I want my children to be able to say, like Sally, "Sure, my dad will understand." And, I know that you want the same thing with your children. So, let's explore the process of understanding.

I had a professor in college who spoke of the six possible messages that could be heard from one statement.

1. What you mean to say.
2. What you actually say.
3. What the other person hears.
4. What the other person thinks he hears.
5. What the other person says about what you said.
6. What you think the other person said about what you said.

How easy it is to misunderstand!

It has been my experience that most misunderstandings result from the hearer, and not the speaker. Some of us never receive the intended message. We only hear what we want to hear. The meaning may get shorted-out by our own thoughts or feelings.

The easiest thing for us to do is respond to the message we think we heard. When this happens people around us stop sending us meaningful messages. Since we don't understand, why waste their time, they say. One of the greatest crises we face today is the "listening crises." But, there are some untapped resources that can be used to help understanding.

In his book *Why am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?* John Powell describes the communication process in five stages

or levels. His divisions have helped me find where I am in communication; maybe they will help you.

**Level 5:** Cliche Conversation. This is the weakest response to the process. "How are you?" . . . "How are things?" . . . "Come see us."

**Level 4:** Reporting the Facts. "So-and-so said . . ." is a typical statement on this level. We don't offer personal commentary, just busy talk.

**Level 3:** My Ideas and Judgments. Powell says this: "As I communicate my ideas, etc., I will be watching you carefully. I want to test the temperature of the water before I leap in. I want to be sure that you will accept me with my ideas, judgments, and decisions. If you raise your eyebrow or narrow your eyes, if you yawn or look at your watch, I will probably retreat to safer ground (level 4)."

**Level 2:** My Feelings — Gut Level. This may be the most difficult area for dad. But, there is a great blessing in this level. Powell says that there is much more for us to communicate to others than just our ideas and judgments. "Actually, the things that most clearly differentiate . . . me from others, that make the communication of my person a unique knowledge, are my feelings or emotions."

**Level 1:** Absolute Openness — Peal Communication — Complete understanding of the thoughts and feelings of each other.

Did you find yourself in the levels? To truly understand his children, dad must develop the skills of communicating on levels 2 and 1.

In the days of Jesus there was a great communications crisis much like today. The "ears to hear" were not hearing much. While a few heard (understood) Jesus, Jesus blanketed the countryside listening to the people relate their thoughts, feelings, and needs. Jesus could observe and listen

to those he encountered and decode the real issue in their lives. For example, when the Samaritan Woman came to the well to draw some water (John 4), she was feeling rejected, guilty, and hopeless. Jesus heard in her voice and her words the real meaning she was sending. He tells her of living water, water that can continually wash away rejection and guilt and hopelessness.

Dad can hear that real message sent by his children, if he wants to. Jesus said in Luke 8:16-18, No one lights a lamp and hides it in a jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, he puts it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. Therefore consider carefully how you listen." The interpretation here is not just for parables, but for life. What are the hidden things? The most hidden things in my life are my gut level feelings. How about you? I believe Jesus is urging us to be careful to listen for the feelings of others. When dad hears a message coming from his child, he is to listen for the hidden meaning, the feelings that are between the lines. The youngster's message may be simple or complicated, but it is still intended to cover the hidden recesses of his little heart. So, to hear the feelings, dad has to be careful *how* he listens. Jesus urges us not to react to the surface facts, not to take the words at face value; he urges us to listen for the facts and the feelings. If we miss the feelings, we will miss the meaning.

Really understanding in today's world is a luxury that few can afford. If you have the money you can buy the time of someone just to listen to you. In fact, that's the most important thing a counsellor does; he listens. He listens to your feelings, making sure he hears the message and not the code. The cost is \$25 to \$75 per hour — high price for such a needed skill.

It makes me think of God as a listener. He becomes the

Poorman's Counsellor. He's always there, listening. He is never too busy or tied up with someone else. He is never preoccupied. He is never too mad to understand. And the Holy Spirit makes sure he hears the real message. In fact, God will hear the message even when we would like to hide it from Him. He sees the hidden feelings of our hearts through His Spirit. It is God who can help dad to become a better listener.

### **How To Improve Your Listening Skills**

The goal: to listen for content and feelings, because together they equal understanding.

There are at least 5 conditioning exercises for an understanding listener:

1. Know why you are listening (Because you care).
2. Suspend your judgment (Focus on the speaker, not your emotions).
3. Resist distractions (Phone, TV, movement, clock, watch, etc.).
4. Practice waiting (Listening requires periods of silence, perhaps as long as 30 seconds).
5. Reflect on the meaning (content and emotion).

In order to develop the skills of an understanding listener, dad must first be in touch with his own feelings. If he is to identify feelings in his child, he must have already experienced a similar feeling. He needs to build a vocabulary of feeling words and he must be continually adding to his list.

### **Becoming An Understander**

When Julie comes into my office and tells me about one of her friends that just ran home saying she didn't like Julie anymore, I have a chance to be an understander. I could say, "You feel hurt," but that is not the complete message. Remember every message has both feeling and content. So, I say something like this: "You are hurt because now there's

no one to play with." Now, from her response I will know if I have really understood the situation. "No," she says, "Now I can't teeter-totter. I'm thirsty." And off she runs to the kitchen. I was close enough to the correct feeling and content for her hurt to be soothed by my recognizing the feeling and feeling it with her, not by words like, "She didn't mean it." I missed the content a little, but it was close enough. You can do it, too!

Leading educator and communicator Robert Carkhuff describes the understanding response like this: "A response is not complete until it communicates both feeling and meaning. A helpful response complements feeling with meaning. Meaning can be communicated by complementing a response to feeling with a response to content. For example, whereas, 'You feel . . . ' expresses the feelings, 'You feel . . . ' because . . . capture both the feeling and the meaning." Now we have an effective format for an understanding response. "You feel unsure of me because I might not be able to understand you." "You feel skeptical because I don't know what it's like in the schools today." — and on and on.

Granted, you don't use this type of listening everytime your child speaks. Dad has to use his discretion. With sensitivity you can recognize when your child wants to talk and when he doesn't.

Voice tones and muscle tensions give us clues to the genuineness of the understanding response. It's easy to mouth words; it's easy to just try to plug in this approach as a magic formula. It is possible to have the skill down pat, and it not work for you. Dad's attitude is just as important as his skills.

Dad may be experiencing some distractions. He may be afraid of emotions. Lots of people are, especially men. I suggest a book by John Powell entitled *Why Am I Afraid To Tell You Who I Am* for those facing that fear. Powell's book

will help dad to be open to his own feelings and it will help him deal with the problem of judging his feelings.

When dad uses the skills of understanding response coupled with the attitude of caring, he has the quality known as empathy. In *Your Child's Self Esteem* by Dorothy Briggs you can find these comments on empathy.

Empathy is powerful proof of caring. When you set your personal viewpoint aside temporarily to be 'with' your child, you demonstrate a fundamental respect for him as a separate individual whose personal point of view matters to you. Empathy says, 'how you see things is important to me. It is worth my time and the effort to be with you in your feelings.' There is no question about it; empathy gets love across. It fosters warm closeness — intimacy; it wipes out loneliness . . . Empathy helps set judgment aside . . . 'Gladys was forever sniping at her younger sister (she felt very inferior to the younger sister). As I was tucking her into bed one night . . . she started it again . . . I listened and then she began talking about the kids at school. 'Mom,' she said, 'At school . . . the other kids are all stronger than I am in most everything and somehow they always win. I'm right at the bottom. They're even stronger than me with words. What they say sometimes hurts so much I get lost in the hurt and can't think of anything to say.'

As she talked, I caught the flavor of her world, and it kinda broke my heart. All at once, her sniping at Anne made sense. Home was the one place she had to possibly even up the score. Once I understood, my anger was gone. I only felt compassion and warmth . . . I resolved to take steps to help.

In becoming an understanding responder, your experiences as a dad will develop into the greatest adventure of your life. Remember to listen for feeling and content and get ready for the change in your family.

### **Putting The Kit Together**

Now that we have identified the eight items in the survival kit, it's time to put them together in a box. We need them together for mobility; you never know when you might need one of the items, even while away from home. This box is special. We need to examine it first.

#### *The Box of Confession*

The base of the box is labeled confession, and the lid is stamped forgiven. The box is just the right size for the survival kit. Every item fits snugly, with just a little room left for personal items.

The box is stronger than you might think. While "The Marlboro Man" has dad demonstrating his supposed strength by denying him the "weakness" of confession, I am finding my greatest strengths by confession. And I am not finding confession either easy or a demonstration of weakness.

Just a few weeks ago I told Julie I would build her a sandbox in the backyard. Then, she and I could work together in filling it with sand. Well, there were people to visit, sermons to preach, phone calls to make, trips to take, and words to write and type. For the time, Julie's sandbox was pushed to the back burner.

Then, one night during our prayer together she asked, "Hey, dad, when are you going to build my sandbox?" I answered, "Next Saturday." You guessed it! Some urgent activity came up that Saturday and I forgot. That night during our prayer time I confessed how sorry I was that I had forgotten and had failed. My little four-year-old just reached up and gave me one of her "what-a-hugs" and said, "That's okay, dad." In her prayer that night she asked God to help her dad to get the sandbox built. And He did, and I did!

The box of confession is strong and the more it's used the stronger it gets.

### *The Lid of Forgiveness*

When the lid of forgiveness covers the box and the items in it, the lid is going to do a lot more than keep things in and things out. It erases all our past failures and the guilt that goes with them.

In many, many ways I realize I am far from being the "Perfect Dad." I am probably not even near being a "Good Dad." However, I am a "Forgiven Dad." Hebrews 10:17 (NIV) reads, "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." Forgiveness is forgetting. My God is capable of totally forgetting my sins, my fears, and my failures. He doesn't just mark through the lists of sins; he bleaches them out. They are not covered; they are gone forever.

When I first became aware of the power I have in being a forgiven dad it was as though I had been injected with new life. I was at a youth gathering and we were asked to take a piece of paper and write down the sins that come to our minds. At the time I was a father of just two years and my failing in that area came to my mind so I wrote them down. After we all listed our sins we were told to write God's words from I John 1:9 over the list. Then we were instructed to tear up the list and throw it away. It was like a bolt from the sky. I understood! My eyes were opened to the real power of forgiveness.

So, today I am a "Forgiven father," and that's enough.

### *Items in the Kit*

Now, we have a box labeled "confession," and a lid stamped "forgiven," and eight items to place inside the box and under the lid.

First, we have a sweatband. The sweatband reminds me of struggle and work. The basic struggle that each of us faces in this mixed-up world is the struggle for identity. Dad needs to know who he is, in a world filled with those who don't. Like Jacob, we wrestle with God, seeking the blessing of "know-

ing who we are." The sweatband represents that struggle. Its purpose is to keep the sweat out of our eyes so we can see clearly what God shows us.

Second, under the sweatband is a "mirror." The mirror's reason for being there is to help us to stop and reflect on our lives. Brothers, we tend to operate on a "firefighting" schedule. We spend our time on the "brush fires" while "hidden fires" smoulder. The mirror will help us stop and smell the roses; it will help us to examine regularly how we spend our time. Some of us are confirmed workaholics; others of us are just lazy. And, some of us spend hours in front of the TV and only seconds with our children. Whatever our condition, the mirror provides us with an instant check-up on our priorities. We can't save time in a bottle, but we can learn from it.

Third, there is an odd looking little "plug." It looks like an electrical plug; it is our connector to God's power supply of acceptance. It is senseless to try and find our worth and value and acceptance in the eyes and minds of others. They will always fail us and when they do succeed we find some way of tearing them down. Tearing them down seems to make us feel bigger and better, for a while. Our only basis for worth and value and acceptance is in God, through Jesus, not in a do-it-yourself book. Since the answer is outside ourselves, the plug is just what we need. Once plugged in, the power will help us develop right relationships with our children and our wives. It may be an odd-looking plug, but it pulls a very heavy load.

Fourth, behind the plug is a "bottle of glue." It's supernatural glue. This glue is used to form a permanent bond. It actually makes two become one. The directions are simple: to glue a marriage together, (1) clean both sides, (2) apply the glue liberally to both sides, (3) press the two together firmly. The result is lasting oneness; it's a oneness that is physical, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional. Marriages today are going through fragmentation, so use the glue regularly. It has

been said that dad's first priority in raising responsible children is loving their mother.

Fifth, this unusual item is called a "father filter." The filter is used almost all the time. The only time we are to take it off is when we are sleeping. The rest of the time it filters "lessons" to our children. We are the most influential teacher our children will ever have, and the filter helps us teach as positively as possible. Our lifestyle (our model) before the attentive eyes of our children, is why the filter must be worn constantly. There are a number of ways we teach our children. The most important way is to teach them what the Lord is doing in our lives. The father filter will help us remember the other methods of teaching and it will help us to use them.

Sixth, we have a towel. It is just a plain, ordinary, dirty towel. It's not a guest towel; it's a family towel. It's used, but it's got a lot of service left. We want to have respect and honor in our homes, and this towel will help us reach that goal. The towel is to be used for service. Jesus came to this earth with the sign of the towel, and dad comes to his family with the sign of the same towel. As we develop the attitude of service and sacrifice, the Lord blesses us with growing respect and honor in the eyes and hearts of our children. And with the new attitude we have new resources for problem-solving, resources that were not available to use before, because our attitude was different. Keep your towel on the top so you can reach in and get it quickly. Remember, the more it's used the better it is.

Seventh, under the towel we find a "hearing aid." This hearing aid is especially tuned to receive feelings. With this aid we can develop the skill of listening first. When we hear the listening aid we hear both the feelings and the content of the message. With this aid we will become a better understander. We develop the skill of hearing the hidden and responding to it because we are hearing the real message,

and with the aid we begin to feel what the kids are feeling. We begin to empathize with them in their situation. Be sure to use the hearing aid in all conflicts, difficult situations, and heated discussions.

Eighth, is a bag of "Kid Control." The purpose of kid control is to help us control the behavior of our offspring. You might be tempted to try to market this item nationwide, especially for Father's Day, but don't. You will need it all for yourself and your children. The bag contains this statement: "These contents are designed to help the children grow and develop into responsible children of God. It is to be taken internally and in no way will it be harmful to the child, nor will their hostility grow from use of it. After all, our discipline is really helping, not punishing. We are to help our children grow by stimulating growth. The bag puts it this way: "Kid Control" will help build strong, responsible children in several ways.

Now, place all the items in your box and close the lid — You have the items you need to survive and to become a forgiving, successful father.

The only thing lacking is a vision of hope, a dream — the dream of what your family can become under your guidance. A dream is absolutely necessary. My favorite literary character is Don Quixote, a man with a dream. I love him because he saw people not as what they were, but as what they could become. He and his "squire," Sancho, traveled the countryside trying to right the wrongs of mankind. Most people said he was crazy; some claimed he was mad. Many laughed at him, and a few felt sorry for him. But a handful met the Man from La Mancha, and it changed their lives.

While on their journey, Don and Sancho entered a tavern and met a wild kitchenmaid named Aldonza. Don stands and bows and claims she is his lady. "You are my lady, Dulcinea," he says. "No," she yells, "You are mistaken." She was hardly a lady at all, but Don insisted, "You are my

Dulcinea." Angered and confused she left the room screaming that she was only a kitchenmaid; that she was not a lady; that she was nothing.

One of the last scenes in the story takes place in Don Quixote's house. He is dying and an unexpected visitor comes calling. Don doesn't recognize her until she gently and warmly tells him she is his Dulcinea. He had given her a vision, a dream of what she could become, and she became.

Say what you will, the same thing happens today, when we, with God's help, dare to dream — when we dare to dream the Impossible Dream.

. . . And I know if I'll only be true to this glorious quest,  
That my eyes will be peaceful and calm when I'm laid to  
my rest.

And, the world will be better for this,  
That one man scorned and covered with scars,  
Still strove with his last ounce of courage  
To reach the unreachable stars.

Dad needs to dare to dream the impossible dream for his family, and then look out!

