

# Studies on The Christian Home

A Study Guide

by

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## Introduction

I had the blessing of being raised in a home that practiced many of the biblical standards for the family that you will read about in these studies. However it was not until I went to Bible College that I was exposed to systematic teaching on the home and the rearing of children. That teaching has been crucial to my husband and me through our more than 40 years of marriage and the parenting of our two daughters – both of whom are now married and serving with their husbands in Christian ministry.

Walking into a Christian book store today, it is hard to imagine how few books there were in the early 1960's on the Christian Home. The Rev James "Buck" Hatch, an outstanding professor at Columbia Bible College, drew from the Bible what I believe to be groundbreaking courses on the relationship of husbands and wives, and parents and children. His work provides a foundation of the studies that follow.

The 1960's were years of great upheaval in society as philosophies that had been confined to academia began to be worked out in practice on the streets *and in the homes* of the western world. Christians were aghast and a number of people started writing books on the family from a Christian viewpoint. One of those was the now out of print *The Christian Home*, by Mrs. Shirley Rice. When I first prepared this series of studies her book was a great help.

In the early 1970's my husband and I were living in Perth, Western Australia where we were involved in planting new churches. The women in my Bible study were hungry for answers to the issues they were facing in rearing their children and in the conflicts they faced over the place of women suggested by the world around them as compared with the traditions they had grown up with. They needed a biblical basis for action. It was in that context that these studies were shaped.

In the 1980's we moved back to America and I found the women of the new church-plant in which we were involved, were hungry for these biblical truths, so the studies were updated with input from some of the more recent books of that time.

In the 1990's we moved to England and again the women in my Bible studies asked for such a series to be taught.

The present form of these outlines is the result of requests from younger women who wanted to use my notes to teach groups they are leading. Since they were never prepared for anyone but me to use I had to spend some time putting them in order. Although they contain many references to sources, not all quotations have been documented and I do not know where some of them came from. I can only offer my apology to anyone who finds themselves quoted here without acknowledgement.

My purpose for this series is threefold: (1) To provide an outline for teaching the course; (2) to provide notes that can be distributed in discussion groups; and, even though they are in outline format, (3) to provide information people can read for themselves. – These notes may be reproduced, so long as they are given free to the end user/student and credit is given to the author.

Barbara Cross  
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## Table of Contents

|       |  |    |
|-------|--|----|
| 1     | The Purpose of and Goal for the Home                     | 7  |
| 2     | A Guide for the Home and Hindrances to Reaching the Goal | 11 |
| 3     | The Divine Origin and Order of the Home                  | 15 |
| 4     | A Broad View of the Marriage Relationship                | 19 |
| 5     | The Responsibility of True Love                          | 23 |
| 6 & 7 | The Spectrum of Love                                     | 27 |
| 8     | The Divine Order of the Wife - Submission                | 33 |
| 9     | Becoming One Flesh                                       | 39 |
| 10    | Introduction to the Parent – Child Relationship          | 45 |
| 11    | The Blessings and Responsibilities of Parenting          | 49 |
| 12    | The Spiritual Training of our Children                   | 53 |
| 13    | The Child's Need for Love                                | 57 |
| 14    | The Child's Need for Discipline – Part One               | 61 |
| 15    | The Child's Need for Discipline – Part Two               | 67 |



# Lesson One

## The Purpose of and Goal for the Home

### 1. The Purpose of the Home

- A. Most people have an interest in the home as evidenced by the many articles in magazines about the home and relationships as well as programs on TV and radio.
- B. As we use the word “home” it stirs up many pictures in our mind. (Encourage students to share the picture that comes to their minds as they think of “home”.)  
*“That word ‘home’ always sounds like poetry to me. It rings like a peal of bells at a wedding, only more soft and sweet. It does not matter whether it means a thatched cottage or a manor house; home is home, be it ever so homely, and there’s no place like it. Show me a loving husband, a worthy wife, and good children, and nothing could take me in a year where I could see a more pleasing sight. Home is the grandest of all institution.”* (Charles Spurgeon)
- C. We know that the home is under attack by the proponents of women’s “liberation” and the permissive society. The home has been under attack for many years as evidenced by a quote from Margaret Whitlam, the wife of an Australian prime minister back in the 1970s.  
*“Margaret Whitlam believes marriage does not matter as much as it did thirty years ago. She said, ‘I was for marriage then (when married thirty years ago), but not now’.* When the children come into the picture however, she thinks marriage is a good idea, even if only to simplify the legal paperwork. But otherwise she says, *“I don’t think marriage matters. Society no longer condemns such a relationship between a man and a woman and people have more separate identities now.”*  
(Taken from New Life Magazine – February 1973)
- D. Yet, not all people agree with the idea that the home is outdated. Karl Menninger, one of the best known psychologist in the United States, has said, *“There is no adequate substitute for the home.”*
- E. Many homes fail because people see no purpose for it.
- F. This lack of purpose for the home comes partly from a belief in evolution. If there is no Creator then nothing has purpose. If the home only came about by random chance, there is no *reason* for the home, as it has been known over the centuries, to continue its existence.
- G. However, if God ordains the home, then it must be preserved. We must know its purpose and its goal to make it succeed and for it to be preserved in our culture.
- H. The home began in Genesis 2:24 and 25. *“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.”*
- I. God has created the relationships within the home to be a picture of spiritual relationships. He has also created the spiritual relationships to be a model for the relationships within our home.  
(1) The Husband and Wife... Isaiah 54:5 – Ephesians 5:25–27  
(2) The Parent and Child... Isaiah 63:16, Deuteronomy 14:1, Romans 8:14–15  
(3) The Brothers and Sisters... Proverbs 18:24, 1 Peter 2:17, Mark 3:35  
(4) The Family... Ephesians 2:19
- J. The Home has been created to be a picture of heaven. Psalm 90:1 says, *“Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations.”* (This has been translated

in some Bibles as “*Lord, you have been our home.*”) In John 14:1 we are told that Jesus is preparing a “home” for us.

**“A Christian home should be a little bit of heaven upon earth. One has truly said. ‘It should be the ground floor of heaven so that departure from this life is just going upstairs.’ (Ken Horner)**

## 2. The Goal of the Home

- A. The answer to the first question of the Westminster Shorter Catechism tells us that, “*Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.*” 1 Corinthians 10:31 states, “*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*” Both the Catechism answer and 1 Corinthians 10:31 remind us that the purpose of whatever we do should be done for the glory of God. Therefore, the home, along with everything else, was created to bring glory to God.
- B. David in Psalm 101:2 states, “*I will walk in my house with blameless heart.*”
- (1) This psalm was composed when David was taking on his responsibilities as sovereign over the kingdom.
  - (2) Though this psalm was written as he considered his responsibilities as a king he also stated what his goal was when he was out of the eyes of the world in his own home but not away from the eyes of God. He knew it was not enough to put on his religion to please or impress men.
  - (3) The fact that the king showed concern for his conduct at home while taking on the responsibility for the kingdom ties in with the fact that the Bible also holds that church leaders must rule their houses well – 1 Timothy 3:4 – 5.
- C. Note the language of the goal David is setting.
- (1) “*I will*” – Here we find a purposing and a deliberate setting of a goal. Not only is it important to set the goal but also we must keep our eyes on the goal so that we reach it.

**Illustration** – Roger Bannister many years ago beat John Landry to set a new record by running the four-minute mile. At one point John Landry was slightly ahead of Roger Bannister. However, John Landry, for a brief instant, took his eyes off the goal and Roger Banister passed him to become the new world champion.

- (2) “*Walk*” – When the Bible speaks of a “walk” it is speaking of a continued action – one that is carried on over a period of time. (See Psalm 1:1)
- (3) “*Within my house*” – This stresses his desire for his goal to be reached within his private life.
 

*“Do we sing in the choir and sin in the chamber?  
“Are we a saint abroad and a devil at home?  
“What we are at home is what we are indeed.”*

(Charles Spurgeon)
- (4) “*With a perfect heart*” –
  - (a) The “heart” is the real us – 1 Kings 8:37–40.
  - (b) God knows the heart – 1 Samuel 16:7.
  - (c) The natural heart is wicked – Jeremiah 17:9.
  - (e) God is the one who creates a new heart – Psalm 51:10.
- (5) When God spoke to Abraham in Genesis 17:1 he said, “*I am God Almighty, walk before me and be blameless.*” This was not a suggestion to Abraham, but a command. God gives that same command to us when he says in Matthew 5:48 “*Be perfect, therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect.*” The command to Abraham and the command to us does not have the idea of being without any fault (as none of us can meet that standard), but it has the idea, as one

writer defines it as “*being single-hearted, without blame, sincere, wholly devoted to the Lord and having integrity.*”

### 3. Power and Strength to reach the Goal

- A. The power to reach this goal of “walking in our home with a perfect heart” comes from our relationship with a Person.

That Person is the Almighty God. In the Old Testament He is called “*El Shaddi*” which some have translated as meaning, “*The God who is more than enough.*” The word “shaddi” comes from the Hebrew word for breast and pictures a child nursing at the breast where he gains his strength.

- B. While the power to reach this goal comes from a relationship with God, the strength for walking in our home “*with a perfect heart*” comes from acknowledging our own inability and our complete dependence on God. The Apostle Paul acknowledged his own utter weakness in 2 Corinthians 12:9 after being given “a thorn in the flesh.”

God told him, “*My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.*” Paul’s reply to that in 1 Corinthians 12:10 was to say, “*Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses so that Christ’s power may rest on me.*”

#### Summary:

The **Purpose** of the home is to be a picture of Heaven on Earth.

The **Goal** for our Home is to “walk in our house with a perfect heart”.

The **Power** for being what we should be in our home is dependence on Christ.

The **Strength** we need for “walking blameless” comes from admitting our own helplessness.



## Lesson Two

### A Guide for the Home and Hindrances to Reaching the Goal

#### Review: In our previous lesson we looked at:

- The Purpose of the Home – To be a Picture of Heaven on Earth
- The Goal of the Home – To Walk in our House with a Blameless Heart.
- The Power and Strength to reach the Goal – Dependence upon God

#### 1. The Need for a Guide

- A. When we were children we loved the stories of the prince and princess who lived “happily ever after.”
- B. Childhood fantasies are fun and have their place, but they are not so in real life.
- C. *“Seldom, if ever, do the circumstances of living together transform the two people of a marriage into an ever-loving, ever agreeable, happy pair – fairy tales, popular love songs notwithstanding.”* (Henry Brant – Christian Psychologist) Another writer reminds us, *“Marriage doesn’t change a person’s character. If there are character weaknesses in either the husband or the wife, marriage will only reveal and accentuate them. A husband or wife who hopes to change his or her spouse after the honeymoon is destined for disappointment.”* (Warren Wiersbe)
- D. Each one of us has different situations and different problems, but we all need help as to how we should manage our home.
- E. In order to reach any type of goal one needs a guide or manual.
  - (1) To win a football game one needs to know and follow the rules.
  - (2) To make a gourmet dish one needs to follow the recipe for correct ingredients and instructions.
  - (3) To plan a trip to a certain destination one needs to have an accurate guide of some kind.
- F. There can be all kinds of disasters (great or small) from not using and following a guide. (Give illustrations of this or ask others to share illustrations of failure to use and follow a guide.)

#### 2. Choosing the Guide

- A. If you asked the average person on the street what their guide or manual for running their home they probably would not be able to give a clear answer.
- B. It has been observed that there are four “guides” used for the home either consciously or unconsciously. The first three are unsuitable for the Christian home.
  - (1) “What I think”– This value system says that man’s mind and opinion is the final bar of judgment. This cannot be as the Scriptures tell us that man’s mind is marred by sin.
    - (a) Isaiah 55:8 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the Lord.”
    - (b) 1 Corinthians 3:19 “For the wisdom of the world is foolishness in God’s sight...”
    - (c) Proverbs 16:25 “There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.”

- (2) **“What has always been done”** – This guide for operating the home is often accepted unconsciously. *“We will do it this way because it is the way it has always been done and we like it”* is the attitude of many. Scripture also contradicts this value system. Jesus criticized those who based their actions on tradition by saying, *“You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions.”* (Mark 7:9)
- (3) **“This seems to work”** – This value system is simply based on the idea that *“If it works we will use it.”* This cannot be defended from Scripture as some things “work” for a time, but the end result can be disaster.
- (4) **“This is what the Bible says”** – This value system as a guide for the home is based on the fact that God has created the family unit and has given us his laws in his Word for running it.
  - (a) 2 Timothy 3:16–17 sets out the principle that all Scripture is profitable for all of life. This would include how the home is to be operated.
  - (b) The Bible does not answer all our questions about the running of the home in exhaustive lists, but it sets out the basic principles.
  - (c) We are to bring our questions and our problems to the principles in Scripture and then pray for God to help us to apply those principles.
  - (d) We must beware the temptation when looking at the principles of Scripture in feeling like the ideals are too high and that we cannot attain them. This leads to discouragement when we can’t obtain our goals perfectly.
  - (e) We are to be both idealistic and realistic in looking at the demands of Scripture. An illustration of this is found in 1 John 2:1. *“My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin, but if anybody does sin, we have One who speaks to the Father in our defense – Jesus Christ.”* John sets before his readers the ideal of being sinless, but he also sets before them the realism that they will sin and will need an Advocate. We will never carry out the Scriptural principles of the home perfectly but we are to set them as our guide and our goal even though we may fail from time to time.

### 3. The Effects of refusing the Scriptures as a Guide

- A. **Women** are abandoning the obligations of the home and children. Large numbers of women are deserting their husbands and their children.
- B. **Men** are also abandoning the obligations and responsibilities of marriage while at the same time wanting the privileges of marriage. They view women, not as one *“to love and to cherish in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want, till death do us part”*, but they view women as objects to be used and discarded.
- C. **Children** are abandoning their obligations to honor and obey their parents and others in authority.

### 4. Hindrances to Following the Guide and Reaching the Goal

- A. **Ignorance** of God’s will and purposes marks many. *“In those days the word of the Lord was rare...”* (1 Samuel 3:1) This certainly describes our day and time.
  - (1) Some are completely ignorant of Biblical principles. In these days when fewer people attend church or have any contact with the Word of God this is more and more the case.
  - (2) Some cannot be bothered to learn or apply God’s Word even when they have some knowledge of it and easy access to it.
- B. **Moral Confusion** results when people no longer can distinguish between good and evil.
  - (1) Our Western society considers it normal for:
    - (a) Students to cheat at exams.
    - (b) Politicians to buy and deceive their way into power.
    - (c) Husbands and wives to be unfaithful to one another.

- (d) Entertainment to run with the gore of violence and throb with lust and passion.
  - (e) Children to disobey and defy parents.
- (2) We may express shock and horror at the above, but do our children but:
- (a) Do our children hear us condemn moral decay; yet see us absorb the rottenness presented on the TV?
  - (b) Do they hear us express shock at the cheating in schools, but see us not being completely honest in our business dealings?
  - (c) Do they see honesty in our social lives when a “white lie” saves us from the bore down the street?
  - (d) Are we careful to keep our word to them even when it hurts? (Psalm 15:4b)
  - (e) Are Sundays approached with real joy in our home or is it a day the children see us dreading?
  - (f) Do we have “roast preacher” as the main course for Sunday dinner and then wonder why our children have no interest in living out what the church teaches?

**C. Self-Indulgence**, which means indulging ourselves at the expense of God’s claims on our lives. Self-indulgence shows itself in:

- (1) Being able to watch just one more TV show, but too tired for fellowship with the Lord.

A letter in a Christian magazine published many years ago by the Billy Graham Association reflects what is still true today.

*“I have been lying awake thinking. You spoke tonight on television about the gods of the American people. You mentioned “sex” as one and right away I said, ‘Ah! That’s not my god.’ But afterward it struck me what my god really is.*

*This god of mine is television. You do not know how faithfully I worship my god. Every morning it is turned on and it stays on all day and all evening. My god is there while I fix the children’s breakfast, and while I make their lunches. The dishes usually stay unwashed and the beds unmade because I cannot leave my god to take care of them.*

*During commercials I throw in some wash. My little boy wants to talk, but I have not time. The baby cries and I resent him because I cannot leave my god. I shove a bottle in his mouth and change his diaper and go back to my worship. Through lunch I continue to watch. I send my boy out to play so I can enjoy my favorite program. The dust piles up. I may fold some wash or iron a few pieces of clothing, but I can do this while I worship.*

*The children come home to watch their afternoon cartoons. I am raising them also to worship my god. Now I do what work must be done, for at 6:30 my worship starts again. Because I don’t like to hear about the troubles and problems of others, I switch around from channel to channel.*

*The supper dishes must wait. My children want to talk, but I have no times. My husband is in the military so I write him everyday. What else can I do? At least he’s not here to interfere with my worship time.*

*On Sunday I go to church. My daughter pouts because she wants to worship her favorite cartoons. I don’t go to prayer meeting on Wednesday because my favorite show is on. I have no time to write to my parents or my husband’s mother or my grandmother. Bad schools, pollution, politics? I can’t be bothered!*

*If you had asked me before tonight whether I obeyed the commandment, ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before me,’ I would have said that I did. Now I know better. My children know more TV programs than Bible stories.*

*Will I be saved when I get to heaven because I went forward at the age of 16 and said I believed Jesus to be the Son of God? Or will God say, ‘Depart from me, I never knew you. You were too busy with your god to worship me or to live as I commanded. You would not be happy in heave, as there are no TV sets here’”*

- (2) Weeping tears over the plight of the heroine on the soap opera or the latest novel, but being unable to weep or spend time praying for the lost in the world.

- (3) Letting the Sunday School teacher be responsible for the Christian training of my children because family devotions take too much effort.
- (4) Some think that being “non-worldly” is composed of “*I don’t drink and I don’t chew and I don’t have any friends that do.*” John Wesley had a much better definition for “worldliness”. He said, “*Worldliness is anything that cools my love for the Lord Jesus*”. A home saturated with self-indulgence and self-love is a complete opposite to a picture of heaven.
4. **Materialism.** Some misquote the Scripture by saying “money is the root of all evil”. But the verse actually tells us that it is “*the love of money*” that is the root of all kinds of evil. (1 Timothy 6:10)

Some can be proud of not being “working mothers” and therefore think they are not “materialistic” just because they do not work outside of the home. However, it is possible to be “materialistic” as a “stay at home mom” when we sit in our home and are dissatisfied with what we have.

What is the answer to an attitude of materialism? The answer is to have faith that God will provide what we need through honest labor. The result of that will be contentment. Philippians 4:11 states the attitude that we all need to develop, “*I have learned to be content, whatever the circumstances.*” Proverbs 30:7–8 gives us the balance in our attitude toward material things. “*Two things I ask of you, O Lord; do not refuse me before I die. Keep falsehood and lies far from me: **give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread.** Otherwise I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the Lord?’ Or I may become poor and steal and so dishonor the name of my God.*”

God has different purposes for each one of us and therefore gives us different amounts of material possessions. Because of this we are to consider our own attitude to material things. Our attitude should be that of the Psalmist in Psalms 16:5–6, “*Lord, You have assigned me my portion and my cup; you have made my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Surely I have a delightful inheritance.*”

### Summary:

We have seen our **Purpose for the Home** – To be a small picture of Heaven.

We have set our **Goal for the Home** – To bring glory to God by “walking in our house with a blameless heart.”

We have chosen the **Guide for our Home** – not “What I think”, not “What has always been done”, not “This seems to work”, but “This is what the Bible says” – using the principles of the Word of God

We have observed the **Hindrances to Using the Guide and Reaching our Goal**, which are ignorance, moral confusion, self-indulgence and materialism.

## Lesson Three

### The Divine Origin and Order of the Home

**Review: In our previous lesson we looked at:**

- The Guide for our Home – The Word of God
- The Hindrances to Using our Guide and Reaching our Goal
  - Ignorance
  - Moral Confusion
  - Self-Indulgence
  - Materialism

#### 1. The Divine Origin of the Home – Genesis 2:18–25

We have seen before that we do not accept the evolutionary belief that the home is a product of chance and therefore has no permanence or meaning. We firmly believe that the home is a creation of God and has lasting meaning and purpose. We find the creation of the home and family in Genesis 2:18–25

- A. Man was created with the need for companionship. Genesis 2:18 *“It is not good for man to be alone.”*

Animals and angels were not enough to meet Adam’s need. Psalm 68:6 tells us *“God sets the lonely in families.”* Man was created to be a social being. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 says, *“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands I not quickly broken.”* Matthew Henry reminds us *“Perfect solitude would turn paradise into a desert and a palace into a dungeon.”*

- B. Marriage fulfils the need for companionship. Genesis 2:18 *“I will make a helper for him.”*

“Helper” has the idea of completion. Matthew Henry expresses it so beautifully when he writes, *“The woman was made out of the rib of the side of Adam – not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected by him and near his heart to be loved by him.”*

- C. The Creation of the family was completely directed by God. Genesis 2:21-22 *“So God caused the man to fall sleep...then the Lord God made a woman from the rib...”*

Adam was asleep when Eve was created so he was in no way involved in the creation of his helper. Adam fell into a sleep knowing that God would provide. Marriage is a divine institution – not a man-made creation which happened by chance in the evolutionary process.

- D. The Marriage Bond is the strongest of all ties. Genesis 2:24 *“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”*

“Momism” is popular in many countries – the belief that the parent/ child relationship is the strongest of all relationships. Because God has ordained the marriage tie to be the strongest of all ties we must make this the primary relationship in our lives. It will adversely affect our marriage if we are still clinging to parents or if we are clinging in a wrong way to our children. Mother-in-law jokes reveal some of the problems that are caused by a lack of recognition of the importance of the marriage ties. One of the most important gifts to give to our children is a strong union between their parents.

- E. Genesis 2:24 eliminates the idea of polygamy. Genesis 2:24 *“They will become one flesh.”*

“One flesh” eliminates polygamy in a group setting or polygamy that comes from one marriage following another because of divorce. Because marriage is a picture of the union between the Church and Jesus Christ a polygamous union destroys this biblical picture.

- F. Marriage was created in the period of Innocence. Genesis 2:24 *“The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.”*

Genesis 1:32 tells us, *“God saw all that he had made and it was very good.”* Hebrews 13:4 also tells us, *“Marriage should be honored by all...”* Failing to understand the holiness and honorable estate of marriage can lead to two dangers:

(1) **Monasticism** – This is a belief which says that to be unmarried is more spiritual than the married state. This is the view held by the Roman Catholic Church and others. It is also a danger that evangelical Christians can fall into as well. What we need to be concerned for is the matter of God’s will for each individual whether it is for marriage or for singleness.

(2) **Licentiousness** – This is the belief system held by the Mormons and the Muslims. They believe that a man can have more than one wife. This is an abuse and a misuse of God’s pattern of marriage.

### **Summary**

Ephesians 5:31-32 reminds us that the task of the Christian marriage is to represent the union between Christ and the Church. It says, *“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and 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.”*

It is important to remember that the Christian family was created by God to bring glory to him. Our own happiness and convenience are not the highest goals in marriage. Our greatest need is not happiness but holiness. This is the sad thing about the story of Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5. They tried to promote each other’s happiness in mutually agreeing to lie, but they did not promote each other’s holiness in refusing to band together in wrongdoing.

Psalms 127:1 reminds us that God is still in the business of creating and building homes for his glory. It says, *“Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.”*

## **2. The Divine Order of the Home**

The One who created the home has also created the order for the home. When we buy an appliance it will often say, *“For best results follow the manufacturer’s directions.”* It is not enough to admit that God is the originator of the home, but we must also see him as the One who has created the order for the home. When we follow his order we see a home that runs more smoothly. This is the reason why some who may not be committed Christians still have a happy home. They are basically following the “manufacturer’s instructions.”

Ken Horner has said, *“A Christian home is one in which all persons involved are properly related to the Lord, and therefore are properly related to each other.”*

- A. Being properly related to the Lord

Being “properly related to each other” is dependent on “being properly related to the Lord.” The husband and wife who are rightly related to the Lord have the essential basis for right relations to each other. Parents and children who are rightly related to the Lord have the essential basis for being rightly related to each other as well.

- B. Being “rightly related to the Lord” means having received him as Savior and Lord of our lives.

(1) We cannot accept him as Savior without accepting him as our Lord. Sometimes accepting Jesus as Lord is presented as an option. Nowhere in the Bible is this taught. Christ never dealt

with people on this basis. Also, in coming to Christ we must realize that sorrowful confession is not enough. There must be a forsaking of sin.

- (a) The Woman at the Well was told to leave her life of adultery.
  - (b) Zacchaeus was told to leave his life of cheating the taxpayers.
  - (c) The Rich Young Ruler was told to put away his lust for riches.
- (2) Mark 6:34 tells us that there is a cost involved in taking up our cross. If we as women are interested in having a truly Christian family, in a home where Christ is honored, in a home that is a heaven on earth, in walking before God with a perfect heart, there is going to be a cross and a cost.
- (3) It will cost us to turn our homes over to the Lord. It will go against our grain. It will mean throwing out cherished opinions along with cherished sins and attitudes.
- (4) Against this, however, it will cost us not to have Christ as Lord of our lives and it will cost greatly not to have him as Lord of our family.
- (5) Christ must be first to us as individuals before he is Lord of our family. He must rule us as families before he can rule our family relationships with others.

Ken Horner reminds us, **“When a home is ruled by Christ, angels might ask to stay all night and not find themselves out of their element.”**

### **Summary**

Success in marriage is not just finding the right person, but being the right person.

The Lordship of Christ in my family begins with me – in spite of my husband, in spite of my children. God does not wait to work till everything is settled and right. *“He meets us as and where we are, not as and where we ought to be.”* (Frank Sells)

We do not want to be like the preacher’s wife who was very ill. The ladies in her church offered to come and clean her house for her in order to help out. The preacher’s wife dragged herself out of her bed to clean the house before the ladies came so they wouldn’t have to see her untidy house. We do not wait for Christ to work in our family until we clean up our family life. We ask him to help us even when we are in a mess.

I do not start by straightening out my husband and my children, but I start right where it costs – with me! The question I must ask myself is, “Am I committed to having Christ as Lord of my life and Lord of my home?”



## Lesson Four

### A Broad View of the Marriage Relationship

**Review: In our previous lesson we looked at:**

- The Divine Origin of the Home
  - It was created to fulfill the need for companionship
  - It was completely directed by God
  - It eliminates the practice of polygamy
  - It was created in the period of innocence
- The Divine Order of Marriage
  - *“A Christian home is one in which all persons involved are properly related to the Lord, and therefore, are properly related to each other.”*
  - I must accept Christ as Lord as well as Savior.
  - If he is Lord of my life my attitude must be:
    - (a) My primary aim is for my home to glorify the Lord. My personal happiness is not my goal, but the growth of personal holiness for the glory of God.
    - (b) I must be willing to submit to his divine rules. This includes studying the operating manual – the Word of God.
    - (c) I must be willing to commit each relationship and detail of the home to his control.
    - (d) I must be willing for him to dig deep to see if there is *“any wicked way in me.”*

**Introduction: There are all kinds of marriages:**

1. Truly united marriages where both are seeking to please the Lord.
2. Some so-called Christian marriages where those involved are simply living in a state of truce.
3. Some so-called Christian marriages, which look good on the surface but underneath there is great bitterness, bickering and heartache.
4. Marriages where one is Christian, the other one is not. One desires to follow the Lord and the other does not have that desire.
5. Marriages that are ready to break.
6. Marriages that have completely collapsed.

#### **1. Marriage is a picture of the mystical relationship of Christ and the Church.**

A. It is a turning from one way of life to another way of life.

(1) Marriage

Someone has said, *“Marriage is the complete upheaval of the settled routine of two adults.”* The familiar ways and faces are left. It is a turning away in many cases from a life of receiving to a life of giving. (See insert at the end of the lesson on the hypothetical couple). The problems in marriage often come because (a) One partner tries to force his or her former life on the other. (b) One partner keeps looking back at the old life and longs for it.

(2) The Spiritual Counterpart

The Christian life is a turning away from one way of life to a new way of life. 2 Corinthians 5:17 tells us “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone, the new has come!*” The problems come in our Christian life when we, as in a human marriage, try to mix the old with the new life, or we look back with longing on the old life.

**B. It is a turning from all others to the one person.**

(1) Marriage

“*I, Mary, take thee, John, to be my wedded husband and I do promise and covenant, before God and these witness, to be thy loving and faithful wife, in plenty and in want, in joy and in sorrow; in sickness and in health; as long as we both shall live.*” It is a turning away from all others in the sense that I do not consider another person with whom I could have this relationship. It means that this relationship is my primary one and all others take second place. This includes parents, children and friends and workmates.

(2) The Spiritual Counterpart

There is a turning from all others as my “first love” or my “god.” “*Thou shall have no other gods before me*”...*Thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.*”

**C. It is a deliberate choice involving the will as I commit myself.**

(1) Marriage

I must count the cost as I lay myself open to the “*want*” the “*sorrow*” and the “*sickness*” in the vows that I take. Along with these negative things I also am eligible for the rich joys and fulfillments only possible within the framework of this relationship.

(2) The Spiritual Counterpart

There is also a cost to be counted in following Christ. Mark 8:34 says, “*If any one would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.*” In following Christ, I lay myself open to his correction and chastening. I also become eligible for the joy that is truly real and lasting. (See Ephesians 3:16-20)

**2. Both partners in marriage have a common standing before the Lord.**

**A. Both are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). While not like God physically they have:**

- (1) A rational nature – able to reason.
- (2) A moral nature – can know right from wrong.
- (3) A capacity for holiness.
- (4) An eternal soul.
- (5) Dominion over the earth – Genesis 1:26

**B. Both are marred by the fall.**

- (1) They are born in sin – Psalm 51:5
- (2) They go astray at birth – Psalm 58:3
- (3) They are alienated from God – Isaiah 59:2

**C. Both share in redemptive privileges.**

Man and women both share in redemptive privileges. Galatians 2:28 says “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*” (It should be noted that Christianity has a nobler concept of women than any other world religion)

**3. Both have joint privileges and responsibilities.**

**A. They are to complete each other. Genesis 2:19**

Animals were given to Adam but they did not “complete” him. Adam needed and wanted someone to complete him and God gave this to him in his union with Eve. This is why a woman must “*leave and cleave*”. I find my place as a woman at the side of man from whom I was taken at the creation.

The fact that woman was created for man is both humbling and glorifying. For the woman it is humbling to know that she was created for man, but it is her glory to know that she alone can complete man. For the man it is humbling to recognize that he is incomplete without the woman but it is his glory to know she was created for him.

**B. They are to cleave to each other with faithfulness. Proverbs 2:16–17**

- (1) They are to be one in their affections, in their goals, and in body. There is to be total commitment to being one in all areas of life. The union of one flesh symbolizes this total commitment. Physical union pictures the union of souls. This union between man and woman is a picture of the union between Christ and his Bride, the Church.” God looked at being one flesh physical and called it “very good.”
- (2) Because the physical union is a picture of the total cleaving it is a sin to indulge in the physical union out of its God appointed setting – marriage. This is why sex outside of the marriage commitment is wrong. It is taking the picture of the union of Christ and his Church and destroying that picture.
- (3) This cleaving involves a leaving – because marriage is the most intimate of human ties. We do not cease to honor parents when we enter into marriage. It may be necessary and economical in some situations to live together with our parents, but our relationship with them must not be allowed to intrude upon this sacred union.
- (4) The 7<sup>th</sup> commandment was given to protect this sacred relationship. There are two ways of committing adultery. The first way is by the physical act of sexual union. The second way is that one may commit adultery mentally by desiring another person other than the one to whom they are married. One can desire another person even in a non-physical way, but this is still mental adultery. (We must note the danger of committing mental adultery by wishing I were married to someone else other than my mate).

**C. Thomas Watson, the great 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritan, noted why unfaithfulness is so terrible.**

- (1) It is a sin against God – a violation of His law.
- (2) It is a breaking of the marriage vow.
- (3) It is thievery – stealing that which belongs to another. Even if not married they may one day belong to another.
- (4) It makes a person lower than many beasts that are often faithful to each other.
- (5) It steals a person’s good reason and sense and makes them do stupid and harmful things.
- (6) It often brings physical judgments – disease, murder and violence.
- (7) Without repentance it damns the soul. 1 Corinthians 6:9.
- (8) It destroys a person’s reputation.
- (9) It not only wrongs one’s own soul, but also tries to destroy the soul of others.
- (10) It sows discord and divides homes.

**D. How should we avoid this sin of unfaithfulness?**

- (1) Look to our eyes – make a covenant, as Job did with our eyes – Job 33:1.
- (2) Look to our lips- Psalm 141:3 “...*Keep watch over the door of my lips.*”
- (3) Watch our heart – Proverbs 4:23 “*Above all else, guard your heart!*”
- (4) Look to your attire – Do not dress in such a way as to be provocative.
- (5) Beware of evil company – 1 Corinthians 15:33 “*Bad company corrupts good character.*”
- (6) Beware of places and literature and entertainment that promotes unfaithfulness.
- (7) Beware of idleness – remember David’s idleness led to sin with Bathsheba.
- (8) Have a holy fear of God - Proverbs 16:6 “*Though fear of God a man avoids evil.*”
- (9) Take delight in the Word of God - Psalm 119:16 “*I delight in your decrees.*”
- (10) Pray against sin at its first uprising.

## ***Many years ago Henry Brant wrote about a Hypothetical Couple***

A man and a woman come from radically different backgrounds. He is from a large, rollicking family with easygoing, untidy ways and a very relaxed sort of disciplines. She is from a small family of reserved people, where sternness, neatness and discipline are the order of the day, and yet, these two have decided to spend their rest of their lives together.

They are going to share the same bed, use the same bathtub and the same tube of toothpaste. This small, neat girl who has always had her own small, neat bed and who always sleeps on her right side finds herself sharing a bed with a person twice her size who is used to fighting for the blankets with a younger brother. So he revolves like a windmill all night, winding the blankets tighter and tighter around himself. He leaves a nonchalant trail of dirty clothes behind him on his way to the shower and leaves the towel in a wet heap on the bathroom floor. He squeezes the toothpaste from the middle too. He wants pancakes, sausage, cereal, fruit and coffee for breakfast. He wakes up wide awake with a zest for living. She has never eaten anything but toast, tea and orange juice because she can't even focus her eyes until 9:00 AM.

Well, it won't be just a nice visit and then he'll home. **THIS IS FOR KEEPS!** They have to live together. It isn't so bad at first because she has read that people get married and live happily ever after. She is riding on a pink cloud and she carries on that happy little illusion for a while.

When you were first married did you wait until your husband was asleep then sneak out of bed to put your hair up in rollers and sleep with one eye open the rest of the night so you could wake up before he did, get it down and combed, put on your make-up and be laying down looking like a fresh rose when he woke up? Well, she does and she freezes all night when he snatches the blankets. She picks up dirty clothes and the wet towels. But all this can be exhausting, so one morning she oversleeps. He wakes up first and the jig is up. There she is, rollers and all and no make-up. The look on his face is interesting to see. She tries to focus her eyes through sleepy eyelashes. *"Why does he look at me like that?"* Then she remembers and claps a hand to her rollers. Now come the first stirrings of resentments she has ever felt against this noble creature lying on his back with his mouth open and snoring. *"Does he think he looks so wonderful?"* Suddenly she realized he has some faults. He grabs the blankets; he leaves his clothes on the floor, he never picks up a towel; he squeezes the toothpaste from the middle. Furthermore, he eats an uncivilized breakfast, and it is grossly unfair to expect her to cook it!

The seeds of disillusionment and resentment are sown and there is emotions immaturity on the part of each of them. This crucial period of adjustment begins to reflect itself in hurt and irritation over the slightest things. Soon this happy extroverted husband begins to wonder, *"Where is the lovely girl I married? She looks so grim much of the time. Look at her over there cleaning the ring out the bathtub. She looks unhappy!"* And she, bewildered little introvert, is thinking, *"Look at him. Doesn't he see I'm working my fingers to the bone cleaning up after him? He can't love me. I've married a brute!"*

# LESSON FIVE

## The Responsibility of True Love

### 1. The Command to Mutual Love

There is a common responsibility of both partners to love one another.

- A. Wives are to love their husbands. Titus 2:4
- B. Husbands are to love their wives. Colossians 3:19

### 2. The Need for Love

- A. Each person wants and needs to be loved and cherished. This is true from the smallest person to the biggest – from the youngest to the oldest.
- B. We all normally search for love through marriage and through children. These are the proper sources for love.
- C. If people do not find love within these God-ordained relationships they often resort to improper relationships such as adultery, homosexuality and pedophilia.
- D. It is very difficult to give love if we have never received love (though it can be learned with God's grace and help). This is why it is important for children to receive the love that they need from their parents so they will know how to love in other proper relationships.

### 3. Love – The World's Definition

- A. Sometimes love is equaled simply to physical attraction.
- B. Romantic love or infatuation is often assumed to be true lasting love.

### 4. Ideas about Romantic Love (The reader or teacher can illustrate these ideas from known popular songs and movies.)

- A. "It must be love if it is made on a free choice." *"I cannot love this person if he/she has been chosen for me."* (This is a western civilization idea that is not found in the Bible. For example Isaac had a wife chosen for him at 37 years of age). A choice of who you are to love is not uncommon in many Eastern civilizations.
- B. "The inspiration of this love will work miracles." "I can do anything if I love you and you love me."
- C. "I am absolutely dependent upon this person."
- D. "My need to be love is more important than the other person's need for love."
- E. "It is important to treat each other like spoiled children."
- F. Christians can be so caught up in romantic love that they say, "It is so wonderful that it must be of the Lord." (Sometimes the "love" they describe may be outside of God's design such as a romance or a marriage between a Christian and a non Christian)

## 5. The Make-up of Romantic Love

### A. It is a combination of:

- (1) Physical attraction
- (2) Overpowering emotions
- (3) A compelling need

### B. The Place of Romantic Love

- (1) We should not condemn the place of romantic Love.
- (2) It is like icing on a cake but we cannot maintain a long-term relationship on it.
- (3) Romantic Love is like the “starter button” on a car. It gets the car going but is not the thing that keeps it going. True lasting love must “run” on something more enduring than romantic Love.
- (4) It is an immature stage of love. (Immaturity in a baby is cute but not in an adult.)

### C. Romantic Love is not permanent.

- (1) After a period of time it “runs out of steam.”
- (2) When problems develop, as they will, romantic love goes “out the window.”

### D. After a period of Romantic Love we discover:

- (1) That person does not inspire me to work miracles.
- (2) It is not workable or emotionally healthy to be absolutely dependent upon that person.
- (3) My desire to be loved above all must give way to the need to love the other person even at times when they are very unlovable.

### E. Conclusion – Romantic Love is not the proper and solid foundation to marriage.

- (1) Romantic love may be that which leads people to be attracted to each other and consider marriage, but it is not that which keeps them married.
- (2) If Romantic love were the foundation of marriage then people in western civilizations should have the most stable marriages in the world. Such is not the case.

## 6. Love – the Biblical Definition

- A. The world says that Romantic Love is the basis for marriage.
- B. The world says that love “just is” or that it “just happens.” It says that “either you have it or you don’t and there is not much you can do about it. Couples who discover that, “*We just don’t love each other anymore*” then may conclude, if they believe the world’s view of love, that there is no basis for their marriage.
- C. While real love should be part of marriage, marriage does not depend on love for its existence. There may be times when love is not “felt” or one partner does not really love the other partner but the marriage needs to be maintained.
- D. Marriage gives love a setting for stability and permanence where it can grow to maturity unlike the popular notion of “living together” where one can simply walk out of a relationship.
- E. Marriage forces a person to live out times of difficulty in which love is tested and can be strengthened.
- F. The world’s view of love should never tyrannize or threaten a marriage to be dissolved. “Couples who come to the conclusion that, “*We just don’t love each other any more*” should be told quite simply, “*Well, start learning!*”
- G. To love in marriage is commanded by God.

- H. Titus 2:4 says that love can be learned. “ ... *“Train the younger women to love their husbands...”* This is a completely opposite idea to romantic love, which says love will simply “overcome us.”
- I. To love properly is a labor. Someone has said, *“Falling in love is not a labor, but there is hard work, sweat and many tears to building a happy marriage.”*
- J. Love is not simply based on feelings. Feelings are to be controlled and are not to control us!
- K. Love is more subject to the will than we can imagine. We can help cultivate it and develop it when we set our minds to it. We are not “the hopeless pawn of love” as the world would say through songs, television shows, movies and novels.
- L. Love does not grow on immediate feelings. It grows on mutual esteem, and recognition of our duty to God and our mate and the responsibilities we hold in the marriage.

## 7. The Source of True Love

- A. I cannot find the source of true love in myself.
- B. The source of true love is God – I John 4:11 *“...If we love each other, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.”*
- C. This love that comes from God is not love only for spiritual relationships but love for all relationships that God has created.
- D. A description of God’s love is in I John 4:10. *“This is love – not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”* God loved us when there was nothing “loveable” in us. This is the kind of love we must have so that when the hard times come we can still love when there is nothing loveable in the other person.
- E. Our love must be a copy of the kind of love that God has for us – a sacrificial love.



# Lessons Six and Seven

## The Spectrum of Love

### Review - Lesson Five – The Responsibility of Love

- The Command to Love
- The Need for Love
- The World's View of Love
- The Biblical View of Love
- The Source of Love

### Introduction – The Spectrum of Love

Galatians 5:22 and 23 *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness and self-control.”* Against such there is no law.” (KJV) Many Bible commentators believe that the primary Fruit of the Spirit is love and from this “fruit” flows all the other fruit. Donald G. Barnhouse has put it this way:

**“Joy is love singing.  
Peace is love resting.  
Longsuffering is love enduring.  
Gentleness is love’s touch.  
Goodness is love’s character  
Faithfulness is love’s habit.  
Meekness is love’s self-forgetfulness.  
Self-control is love holding the reins.”**

#### 1. What is this love and how does it apply in my relationships within my family?

*“Christian love is love, to its fullest extent, exercised toward God and my fellow creatures.”*

- A. The Holy Spirit has given us Christian love. *“God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.”* Romans 5:5
- B. It is this same work of the Holy Spirit that works both genuine love to God and also to my fellow man. *Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child s well.”* I John 5:1
- C. Both God and my fellow man are loved from the same motive.
- (1) I love God for who he is.
  - (2) I love my fellow man because the/she is made in the image of God. *“In the image of God has God made man.”* Genesis 9:6 This image may be terrible marred and scarred but I must love that person in spite of that).
- D. This Christian love is to be evidenced in my actions.
- (1) My love to God is shown in my actions or my “deeds.” *“As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.”* James 2:26
  - (2) My love for other people is also shown in my actions *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.”* 1 John 3:16 (Discuss what it means to “lay down one’s life”).

## 2. Christian love is the greatest of all – a study of 1 Corinthians 13

1 Corinthians 13:1-2 shows that the Fruits of the Spirit are greater than the Gifts of the Spirit. The setting of chapter 13 of 1 Corinthians – the “Love Chapter – is sandwiched in between chapters which are a discussion on the Gifts of the Spirit.

### A. Why are the Fruit of the Spirit more “excellent” than the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit?

- (1) When God works the Fruit of the Spirit (love) in a person’s heart it changes his/her nature while extraordinary gifts of the Spirit do not change one’s nature.
- (2) When God works the Fruit of the Spirit (love) in us we are more conformed to the image of Christ. This is not necessarily so with the experience of extraordinary gifts.
- (3) The Fruit of the Spirit is only worked in God’s children while extraordinary gifts may be given to non-Christians. Note the examples of this in Scripture:
  - (a) Balaam – Numbers 23 and 24
  - (b) Saul – 1 Samuel 10:9-10
  - (c) Judas – Matthew 10:1 (All 12 disciples were given power to drive out evil spirits.)
- (4) Divine love (the primary Fruit of the Spirit) will last through eternity but extraordinary gifts of the Spirit will pass away. 1 Corinthians 13:8

## 3. Christian love is more excellent than great actions. (I Cor. 13:3)

### A. The greatest performance is vain without love. “*Though I give all I possess to the poor ... but have not love I gain nothing.*”

- (1) Paul tells us in Philippians all he did that seemed “good” before he became a Christian but he now counted it as worthless. (Philippians 3:4-9)
- (2) Ungodly people can do great and good things. (Ask students to give illustrations of this)
- (3) People can do good things from fear of hell, from pride, from desire for reputation and for honor but with no desire to please God or bring him glory.

### B. The greatest suffering is vain without love. “*Though I surrender my body to the flames but have not love I gain nothing.*”

- (1) The Pharisees went through great penances.
- (2) Modern day terrorists kill themselves for their religion but have not love.
- (3) We can each do very sacrificial deeds for others and yet have no love for them.
- (4) God does not consider actions of the body separate from the motives of the heart. God does not stand in need of anything we do. Hence, the only thing he desires is the love that motivates our actions.

## 4. A Description of the Love – I Cor. 13:4-8

### A. “Love is Patient”

- (1) Love causes us to meekly bear injuries received from others. True Christian love will cause us to bear injuries without revenge or retaliation. (This does not mean that we do not lovingly reprove wrongdoing. (Application – Discuss where loving reproof may be necessary)
- (2) True patience means bearing injury without losing quietness or rest of the soul.
- (3) Christian patience means that we will often suffer long for the sake of peace rather than demand our rights.
- (4) Why are we to be patient?
  - (a) God is patient with us.
  - (b) Patience comes from humbly remembering how little I am.

- (5) I can have patience or “longsuffering” because I remember that as a child of God my life is hid with Christ and ultimately nothing can hurt me.
- (6) **Application** – What does it mean in my marriage to be patient toward my mate and children?

B. “Love is Kind”

- (1) We are to be kind by setting good examples, edifying, encouraging and comforting others.
- (2) We show kindness by giving to others, doing for them, and by suffering with them (bearing their burdens with them. (Galatians 6:2)
- (3) To whom should we show kindness?
  - a. To the good and the bad (just as God sends his rain on the just and the unjust).
  - b. To the thankful and the unthankful.
- (4) How are we to show kindness?
  - a. We are to show it freely. *“Freely you have received, freely give.”* Matthew 10:8
  - b. We are to show it cheerfully and heartily. *Do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted towards your poor brother, rather be open handed and freely lend him whatever he needs.”* Deut. 15:8
- (5) **Application** – In my love for my mate is my kindness evidenced by looking for ways of meeting his/her needs and making him/her comfortable? What are some ways that I can work to show greater kindness to my mate?

C. Love rejoices in the prosperity and good of others. “It does not envy.”

- (1) Envy is a spirit of dissatisfaction with and opposition to the happiness of others as compared with myself.
- (2) Christian love fights the feelings and the actions of envy.  
Christian love causes me to rejoice in the good of others. *“Rejoice with those who rejoice.”* Romans 12:15
- (3) Pride is the root of envy. Because of pride I long to be superior to others.
- (4) **APPLICATION** – Are there times when I actually envy my mate and am unable to rejoice at the good he/she is experiencing? How can I actively fight these feelings of dissatisfaction and begin to rejoice in their good?

D. Love is humble “It does not boast. It is not proud”

- (1) “Love is not anxious to impress others. It is never boastful. Love does not have elevated ideas of its own importance. Love is not conceited. Love not only keeps me from envying others but also keeps me from glorifying myself.”
- (2) Humility comes when:
  - (a) I see my smallness in comparison to God’s greatness.
  - (b) I see my sinfulness as compared to God’s holiness.
  - (c) I see my own unimportance in comparison to many of my fellow men.
- (3) Humility makes me:
  - (a) Acknowledge my smallness and unworthiness before God.
  - (b) Distrustful of myself.
  - (c) Dependent wholly upon God.
- (4) Humility prevents me from:
  - (a) The wrong kind of anxious behavior - I have no need to impress.
  - (b) Making a show of the benefits that God has given to me.
  - (c) Treating others with scorn and contempt.
  - (d) Having a willful stubborn behavior, which always insists on having my own way.
  - (e) Having a self-justifying behavior so that I am willing to accept reproof.

- (5) Lack of humility in the home makes me think that my way of doing things is better than that of my mate. It makes me think I am more spiritual than my mate. It makes me want to push my will on him/her.
- (6) **Application** – What do I see in my actions that show I need to have a greater spirit of humility in my home?
- E. Love is Courteous –“It is not rude”
- Questions to ask myself:
- (1) Am I as courteous to my mate as I was when we first met?
- (2) Do I speak up and give my opinion before he/she can open his/her mouth?
- (3) When he/she has faults do I speak in love to cover them up before others?
- (4) Do I skillfully help to complete him/her before others?
- (5) Do I in private treat him/her in such a way as to give him/her confidence and encouragement?
- (6) “A person possessed of Christ’s love will always show TACT – Touching As Christ Touches.”
- (7) **Application** – What are those areas where I lack courtesy in my home and what can I do to be more careful to "Touch as Christ Touches"?
- F. Love is Unselfish “It is not Self-Seeking”
- (1) “Love does not demand its own way. It does not pursue selfish advantages nor insist upon its rights. Love is the opposite of a selfish spirit, but not the opposite of a proper self-concern. It is not a thing contrary to Christianity that a man should look out for his own happiness. The thing that takes place when a person is converted is that he/she exchanges sinful objects for righteous objects and ways of happiness.”
- (2) We sin by loving self:
- a. Out of proportion to others.
- b. By confining our desire for happiness to ourselves and not for the good of all.
- (3) Lack of selfishness means we:
- (a) Seek to please and glorify God
- (b) Seek the good of fellow creatures (Philippians 2:4)
- (c) Seek other’s spiritual good, prosperity and their happiness.
- (4) **Application** – Do I see, as I look in my own heart, a greater desire for my own happiness than for the happiness of others, especially those that surround me? Do I work to promote my own happiness at the expense of others?
- G. Love is Good-tempered “It is not easily angered.”
- (1) Love is not easily provoked. Love is not touchy. It is not irritable, fretful or resentful.
- (2) There is such a thing as “righteous anger” which is the opposite of “sinful anger.”
- Anger is wrong when it desires ill will to another or desires revenge. (It is important to note in this age when there is little discipline in the home that there is a proper kind of anger toward a child’s ill behavior when one desires and is working for the good of that child.) (Consider and discuss how this “righteous anger” should and should not be demonstrated.)
- (3) Anger is wrong when it is without cause.
- a. Anger is wrong when something is no fault of that person.
- b. Anger is wrong when the occasion is small or trivial and should be overlooked.
- c. Anger is wrong when it is immoderate in degree
- d. Anger is wrong when it is immoderate in its continuance.
- (4) The basic cause of anger, as in most sins, is that of pride.
- (5) **Application** – Do I find myself “flying off the handle” at small annoyances? Do I take out my anger on those in my household when the cause of my anger has nothing to do with them?

H. Love does not hold grudges. “It keeps no record of wrong-doing.”

- (1) “Love does not keep account of evil. It does not hold grudges and will hardly ever notice when others do it wrong. It does not count up past wrongs. Love is the opposite of a censorious spirit.”
- (2) A judgmental attitude shows itself in a disposition to think the worst of others.
- (3) A judgmental attitude shows itself in overlooking good qualities and magnifying bad qualities.
- (4) A judgmental attitude shows itself in judging good actions to come from bad motives.
- (5) Like most sins a judgmental attitude comes from pride and building myself up by putting down the other person.
- (6) **Application** – Am I willing to forgive past wrongs? Am I willing to believe the best about people? Am I willing to put grudges at the foot of the cross?

I. Love Rejoices in Good “Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.”

- (1) “Love does not gloat over the wickedness of others. It is never glad when others do wrong. It is glad with all good people when truth and goodness win out. Love means I want righteousness in the lives of others as well as in my own life.”
- (2) **Application** – Am I glad when others fail so that I can look better than they appear to be? Am I glad when others fall into the same kind of sins that are my besetting sins so I am glad that they are at my level? Am I glad when I have told someone the best way to do something and they have not done it, then I am proved right?

J. Love perseveres in protecting another, trusting another and hoping for the best in another. “ It always protects always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

- (1) Because love protects I do not do those things that would hurt another person’s reputation. I keep quiet about their faults unless in very difficult circumstances I must expose their faults to help them or to protect my family, others or me from harm. (**Discuss in what circumstances this may occur**).
- (2) Because love trusts I give the other person the benefit of the doubt and I work to believe the best about the other person.
- (3) Because love hopes I look for a brighter hour because of what the grace of God can do by working in one’s heart. This is the opposite of unreasonable optimism but it is a refusal to take failure as final.
- (4) Because love perseveres I keep my eyes on Jesus as the one who gives me the strength to “keep on keeping on.” It is to be compared to a soldier being steadfast in a battle situation.
- (5) **Application** – Am I care not to gossip in a hurtful way about my mate? Do I give my mate the benefit of a doubt when there are difficult things to overcome? Have I easily given up on my relationship with my mate or children or in other relationships without being willing to trust that God can work in their hearts?

Note – A great deal of this material has been drawn from two sources. The first is the great little book by Jonathan Edwards (1703 to 1758) who has been called “the greatest philosopher-theologian yet to grace the American scene.” The book was originally titled CHARITY AND ITS FRUITS but was republished in the 1960s under the title CHRISTIAN LOVE. A careful study of this book is recommended.

Other material was drawn from a book by Shirley Rice simply called THE CHRISTIAN HOME which is no longer in print. This book was written and published in 1965 and came out of her teaching of a women’s group at Norfolk Tabernacle church in Norfolk, Virginia. This book was very valuable in the life of the author of this study when she was first married and was then a young mother. At that time books on the home were few in number.



# Lesson Eight

## The Divine Order of the Wife – Submission

### 1. Scriptural Commands to Submission

- A. Ephesians 5:22-24 *“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. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.”*
- B. Colossians 3:18 *“Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.”*

### 2. Negative reactions to the idea of submission

- A. It may come from a lack of knowledge, never having heard of this command.
- B. It may come from a lack of understanding of what the Biblical wifely submission is. (Many think that “submission” is the same thing as being a “doormat.”)
- C. It may come from an unwilling heart. Isaiah 53:6 *“We all, like sheep, have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way...”* (It is my responsibility to deal with “A” and “B” but I must have the help of the Holy Spirit to deal with “C”).

### 3. Examples of Submission

- A. The submission of God the Son to God the Father. Philippians 2:5-9 *“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”*
- B. The submission of the church to Christ. Ephesians 5:24 *“Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.”*

### 4. The Basis of Submission

- A. Because of Creation – Eve was made to be the helper of Adam and to be his follower. (Genesis 2:18)
- B. Because of the Fall – The entrance of sin was because the woman turned aside from God’s command and also from obedience to her husband. She was deceived but Adam was not. (1 Timothy 2:13-14) She led, when she should have followed. The blessing of being submissive to a sinless husband became the problem of being submissive to a now sinful husband. (Genesis 3:16) What was once a pleasant and blessed duty became complicated by sin. If the man had not sinned by eating the forbidden fruit and following the woman’s example he would have ruled with love and wisdom.

### 5. A Wrong View of Submission

Submission does not imply being inferior. The Greeks and the Romans, along with many other cultures believed in the inferiority of women, but true Christianity has never taught that women are inferior. Galatians 3:38 *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

## 6. The Definition of Submission

### A. What submission is not:

- (1) It is not servility.  
*“Husband, husband, cease your strife.  
 No longer, idly rave sir.  
 Though I am your wedded wife,  
 Yet, I am not your slave sir!”* (Burns)
- (2) It is not being inactive, insignificant or a doormat.
- (3) It is not sitting quietly and saying nothing or meekly saying (no matter what one may think) “Do what you think best.” False submission is when one does not offer an opinion even when one sees that the husband is heading for trouble. “Submission does not mean one remains piously silent, leaving everything in the husband’s hands.”
- (4) It does not mean that a wife must stifle her personality and be someone she is not. It actually provides a place for her creativity and individuality.
- (5) While the wife’s first responsibility is to her home it does not mean that she cannot have places of leadership and service in God’s plan for the church and in my community.

### B. What it is.

- (1) **To be submissive means to yield humble and intelligent obedience to an ordained power or authority.**
- (2) **Submission is not a matter of a mere outward form, but an inner attitude.**
  - (a) A wife can be a person of strong, even outspoken opinion, and still be submissive to her husband’s authority if deep down she respects him and is prepared for him to make and carry out the final decision.
  - (b) On the other hand, a woman can scarcely open her mouth; never questioning her husband’s decision, going along with all his plans (no matter how foolish) but underneath she still can have a heart full of sullen rebellion. **God is interested in submission of the heart.** We can be like the little boy who, when told to sit down, murmured as he sat, *“I may be sitting down on the outside, but I am standing up on the inside!”*
  - (c) **Submission means to put oneself wholly at the disposal of the person who is set over me.** Romans 6:13 illustrates this when it says, *“...Offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life...”*  
*“A wife who sees that her husband’s judgment is wrong or unwise should tell him so with all respect, but freely and honestly. The judgment, wisdom and opinion of a loving wife are some of man’s greatest assets. It saves him from many a foolish mistake and it is his privilege and responsibility to receive the wise counsel of his wife. She must tell him her thought fully, never laying aside her respect, but never concealing her honest doubts about a decision. When she has done this, then she may let the decision rest with her husband, trusting God to give him good judgment.”*  
 (Shirley Rice)
- (3) **Summary – A wife’s primary responsibility is to give of herself, her time, her energy, to her husband, her children and to her home.**

## 7. The Purpose of Submission

### A. There is the need for harmony of the home.

There is a need for an authority in any organization. This is true in government with a congress or a parliament or other type of ruling body. It is true in a church with a need for elders and deacons. It is just as true in the home with the need for a head of the home.

B. There is the need for the protection of the wife. There is the need for protection at the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual level

*“Now in his kindness toward womanhood, the Lord, fully realizing that within the family much of the care of children will rest on the wife, has been pleased not to overburden her. Hence, he has planned to place the ultimate responsibility with respect to the household upon the shoulders of her husband.”*  
(Author Unknown)

- (1) The husband should provide freedom from the emotional strain of representing the family to the community.

For example, should there be trouble with the neighbors it should be the husband who has to deal with it and protect his wife.

- (2) The husband should provide the freedom of emotional attacks from the children.

It is the husband’s duty to see that the mother receives the respect from her children that is due to her. The husband’s own courtesy and consideration will instill in his children a respect for womanhood.

- (3) The husband should protect her from spiritual attacks.

The woman in the Garden of Eden was open to deception. (1 Timothy 2:12-14) However, this does not keep the woman from making great contributions as a teacher of other women and children. Women can prophecy (“forth telling – not foretelling”) and pray publicly - Joel 2:28 and 29 and 1 Cor. 11:5. However, women are not to formulate doctrine or be in authority over men in the church. The church and the home have suffered greatly because of women taking the place of men. This means that the husband should take the responsibility to be the spiritual leader in the home. (If he will not take up that role the woman will have to take responsibility for herself and for the training of the children while still showing respect to her husband)

C. It is God’s intention in marriage that a husband should stand between his wife and the world to absorb the many physical, emotional and spiritual pressures of life.

D. Submission is not commanded because:

- (1) Paul had a grudge against women. (See the list of women Paul commends in Romans 16)  
(2) God thinks less of women.  
(3) Women are second rate in Christianity. Galatians 3:28

## 8. Incentives to Submission

A. The Husband’s Love

Proverbs 31:10-31 presents a picture of what a good wife should be – capable, ambitious, kind, wise, trustworthy and God-fearing. A husband “holding the whip” does not make her this way. It is a husband who expresses appreciation for her and to her as found in Proverbs 31:11 and 28.

Ephesians 5:25 teaches that the husband is to love his wife in a self-giving way. *“In true marriage, as in the loving obedience of a believing soul to Christ, the wife submits not because she has found a master, but because her heart has found its rest. It is a joy to serve where the heart is engaged.”*  
(Alexander McLaren)

B. Her Love for Christ – all relationships are based on our relationship to Christ.

Ephesians 5:21 stresses, “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”

Ephesians 5:22 says that wives are to submit to their husbands as to the Lord.

Ephesians 5:25 states that husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves the church.

Ephesians 6:1 says that children are to obey their parents in the Lord.

Ephesians 6:4 says that fathers are to bring up children in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:5 teaches that servants are to be obedient unto their masters, as they would obey Christ.

Ephesians 6:9 reminds us that masters are to be gentle with servants because they are servants of Christ.

- (1) Each one is to be willing to recognize the rights, needs and wishes of the other for Christ’s sake.

- (2) Christianity presents a purpose for what it asks. Colossians 3:18 is to be done in the light of Colossians 3:17.
- (3) Submission is made easier because I am to do it as a way of rendering obedience unto the Lord. This means I can be submissive to my husband even when he is unloving, impatient, weak, even unfaithful, because my submission is not ultimately to him but to Christ.
- (4) *“By a conscientious discharge of the duties we owe to our fellow creatures we obey and please God himself.”* (Matthew Henry)

## 9. The Power of Submission

- A. Read 1 Peter 3:1-6. Peter’s concern in this passage is for married women who are recently converted but have unsaved husband. In this case should a wife leave her husband and seek a more congenial atmosphere? 1 Corinthians 7:13 states the principle we are to follow – *“And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live wither, she must not divorce him.”*
- B. To be an effective witness for the Lord the wife must be in submission. All the church going and witnessing are not as effective as a loving submissive wife. Someone has said that it is not preaching and nagging but praying and living that wins the husband. If there are spiritual subjects that annoy the husband keep quiet about them. There are two things that will win him – a godly life and a loving respect for him as a husband. Galatians 6:9 is an encouragement when the process seems to be a long one.
- C. A word of warning needs to be given at this point. There is no promise of hope given to the Christian who deliberately marries an unbeliever. See 2 Corinthians 6:14.
- D. 1 Peter 3:3-4 stresses that the primary adornment of a woman is that of *“a gentle and quiet spirit.”* This does not mean that one has to look dowdy. It simply stresses that a woman’s real beauty comes from within. Vance Havner once said, *“To be all out for God you don’t have to look all in!”*

## 9. Limits in Submission

- A. Ephesians 5 24 says that we are to submit to our husbands “in everything.” However, as in all scripture we must look at the balance. That balance is given in Acts 5:29 where we are told that we must obey God rather than man. We are not to submit to something that violates the express Word of God or submit to anything that is directly sin. The line is drawn by those things listed in Galatians 5:19-21. However, this does not mean we can put aside biblical submission to an unbelieving husband on the pretext of love to God.
- B. Specific areas of difficulty in submission
  - (1) The Social life  
There may be times when we have to say in all gentleness, “I would rather not do those things or go there!” However we must beware of a false holiness, which says, “I will draw my robes of righteousness around me” and avoid all contact. We must be careful of having an attitude to sinners that says, “I am more holy than you are!” We must also beware of trying to look as much like the world when we are with them.”  
Shirley Rice reminds us, *“The answer must be in whether or not you are really dead to the things of the world and alive to God. If you are in a situation you would not choose, but are there because you are a Christian and you are inwardly in vital union with Jesus Christ, you can walk with His dignity and poise and assurance where it is necessary and not have to compromise his name.”*

- (2) The Church life
  - (a) Do not go if he forbids it or attend only the number of meetings that he will allow.
  - (b) Do not condemn him for not going to church but allow the Holy Spirit to convict him.
  - (c) Do not make a big show of going yourself.
  - (d) Don't neglect him by going to your church activities. He is your mission field.
- (3) The Devotional Life
  - (a) If he won't lead family devotions, you do it quietly and without show.
  - (b) If you cannot draw him in willingly do it alone.
  - (c) Do not parade your private devotions before him.
- (4) Discipline and handling of children

The wife has an obligation to protect the children physically emotionally, morally and spiritually. However, at the same time she is to teach her children to honor and respect their father though at times she must explain that he does not know God.
- (5) Money Matters

Be careful about taking over money matters in a non-submissive way.  
Do not try and make a non-Christian husband tithe. God does not need or want his money.  
Give what you can without it being an issue between you.

## 10. Results from the lack of Submission

- A. It is harmful to the man because is not allowed to take the place that God has ordained for him to fill.
- B. It is harmful to the wife because she does not have the protection and care that the husband should and could provide for her.
- C. It is harmful to the children as they do not develop the proper respect for their father and it sets a bad example for them to follow in their own marriages.



# Lesson Nine

## Becoming One Flesh

### Introduction

In Genesis 2:24-25 marriage is described as being “one flesh”. Becoming “one flesh” has many aspects. It involves “becoming one” spiritually, socially, emotionally and physically.

In Paul’s charge to the elders at Ephesus in Acts 20:27 he says, “*I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God.*” In the study of the Christian home it would be wrong to leave out what God has to say in the matter of becoming “one flesh” in the physical aspect. To do so would be to neglect what we need to learn from God about this subject, both for ourselves as individuals and as we influence the attitude of our children and those we teach. This study is not one of clinical facts but basic principles. Much of this material has been drawn from *SEXUAL HAPPINESS IN MARRIAGE* by Herbert. J. Miles.

### 1. Wrong ideas about sex have produced two principle perversions:

#### A. Materialism which says:

- (1) Matter was the only thing in the beginning.
- (2) Matter is made up of chemical elements.
- (3) All things, including man, are merely combinations of chemical elements.
- (4) There is no creator, no purpose, no goal, no God and no after life.
- (5) When materialism is applied to marries and sex strange ideas immerge:
  - (a) Man is essentially an animal.
  - (b) “Love” is nothing more than physical desire.
  - (c) Emotional and physical health requires sex drives to be satisfied immediately
  - (d) Marriage is only choosing a sex-partner.
  - (e) Extra-marital sex is normal.
  - (f) There is no such thing as sexual wrong as long as no one is forced to do what he or she does not want to do.
  - (g) Sex is one’s personal business and not to be regulated by society.

**Summary – Materialism is an over emphasis on the flesh and denies the spirit.**

#### B. Asceticism

- (1) This view is the other extreme of materialism and says that matter is evil and flesh is evil and only things of the spirit are good.
- (2) Because the flesh is evil a person must rigidly deny expressions of the flesh in order to reach a high state of morality and spirituality.
- (3) Some who have adopted this idea have said that even reproduction is evil.
- (4) A Christian might wrongly conclude, “*At least, this is better than materialism.*”
- (5) This is not true as this view also leads to immorality.
- (6) Ascetics also say, “*Since the flesh and body is evil it really doesn’t matter what the body does since it doesn’t touch my spirit.*”

**Summary – Those in the world might tend to materialism and those who are religious might tend to asceticism but both are wrong. We need to go to the Scriptures for a balanced view.**

### 2. The Scriptural Teaching of Sex within Marriage.

The Bible is the record of God’s revelation of Himself to man in the person of Jesus Christ. It is concerned with ideas of sin salvation, evangelism, eternal life and such. While it is not a textbook on science music,

agriculture and other important areas of life, where it does speak about these things it is true. Also the Bible is not a textbook on sex, but it does contain definite ideas on sex and how this God-created drive fits into God's total plan for life. To help us see some of these ideas presented we must look at some of the Bible passages that relate to this.

A. Genesis 1:27-28

- (1) God created man and woman as complete individuals.
- (2) On the non-physical side men and women are made in the image of God by being intelligent, rational and moral creatures.
- (3) On the physical side they possess physical bodies including sexuality and the ability to reproduce.
- (4) One of the purposes of sex is presented – that of reproduction.

B. Genesis 2:24-25

- (1) The central theme is “*shall be one flesh*”.
- (2) This refers to the bodily and spiritual union in sexual intercourse.
- (3). The emphasis is on sex as a profound personal experience of spiritual and physical pleasure between a husband and his wife. “*God created this one flesh experience to be the most intense height of physical intimacy and most profound depth of spiritual oneness between husband and wife.*”

C. Genesis 1:31

- (1) When God created animals the Bible says, “*God saw that it was good.*” (Genesis 1:25)
- (2) When God created man and woman the Bible says, “*Behold it was very good.*” This goodness includes every aspect of man and woman including their sexuality.

D. Proverbs 5:1–8

- (1) This passage gives a stern warning to young men (and all who read it) about the misuse of the sexual life.
- (2) It relates the terrible consequences that follow such a misuse.

E. Proverbs 5:15–20

- (1) A person is to meet their sexual needs in intercourse with their own husband or wife.
- (2). The Bible pictures this time together as a time of satisfaction, blessing and rejoicing together.
- (3) The wife is referred to as a “*cistern*”, a “*stream of running water*”, an “*overflowing spring*” and a “*cool fountain*”. These are all symbols – just as a person's thirst is satisfied by cool fresh water – a person's sexual thirst must be satisfied within the marriage relationship. This passage would especially speak to people in a land where water was scarce and precious. To go outside of marriage for sexual pleasure is picture as drinking at the sewers running in the city streets!
- (4) Here sex in marriage is described as a mutual pleasure between husband and wife. Procreation of children is not mentioned here. This shows that while procreation of children is an important part of sex, the pleasure and mutual love and satisfaction is also important. This refutes the idea of some who say that sex should only be for procreation.

F. 1 Corinthians 7:2–5

In this passage there are three main ideas:

- (1). Both the husband and the wife have definite sexual needs that should be met in marriage. This goes against the Victorian idea (this was not a Puritan idea) that sexual pleasure was only for men and women were simply to submit and be passive.
- (2) It is the responsibility of each to meet the other's needs.
- (3) The fact that each enjoys meeting each other's needs does not conflict with the idea of devout Christianity.

G. 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

- (1) While the sexuality is God-ordained it is to be controlled.

- (2) We are not to give into passionate lust.
- (3) Lust should not be the guide in selecting a Christian wife or husband. (This does not mean that physical desire is absent in being attracted to one another but it should not be the controlling factor in our choice of a mate).

#### H. The Song of Solomon or Song of Songs

- (1) Here are eight chapters of poetry about the love relationship between a husband and a wife.
- (2) While there are applications to Christ and His bride, which is the church, it is primarily a description of the spiritual happiness and physical joys of marriage.

#### I. Hebrews 14:6

- (1) Marriage is an honorable estate and should be recognized by all in society.
- (2) Because marriage is honorable it must be preserved by keeping the sexual relationship only within the marriage relationship.
- (3) God will bring judgment on all who violate the right use of the sexual relationship.

### 3. **A Broad Summary of Biblical Principles concerning Sex and Marriage**

#### A. The Universe and all life is a Creation of God.

- (1) All efforts to explain anything must begin with an understanding of how things began.
- (2) Christianity rests upon the simple but profound statement, “*In the beginning God created.*”
- (3) All things were created out of nothing. God spoke the world into existence. (Hebrew 11:3)
- (4) Creation was the result of an intelligent purpose. Law, order, continuity and reproduction mark this creation.
- (5) The creation not only came from God but also continues to depend on Him for its existence. (Colossians 1:17)
- (6) That God created all things affects all our beliefs about marriage and sex.

#### B. God created man and woman as individual persons composed of soul and body.

- (1) God created a person to be composed of both body and soul.
- (2) The sacredness and value of human life is shown in the fact that:
  - (a) Man was created in God’s image unlike animals or other created things.
  - (b) Christ died to redeem men and women, which shows their value to God.
  - (c) All people are worthy of respect and Christian love.
  - (d) Because all human life is sacred it should not be violated and used towards selfish ends.

#### C. Men and women have many needs involving both soul and body.

- (1) The purpose of life is to live according to the plan of God.
- (2) God has created not only the needs of men and women but also the process through which these needs are to be met.
- (3) Both the needs and the processes to meet these needs are morally good and glorify God when they are operated according to the purpose and plan of the Creator.
- (4) I Corinthians 10:31 says to “*do all things to the glory of God*”. This gives a new aspect to sex. It is not something necessary but somewhat “worldly”, but it is an occasion for glorifying God.

#### D. Marriage is a divinely created social institution.

- (1) God not only created men and women, but also he planned for them to associate in the relationship of marriage.
- (2) Genesis 2:24 says they are “*to leave and cleave*” and they are to form a new family unit.
- (3) The marriage relationship is the most basic of all relationships.

- E. The marriage relationship is a permanent relationship.
- (1) Jesus said this in Mark 10:9. *“Therefore what God has joined together let man not separate.”*
  - (2) Marriage demands a permanent “one flesh relationship” to meet in the best way the needs of husband, wife and the children.
  - (3) This is not only shown from the Bible but also from secular studies that have been done. *“Monogamy is the simplest form of family grouping. It provides efficiency in social organization and regulation and the privacy necessary for the operation of love and sympathy in the husband-wife and parent-child relationship.”*
- F. Marriage is a reproductive relationship.
- (1) Scripture directs husbands and wives to *“Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it.”* (Genesis 1:28)
  - (2) The creative plan of God is not complete until new life is born as a result of the “one flesh” union. Normal couples should not enter into the marriage relationship with the purpose of remaining childless. To do so is to be robbed of true and complete fulfillment.
  - (3) However this does not mean:
    - (a) Marriage is only for reproduction.
    - (b) One must reproduce as many children as possible.
- G. The sexual nature of men and women is spiritual, emotional, mental and physical.
- (1) Sexual relationships cannot be separated from spiritual, emotional and mental attitudes and feelings.
  - (2) Our society calls the spiritual, emotional and mental attitudes between sweethearts and married people by the name of “love”.
  - (3) To try to keep sex purely physical is impossible. Even a number of non-Christian psychiatrists warn that extra-marital sex can be very damaging emotionally to a person.
  - (4). One Christian study has said *“Sex serves as the medium through which love is expressed. The meeting of two bodies cannot of itself make love. It can only express a love that already exists.”*
  - (5). Because God created us as mind and a body unit we cannot violate the physical. James 2:26 says, *“The body without the spirit is dead.”*
- H. Sexuality is only one aspect of the total personality.
- (1) There are different parts of the body that work together as a whole.
  - (2) Just as there are different parts that make up the body the sexual aspect of human nature is only one component of the total personality. This principle is in contrast to the world in which we live which raises the sexual aspect of nature out of proportion to the whole personality.
  - (3) Recognizing the rightful place of the sexual aspect of life this means that we neither glorify sex nor rob it of its rightful place.
- I. Sexuality was designed by the Creator to be a relationship of personal pleasure between husbands and wives.
- (1) Proverbs 5 and the Song of Songs picture this pleasure.
  - (2). *“Sex in the Old Testament is clearly regarded as a valuable gift from God not only for the purpose of bringing children into the world but also for the satisfaction of one of mankind’s deepest needs and for enjoyment. Marriage is viewed as a divinely ordained way by which men and women satisfy physical and emotional needs and provide for the continuation of society.”*
  - (3) In the past many Christians have shied away from the idea that God approves of sex for pleasure between a husband and wife.
  - (4). This attitude is not Biblical but comes from asceticism.
- K. Sexuality was never planned as a means to an end but as a means to other ends.
- (1) The sexual relationship is a personal pleasure but is never an end in itself.
  - (2) It is only through self-control a person can use their sexuality to glorify God.

- (3). The Sexual relationship has a function to accomplish:
  - (a) To develop the personality.
  - (b) To improve the relationship between husband and wife within the home.
  - (c) To increase the spiritual relationships between people and God.
- L. Ultimately the basic purpose of God in sexual pleasure in marriage is to bind husband and wife together in a lifelong relationship.
  - (1) Sexual intercourse fuses husband and wife into a complete one-flesh unit.
  - (2) C.S. Lewis writes, “*Woman was created to meet the need of man and also in such a way that man would meet her need. Either without the other is incomplete like a lock and a key or a bow and a violin.*”
- M. A happy loving relationship between a husband and a wife provides the proper home environment for growing and nurturing children.
  - (1) One of the basic needs of a child is emotional. To have those emotional needs met a child must live in a happy home.
  - (2). The only adequate environment for growing children is a home where a happy husband and wife are deeply committed to each other and deeply love each other.
- N. The sacred and personal nature of sex demands modesty in social relationships and privacy in sexual relationships.

David Mace writes, “*The best, the most stable, the most satisfying kind of marriage is that in which the couple think of their intimate life together as a secluded walled garden where no one else ever comes. A private little kingdom, apart from the rush and roar of the world’s life, in which they can enjoy the full and free expression of their mutual love and be refreshed and renewed. To allow an interloper to break into that garden or a usurper to invade that kingdom would be to threaten the very hear of the marriage with grave danger and even with destruction.*”
- O. Sex destroys when it operates outside the Creator’s plan for us.
  - (1) When sex is used outside of the Creator’s plan it is sinful.
  - (2). Someone has rightly said, “*Out of sex rightly used arises some of the most profound satisfactions, most meaningful human relationships, richest beauty of which man is capable. Out of sex misused arises some of the profoundest disappointments, most tragic interpersonal relationship and the grossest ugliness known to man.*”
- P. The rightness of sexual behavior must be determined by the creative plan of God and not by current culture practices.
- Q. Because sex is a central part of life it calls for pre-marriage training and counseling.
  - (1) Normally when a person moves into a new relationship or activity of life he is given information.
  - (2) This is also true in sex. It cannot be left to those who will only give brute facts that are not given with a framework of God’s creative plan.



# Lesson Ten

## Introduction to the Parent – Child Relationship

### Review of Basic Principles of the Home

1. The Purpose of the home – The home is to be “a little bit of heaven on earth”. In the parent-child relationship it is our responsibility to provide a home that is a little preview of heaven.
2. The Pattern for the parent-child relationship – All normal human relationships have been created to be a picture or illustration of supernatural relationships.
  - A. The parent-child relationship is a picture of and is to be modeled after the parent-child relationship of God and his children. See Ephesians 3:14; Psalm 103:13; and the Lord’s Prayer. The relationship I have with my child is to be patterned on that supernatural relationship between my Heavenly Father and myself as a child of God.
  - B. The way that I deal with my child is to be based on the way that God deals with me as His child. (Briefly reflect on ways that God deals with those who belong to him)
  - C. My child’s needs on a human level are the same as the spiritual needs I have as God’s child such as love and discipline.
3. The Guide for the parent-child relationship:
  - A. It is:
    - (1) Not based on what my mind says is rational.
    - (2) Not based on “the way it has always been done.”
    - (3) Not based simply on “what will work.”
  - B. The guide for the parent-child relationship is based solely on the principles of the Word of God.

It is sometime helpful to read the child experts but at any point that the “experts” contradict the Word of God I must ignore what they say and practice the principles of the Word of God.  
(Give illustrations of advice from child experts that contradict the Word of God)

The terrible cause of the mess the world is in with the parent-child relationship is that the principles and patterns given in Scripture have too long been ignored.  
(Discuss problems that have been seen or even experienced because of this)
4. My Attitude in the parent-child relationship
  - A. The proper attitude is that of Hannah toward Samuel in 1 Samuel 1:27 and 28. *“I prayed for this child and the Lord has granted me what I asked of him. So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he shall be given over to the Lord.”*

Here we find the right reason to have children as demonstrated by Hannah. I do not have them just because I want them but I want them so I can give them back to the Lord.
  - B. The proper attitude in training a child should be that of Manoah when the angel told him that he and his wife would have a son called Samson. In Judges 13 Manoah cried out to the Lord, *“O Lord, I beg you, let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born.”* (My attitude in rearing my children is that I want God to teach me, though his Word, how to bring my children up *“in the fear and admonition of the Lord.”*)
5. My Goal in the parent-child relationship
  - A. The person interviewed in the street would give many different answers if asked what their goal for their children would be. Some would say, “to be good citizens”. Others would want them “to be well adjusted”. Still others would make their “children’s happiness” to be the chief goal. Some would even speak of the “success” as the goal for their children. (Discuss if there are their other goals that parents might have)

- B. What do we find in Scriptures as the goal we must have for our children? We find the answer to this in the early chapters of 1 Samuel.
- (1) The sons of Eli described – 1 Samuel 2:12–36
    - (a). They grew up in a religious home; their father was the high priest.
    - (b). Both of them knew the facts about the true religion; they were trained priests.
    - (c). Both were in “full-time ministry”. This might appear to be the greatest goal – to have one’s children in “fulltime ministry.”
    - (d). However, they were guilty of theft; they took meat given to the Lord.
    - (e). They were guilty of blasphemy; they took their portion before the Lord’s portion.
    - (f). They were guilty of immorality; they slept with the women of the tabernacle.  
The Bible gives a description of these two men. It says of them, “*Eli’s sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the Lord.*” Thus, the main goal for our children cannot be that of “full-time ministry.”
  - (2) Samuel, the son of Hannah, described:
    - (a) “*He (Samuel) worshipped the Lord*”. 1 Samuel 1:28
    - (b) “*And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the Lord and with men.*” 1 Samuel 2:26 It seems certain that Luke had this description of Samuel in mind when he wrote about Jesus in Luke 2:52.

## 6. My Role in the parent-child relationship

- A. Many years ago, an article on the Christian home appearing in BANNER OF TRUTH MAGAZINE, suggested that the word to describe the position of parents is that of a “mediator”.
- B. The dictionary meaning of mediator is “*one who is the connecting link between two persons – one who brings two parties together.*”
- C. God has provided two ways of working with the child.
  - (1) God works supernaturally in me as a parent to make me what I ought to be as I teach the child about God both by what I say and in the way that I live.
  - (2) God also works directly in the heart of the child. (In our study we are primarily considered the first means of God working with the children – through the parents).
  - (3) Larry Christiansen in his book on the CHRISTIAN FAMILY said “*Our homes must be so filled with the presence of Jesus that they encounter Him at every turn; come to know Him and His love as effortlessly as they come to know their parents.*”
  - (4) The main way the truths of God are taught to a child is through the influence and teaching of the parents. We have chiefly lost sight of this as we have often placed the responsibility for the training of our children on the Sunday School or a Christian school.
- D. The parent, to some degree, carries out the duties of that of a prophet, a priest and a king. Christ showed his mediatory work in his offices as prophet, priest and king. These three offices in the OT were all pictures of the work that Christ came to do. We see these offices describes in the simple questions and answers of the Children’s Catechism.
 

**Q.** What offices has Christ? **A.** Christ has three offices.

**Q.** What are they? **A.** The offices of a prophet, of a priest and of a king.

**Q.** How is Christ a prophet? **A.** Because he teaches us the will of God.

**Q.** Why do you need Christ as a prophet? **A.** Because I am ignorant.

**Q.** How is Christ a priest? **A.** Because he died for our sins and pleads with God for us.

**Q.** Why do I need Christ as a priest? **A.** Because I am guilty.

**Q.** How is Christ a king? **A.** Because he rules over us and defends us.

**Q.** Why do you need Christ as a king? **A.** Because I am weak and helpless.
- E. In some sense we as Christian parents stand as prophets, priests and kings to our children.

- (1) The main task of a prophet in the OT was not so much to foretell the future but to reveal the mind and will of God. This is also my task as a parent – to teach my child the will of God for his/her whole life. I am to interpret for my child the experiences of life in the light of the Word of God. (Read and discuss Duet 6:4-9 – especially 6-9)
- (2) One main task of a priest in the OT was to bear patiently with the ignorant and the erring. This is an important task as a parent. Why do I deal with them with compassion? Because I am also beset with weaknesses. Another main task of the priest was to bear people up in fervent prayer. This is also my task as a parent. We need to pray for all our children's needs and their greatest needs are spiritual. (See Job 1:5 for an example of this) (Recall those who had the influence of the godly prayers of their parents – John Paton and Hudson Taylor are examples)
- (3) One main task of the king in the OT was to rule over his subjects. To rule over the child is also my responsibility as long as the child is in my home and under my authority. I do not have that authority because I am bigger than the child, smarter than the child or stronger than the child but because God has given me that authority for a certain period of the child's life. A child must be taught from infancy that to disobey his parents is to disobey God's authority.

We see many illustrations in Scripture of parents having authority in the home.

- (a) Genesis 18:19 tells us that God chose Abraham so *“he would direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just....”*
- (b) 1 Timothy 3:12 makes it clear that a minister cannot rule in the church unless he also rules in his own home.

The other main task of the OT king was to defend his subjects. I also have the responsibility to defend that child from the assaults of life. While this includes defending from physical assaults it also means I am to defend my child from emotional and spiritual assaults on his/her life.

- (4) What must be true before I can fulfill my responsibilities as a prophet, priest and king to my child?
  - (a) In order to be a prophet to my child I must look to Christ as my prophet by daily seeking his will for me.
  - (b) In order to be a priest to my child I must seek the compassion of my High Priest coming to him with my petitions and recognizing that he is praying for me.
  - (c) In order to be a king to my child I must demonstrate that I am submitting to the rule and protection of one who is the King of Kings.



# Lesson Eleven

## The Blessings and Responsibilities of Parenting

### Review

- My Attitude in the parent-child relationship – “I have given this child back to the Lord.” (1 Samuel 1:27-28)
- My Goal in the parent-child relationship – My desire should be for this child to grow in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. (1 Samuel 2:26 and Luke 2:52)
- My Role in the parent-child relationship –
  - “I stand as a prophet in teaching my children the will of God.”
  - “I stand as a priest in bearing gently with my children and praying for them.”
  - “I stand as a king in ruling over my children and defending them.”

### 1. The Blessing of Children – Psalm 127:3–5

- A. Children are here described as a heritage, a reward, an arrow and a source of happiness.
- B. This, however, is only true when it is put in the context of Psalm 127:1. “Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain.” The Christian home should be one where the Lord is “building the house” and where parents are “rightly related to the Lord and rightly related to each other.”
- C. If the home is not built by the Lord children are:
- (1) Not a gift but a curse
  - (2) Not a reward but a punishment
  - (3) Not a happiness but a sorrow
  - (4) “Not an arrow in the hand, but an arrow in the heart” (Matthew Henry)

### 2. The Responsibility toward children.

Receiving anything of value involves responsibility. When we receive a child from God we receive a life that has begun to exist for eternity.

- A. What is the primary responsibility that we have in raising this child? Proverbs 22:6 answers this.” *Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it.*”

A child is described as an “arrow” in Psalm 127:4. An arrow is an instrument that can be used for good or evil according to the direction given it. A key thing that determines the direction of these “arrows” (our children) is the training that we give to them.

- B. There are two ways that are open to our children:
- (1) The way he/she **would go** – which is the way to ruin
  - (2) The way he/she **should go** – which is the way to eternal life and joy
- C. To “train up a child” does not ultimately mean:
- (1). To send our children to Sunday School
  - (2). To go to church with them
  - (3). To have devotions with them occasionally
  - (4). To place them in a Christian School

- These actions are all good in themselves but they are not the basic meaning of “training a child.”
- E. An understanding of the word “training” seems to be that of “*building a foundation and building it up until it reaches full potential.*” Drawing up blueprints involves having a purpose. In laying a foundation one has a purpose. The “training” of our children involves having a purpose.
- F. The purpose of this “training” means that the whole of the child’s life must be built upon and governed by the will of God as expressed in his Word.
- G. Training is not only teaching or imparting facts. I can know facts that have no real meaning to my life. I can read the words in a book of knitting instructions and yet not know how to knit. To “train a child” is to impart a skill. The “skill” that I want to impart is for that child to have every area of his/her life more and more governed by God’s will.
- H. When we train our children we are preparing them to enter three basic areas of life in which they will carry out God’s will. Those areas are the Home, Society and the Church.

(1) **Into the Home**

Illustration – A mother constantly told her little boy as she taught him how to behave in the situations of life, “We are doing this for Betty.” The little boy accepted this without question for some years but finally one day he asked his mum, “Who is Betty?” “That’s the girl you will marry some day,” she explained.

Of course, “Betty” stood for whoever the future wife might be. We are training our child all through their young lives as to how they will establish their future homes. Will it be a place where they will do what they **would do** or do what they **should do**? Too often we see the results in homes where there has been no preparation as the person was growing up for going into a future family life.

Someone has illustrated it this way - RESPONSIBLE PARENTS produce RESPONSIBLE CHILDREN who become RESPONSIBLE MATES and RESPONSIBLE PARENTS.

The reverse is also true – IRRESPONSIBLE PARENTS produce IRRESPONSIBLE CHILDREN who become IRRESPONSIBLE MATES and produce IRRESPONSIBLE CHILDREN. (For the teacher a good way to illustrate this is with flash cards)

(2) **Into Society**

God did not create man to be a hermit. John Donne, a poet of the 16<sup>th</sup> century expressed it well when he said, “*No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the Continent, a part of the main.*” God’s commands are to us as individuals who must live in society. Matthew 5:13 calls us to be “*the salt of the earth*” – a preservative in society. We must instill into our children those principles that will make them responsible members of society. Society is at its best when it is the most greatly influenced by Scripture. (Have class members tell of ways that we teach our children to be good members of society. What should they see in our actions and words to help them in this part of their lives?)

(3). **Into the Church**

Our children are the future members of the church and what we as parents teach them has a direct bearing on the future of the church. Many of the great Christian leaders trace what they have become back to the godly influence of their parents – John Patton, Hudson Taylor, Praying Hyde, Jonathan Edwards, John and Charles Wesley, Mary Slessor, Amy Carmichael and many others. This is not only true of famous Christians but of many Christians all over the world who have had godly parents or grandparents who have influenced them (Consider those who have influenced you or let members of the class mention others)

### 3. The Areas of Training for Children

We have stated that the goal for our children is that spoken of in 1 Samuel 2:26 and Luke 2:52 – “*to grow in wisdom, in stature and in favor with God and man.*” Just as all other children Jesus, though divine, had to go through the normal process of learning from Mary and Joseph.

**A. Intellectually – “Increased in Wisdom”**

- (1) Wisdom begins by absorbing knowledge and facts.
- (2) Wisdom has to be more than absorption of facts, however. The process must go on to apply these facts to one’s life. The book of Proverbs has a great deal to say about true wisdom. (See Proverbs 1:1-7 for a sample)
- (3) Our responsibility as parents is to help provide needed information for our children and then teach them how to use this information for their own good. It is sad to see a person who has a great knowledge of facts but has never learned how to put that knowledge into practice for his own good. One illustration would be a doctor who smokes and is greatly overweight but tells his patients to act otherwise. (Let the class give illustrations of facts people know and do not apply those facts which results in their own hurt)
- (4) How do we provide this information?
  - (a) We answer questions from the time they are tiny. If we do not know the answer we help to find the answers.
  - (b) We must look for ways to provide new learning experiences.
  - (c) We must read to them when they are small and continue all through their years to make good books available to them
  - (d) We are to do all we can to provide a good education and encourage them in their schoolwork.
- (5) How do we train them to use this information?

Our society is one that doesn’t want to think. Decadent societies in the past would provide massive entertainment just to keep people from thinking. We see much of that in our own society.

  - (a) We can keep children away from things that cause or encourage mental laziness – ungoverned TV, comic books and ungoverned or overuse of video games.
  - (b) We can give suitable opportunities for children to make decisions based on their level of maturity. (Give illustrations of this)
  - (c) We can encourage them to participate in games of skill to promote thinking.
  - (d) We can discuss with them the thinking behind family decisions. One example of this would be to show the children at the proper age how the family money must be handled.
  - (e) Without sinful gossiping we can discuss real life situations that the children see around them. We can look at the good or bad features of those situations and discuss whether the outcome is from doing the wise thing or failing to be wise.

**B. Physically – “Increased in stature”**

- (1) At certain times during his time on earth angels strengthened Jesus. Generally, however, he had only normal human strength to carry on his ministry. He had to care for his body using the normal means.
- (2) God created us body and soul. God has called our bodies “temples of the Holy Spirit.” We must care for these “temples” and must have a respect for them. There is a danger as Christians that we may see the body as being of little importance.
- (3) It is important that we teach good health habits to our children. We must teach and practice proper nutrition, proper rest habits and proper exercise habits. This may mean applying pressure on the child in the formative years to ensure these things are done. We must warn against those things that harm our body – smoking, a destructive use of alcohol and a harmful use of all types of drugs and refrain from a wrong usage of these as well.
- (4) We must set an example to our children in the way that we treat our own bodies. Our children will very unlikely learn to care for own their bodies properly unless they see their parents caring for theirs. I Corinthians 10:31 reminds us that in the proper care of our bodies we can glorify the Lord.

**C. Socially – “In favor with man”**

- (1) Our children must develop proper social skills to fit into their culture. There are certain things in each society that are accepted as being proper, which do not violate moral values. These

must be learned and practiced. (Some things do vary from culture to culture. These differences must be recognized so as not to offend if we are in a culture different to our own.)

- (2). The Book of Proverbs is full of teaching as to what makes us acceptable and winsome to other people no matter what the culture may be. (Class member can be asked to recall some of those sayings) Jesus never offended with his social relationships in life – only with the truth. There is no Christian merit in being obnoxious.
- (3). There are certain things that are universal to all cultures.
  - (a) Proper eating habits.
  - (b) Proper respect for the elderly and for the leaders of the society
  - (c) Proper appreciation
  - (d) Proper respect for privacy and property.

Training in the intellectual, the physical and the social areas of life (along with their spiritual training, which will be covered in the next lesson) will enable a child when he is older to successfully enter a future home, society and church.

# Lesson Twelve

## The Spiritual Training of our Children

### Introduction

We have been called by God to “*Train up a child in the way that he should go.*” Proverbs 22:6 That training is designed to lead him to become all that he should be as a future member of the home, the society around him and the church.

The areas of life in which our children are to be trained are found in a passage about Jesus as he developed during his childhood. It says in Luke 2:52, “*And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.*”

We want to look in this lesson at “*growing in favor with God*” which is the spiritual training of our children. We will do this by answering some basic questions.

### 1. Who is to teach the child?

- A. Scripture stresses that it is basically the responsibility of the parents to care for their child’s spiritual development.
- B. Moses gives us directions on this in:
  - (1) Deuteronomy 4:9 - “*Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.*”
  - (2) Deuteronomy 6:4-7 – “*Here, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*”
- C. Note that before the commandments of God can be successfully taught to children they must be “upon your hearts” – the hearts of the parents. There must be a personal belief in, commitment to and obedience of these commands by the parents before children will usually be affected by their spiritual teaching.
- D. The Psalmist instructs us:
  - (1) Psalm 78:1-2 “*O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth... We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation in praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, his power and the wonders he has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel which he commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so that the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds and would keep his commands.*”
  - (2). In his commentary on Psalm 78 Charles Spurgeon says, “*The more of parental teaching the better. Ministers and Sabbath school teachers were never meant to be a substitute for a mother’s tears and a father’s prayers.*” (This is not to say that we should not take advantage of other opportunities for our children to be taught spiritual truths. Charles Spurgeon is stressing that we cannot ignore our responsibilities and hope that others will make up for our neglect).
- E. The Apostle Paul illustrates for us the training by godly parents when he writes about Timothy. “*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*”. 2 Timothy 1:5

- F. Jewish history tells us that originally Jewish children were taught only by their parents - the small children by their mother, the older girl by the mother and the older boys by the fathers. Later, when educational institutions arose, the parents’ teaching was still considered to be the most important. This is still true today. The Sunday School, the Christian School and the Bible Club cannot replace the place of parents in holding the chief teaching responsibility.

## 2. When is the child to be taught?

### A. Early

- (1) Joshua 8:35 *“There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children and the aliens who lived among them.”* The children were included in hearing and reading the law. This tells us that there is something to be said for the children to be in church services at an early age.
- (2) Proverbs 8:17 *“I love those who love me and those who seek me (early –KJV) find me.”*
- (3) Nehemiah 8:2-4 *“So on the first day of the seventh month, Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up on men and women and all who were able to understand. He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women, and others who could understand.”*

### B. Daily

- (1) Deuteronomy 6:7 *“Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”*
- (2) Deuteronomy 11:19 *“Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.”* Children are to be taught in times of both work and leisure.
- (3) It is important that there be a planned daily devotional time with the children and it is best if this is done as a family when possible. An occasional spurt of spiritual training is not diligence. There is no excuse for not practicing daily spiritual training. If we are too busy to train our children in spiritual things, we are too busy. There are many wonderful devotional helps available for every age group.

## 3. How is the child to be taught?

- A. According to his ability - I do not give my child all his daily nutrition for the next 18 years in the first week after his birth. I meet the child’s needs day by day. It is the same way with spiritual needs. I meet the child’s need at that particular stage in his development. The amount of spiritual food a 2-year-old needs is not what a 14 year-old needs.

### B. In every circumstance –

- (1) This does not mean that every moment I am to be quoting Bible verses or “preaching” at him. However, I should recognize when there is a natural opportunity to relate life experiences to God’s Word. I need to ask God to open my eyes to those opportunities.
- (2) All the experiences of life are opportunities we have with children to relate the events of life to the will of God. As children observe what happens around them we can relate spiritual principles to those events – whether those events are good or evil. (Discuss ways that this can be done with the child).
- (3) Too often the truths of God are set-aside for “the devotional period.” Many Christian families seem almost embarrassed to talk about the truths of God in natural conversation.

## 4. Why teach them?

- A. They are born estranged from God. Psalm 51:5 *“Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”*

- B. So that they might put their trust in God. Psalm 78:7 “...*Then they would put their trust in God...*”
- C. That they might know and keep God’s commands. Psalm 78:7 “...*they would not forget his deeds and would keep his commands.*”
- C. So that they might be able to distinguish good from evil. Hebrews 5:14 “*But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*” It is important as the child matures we teach him to observe all of life through the eyes of Scripture so that he are able “*to distinguish good from evil.*” (This is also a reminder of why we as parents must also be constantly in the Word for our own ability to distinguish good from evil).
- E. That they might have peace. Isaiah 54:13 “*All your sons will be taught by the Lord and great will be your children’s peace.*”

## 5. What are they to be taught?

- A. They are to be taught to grow in knowledge. 2 Peter 3:18 “*Grow...in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*”
  - (1) “Growing in knowledge” is a deliberate seeking of knowledge about God – Who he is and what he can do. This means that as a parent I am primarily responsible to teach this child the facts about God. The Bible is the revealed revelation of who God is and this is my primary source of information. This means that I not only read the Bible to the child, but at that child’s level of understanding I instruct him from the Scriptures, both through formal training and the circumstances of life.
  - (2) Not only do I teach the child the bare facts from the Scripture but also I look for ways to take biblical truth and illustrate it from life examples that the child can understand. **For example** – If the child starts to eat an apple that looks good on the outside but is rotten on the inside I can point out that this is an example of what a hypocrite is (Give other illustrations as to how to apply this and have students give suggestions as how it can be done with their children).
- B. They are to be taught to grow in grace. 2 Peter 3:18 “*Grow in the grace... of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*”
  - (1) Learning to “grow in grace” means applying the truth of what the child has learned to his own life about God and His will.
  - (2) Here the action is not so direct as “growing in knowledge”. Growth in grace for the child first comes through “seeing Jesus” in the life of the parents. Illustration - Shirley Rice tells of a little girl who asked her parents where Jesus was. When told that Jesus was everywhere, but also in the hearts of those who believe the little girl answered earnestly. “*Daddy, I want to see Jesus in you!*” God works supernaturally in me as a parent to make me to be what I ought to be as I teach my child by word and by my life.
  - (3) Parents are not perfect, but a child can sense when there is an earnest effort by the parents to measure up to what is being taught from the Bible.
  - (4) The second way that the child grows in grace is by God working directly in the heart of the child. This will take place as the child matures and enters adult life.

## 6. What must accompany this training?

### Prayer

- (a) There is to be much prayer on the part of the parents for guidance and wisdom in rearing the child. We need to have the attitude of Manoah, the father of Samson. When the Angel of the Lord came to tell Manoah that he and his wife would have a son Manoah prayed, “... *O Lord, I beg you, let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born.*” (Judges 13:8) I must ask myself, “Do I have that kind of heart attitude that longs for God to teach me how to rear my children for him?”

- (b) There is to be a prayer of intercession for the Holy Spirit to apply the truths of Scripture to my life and the life of my child.
- (c) Prayer for our children is part of our responsibility for them for as long as they and we both live. See Job 1: 4-5 for an example of a parent who prayed for his children no matter what age they were.

## 7. What about the child’s conversion?

- A. It is our responsibility as parents to nurture our children and train them in their need of salvation. We must teach them to see themselves as sinners. They must know that God is angry at sin, but that he is also a loving God who will forgive those who come in true repentance through his Son. All of these things must be taught clearly.
- B. The day will come when they will realize their position before God and that they must choose to continue on the broad way or choose the narrow way. As Christian parents our greatest goal is to see our children grow to love and follow the Lord Jesus – to grow in grace. But we must be warned against rushing the child into a decision about conversion that he/she does not understand. A child may grow up to trust in a decision that was not real. The child may later realize that he/she is not a Christian and either be ashamed to admit it or will throw the Christian faith away.

## 8. Summary

Mathew Henry encourages us in our responsibilities to “*Train up a child in the way he should go.*” He reminds us, “*This is a great duty enjoined, particularly to those that are the parents and instructors of children, in order to the propagating of wisdom, that it may not die with them. Train up children in that age of vanity to keep them from the sins and snares of it. In that learning age, to prepare them for they are designed for. Catechize them, initiate them; keep them under discipline. Train them as soldiers, who are taught to handle their arms, keep rank and observe the word of command. Train them up not in the way they would go (the bias of their corrupt hearts would draw them aside); but in the way they should go, the way in which, if you love them, you would have them go.*”

# Lesson Thirteen

## The Child's Need for Love

### Review

- The Basic Responsibility of the Parent is to train the child (Proverbs 1:26)
  - For a child's future place in the **home**
  - For a child's future place in **society**
  - For the child's future place in the **church**
- The Basic Areas in which the child must be trained (Luke 2:52)
  - In **Wisdom** – Intellectually
  - In **Stature** – Physically
  - In **Favor with Man** – Socially
  - In **Favor with God** – Spiritually
- The Spiritual Training of children
  - **Who** is to train them? – The Parents are the primary ones to do the training.
  - **When** are they to be trained? – The child is to be trained early and daily
  - **How** are they to be trained? As befits their age and understanding and in all circumstances
  - **Why** teach them? Because they are sinners and are estranged from God
  - **What** are they to be taught? – To grow in the grace and knowledge of God

### Introduction - The Child's Two Needs – Love and Discipline

- A. The child has two needs – love and discipline. “Love without discipline is sentiment.” “Discipline without love is tyranny.”
- B. In our day the pendulum has swung to both extremes. On the whole our society puts the emphasis on “love” – which usually means there is a lack of emphasis on the child's need for discipline. However, there are those, who in reaction to a wrong emphasis on “love”, have swung to an emphasis to what is sometimes a harsh discipline.
- C. God has intended for these two needs of love and discipline to be in balance. The lack of either one of these is what often produces juvenile delinquency or an unbalanced child. Many times there are problems in adult lives that can be traced back to a neglect of one of these needs being met.
- D. Shirley Rich, in her book on the CHRISTIAN HOME, reminds us that 2 Timothy 1:9 gives us the balance that we need as parents. “*For God did not give us a spirit of timidly, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*” (The KJV says for “self-discipline” – “a sound mind”). Too many parents have a “spirit of fear” (KJV) or “spirit of timidity” (NIV) about administering both love and discipline. In this verse we are promised the “power” – the authority to administer love and discipline. We are promised “love” which provides the balance to discipline and we are given “a sound mind” – the wisdom to balance the administration of love and discipline.

## 1. The Child’s need for love

- A. God has created every person with a need for love and a capacity to love. Unless we have experienced love from others it is very difficult to give love to others –except that God works a miracle of grace in our hearts.
- B. Not only are we created with the need for love as children; we never outgrow our need for love. (This is important to remember when we are dealing with older people as well as with children).
- C. The greatest reason that it is so important for a child to have the love of the parent is so that it is easier for that child to understand and experience the love of God. What my children experiences in love from me will help them to be open to receiving the love that God offers through Jesus Christ. (Illustration of Barbara Cross trying to teach about God’s love to a group of black girls from a gang in New York City. When told of God’s love as a father – one girl burst out with, “My old man – he don’t do nothing but beat me!”)
- D. Another reason it is important for our children to experience love from us as their parents is so that in their future home they will be able to able to truly love their own children. People who have lacked love as a child often finds it hard, apart from God’s grace, to show proper love to their own children.

## 2. The Pattern for loving our children

- A. As we have seen before God has created human relationships to be a learning picture of supernatural relationships.
  - (1) The love of a husband for his wife is a picture of Christ’s love for the church.
  - (2) The love of parents for their children is a picture of God’s love for his children.
- B. The reverse is also true. Supernatural relationships are to be a model for human relationships.
  - (1) The husband is to love the wife as Christ loves the church.
  - (2) Parents are to love their children as God loves his children.
- C. What is the pattern from God that we are to model, as we love our children?
  - (1) God loved us before we ever loved him. 1 John 1:10 “*This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*” The parent’s love comes before the child responds in love and their love is not dependent on the child’s love
  - (2) God wins our love by first demonstrating his love. Jeremiah 31:3 “*I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with loving kindness.*” Note that God has “drawn” us to himself with his love for us. Our children learn to love in response to our love.
  - (3) God’s love for us is not based on what he sees in us. Romans 5:8 “*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*” The love I have for my child cannot be based on whether that child pleases me. It may be my natural reaction to only love someone who is pleasing. However, when a child is “unlovable” I must throw myself on Christ for the love I need for that child. The Bible says, “*Nothing shall separate me from the love of God*”. A child should be able to say, “*Nothing shall separate me from the love of my parents*”. There is a little song that says;
 

Jesus loves me when I’m good – when I do the things I should.

Jesus loves me when I’m bad – though it makes him very sad.

 (We should be able to substitute the words “mommy” and “daddy” there, but this does not mean that God or the parents are to overlook sin in their children but simply that their love is not based on the child first loving them).

- (4) God’s love is unending. Jeremiah 31:3 *“I have loved you with an everlasting love. Just as God’s love for his children will not end, the love of a parent for his child should never end.*
- (5) God’s love for us is for our good. Romans 8:31 *“He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?”* I must ask myself if I love my children because of what they can do for me or for what I can do for them.
- (6) We are assured of God’s love in during times of trouble. Isaiah 43:1 ... *“Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you my name; you are mine, when you pass through the waters I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fires you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze; For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.”* Do our children have the same assurance about our love for them during troubled times?
- (7) God’s love is our security. Deuteronomy 33:12 *“Let the beloved of the Lord rest secure in him, for he shields him all day long, and the one the Lord loves rests between his shoulders.”* The greatest security we can give our children is to know that they are loved. Where the parents love each other and love their children then that becomes “home”.
- (8) God’s love remembers our weakness and our limitations. Psalm 103:13 and 14 *“As the father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him, for he knows how we are formed; he remembers that we are dust.”* Do we remember the limitations of our children and make allowances for their age and immaturity? (This does not mean that we “make allowances” for deliberate sinful behavior).

### 3. Attitudes to avoid in loving our children

#### A. True love is not overprotective

- (1) True love works to develop independence and maturity. There is a difference between protection that helps development and that, over-protection which holds back the development of maturity.
- (2) Overprotection is when we try to create an environment that shields the child from all difficulties. The child must someday face difficulties and yet, we must demonstrate that we are standing by him in those difficulties. It is important to teach the child to turn to the Lord in times of trouble for his strength and protection.

#### B. True love is not possessive

- (1) Possessive love does such things as decides the child’s career, binds a child to the family for too long, demands to know every thought and every action and uses the child’s love for its own purpose.
- (2) Possessive love is the kind that says, “Unless you do \_\_\_\_\_ Mommy won’t love you!” or “If you love Mommy you will do\_\_\_\_\_.”
- (3) A child who is loved possessively soon learns that love is conditional on his behavior.
- (4) The cure for possessive love is that of Hannah concerning her son Samuel. 1 Samuel 1:27-28 *“So now I give him to the Lord. For his whole life he shall be given over to the Lord”.*

#### C. True love is not indulgent

- (1) Indulgent love means that the parent gives in to the child, even when it is not good, just to keep the child “happy”.
- (2) Indulgent love gives the child more of something than he should have for his good. This can include physical objects, playtime, food or anything beyond what is helpful for the child. Often the thing in which is child is indulged is given at the expense of something he really needs. An example of this is when parents give material possessions instead of the spending needed time with the child.

#### D. True love is not domineering

- (1) Domineering love is when the parent makes all of the child’s decisions even in areas where the child is able and mature enough to make the decisions for himself. In domineering love the parent forces the child to be a certain way that pleases the parent. This kind of love can break the child’s will or make the child very resentful

- (2) The Bible has a balance that prevents domineering love.
  - (a) Ephesians 6:1 “*Children, obey your parents in the Lord.*” – the child’s responsibility.
  - (b) Ephesians 6:4 “*Fathers, do not exasperate your children.*” – the restraint of domineering love.
  - (c) My purpose should not be to force my will on the child. The thing I put on the child is God’s will. It is God’s will that I want the child to seek when they are no longer under my control. It is easy to get outward conformity but as the saying goes, “*A person convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.*”
  - (d) Our goal as parents is not outward conformity but a growing submission to God. We want that child to become one who “delights” to do God’s will. The question I have to ask myself is, “Does my child see me delighting to do God’s will?”

## Summary

- A. Love is not just something you do. It is something that is within you. “**Love is that selfless affection which seeks the good of its object even at personal cost.**”
- B. Love demands physical expression. The sense of touch conveys love. It is the first way we have of communicating love to an infant. It shows itself as they grow up demonstrated by a pat on the back, a ruffle of the hair, a cuddle, even a bit of “roughhousing” at suitable times.
- C. Love demands time. Material things can never take the place of time. In order to know that they are truly loved our children need to know that we want to spend time with them. Children do not only need “quality time” but they also need “quantity time” with their parents.

# Lesson Fourteen

## The Child's Need for Discipline – Part One

### Introduction

Love and discipline are not opposites. They go hand in hand and grow out of each other. A parent who truly loves his child will work to meet his need for discipline. A parent who disciplines properly will do it in love.

### 1. The Meaning of Discipline

- A. “Discipline” is not limited to punishment though sometimes punishment is included in discipline. It isn’t just “spanking” or “smacking” a child. Many children have been beaten who have never truly been disciplined.
- B. Discipline is not something you do only while the child is young. It is a twenty-year process.
- C. Discipline is teaching a child in the way he ought to go so that he will gradually be able to take responsibility for his own conduct and consequences.

### 2. The Command to Discipline

- A. Discipline of our children is not an optional thing. Some parents will actually state, “We have decided not to discipline \_\_\_\_.” (The behavior of the children in these cases makes it fairly obvious that the parents have “practiced what they preached.”). It is to be suspected that parents who will not or cannot discipline their children are undisciplined themselves!
- B. God holds parents responsible for the discipline of their children.
  - (1) **A positive example** – Abraham – Genesis 18:17-19 *“For I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him.”* Matthew Henry says of this passage, *“Those that expect family blessing must make conscience of family duty.”*
  - (2) **Two negative examples** –
    - (a) Eli and his sons – 1 Samuel 2:12 *“Eli’s sons were wicked men; they had no regard for the Lord.”* 2:25b *“His son’s, however, did not listen to their father’s rebuke, for it was the Lord’s will to put them to death.”* 3:13 *“For I told him (Eli) that I would judge his family for ever because of the sin he knew about; his sons made themselves contemptible and he failed to restrain them.”*
    - (b) David and his sons – Though David was a godly man we see the results of his lack of correction in the lives of his sons. His son Amnon was guilty of raping his half-sister Tamar. When the king heard of it “he was furious” (2 Samuel 13:21) but we don’t read of him doing anything about this terrible wickedness. When his son Absalom killed his half-brother Amnon for raping Tamar David did nothing to punish Absalom except to keep him away from the palace for some time. When Absalom turned traitor and had himself declared king David wanted him spared by Joab. When his son Adonijah attempted to take the kingdom when David was old he did not deal with him for his treason. 1 Kings 1:4 makes a telling comment about David and his dealing with his treasonous son, Adonijah. *“His father had never interfered with him by asking, “Why do you behave as you do?”* It is very possible that this describes David’s dealings with all of his children and why their lives became characterized by sinful behavior.

- (c) God has created in every child the need for discipline. To treat that need as an option is just as deadly as treating a child’s nutritional requirements as optional.
- (d) It is as simple as this – If we bring our children up to follow God’s will, which is the goal of our discipline, we will have God’s blessing. If we do not, we will have his anger. Matthew Henry wisely comments on this by saying, “*Those that do not restrain the sins of others when it is in the power of their hands to do it make themselves partakers of the guilt and will be charged as accessories.*”
- (e) In his book DARE TO DISCIPLINE James Dobson tells that there are some secular psychologists who now recognize this need for proper discipline. One speaker at a secular convention said, “*The greatest social disaster of this century is the belief that abundant love makes discipline unnecessary.*” That same speaker went on to point out that the many of the “terrors in the school” were mistakenly believed to have emotional problems but testing found that they simply had never been required to inhibit their behavior or restrict their impulses.

### 3. A Basic Misconception about Discipline

- A. A misconception that has created all kinds of problems is the belief that children comes into life sweetly innocent and are only affected negatively by bad things in their environment. Parents often feel that since “the child is basically good” and all that society needs to do is to get rid of outside elements that have a negative influence.
- B. The proof that outside environment is not the heart of the problem is that we have a couple of generations of people who have had all kinds of good benefits outside of themselves such as more educational opportunities, improved nutrition, better medicine, more leisure time and yet, we see greater problems in our homes, our schools and our communities with young people
- C. This misconception that the child is basically good is strongly refuted by Scripture.
  - (1) Psalm 51:5 “*Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.*” This is not teaching that the act of procreation is sinful (as some have mistakenly taught) but that each child is born with a sinful nature that causes the child to sin.
  - (2) Psalm 58:3 “*Even from birth, the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies.*” This is certainly illustrated in seeing that one does not have to teach very young children to lie – they come up with that action all on their own!
  - (3) Proverbs 22:15 “*Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.*” “Folly” is the inclination to do evil. It includes all the sins of which a child is capable.
  - (4) Charles Bridge – the writer of a great book on Proverbs over 100 years ago, comments, “*A child is not like a sheet of pure white paper, but is a creature with a heart full of sin containing all the seeds of future evil, which can multiply to a fruitful harvest.*”
- D. While maintaining the biblical doctrine of original sin as it pertains to children we must avoid two mistakes.
  - (1) We should not punish a child for what is true childishness. “*A child is to be punished not for being a child, but for being a wicked child.*” (Charles Bridges)
  - (2) Paul speaks of this childishness in 1 Corinthians 13:11 when he says, “*When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.*”
  - (3) Childishness is when a child does or says something because it is part of his normal development – not because the child is deliberately defying authority. Some examples of this are:
    - (a.) An infant messing up his diapers
    - (b.) A toddler spilling food when learning to handle a spoon

- (4) On the other hand, a potty-trained child not bothering to use the bathroom because he is “too busy” at something else is being sinful. A two year old throwing his spoon and food on the floor because he does not want to eat something is exhibiting sinful behavior.
- (5) There are two principles to keep in mind when disciplining a child. Knowing these two principles can be a tremendous help in determining how I react to a child’s actions and words.
  - (a) If I find I am punishing by “reproof” or “rod” when it is only childishness I need to be more patient.
  - (b) If I am letting childish wickedness go unpunished I must begin immediately to face the fact that this is sinful behavior in the child and it must be dealt with quickly and consistently.

#### 4. The Goal of Discipline

- A. Our goal in discipline is the same as that which God the Father has in disciplining us. Hebrews 12:10 and 12 tells us, “...*God disciplines us for our good that we may share in his holiness.*”
- B. The main reason we discipline our child is:
  - (1) Not to let loose our frustrations
  - (2) Not to have a good reputation because my child is a “good” child.
  - (3) Not to fit into the culture of our society.
  - (4) Not so they won’t be a bother
- C. The main reason for the discipline of our children is so that they will follow after holiness. Hebrews 12:14 stresses the importance of personal holiness when it says, “...*Without holiness no-one will see the Lord.*”
- C. Shirley Rich in THE CHRISTIAN HOME says, “*Discipline is that which corrects, moulds, strengthens, perfects. It is training in self-control and to given standards. The standards are the Word and the Will of God.*”

#### 5. The Beginning and Foundation of Discipline

- A. “*Chasten your son while there is hope*” says Proverbs 19:18 (NKJV). The NIV translates the second part of this verse to say “*Do not be a willing party to his death.*” “Death” here primarily refers to spiritual death, but a child who has not been disciplined is more likely to be involved in early physical death because of his/her actions.
- B. Charles Bridges reminds us that discipline begins in the cradle. “*The child must know from the beginning that struggle and victory in very early life which may, under God, do much towards settling the point once and for all. On the other hand, sharp chastening may fail later to accomplish what a slight rebuke in the early course might have wrought.*”
- C. The foundation of discipline and the effectiveness of the parent’s authority are based on the child’s respect for parents. To achieve this respect and to be seen as having authority the child must know loving discipline from his early days.
- D. The parent-child relationship is the first and most important relationship the child can have. The amount of respect the child has for his parents will determine the respect he has for school authority, police, the law and the authority of his employer and all who will be over him in some capacity.
- E. If I want my child to respect what I value in later life he must respect me in earlier life. This includes many areas of life but especially Christian principles.

- F. Someone has wisely said, *“It is the ultimate paradox of children that a child wants to be controlled but insists that parents earn the right to control him.”*
- G. Respect is a two way street. We cannot require a child to treat us with respect if we do not treat him with respect. As a person “made in the image of God” the child has the right to be respected even when under authority. Respect is a heart attitude. This means we eliminate
- (1) Calling him derogatory names
  - (2) Belittling him in front of his friends
  - (3) Punishing him in front of gleeful onlookers (even his siblings!)
  - (4) Laughing at or teasing him unmercifully. (However, a child should learn to take gentle and kind teasing in the right spirit).
  - (5) Respecting his right of privacy
  - (6) Speaking as if he was or is an unwanted child (Parent’s can do this innocently when they refer to the child as “an accident”).

## 6. The Means of Discipline

- A. **The first means of discipline is that of reproof.** – Hebrews 12:6 and 6 *“My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline and do not lose heart when he rebukes you.”* Much wrong can be corrected with the right words spoken in the right manner at the right time. As has been stated before reproof at the right time can eliminate the need for later use of the rod.
- B. **The second means of correction of which the Bible speaks is that of the rod.** This form of punishment has become a “no-no” in our modern world but the Bible has quite a bit to say about the use of the rod.
- (1) Proverbs 13:24 *“He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.”*
  - (2) Proverbs 19:18 *“Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death.”*
  - (3) Proverbs 22:15 *“Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.”*
  - (4) Proverbs 23:13 *“Do not withhold discipline from a child; if you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.”*
  - (5) Proverbs 29:15 *“The rod of correction imparts wisdom, but a child left to itself disgraces his mother.”*
- C. Corporal punishment must be administered in a calm and sensible manner.
- (1) The parent must not do it in anger.
  - (2) The child must clearly understand why it is being done.
  - (3) The “punishment must fit the crime.” It should not be given in excess or so little administered that it has no effect.
  - (4) It should never be given where it brings physical harm to a child. However, it should be done so that there is sufficient discomfort to make the point of the punishment.
  - (5) The hand that spans the bottom should be the first to go around the child in a hug afterward to assure the child that you love them.
- D. James Dobson in his book DARE TO DISCIPLINE says, *“Corporal punishment, when used lovingly and properly, is beneficial to the child because it is in harmony with nature itself.”*

## 7. The Results of Reproof and the Rod

### A. There are temporal results.

- (1) Rest and peace - Proverbs 29:17 *“Discipline your son, and he will give you peace, he will bring delight to your soul.”*
- (2) Wisdom to the child Proverbs 29:15 *“The rod of correction imparts wisdom...”*
- (3) Drives away foolishness (sin) Proverbs 22:15 *“Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.”*

### B. There are eternal results – the most important result of all

Proverbs 23:14 *“Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.”* (spiritual death)



# Lesson Fifteen

## The Child's Need for Discipline – Part Two

### Review

- The Meaning of Discipline – “Teaching the child in the way he ought to go so that he will gradually be able to take responsibility for his own conduct and consequences.”
- The Command to Discipline – “*Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it.*” Proverbs 22:6
- The Need for Discipline – Because of inborn sinfulness - “*Folly is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.*” Proverbs 22:15
- The Goal of Discipline – To promote holiness of life – “*God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness.*” Hebrews 12:10
- The Beginning of Discipline – From a very early age - “*Discipline your son while there is hope...*” Proverbs 19:18 (KJV)
- The Foundation for Discipline – Respect for one another – “*Children, obey your parents ... Fathers, do not exasperate your children...*” Ephesians 6:1 and 4
- The Means of Discipline –
  - The Rod– “*The rod of correction imparts wisdom...*” Proverbs 29:15
  - Reproof - “*My son, do not make light of the Lord’s discipline and do not lose heart when he rebukes you...*” Hebrews 12:5b
- The Results of Discipline –
  - Temporal = Peace, Wisdom and Removing Foolishness “*Discipline your son and he will give you peace...*” Proverbs 29:17 – “*The rod of correction imparts wisdom.*” Proverbs 29:15 and “*The rod of discipline will drive it (foolishness) far from him.*” Proverbs 22:15
  - Eternal = Deliverance from hell - “*Do not withhold discipline from a child. If you punish him with the rod, he will not die. Punish him with the rod and save his soul from death.*” Proverbs 23:13-14

### 1. The Manner of Discipline

#### A. Discipline should be given in God’s Name and with His Authority

- (1) Disciplinary action is to be carried out in God’s name, which means it is to be done in his authority. “Ephesians 6:4 says, “*Fathers...bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.*” When I discipline my children I must be aware that I am under strict orders from the Lord I do not discipline my children because:
  - (a) I am older than they are.
  - (b) I am bigger than they are.
  - (c) I am smarter than they are.
- (2) I discipline my children because God has given me this responsibility and holds me accountable.
- (3) The awareness that I am under God’s authority that keeps me from three mistakes.
  - (a) It keeps me from indifference because I am accountable to God. “*Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account.*” Hebrews 13:17

- (b) It keeps me from being afraid of consequences such as being afraid that my child won’t love me. An illustration of this was Abraham and Isaac. (Genesis 22) Abraham was willing to obey God and leave the consequences to him when ordered to slay his son.
- (c) It will gain the respect of the child for the parent and give them an understanding as to why the parent must exercise discipline. If my children know that I discipline because I am answerable to a higher authority they will see that I am not doing it because I am a bully. It is important to stress to our children “If I do not discipline you God will discipline me.”

#### B. Discipline should be given in a climate of Love

- (1) The definition of love has been given as *“Love is that selfless affection which seeks the good of its object even at personal cost.”* Revelation 3:19 tells us that God disciplines us in love. *“Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline.”*
- (2) There is a need for an expression of physical love along with discipline. The hand that has spanked the child’s bottom is the same hand that should go around his shoulders in a loving embrace. True discipline should cause the child to turn in love to the parents. We, as Christians, should want to run to the Lord’s arms when he has disciplined us.
- (3) Discipline should be in the broader context of love. It is not enough to show a child affection after he has been rebuked or the rod has been used. If this is the only time that love is shown children will be naughty just to get love or else they will not see discipline as a part of love. It makes it easier for a child to accept that discipline is simply another means of love when it is surrounded by other expressions of love.

#### C. Discipline should be given with sufficient firmness

- (1) Discipline must be sufficiently firm to bring grief. *“No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful.”* Hebrews 12:11
- (2) If the discipline is too little or too late it will simply annoy or provoke anger. It must be enough to get the child to do what is required. Proverbs 20:30 *“Blows and wounds cleanse away evil and beatings purge the inmost being.”*

#### D. Discipline should be given within reason

- (1) Our discipline must be within the child’s capability to understand what we want and what is expected of him.
- (2) Colossians warns against unreasonable discipline. *“Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.”* Colossians 3:21
- (3) Just as God remembers our frailty we must also deal with the frailty of our children. This is where it is important to make a difference between childishness and deliberate sin. Psalm 103:13-14 *“As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed, he remembers that we are dust.”*
- (4) What one child understands at a particular age may not be true of another child at the same age. We must gear the punishment of reproof and the rod to the child’s understanding.
- (5) We need to remember that the rod is medicine, not food. Some misbehavior needs sharp glances. Some misbehavior needs sharp rebuke. Other misbehavior needs the use of the rod. The rod be used sparingly but it should be used in the case of deliberate defiance and deliberate disobedience, also in the matter of deliberate lying.

#### E. Discipline must be given with unrelenting consistency

- (1) We are not to use “pressure-value discipline” in which little things build up and explode. Proverbs 13:24 tells us, *“He who spare the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is careful to discipline him.”*
- (2) Some people object to the use of the rod and cite cases where the child has been abused in this manner. Many times this happens because the parents have not disciplined consistently, allowing things to build up and then they explode like a pressure cooker. Parents who claim they would never “spank” the child will many times allow the child to continually ill-behave until they lose their temper and harm the child. Consistent, loving and well thought-out discipline means that this will not happen.

- (3) It is important to remember that this child will be going as an adult into a future home, church and society. When I see in that child that which will make him less than useful in any of these three areas I must be careful to discipline that child consistently in those areas in which he/she needs training. (An illustration to use with little children is to tell them that they are like a beautiful garden where sometimes ugly weeds begin to grow and these must be uprooted and taken out)
  - (4) Often those things that are overlooked and ignored in children and not dealt with on a consistent basis are those things that will:
    - (a) Break up a marriage
    - (b) Bring problems to society
    - (c) Wreck churches
  - (5) To be consistent the parent must keep his word. Idle threats break one’s word and truthfulness. The child should know that what I promise for his pleasure I will keep and what I promise for his discipline I will keep as well.
  - (6) The child must be taught to respond to the first expression of the parent’s direction and will for that child. The child should know that, “When my parents speak they mean what they say and I must obey immediately.” A grudging response to a call for obedience must be dealt with as rebellion.
- F. Discipline should be given prayerfully
- (1) In raising our children God wants us to use the means he has ordained along with prayer. If our discipline is not coupled with prayer we do not have the right to claim the salvation of that child. We can do nothing good in our own strength – even the discipline of the child.
  - (2) Like Job we should to daily pray for our children. Job 1:4-5

## 2. The Method of teaching self-discipline to the child

### A. Restraining excessive materialism

- (1) When parents have lacked certain things in their own childhood it is often hard to say “no” to the material demands of their own children. We must avoid letting our desires and wants from the past control what we do for our children.
- (2) Why is it important that I deny certain things to my child when it is in my means to provide them?
  - (a) Too much of anything inhibits a sense of appreciation. A child who is given more than he needs will begin to feel that he is entitled to whatever he wants when he wants it.
  - (b) We cheat a child a child from the pleasure of receiving something he has waited for when we give him too much too soon. Someone has wisely said, “*Half of the fun of pleasure is the anticipation.*” Anything of which we have too much too soon will spoil our fun of anticipation and the receiving of the thing desired. Illustration – too much food at Christmas spoils our appetites. The fact is “No need = No pleasure.”
- (3) Society fans the child’s lust for things through advertising and other means. We must train the child to see the false lure of advertising.

### B. Providing meaningful work

- (1) Work was part of God’s plan for all of mankind even in his period of innocence. Genesis 2:15 “*The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.*”
- (2) The curse was not work but the pain and the hardship now connected with work. Genesis 3:17-19
- (3) Work is still God’s plan for the good of all mankind.
  - (a) In the Old Testament the Seventh Commandment not only commands us to rest on the Sabbath, but also to work the other days of the week. “*Six days you shall labor and do all your work...*” Exodus 20:9
  - (b) The New Testament commands us to work as well. 2 Thessalonians 4:11 says, “*Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands just as we told you so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.*”

- (c) It is also God’s plan for a child to learn to work. The Prophet Jeremiah tells us in Lamentations 3:27, “*It is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young.*”
- (d) To deprive a child of learning to work is to deprive the child of God’s blessing. Work is a training experience in:
- (1) Organization
  - (2) Responsibility
  - (3) Neatness
- (e) Developing a child’s work habits should be started very early. Even little children can do some work that fits their ability such as picking up their toys. (Discuss things that children at various ages can do as their work)
- (f) As a child grows older work time should grow proportionately. God’s standard is that about 6/7s of an adult’s time should be work time. We must be careful to see that school homework, piano lessons and practicing are also work lest we burden the child over much with other responsibilities. However, these should not be seen as the only work the child should do. There should be responsibilities in the home as well.
- (g) Rules to remember in training a child to work.
- (1) The child should not be allowed to grumble and complain when given a reasonable task.
  - (2) If the spirit of irritability and failure to finish the job becomes part of the child’s general attitude it will also be true of him when he is older.
  - (3) A bad spirit in work is rebellion against authority and will grow unless it is stopped.
  - (4) The child must be required to complete the task given to him.
- (h) The Rewards of training the child to work
- (1) It is one of the greatest hindrances to juvenile delinquency
  - (2) It contributes to the overall welfare of the home
  - (3) Work that has been completed successfully will provide a feeling of accomplishment to the child.
  - (4) Work prevents boredom – the cry of the modern child.
  - (5) Work makes later and larger responsibilities easier to accept.

Summary– Warren Wiersbe, in his excellent Bible Exposition Commentary on Proverbs, sums up what we have been learning as to our responsibilities as parents. “*Along with the basic necessities of physical life, what should the godly home provide for the children?*” He sums them up by saying that there are three:

- The First Way we lead our children is by **example**. “*The righteous man leads a blameless life; blessed are his children after him.*” (Proverbs 20:7)
- The Second Way we lead our children is by **instruction**. “*My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother.*” (Proverbs 1:8 and 6:20)
- The Third Way we lead our children is by **loving discipline**. “*My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction; for whom he Lord loves he corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.*” (Proverbs 3:11–12)