



Marriage & The Family

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THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE

Genesis 2:21-25

Introduction: What makes a marriage successful? How can we insure that our young people are adequately prepared to enter this most sacred of covenants? We must lay a scriptural foundation and teach them the Bible principles that will provide them with the tools necessary for success. We must then impress upon them the importance of following those principles. Cute sayings and catchy stories will not do it. There is too much at stake and there have been too many casualties for us to continue to ignore it and hope that things will somehow be alright.

The following “marriage” maxims are worthy of more than a hasty reading. Husbands should not pass them by, for they are designed for wives; and wives should not despise them, for they are addressed to husbands:—

1. *The very nearest approach to domestic happiness on each is in the cultivation on both sides of absolute unselfishness.*
2. *Never both be angry at once.*
3. *Never talk at one another, either alone or in company.*
4. *Never speak loud to one another unless the house is on fire.*
5. *Let each one strive to yield oftenest to the wishes of the other.*
6. *Let self-denial be the daily aim and practice of each.*
7. *Never find fault unless it is perfectly certain that a fault has been committed, and always speak lovingly.*
8. *Never taunt with a past mistake.*
9. *Neglect the whole world besides rather than one another.*
10. *Never allow a request to be repeated.*
11. *Never make a remark at the expense of each other, —it is a meanness.*
12. *Never part for a day without loving words to think of during absence.*
13. *Never meet without a loving welcome.*
14. *Never let the sun go down upon any anger or grievance.*
15. *Never let any fault you have committed go by until you have frankly confessed it and asked forgiveness.*
16. *Never forget the happy hours of early love.*
17. *Never sigh over what might have been, but make the best of what is.*
18. *Never forget that marriage is ordained of God, and that His blessing alone can make it what it should ever be.*
19. *Never be contented till you know you are both walking in the narrow way.*
20. *Never let your hopes stop short of the eternal home.—COTTAGER AND ARTISAN.*

While many of the “maxims” above are based on scriptural teaching and certainly represent good advice, much more is needed if we are to have successful marriages that are functioning in a scriptural manner.

I. MARRIAGE IS ESTABLISHED BY A SOVEREIGN PLAN

- A. It is Spiritual in its Derivation - God is the author and creator of the institution of marriage.
 1. How Man was Created - Adam, from the dust of the ground. Eve, from the side of Adam
God Breathed - Genesis 2:7
 2. How Marriage was Created
God Brought - Genesis 2:22b

B. It is Specific in its Definition. Genesis 2:24

There has been a good deal of controversy in recent times with regard to what constitutes a family. How is marriage defined? Some would like to characterize marriage as a partnership between two human beings, without restriction concerning gender. Consider Webster's definition: "*1a: the state of being married* *b: the mutual relation of **husband and wife** :*" Our text reads "*Therefore shall a **man** leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his **wife**: and they shall be one flesh.*" There can be no doubt that God's intention and societies understanding both reflect the nature of marriage as being between a man and a woman.

C. It is Sacred in its Dedication.

Marriage is a spiritual union. It is initiated by a sacred vow. That is why the commitment in the marriage ceremony is emphasized so dramatically. It is not to be taken lightly. When we consider marriage to be a "temporary" arrangement which is easily dissolved at will by either party we profane (make common) a holy institution.

D. It is Sanctified in its Demonstration. Genesis 2:24

1. There is an *Edifying Purpose* Involved. Genesis 2:18

God recognized the need of Adam, he was "alone". God had created Adam as a social being. He had a need for fellowship which could not be met in the animal kingdom. God created marriage to satisfy that need in two specific ways;

- a. Companionship
- b. Completion

2. There is an *Exclusionary Promise* Involved.

a. There is a promise concerning the Priority of the relationship.

A couple's commitment to their marriage relationship comes second only to their relationship with their heavenly father. All other commitments fall below it. Occupation, parents, extended family, friends, hobbies, etc. must all take a back seat to the marriage relationship.

- 1). A man is to "*leave*" his father and mother
- 2). A man is to "*cleave*" unto his wife

b. There is a promise concerning the Permanence of the relationship.

Illustration: I heard a story about a mother and father who gave their precious daughter away in marriage. After the honeymoon, their daughter and her husband moved several states away. A few weeks later, the phone rang, the mother answered, and it was their daughter. She was in tears because she and her husband had just had their first fight. The daughter asked to speak to her dad. He took the phone and went into another room and talked to "his little girl" for about 10 minutes. When he came back out, the mother asked, "What did she say." The father replied, "She and her husband had a big fight and she wants to come home." After a moment of silence, the mother asked, "What did you say?" The father answered, "I told her, SHE IS HOME." That's good! That father recognized that he needed to let go after his daughter said "I do."

E. It is Sensual in its Design. Genesis 2:24b

God made man with a need for intimate companionship. This need goes beyond social interaction with friends and associates. It is a need that can only be satisfied by the intensely close relationship of a lifelong partner. That intensely close relationship, which is established by the sacred union of marriage, requires more than just the physical relationship which is so often emphasized as the means to a successful marriage. Man's need for intimacy covers several areas. Consider these areas that are crucial to the success of a marriage:

1. Man has a need for Spiritual intimacy.
Man's basic need is for a secure relationship with his God. Beyond that, he has a need to share his walk of faith with his spouse. There is a very special joy and peace that comes from a common desire to know, love and serve God together.
2. Man has a need for Social intimacy.
Life is filled with dreams, accomplishments, opportunities and successes as well as disappointments, tragedies and failures. Social intimacy with a lifelong mate provides support and strength when dealing with those issues. Every man needs someone with whom to share those everyday occurrences of life.
3. Man has a need for Sensual intimacy.
Man is a sensual being. His actions and responses are based on information fed to him by his senses. We live our lives in the physical realm by the power of our senses. Man has a need to share the physical side of his life with someone.

Now let's consider the "one flesh" relationship mentioned in verse 24. There is no need for a graphic description of this aspect of the marriage relationship. We often make the mistake of assuming that the physical aspect of marriage is only sensual. We place a great deal of emphasis on the physical pleasure that is derived from the "one flesh" relationship of marriage. While physical pleasure is one (very important) aspect of the marriage relationship, there is much more. This "one flesh" relationship is intended by God to be a very intense and unique experience which involves all levels of intimacy. It is Spiritual, it is Social, and it is Sensual. There is nothing that can compare with the fulfillment and satisfaction that results when a couple is willing to honor God in every aspect of their marriage.

II. MARRIAGE IS ENHANCED BY A SPIRITUAL POWER

While it is possible for a couple to have a successful marriage without the benefit of a spiritual foundation, it is not the best. God made man with the capacity for a spiritual relationship with him. If that relationship is not established and nurtured, a void exists which makes the marriage relationship more tenuous. Couples laboring to make a marriage work without the benefit of that spiritual influence, do so in their own power and are at a severe disadvantage. Consider these benefits which a saved couple enjoy:

- A. Their Purpose is the same - To honor the Lord.
- B. Their Path is the same - A personal, conscious, daily walk with Christ.
- C. Their Pilot is the same - The Holy Spirit lives in their heart to provide guidance.

Note: God has a perfect plan for every one of his children. When a person trusts Christ as his Savior everything changes in his life. The matter of marriage then becomes a matter of finding God's perfect mate. The Spirit of God will give absolute direction and assurance for a child of God who will earnestly seek His will. It is abundantly clear from scripture that a saved individual should NEVER marry an unsaved individual.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" 2 Corinthians 6:14 To do so is to invite certain failure. Not only does this couple not have the blessing of God on their marriage, but they also suffer from a disunity in beliefs, philosophy and direction in their lives. For a saved man or woman to knowingly marry an unsaved individual is a direct violation of the Word of God.

III. MARRIAGE IS ENRICHED BY A SCRIPTURAL PROCESS

*“Two persons who have chosen each other out of all the species with a design to be each other’s mutual comfort and entertainment have, in that action, bound themselves to be **good-humoured, affable, discreet, forgiving, patient, and joyful**, with respect to each other’s frailties and perfections, to the end of their lives.”—ADDISON.*

The Word of God is the guidebook for a happy marriage. The remainder of the messages in this series will deal with principles and guidelines which, if observed, will provide for a happy and harmonious home.

IV. MARRIAGE IS ERODED BY A SECULAR PHILOSOPHY

There are several issues that a Christian couple must be wary of if they are to avoid the dangers of a society determined to destroy the family as we know it.

A. Confusion regarding family structure

Some today would like to change the definition of marriage.

The following question and answer comes from the [Alliance for Marriage](#) web site:

Why do we need a constitutional amendment dealing with marriage?

“The institution of marriage is so central to the well being of both children and our society that it was, until recently, difficult to imagine that marriage itself would need explicit constitutional protection. However, our country’s time-honored understanding that marriage is - in its very essence — the union of male and female has come under fire in the courts. And the time has come for America to put this issue back where it belongs - in the hands of the American people.”

B. Confusion regarding the importance of commitment

Eighteenth-century author Leo Tolstoy observed, “What counts in making a happy marriage is not so much how compatible you are, but how you deal with incompatibility.” The common way to deal with unhappiness in marriage today is to get a divorce. However, getting a divorce will not restore happiness, it just increases the misery.

C. Confusion regarding gender roles

Children today grow up in a society that gives no definition whatsoever regarding gender roles. It is important for them to learn that the Bible does assign specific responsibilities to both parties in a marriage relationship. While a marriage can exist and function without adhering to Biblical principles, it can never reach the level of fulfillment that God intends. Our young people need to be aware that if they ignore scriptural responsibilities, they will forfeit spiritual blessing.

D. Confusion regarding emotions and feelings (the meaning of love)

Never has there been a time when there was more focus on love than there is today. And never has there been a time when love was less understood than it is today. Confusion abounds. Children today are taught that love is entirely about emotional attachment, that it is evidenced by feelings, and that it is temporary in nature. As a result, young people enter the marriage relationship unprepared to deal with the change in emotions that they will without exception experience.

Illustration: Divorced couples in Albuquerque, New Mexico, can take advantage of a new business in town. The company is called Freedom Rings: Jewelry for the Divorced. Founded by jeweler and divorcee Lynn Peters, the company makes custom jewelry out of wedding rings. Each customer at Freedom Rings pays a fee, and the ring-smashing ceremony begins - complete with champagne and music. Just before the smashing the M.C. says, ‘We will now release any remaining ties to your past by transforming your ring—which represents the past - into a token of your new beginning. Now take the hammer. Stop for a moment to

consider the transformation that is about to begin your new life. Ready? With this swing let freedom ring!’ She then uses a four-pound sledgehammer to whack her emblem of love and fidelity into a shapeless piece of metal. And the ceremony ends. The fact that women are pounding their wedding rings into pendants and men are grinding theirs into golf ball markers doesn’t surprise me. We’ve all heard the divorce statistics. (Brian Peterson, New Man, October, 1994, p. 8)

Conclusion: This is where it all begins. We must understand that marriage is more than a business agreement. It is more than a secular union. It is a sacred covenant, founded upon scriptural principles, that is designed to endure a lifetime, and provide immeasurable happiness and fulfillment to those who enter it with a proper attitude.

A BIBLICAL STRUCTURE FOR AUTHORITY IN THE HOME - UNDISPUTED LEADERSHIP

Ephesians 5:23-24

“When home is ruled according to God’s Word, angels might be asked to stay a night with us, and they would not find themselves out of their element.” —SPURGEON.

Introduction: For a Christian home to function properly, scriptural guidelines must be observed and obeyed. It is not reasonable, nor responsible to ignore that which the Bible tells us is the means to success. Yet many today, including professing Christians, have a problem accepting Biblical teaching concerning authority. In some cases we reject the truth in favor of a softer, more popular position which destroys the authority of the husband and father in the home. In other cases, the “man of the house”, embraces the principle of authority to the exclusion of love and compassion and becomes a heartless tyrant. What is your attitude toward the Biblical principle of authority in the home?

Several years ago, a Dennis the Menace comic strip illustrated how some of these attitudes manifest themselves. Dennis is having cake and milk at the Wilson’s. Mrs. Wilson is washing the dishes while Mr. Wilson is trying to read a newspaper. Dennis wonders aloud why Mr. Wilson never goes to work. Mr. Wilson explains that he is retired. “Retired! Is that why you loaf all the time?” Dennis asks him. Mr. Wilson tells Dennis since he has worked hard for so many years he has earned the right to loaf. This makes Dennis wonder why Mrs. Wilson also doesn’t retire. He has never seen her loaf. Mr. Wilson responds, “She can’t retire because she never worked.” But Dennis has seen Mrs. Wilson always cooking or washing or sewing and he can’t accept that answer. “That’s different,” Mr. Wilson explains. “She’s a housewife! If she retired who’d do the housework?” Dennis asks, “Couldn’t you help?” “Dennis! Are you trying to make trouble?” Mr. Wilson shouts. Mrs. Wilson finally intervenes, telling her husband not to yell at Dennis. “He’s right and you know it!” In the next frame we see Dennis walking up to his mother in her garden. When she asks what the Wilson’s were arguing about, Dennis says, “I don’t know. I came home ‘cause I didn’t want to get involved!”

Three men were talking over coffee. Two of them are talking about the amount of control they have over their wives, while the third remains quiet. After a while one of the first two turns to the third and says, “Well, what about you, what sort of control do you have over your wife?” The third fellow says, “I’ll tell you. Just the other night my wife came to me on her hands and knees.” The first two guys were amazed. “What happened then?” they asked. “She said, ‘Get out from under the bed and fight like a man.’”

A mild mannered man was tired of his wife bossing him around so he went to a psychiatrist. The doctor told him he had to develop self-esteem and gave him a booklet on assertiveness training. The man read the book on the way home. He walked through the door of his house and said to his wife, “From now on I’m the man of this house and my word is law. When I come home from work I want my dinner on the table. Now go upstairs and lay me some clothes on the bed because I’m going out with the boys tonight. Then, when you have completed that, draw my bath. When I get out of the tub, guess who’s going to dress me and comb my hair?” The wife answered, “The undertaker!”

Three important statements concerning authority.

1. *Authority is necessary for proper function of a home.*
2. *For authority to be effective, there must be subordination.*
3. *Subordination does not destroy equality.*

I. THE SCRIPTURAL PRINCIPLE CONCERNING AUTHORITY - Ephesians 5:23

The scripture says very plainly that the husband is the head of the wife. It is a principle which is not received well in society in general because it is considered to be demeaning to women. Some preachers

ignore the principle altogether and others so minimize the significance of its teaching that they may as well ignore it. If we would have God's blessing on our home, we must accept, and apply this Biblical principle of the authority of the husband in the home.

A. The Necessity of Authority - I Corinthians 11:1-3

God has established a scriptural chain of command that must be observed if we are to be successful in society and in our homes. To ignore this principle is to invite difficulty in the home. Consider the results in a home (or a society) where no authority exists, or where the one that does exist is ignored. - Anarchy - Anxiety - Anger

1. The Scriptural Order - Subordination of Authority - I Corinthians 11:3

- a. God is the head of Christ
- b. Christ is the head of the man
- c. Man is the head of the woman

2. The Scriptural Opinion - Equality of Essence - I Corinthians 11:11

While it is true that God has placed the husband in a position of authority in the home, and commanded the wife to subordinate herself to him, He also makes it very clear that husband and wife are equal in essence. Galatians 3:28 *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."* There is no scriptural reason for a wife to feel inferior to her husband.

It is very clear from scripture that God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are equal in nature and character. But it is also very obvious that there is a specific hierarchy of authority in the Trinity. The husband - wife relationship functions in the same fashion.

B. The Nature of Authority

1. Scriptural edicts concerning authority.

a. Authority is a Delegated Power - John 19:10-11; Romans 13:1-6

1). It is Imparted by a Holy God

Romans 13:1b .."*For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*" No human, individual or government, has inherent authority. Whatever power or authority that they have is delegated to them by God.

2). It is Implemented by a Human Government

- > Those who have been given authority have the weighty responsibility of exercising their power properly. They will answer to God for how they used and abused their power.
- > Those who have been placed under authority have a responsibility to respect and obey that authority. Modern society has a tendency to reject any authority that they don't agree with and dismiss any authority that they think is not fair. They will answer to God for their response. Romans 13:2 *"Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."*

b. Authority has a Distinct Purpose

1). To Protect those who Obey

Romans 13:4a *"For he is the minister of God to thee for good..."*

2). To Punish those who Offend

Romans 13:4b *“...But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.”*

2. Scriptural examples of authority.

a. Secular - Government

b. Spiritual

- 1). The Sovereign (Father, Son & Holy Spirit)
- 2). The Scriptures
- 3). The Shepherd (Pastor)
- 4). The Spouse (Husband)

II. THE SECULAR PHILOSOPHY CONCERNING AUTHORITY

Authority is not popular in today's society. There are several responses to authority that are easily observed in any public place that are indicative of society's attitudes.

A. Rebellion - “No one has the right to tell me what to do!”

B. Resentment - “Why do I have to submit to authority?”

C. Retaliation - An “I'll get even” attitude.

This attitude is illustrated all too frequently in our society today. It is not uncommon to hear a news report of an individual who has returned to his former place of business to retaliate for perceived injustices committed against him. The event usually ends with serious injury, and often death.

III. THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICE CONCERNING AUTHORITY

How does all of this relate to the Christian home?

Consider four issues;

A. The Issue of Reason

Consider this interesting paraphrase:

“Wide receivers, submit to your quarterback, as to the Lord. For the quarterback is the head of the wide receiver as Christ is the head of the church...” (NFL version!).

Every organization must have a leader to function successfully.

1. Proper authority in the home is not the result of taking but of giving.
2. Proper authority in the home requires effort by all.
3. Proper authority in the home leads to order and progress.
There can be no authority without submission

B. The Issue of Rank - It is an issue of Biblical Obedience

When a wife submits to her husband she is showing;

1. Honor to her Spouse
2. Honor to her Savior

C. The Issue of Respect

A wife who shows respect for her husband by submitting to him should remember;

1. Submission is an act of the will for which she will be rewarded.
2. The wife is to submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ.
3. Respect is a two-way street.
What about the Husband's attitude?

Husbands are not to use their authority to intimidate their wives!!!

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

Considers these signs of a lack of respect by the Husband:

- a. He makes all the decisions without the input of the wife.
- b. He tightly controls all family money and watches critically over his wife's spending.
- c. He never says, *“I was wrong”* or *“I am sorry.”*
- d. He disregards suggestions and pleas from his children.
- e. He has an intense need to control those closest to him.

D. The Issue of Responsibility

What role does authority play in the home?

1. Provision
 - a. Secular needs
 - b. Spiritual needs
2. Protection
3. Preparation
4. Partnership
5. Passion

There is a definite issue of accountability to consider. - I Samuel 3:12-14 God made it clear that Eli was going to have to answer for not bearing the responsibility of leadership in his home.

Conclusion: Undisputed leadership is the Biblical standard for authority in the home, and is absolutely necessary for the home to function successfully.

A BIBLICAL STANDARD FOR AFFECTION IN THE HOME - UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Ephesians 5:25

Introduction: While all would agree that members of a family should love one another, there is often a great deal of discrepancy with regard to what that love entails. For many love is conditional. It is based on conduct. Conditional love says, "I will love you if..." Unconditional loves says, "I love you because..." Conditional love is 'approval' love. That's why an individual who is so emotional in their declaration of love at the altar on their wedding day can be so adamant about the fact that they no longer love the same person a few years down the road. What is unconditional love? How is it displayed? There are few things as important to the success of a family as the understanding and implementation of the concept of unconditional love.

I. THE CHARACTER OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

To love unconditionally is to love like God loves.

A. Unconditional Love rests on a Divine Foundation

Man does not have a natural capacity for unconditional love. We are too easily offended. Man must experience God's love before he can understand or demonstrate Godly love. 1 John 4:8 "*He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.*"

B. Unconditional Love requires a Dedicated Focus

We will never love like God does if we focus on an individual's failures. Consider:

1. God loves us in spite of our sinfulness (we do not obey Him like we should).

Our conduct does not determine God's love for us. There is nothing we can do to make God love us more than He already does. Conversely, there is nothing we can do that will make God love us less than He currently does. The responsibility for love rests on the one doing the loving, not on the one being loved.

2. God loves us in spite of our selfishness (we do not return His love like we should).

We have a tendency, as sinners, to behave in a very selfish fashion. Not only do we often fail to display our love through obedience, but we are also careless about expressing our love and adoration to God in prayer. We don't have time, or don't take time. I am convinced we do what we want to do.

C. Unconditional Love results in a Devoted Forgiveness

Forgiveness is the natural result of unconditional love. If conduct does not play a part in producing the love to begin with, then it is natural to conclude that conduct would not play a part in restoration. Forgiveness requires a decision to no longer remember a loved one's sins. If we love as God does, and forgive as God does, we will choose not to remember their sins. Hebrews 10:17 "*And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.*" You will notice that it does not say that God will forget their sin. I don't believe he *has the ability* to forget their sin, considering His omniscience. But he does *make a choice* not to remember them any longer. Nor does it say that God will overlook their sin. We will deal with this issue more later.

II. THE CONDUCT OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

I Corinthians 13 is the Bible standard for the conduct of unconditional love. Following are some basic characteristics of love as defined in I Corinthians 13.

A. Unconditional Love is Gentle in its Demands.

V. 4 - "*Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up*"

1. Unconditional love Requires nothing.
Since unconditional love is not based on conduct, there is nothing required to obtain, or maintain it.
2. Unconditional love Rewards nothing.
Whatever gifts are presented to a loved one are not given in response to kindnesses received but as a result of genuine love and a desire to show kindness. It is not a “*you treat me right, I’ll treat you right*” type of proposition.
3. Unconditional love Repays nothing.
Vengeance is never an option in unconditional love. Our motive in discipline is always for the welfare and benefit of the loved one.

B. Unconditional Love is Gracious in its Delivery.

V. 5a - “*Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own...*”

1. Grace enriches when there is no merit
2. Grace enables when there is no means
3. Grace empowers when there is no might

C. Unconditional Love is Generous in its Disposition.

V. 5b - “*...is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;*” V. 6 - “*Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;*”

How easy it is to see the bad side of people. How easy it is to assume the worst when something happens or is said. Unconditional love is quick to give the benefit of the doubt. And is not easily offended.

D. Unconditional Love is Glorious in its Display.

V. 7 - “*Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*”

Unconditional love always demonstrates itself by concern and compassion. Never would it attempt to ridicule or expose a persons faults. It is the opposite of the cynical, critical, caustic attitude that is so prevalent in today’s society.

III. THE CHALLENGE OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

The great challenge associated with unconditional love is to remember that there are certain things that love and forgiveness cannot do. There is a tendency to make love and forgiveness the cure for any wrong.

A. Unconditional love cannot ignore the responsibility for sin.

God’s justice must be satisfied. There is a mistaken perception among some that because they are forgiven the responsibility for their sin has just gone away. We must remember that while God loves us unconditionally, He does not forget about the responsibility for our sin. He does not simply ignore it. His justice would not allow that. What He did was move the responsibility for our sin from us to His son. Forgiveness means that Christ paid the price for our sins so that we don’t have to. Consider this statement by C. H. Spurgeon: “*Never once has he pardoned an unpunished sin; not in all the years of the Most High, not in all the days of his right hand, has he once blotted out sin without punishment. What! say you, were not those in heaven pardoned? Are there not many transgressors pardoned, and do they not escape without punishment? Has he not said, “I have blotted out thy transgressions like a cloud, and like a thick cloud thine iniquities?” Yes, true, most true, and yet my assertion is true also— not one of all those sins that have been pardoned were pardoned without punishment. Do you ask me why and how such a thing as that can be the truth? I point you to yon dreadful sight on Calvary; the*

punishment which fell not on the forgiven sinner fell there. The cloud of justice was charged with fiery hail; the sinner deserved it; it fell on him; but, for all that, it fell, and spent its fury; it fell there, in that great reservoir of misery; it fell into the Saviour's heart. The plagues, which need should light on our ingratitude, did not fall on us, but they fell somewhere; and who was it that was plagued? Tell me, Gethsemane; tell me, O Calvary's summit, who was plagued. The doleful answer comes, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is Jesus suffering all the plagues of sin. Sin is still punished, though the sinner is delivered." (C.H Spurgeon in his sermon Mercy, Omnipotence and Justice)

B. Unconditional love cannot ignore the results of sin.

It would be wonderful if the results of sin could be removed by our unconditional love. However, just as the laws of nature cannot be reversed by an act of forgiveness, neither can the results of sin. Actions have consequences, and we must live with those consequences. Unconditional love may make those consequences easier to deal with, but it cannot make them go away.

C. Unconditional love cannot ignore the reprimand for sin.

One of the characteristics of God's love for his children is His promise to chasten those who are disobedient. Hebrews 12:6 *"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."* We have a tendency to excuse the punishment because of our emotional feelings. It is necessary for us to see things from a Biblical perspective and act accordingly. To ignore the punishment for sin is to demonstrate a lack of love.

Conclusion: Unconditional love is the Biblical standard for affection in the home. Nothing else is acceptable. It matters little what conflicts you are having; it makes no difference what kind of sin family members are involved in; it is of no concern how dirty one gets, unconditional love says *"I love you anyway"*.

A young lady tells a story about an experience she had on a short flight from Tucson to Phoenix. Across the aisle from her sat a young woman and her baby, both dressed in white pinafores. The baby had a little pink bow where there would eventually be hair. The mother was smiling, as the baby kept saying "Dada, Dada," every time someone walked down the aisle. The mother said Daddy was waiting for them after they had been gone for a few days. She was so adorable – quiet – that all passengers enjoyed watching her. Unfortunately, there was a lot of turbulence, making the flight extremely rough, which of course was hard on the baby. But the mother had some fruit and a little Thermos with orange juice in it. Every time the baby cried the mother fed her a little bit more orange juice and a little more fruit. While this seemed like a good idea at the time, the turbulence seemed to spread from the air around the plane right down to that baby's gastro-intestinal system, and pretty much all of the fruit that had gone down came up. However, the process of coming up was considerably messier than the process of going down had been. It also seemed to have increased in volume tremendously between the going down and the coming up, so that not only were the baby and the mother pretty much covered in it, but so were most of the passengers within a significant radius of the baby, including the young lady, who was telling the story. Fortunately for the mortified mother, all of the passengers were gracious and tried to help her and tell her it was OK. After all what could she do about it?? The baby was crying, and she looked awful. Even though they didn't cry, her fellow passengers looked – and smelled – pretty awful, too. The mother was so sorry about it. As soon as they landed, the baby was fine and returned to calling: "Dada, Dada." The rest of the passengers didn't recover quite so quickly, being covered as they were in pre-digested fruit. The young lady said, "I had on a suit, and I was trying to decide whether to burn it or just cut off the sleeve. It was really bad." Waiting for the plane was a young man who had to be "Dada." He was wearing white slacks, a white shirt, and he carried white flowers. Now what do you think that clean Daddy all dressed in white did when he saw his baby who had that sticky, smelly stuff all over her clothes and her face and her hair? He ran to the young mother, who handed the baby over pretty quickly so she could go get cleaned up. That Daddy picked up that baby, and he hugged her and he kissed her and he stroked her hair. As he held her close, he said, "Daddy's baby's come home. Daddy's baby's come home."

That is unconditional love. “Oh,” you say, “I would not have a problem with that. Babies are always sweet no matter what happens”. But what about when the baby turns 18 and comes home drunk, do you love her then. That is the test.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HUSBAND

Ephesians 5:23-33

Introduction: The husband is to be the spiritual head of the house. He is to lead in a spiritual fashion. Many husbands never succeed because they fail to understand their role. There are several leadership styles that are very popular but inappropriate from a scriptural perspective.

1. Authoritarian - Rule by the will - leads to a very cold, indifferent relationship
2. Accommodating - Rule by the emotions - a very permissive attitude
3. Analytical - Rule by the intellect - everything is done properly, just very methodical

A proper leadership attitude comes from the heart, which is a balanced combination of the three styles listed above.

I. HE IS TO LEAD WITH THE CONCERN OF THE SOVEREIGN - Ephesians 5:23

What is the heart of God like? How does He lead? If we are to be successful as fathers we must pattern our leadership in the home after our Heavenly father. In II Timothy 2 the apostle Paul gives some very definite leadership qualities for a man who has been called to shepherd a flock. While a husband does not necessarily pastor a church, he is certainly the pastor of his home.

A. A Godly Husband must have the Head of a Soldier.

Later in Ephesians 6 we are admonished to put on the whole armor of God so that we can be victorious in spiritual warfare. The Christian life is a battle, and that battle extends into the Christian home. A Godly Husband, if he is to succeed, must have the mental toughness of a soldier. *In 2 Timothy 2:3* Paul encourages Timothy to “...endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.” How can a husband make sure that he is properly prepared for the daily battle that he will face?

1. Faithful Interaction with the Scripture - A daily time in the Word of God which includes both meditation and memorization
2. Faithful Interaction with the Savior - Daily communication with the Savior in prayer

Joshua was a Godly leader who led the children of Israel through many battles. How was he successful? Joshua 1:8 “*This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*” Joshua spent much time communicating with God. When he received instruction from God and followed that instruction when leading the people, Israel had success. The times Israel failed were the times when Joshua neglected to pray.

B. A Godly Husband must have the Heart of a Shepherd.

II Timothy 2:10 “*Therefore I endure all things for the elect’s sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.*”

The character of a shepherd leads him to suffer for his sheep. In John 10:11 we are told that “...*the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*” The husband is the shepherd of his family. We can learn much about the heart of a shepherd from a study of Psalm 23.

1. A Shepherd Gives - He is our Provider.
Psalm 23:2 - "*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters."*
Notice the *green pastures* and *still waters*. It is the husband's responsibility to provide spiritual nourishment for his family.
2. A Shepherd Guides - He is our Pilot.
Psalm 23:3b - "*...he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*" A Godly husband has a responsibility to provide spiritual direction for his family.
3. A Shepherd Guards - He is our Protector.
Psalm 23:4 - "*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.*" A Godly husband will do his utmost to protect his family from the dangerous philosophy of a Godless society.

David, the man after God's own heart is a perfect example of the heart of a shepherd. He tended his sheep lovingly, and demonstrated the spiritual characteristics above in an obvious way.

C. A Godly Husband must have the Hands of a Servant.

It happened in the Spring of 1981 perhaps you remember it. President Reagan had just been shot by John Hinckley. Washington was shocked and stunned. Vice-President George Bush was not immediately available. Even at the White House no one was sure what was going on. That's when Gen. Alexander Haig, who was at the White House, stepped in & confidently asserted to the press—"I'm in charge here!" He's never been able to live those four words down. What HE thought he was doing was providing crisis leadership. What the country saw was a man hungry for power.

Matthew 20:27 "*And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:*"

Spiritual leadership is servant leadership. Dwight L. Moody once said, "The measure of a man is not how many servants he has, but how many men he serves." What is servant leadership?

1. Servant Leadership requires a proper Motive.
A Christian husband will remember that his primary concern is for those in his family. It is not about the husband being in charge. The important thing is if the family is making progress in their walk with the Lord. Serious problems occur when a husband begins to feel insecure in his leadership and takes an "I'll show you who's boss" attitude.
2. Servant Leadership requires a proper Manner.
 - > Servant leadership never panics, it is always calm.
 - > Servant leadership never provokes, it is always considerate.
3. Servant Leadership requires a proper Message.
The message is not, "I'm in charge, you are to do what I say", but "What can I do to help you get where you need to go". While leadership sometimes requires giving orders, the message in those orders needs to come across loud and clear; "This is what is best for you".

II. HE IS TO LOVE WITH THE COMPASSION OF THE SAVIOR - Ephesians 5:25-33

We have already talked about the character and conduct of unconditional love. In this passage, the meaning goes a little deeper. Here it is talking about a husband's love for his wife. And the scripture here is very specific. It does not only say that a husband is to love his wife unconditionally, but it also gives a very important illustration concerning the character of that love. The Bible says that he is to love his wife as

“...*Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.*” We must give serious consideration to this command if we are to have a scriptural home. What is the Bible saying?

A. The Constraint of the command.

We begin by taking note of the fact that this is an imperative command. There is no room for consideration. Many times we equate love with emotion only. When the emotion that fueled the relationship to begin with starts to fade, we come to the conclusion that love no longer exists. We do not have the option of dismissing our love because of a lack of emotion.

B. The Character of the command.

This command is very specific in what it requires. We are commanded to love our wives in the same way that Christ loves the church. We are to be willing to give ourselves for our wives as Christ gave himself for the church. This is the highest, purest, strongest characterization of love possible. It is also the greatest challenge to attain, by far. There is nothing that has a greater affect on our attitude toward personal gratification.

1. A Husband’s love is to be Sincere (Characterized by Displayed Gratification).

Ephesians 5:25a “*Husbands, love your wives...*” This is how we demonstrate our selfless attitude. The sincerity of our love is displayed by our affection toward our wives. It is important that others see the love and respect we have for our wives. How we treat them in public says much about our love.

2. A Husband’s love is to be Sacrificial (Characterized by Displaced Gratification).

Ephesians 5:25b “*...even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*” There will be a willingness on the part of a Godly husband to forgo personal desires for the sake of his wife. Again, there is not much room for negotiation. Christ loved the church and gave the ultimate sacrifice.

3. A Husband’s love is to be Sanctifying (Characterized by Dedicated Gratification).

Ephesians 5:26 “*That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*” What is a husband’s primary goal in marriage? We would be wise to give that question serious consideration. Our wives do not exist for our pleasure. They are not slaves waiting to fulfill our every desire. They are our companions, created by God to fill a void in our lives. They are our means to a complete life. They are a part of us. With them, we are “one flesh”. Notice *Ephesians 5:28-29* “*So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:*”

Now, what is Christ’s goal for the church? Ephesians 5:27 “*That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*” Our goal for our wives should be the same. It should be our desire to present her before the throne spotless, and without blemish.

How can we accomplish this exalted goal? In the same way that Christ accomplishes His goal with His church.

- a) Through a Promise of Exclusivity - We are to sanctify her, set her apart as being very special. In the marriage ceremony we usually repeat a vow of faithfulness. We promise to keep ourselves only unto our wives as long as we both shall live. That is a promise of exclusivity.
- b) Through a Process of Edification - We have a scriptural obligation to lead our wives spiritually. The “*...washing of water by the word*” takes place as we seek to edify her through the teaching

of the Word of God. Many husbands fail in this area because they don't understand their responsibility. Some fail because they don't want to invest the time necessary. Before he can teach his wife, he must learn himself. This is not optional. A husband who loves his wife as Christ loves the church will be willing to make the sacrifice necessary to accomplish this goal.

4. A Husband's love is to be Steadfast (Characterized by Delayed Gratification).
The greatest gratification, the greatest joy, comes for a Godly husband not in the early stages of the marriage, but in the sunset years, when as a couple you have weathered the storms and stood beside each other through thick and thin. At that point there is a wonderful sense of fulfillment and satisfaction, because the vows have been kept, the battles have been won, and God's blessing has been evident. It comes at the end of years of faithfulness to the Lord and to each other. And it is well worth waiting for.

Helmut Thielicke, in his book How the World Began, made this observation: I once knew a very old married couple who radiated a tremendous happiness. The wife especially, who was almost unable to move because of old age and illness and in whose kind old face the joys and sufferings of many years had etched a hundred lines, was filled with such a gratitude for life that I was touched to the heart. Involuntarily, I asked myself what could possibly be the source of this kindly person's radiance. In every other respect they were common people, and their room indicated only the most modest comfort. But suddenly I knew where it all came from, for I saw those two speaking to each other, and their eyes hanging upon each other. All at once it became clear to me that this woman was dearly loved. It was not because she was a cheerful and pleasant person that she was loved by her husband all those years. It was the other way around. Because she was so loved she became the person I saw before me.

III. HE IS TO LABOR WITH THE CONSISTENCY OF THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit works in the heart and life of a believer on a continual basis to make him what he ought to be. He performs multiple duties:

1. What He does for us.
 - a. He Indwells - 1 Corinthians 6:19 *"What? 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?"*
 - b. He Intercedes - Romans 8:26 *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."*
2. What He does to us.
 - a. He Convicts - John 16:8-11 *"And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."*
 - b. He Convinces - John 16:13a *"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:..."*
 - c. He Constrains - Acts 16:6 *"Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia"*

- d. He Comforts - Acts 9:31 *“Then had the churches rest throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.”*

In the same way that the Spirit of God is continually laboring in the life of the believer, the Christian husband should be continually laboring in behalf of his family. The scripture makes some pretty severe statements with regard to a man’s attitude toward work.

- > First God says that if a man will not work, he does not deserve to eat. 2 Thessalonians 3:10 *“For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.”*
- > Then He comments that a man who will not provide for his family is of pretty sorry character. 1 Timothy 5:8 *“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”*

A. His labor should result in Provision

1. Provision of Secular Needs

The husband has the responsibility to provide the basic needs of the household. We live in a day when wives contribute to this provision, and the scripture does not forbid their participation. However, the bulk of the liability rests on the shoulders of the husband, and he will answer to God for how he handles that responsibility.

2. Provision of Spiritual Needs

As we have already noted, the husband is to be the spiritual leader in his home. He is to teach, guide and aid his family in their spiritual growth.

B. His labor should result in Protection.

1. Protection from Physical Dangers

Many dangers exist in our society today. A husband's responsibility does not end with protecting his family at home. It is much more extensive than that. He must be aware of all possibilities. It often requires being suspicious of unusual situations or people and a willingness to ask questions and investigate people or circumstances. There is a fine line between trust and foolishness when dealing with an evil society. It is always better to err on the side of caution.

2. Protection from Philosophical Diversions

Colossians 2:8 *“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”*

C. His labor should result in Progress.

When a husband is doing his job as the authority in the home, there should be obvious signs of both secular and spiritual progress in the family. Progress is an indication of growth and learning. Both should be taking place continually in a Christian home.

D. His labor should result in Peace.

Nothing is more wonderful than the peace that fills a home where Biblical guidelines are followed. God wants every home to have a pleasant and peaceful atmosphere. It all begins with the husband’s spiritual labor.

Conclusion: The husband, as the spiritual leader of the family, has a weighty responsibility. It will not do for the husband to neglect his duty or to leave it for the wife to fulfill. The wife suffers, the family struggles, and God’s blessing is forfeited when the husband fails in his obligation to lead, love, and labor in a scriptural fashion

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HELPER

Ephesians 5:21-24

Introduction: Having already dealt with the responsibilities of the husband, we now turn our attention to the helper. There is no way to avoid the Biblical principle of submission. Some wives today have a problem with it because they think that somehow it makes them a lesser person than their husband. We have already dealt with the matter of subordination and equality. This principle does not teach inequality but it does teach subordination of function, which is an absolute necessity for a home to operate in a scriptural fashion. What does the scripture teach about submission? What is the helper's role?

I. THE MEANING OF SUBMISSION

The word translated submit comes from a Greek word which means "to arrange under, to subordinate". It is a Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader". In non-military use, it was "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden".

This same word "hupotasso" *hoop-ot-as'-so* is translated as;

1. Subject - Romans 13:1 "Let every soul be **subject** unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."
2. Subdue - Philippians 3:21 "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to **subdue** all things unto himself."
3. Obedient - Titus 2:9 "Exhort servants to be **obedient** unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;"

Note: In every case the word speaks of unqualified, voluntary subordination to authority. The scriptural example found in verse 24 is of the church's submission to Christ. In the same way that the church is under Christ's authority, the helpmeet is to be under the authority of her husband.

II. THE MEASURE OF SUBMISSION

Are there areas where a Christian wife would be justified in refusing to submit to her husband? There are some who teach that a wife is not responsible for what she does as long as she is following her husband's leadership. This makes her a powerless pawn who is subject to the desires and direction of a man who may or may not be concerned about doing what is right. Nowhere in scripture does it teach that a wife is to blindly submit to a man who is going to require her to participate in activities which are contrary to a consistent Christian life-style. What boundaries, if any, do we find in scripture with regard to a wife's submission?

A. Boundary of Scriptural Leadership

The scripture is clear in verses 22 & 24 that the wife's responsibility for submission is limited to her "own husband".

B. Boundaries of Scriptural Law

Remember that the wife is to submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ. There should never be in the heart of a wife a fear that her husband would require of her anything that would violate scriptural laws. Just as Christ would never violate the word of God in leading the church, a Godly

husband would never violate the scripture while leading his wife. *If a husband should ask his wife to violate a clear scriptural principle, (ex. fornication, stealing, etc.) she would be justified in refusing.*

C. Boundaries of Secular Law

Two important principles to remember:

1. Scriptural law supersedes secular law - Acts 5:29b “...*We ought to obey God rather than men.*”
2. Scriptural law supports secular law - Romans 13:1 “*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*”
A wife is not required by scripture to submit to her husband if he demands that she violate secular law, as long as the secular law is not superseded by scriptural law. (Example, should a wife be required to sign an income tax return that she knows is inaccurate?) Again, we are guided by the illustration of our text, Christ and the church. As the church can be assured of the righteous guidance of Christ, so the wife should be able to have confidence that her husband is going to lead her properly.

Note: In every area of life where the above boundaries are not compromised, the wife has a scriptural obligation to submit to the authority of her husband. The latter part of verse 24 makes it clear that the wife has a responsibility to submit “*in every thing*”.

Consider these critical areas;

- 1) Decisions concerning the Work of the family
- 2) Decisions concerning the Wealth of the family
- 3) Decisions concerning the Worship of the family
- 4) Decisions concerning the Welfare of the family

III. THE MANNER OF SUBMISSION

Scriptural submission involves a conscious, voluntary yieldedness of our will. Anything less than that does not constitute scriptural submission.

Consider four types of submission that are *unscriptural*;

A. Conditional Submission

“*I will submit if...*” It is a submission that is based on an agreement. Not really submission at all.

B. Critical Submission

“*I will do it, but I don't agree with the decision...*”

C. Cautious Submission

“*I hope he is right, but I sure wish I didn't have to find out...*” Demonstrates a lack of trust, not healthy.

D. Coerced Submission

“*I guess I don't have a choice...*”

Note: As you can tell, the above examples don't really represent scriptural submission at all. While all certainly demonstrate an *act* of submission, they do not indicate a *spirit* of submission. The ultimate result of this kind of submission will be a home filled with division and strife.

Conclusion: Harmony in the home is the result of husband and helper each fulfilling their scriptural obligations. An overbearing, tyrannical husband who never demonstrates a scriptural attitude of compassion in his authority

can never expect a spirit of harmony in the home. Nor is it reasonable for a wife who has an unsubmitive spirit to expect harmony in the home. A wife cannot change her husband's unscriptural approach to leadership, nor can a husband change his wife's unscriptural attitude toward submission. It is not in changing our spouse that we find the answer. It is in changing our own attitude to conform to the scriptural standard.

NECESSITY OF DISCERNMENT

Ephesians 6:4

Introduction: Part of our responsibility as parents is to prepare our children to function properly as adults. We are raising them to leave home and take their place in society. It is not enough to make sure that they will be good citizens. It is not enough to make sure that they will be honest and hard working. We are to train them to know the difference between right and wrong. They must learn how to make spiritual decisions.

I. THE DEFINITION OF DISCERNMENT

Ephesians 6:4b commands us to bring up our children in “...*the nurture and admonition of the Lord*”. What exactly does that mean? Let’s look at some definitions.

Nurture: “*paideia*” *pahee-di’-ah*

- 1) the whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment) It also includes the training and care of the body
- 2) whatever in adults also cultivates the soul, esp. by correcting mistakes and curbing passions.
 - 2a) instruction which aims at increasing virtue
 - 2b) chastisement, chastening, (of the evils with which God visits men for their amendment)

Admonition: “*nouthesia*” *noo-thes-ee’-ah* - 1) admonition, exhortation

Root Word: “*nous*” *nooce*

- 1) the mind, comprising alike the faculties of perceiving and understanding and those of feeling, judging, determining
 - 1a) the intellectual faculty, the understanding
 - 1b) reason in the narrower sense, as the capacity for spiritual truth, the higher powers of the soul, the faculty of perceiving divine things, of recognizing goodness and of hating evil
 - 1c) the power of considering and judging soberly, calmly and impartially
- 2) a particular mode of thinking and judging, i.e thoughts, feelings, purposes, desires (Definitions from the Online Bible Greek Lexicon)

You will notice that in the definitions we find two important themes;

- 1 - Training, education and instruction which is reinforced by chastening, if necessary.
- 2 - Thinking properly, specifically with regard to making right decisions.

In other words, we are to train our children to have spiritual discernment, to see things from a spiritual perspective.

When Goliath came against the Israelites, the soldiers all thought, “He’s so big we can never kill him.” David looked at the same giant and thought, “He’s so big I can’t miss.”

Spiritual viewpoint is extremely important.

II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISCERNMENT I Corinthians 2:9-16

We live in a day when people do their own thing. They have little concern for what the Word of God says, pay little attention to what the preacher says, and often reject even the feelings of discomfort that they experience when they choose to step beyond certain boundaries that they had previously observed. They often defend their actions by saying that they see nothing wrong with what they are doing. Their problem is not so much a rebellious attitude as it is a lack of discernment. We often make a serious mistake when we attack an individual rather than trying to teach them. Character building requires more than just demanding that our children do what we say, we must teach them how to determine for themselves what is right and wrong. How can we help them develop discernment?

Notice several important truths in this passage

1. God has prepared some wonderful “things” for his children. - Verse 9
Some would insist that these “things” are heavenly in nature, and will not be enjoyed until we are in the presence of the Savior. However, the context makes it clear that these things are available now to the Christian who loves God.
2. These “things” are revealed to a Christian by God’s spirit. V. 10
3. These “things” are available *exclusively* through the Spirit of God. V. 11
4. These “things” are only available to the child of God, and only by spiritual discernment. V. 14-15
The word translated “discerned” in verse 14 is “anakrino” *an-ak-ree’-no*. “The word means a sifting process to get at the truth by investigation as of a judge.” (Robertson’s NT Word Pictures)

A. Three Sorts of Individuals

1. The Condemned Man - I Corinthians 2:14
 - a. His Destination - Hell
 - b. His Desire - Satisfy his senses
 - c. His Disposition - Ignorant of the truth
- 2.. The Carnal Man I Corinthians 3:1-3
 - a. His Destination - Heaven
 - b. His Desire - Satisfy his senses
 - c. His Disposition - Ignorant of the truth
3. The Consecrated Man - I Corinthians 2:15
 - a. His Destination - Heaven
 - b. His Desire - Serve his Savior
 - c. His Disposition - Informed of the truth

B. Three Spheres of Influence

1. A Selfish Influence I Corinthians 2:11 - “*spirit of man*”
This is the natural man. All men are born with it. It is an unregenerate influence that would lead us to ignore spiritual truth.
2. A Secular Influence - I Corinthians 2:12 - “*spirit of the world*”
The word world is “kosmos” *kos’-mos* from the Greek meaning this world system. It is the same word that is used in I Corinthians 2:6 referring to the “*wisdom of this world*” and the “*princes of this*

world". This sphere of influence would include our educational system as well as our entertainment industry. While all is not bad, their primary goal is not to help a child of God spiritually.

3. A Spiritual Influence - I Corinthians 2:12 - "*spirit of God*"

C. Three Stages of Interaction

There is a constant interaction taking place between the individuals listed above and the influences listed above. How each individual reacts to the influences he encounters determines his level of spiritual discernment. Let us consider the reaction of each of these individuals.

1. The Condemned man - He;
 - a. Receives the selfish influence
 - b. Receives the secular influence
 - c. Has no means to receive the spiritual influence (he is not saved)
 - d. Result - He has no spiritual discernment.
2. The Carnal Man - He;
 - a. Receives the selfish influence
 - b. Receives the secular influence
 - c. Rejects the spiritual influence (has the capacity because he is saved, but rejects the truth)
 - d. Result - He has no spiritual discernment
3. The Consecrated Man - He;
 - a. Rejects the selfish influence
 - b. Rejects the secular influence
 - c. Receives the spiritual influence
 - d. Result - He has spiritual discernment - notice verse 15

Note: What is the source of the spiritual influence? It is not simply the opinion of a man's heart. How many times have you heard someone say, "I just don't see anything wrong with what I'm doing". They are basing their practice exclusively on their opinion, which is a very dangerous practice. Where can we find this spiritual influence? Two primary sources:

1. The Influence of the Scriptures

The Word of God is our fundamental source of wisdom. It is, or at least should be, the final authority for everything we believe and do. It holds the key to our discernment. That is why it is so vitally important that we spend time reading and studying it every day. When we neglect the Word of God, we sentence ourselves to wander and struggle as we seek to do what is right.

 - a. Private - personal study
 - b. Preaching - God definitely uses the preaching of the Word of God to influence our lives. We would be wise to give careful consideration to what we hear from the pulpit when the man of God is being faithful to the Word of God.
2. The Influence of the Spirit

The Holy Spirit lives in the heart of every believer and is constrained by His office to guide the child of God into all truth. John 16:13a "*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:*" The problem is that many Christians are not listening as He speaks. He may speak through personal Bible study and he often speaks through preaching, but a Christian has to be listening to learn the truth.

Our level of Spiritual discernment is determined by how we yield to the influences we encounter. Romans 6:16 “*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?*” The key is to make sure that we are allowing the spiritual influence to control our thinking.

III. THE DEMONSTRATION OF DISCERNMENT

It is not enough to teach our children to *think right*, we must influence them to *do right*. Neither step can be ignored. How do we accomplish this very challenging task? We are no longer dealing with the influence of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Now we are dealing with the will of the child. One of the great battles for any parent is developing the will of the child to obey what he knows is right. Discipline (covered in the next message) is a very important part of this training.

How do we demonstrate discernment? Hebrews 5:14 “*But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who **by reason of use** have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*”

Consider two things that happen when we exercise our senses to “*discern both good and evil*”.

1. Our Discernment is Manifested - Others see our testimony and are influenced for good.
2. Our Discernment is Multiplied - Our level of spiritual understanding is directly proportionate to our willingness to obey what we have learned. *Light obeyed brings more light. Conversely, light refused brings darkness.*

Conclusion: What benefits are derived from discernment?

Let me list three:

1. Discernment will Make Plain the Calling in which you are to be Laboring.
What has God called you to do? Every child of God has a specific job to fill. It is important for the sake of fulfillment and satisfaction for a Christian to be in the center of God’s will. Without discernment, it is impossible to know God’s perfect plan and purpose for your life.
2. Discernment will Make Plain the Convictions by which you are to be Living.
Christians today are having difficulty in the area of convictions. Many don’t even know what a conviction is. We have confused, in many cases, our preferences with our convictions. Convictions are non-negotiable; preferences are not. Convictions you die for. How can a child of God tell what he should or should not be involved in? What is considered worldly and what is not? Discernment is the key to pleasing God in how you dress, where you go, what you do, what you say, what you think, and every other aspect of the Christian life. We must remember that there is no segregated portion of our life that can be identified as secular. Every area of our lives is to conform to the will of God.
3. Discernment will Make Plain the Cautions of which you are to be Leary.
How many Christians have made serious mistakes that could have been avoided had they just been aware of God’s warnings. We must be sensitive to the Spirit of God who lives within us and receptive to the Word of God when reading or listening to it if we are to avoid the pitfalls that Satan is so eagerly placing in our path. It is going to be revealing, when we stand before the Lord and try to justify our actions by pleading innocence, to hear our Savior remind us of warnings that were ignored. Discernment is the key to avoiding those dangers.

Conclusion: One of the greatest responsibilities a parent has is to practice discernment in his own life, and develop discernment in the lives of his children. Nothing will provide a greater vehicle for spiritual growth and proper decision making than the capacity for spiritual discernment..

THE NECESSITY OF DISCIPLINE

Ephesians 6:1-4

Introduction: What is the goal of effective discipline? Many parents have a hard time administering discipline to their children because they have never identified their purpose and goals. Some parents approach discipline as if their only purpose is to make their child pay for their disobedience. Inflicting pain becomes the primary goal. These parents have lost sight of their purpose. We must never forget that our primary purpose is to train our children to honor and serve the Lord. Scriptural discipline is how we accomplish that goal.

The word nurture in our text comes from a Greek word which means to instruct or chasten. This word “paideia” *pahee-di'-ah* is also translated as;

- 1) Instruction - 2 Timothy 3:16 *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for **instruction** in righteousness:”*
- 2) Chastening - Hebrews 12:5 *“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the **chastening** of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:”*

I. THE PURPOSE OF DISCIPLINE

A. Its Focus - Instilling Character

We will never train our children to love and serve God unless we first lay a proper foundation. The primary focus must be on Biblical principles. Salvation is the first concern, then emphasizing the importance of a personal, conscious, daily walk with God.

B. Its Function - Influencing Conduct

A change in behavior is the *result* of a proper focus in our discipline. We make a serious mistake if we focus on conduct to the exclusion of character.

II. THE PROCESS OF DISCIPLINE

- A. Teaching - What you tell a young person to do. This has the least influence. Parents make a tragic mistake if they rely only on a “*do what I say*” approach.
- B. Training - What you require a young person to do. This is where the practice of chastening is effective.
- C. Testimony - What you show a young person to do. Very important. Your children are watching what you do.

III. THE PRACTICE OF DISCIPLINE

Five requirements for scriptural discipline:

A. It must be Controlled - You, as the parent, must be in control of;

1. Self - Be careful of emotions.
 - a. Anger - Leads to a desire for revenge or retribution, often results in excessive punishment.
 - b. Anxiety - Undue concern over the consequences.
 - c. Arrogance - Selfish Pride which demonstrates concern for personal image rather than the welfare of your child. *“How could you do this to me?”*

d. Affection - While it is certainly understandable that you would feel sympathy for your child, you cannot allow your affection for him to alter your determination to discipline him. Many parents fail in their discipline because they cannot stand to see their child suffer.

2. Situation - You are to determine circumstances surrounding the discipline.

a. What? - The manner and extent of the punishment.

b. When? - The time of the punishment. The younger the child, the more important it is that the discipline takes place quickly.

c. Where? - The place where the punishment is to occur.

Note: Never allow your child to bargain with you. When you do you reinforce a belief that there is always a way to avoid the consequences of disobedience. It's just a matter of finding out what will accomplish that goal. When they do not accept the punishment two things happen:

> Resentment grows - They are very unhappy about their "unjust" treatment.

> Rebellion grows - Their determination to disobey is reinforced.

3. Son - Many parents allow their children to intimidate them. This is especially true as the children get older. There should never be a time that you feel you have lost control of your children. Even as adults, your children should continue to honor and respect you (Though you no longer have control over their actions once they have moved out of your home). When disciplining your child, you should always be in control of the child.

a. The child should be calm during the discipline.

Crying is certainly to be expected, however, uncontrolled screaming is a sign of anger rather than anguish.

b. The child should be compliant during the discipline.

Never allow your child to run from you or hide when you are trying to discipline them.

B. It must be Consistent - Children need to know what is expected of them. Whether they are punished or not should not be determined by how a parent feels at the moment or what is going on in the parent's life. Too often parents will postpone discipline until they finish what they are doing and may on occasion neglect the discipline altogether. Doing so sends a very confusing message to a child who does not know what to expect.

1. Discipline must be consistent in its Expectations. The standards you set should be;

a. Right - They should apply to all children equally.

b. Reasonable - They should make sense *to the parent*.

c. Realistic - They should be attainable for the child.

2. Discipline must be consistent in its Examples.

Parents can have the greatest influence when disciplining their children if they set a consistent, Godly example for them to follow.

3. Discipline must be consistent in its Execution.
Offenses should have a pre-determined punishment. And each repeated offense should receive a consistent response. Beware of distractions that could keep you from being consistent.
Examples: current activity, moodiness, etc.

C. It must be Compassionate

1. Attitude - Don't act like an executioner.
2. Administration - Do demonstrate a sorrow that you have to apply the punishment.

D. It must be Conclusive - Nothing is more disheartening and discouraging to a child than to face a punishment which has no obvious end.

1. The Purpose - Know what you are trying to accomplish. What behavior are you trying to correct? Your purpose should not be to demonstrate your authority or inflict pain.
2. The Program
 - a. Method - Know what you will do.
 - b. Manner - Know how you will do it.
 - c. Measure - Know when it will end.

E. It must be Convincing - You must believe that what you are doing will work. And it should be effective at convincing your child.

Conclusion: Rearing children requires time, tenderness, and tenacity. It is not an easy thing to do. Many parents fail because they are not willing to make the sacrifice necessary for success. Some parents fail because they do not see the value of their children. Others fail because they are just too caught up in themselves.

A man came home from work late again, tired and irritated. He found his 5-year-old son waiting for him at the door. "Daddy, may I ask you a question?" The dad replied: "Yeah, sure, what is it?" "Daddy, how much money do you make an hour?" The dad got mad and said, "That's none of your business! Why do you want to know?" The little boy said, "I just want to know. Please tell me, how much do you make an hour?" The dad, wanting to sit down and relax, said, "If you must know, I make \$20 an hour." The little boy sighed and bowed his head. Looking up, he asked, "Daddy, may I borrow \$10 please?" The father flew off the handle, "If the only reason you wanted to know how much money I make is so that you can hit me up for some cash to buy some stupid toy, then you march yourself straight to your room and go to bed. You're so selfish. I work long, hard hours every day and don't have time for this." The little boy quietly went to his room and shut the door. The dad sat down and started to get even madder about the nerve of his little boy. How dare he ask questions only to get some money. After an hour or so, the man had calmed down, and started to think that maybe he was a bit hard on his boy. Maybe his son really needed the money for something important. And so, the father went up to his boy's room and opened it, "Are you asleep, son?" "No daddy. I'm awake," replied the boy. "I've been thinking, maybe I was too hard on you earlier. It's been a long day, and I took it out on you. Here's that 10 bucks you asked for." The little boy sat straight up, beaming. "Oh, thank you, daddy!" he exclaimed. Then, reaching under his pillow, he pulled out a wad of crumpled up bills. The dad, seeing that the boy already had some money, started to get angry again. The little boy slowly counted out his money, and then looked up at his dad.

The dad, now very upset, demanded to know what was going on, "Why did you want more money if you

already had some?" The little boy replied, "Because I didn't have enough, but now I do. Daddy, I have \$20 now...and I'd like to buy an hour of your time."

It is a sacrifice. It requires your time. It requires consistency. But the rewards are great.

