



Global College of Ministry

EXPLORE

The Christian & The Home

Marriage & the Home

(Adapted from *Path to Righteousness* by Linda Poitras)

“But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh; so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder”
(Mark 10:6-9).

Introduction

We cannot begin a discussion about marriage without first understanding what is involved. Mark 10:6-9 indicates marriage is a joining of one man and one woman by a holy God. This is how God created man and woman in the Garden of Eden – to be the completion of each other. Genesis 2:20-25 tells the complete story of the first marriage. Verse 24 is almost an exact replica of our memory verse: *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one flesh.”*

Today, the majority of young people (and even older folks) do not really understand what is involved in this idea of “1 + 1 = 1.” Notice this concept does not make room for mothers, fathers, aunts, and uncles. It is just a man and a woman. That is why Jesus said, *“...For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh”* (Matthew 19:5).

People everywhere have taken this serious and binding contract, and made it as meaningless as a piece of paper. God does not look at it so. We would be wise to go back to His original plan for joining two into one. Then, carefully and prayerfully follow His instructions.

To those who are considering marriage, pray for God’s will in the choice of a mate. When repeating the wedding vows, seriously consider what you are promising to each other.

To those already married, remember the solemn vows made before God, the officiating minister, and the congregation. Pray that the Holy Spirit will bring all things to your remembrance. Only physical death should bring separation. It is a vow we must pay (Ecclesiastes 5:4). Remember all those witnesses around you that day? *“God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all them that are about him”* (Psalm 89:7). Marriage is no joke!

The Purpose of Marriage

Many people have the wrong idea about why they should get married. Some look on marriage as a legal means to satisfy their lust. Others enter into marriage to get children, or to have someone to work and care for them. One lady said, “To give out ‘food money’ is a difficult

experience. I must marry so that the man will shoulder this responsibility.” But does she have any guarantee the he will take on any responsibility? Many times, the wife ends up working harder than ever to support the husband’s education or other desires. On the other hand, the man who chooses a wife simply because he wants someone to cook for him can find himself having much difficulty meeting her demands for this same “food money,” not to mention clothing and adequate housing. What is the correct reason for marriage? What does the Bible have to say on this important subject?

Marriage is union. Marriage is not two people living their own lives under the same roof, doing things to please themselves. It is the union of one man and one woman in the sight of God, becoming one flesh. This is the most sacred of relations ordained by God on earth. It needs to be treasured with love and sincerity. Both partners have to sever all relations and old ties, and please each other in order for this new important step to work. This union is for a lifetime.

Marriage is commitment. We need to remind ourselves of the value of this important word. It means “a continuing obligation, promise, pledge” (*Webster’s Encyclopedic Dictionary*). This is what Jesus meant when He said: “*For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife*” (Mark 10:9). There is a “continuing obligation” to work, grow, and live together until death. The “promise, pledge” of your marriage vows should mean something to you.

The Principles of Marriage

Married people should be easy to identify. It is sometimes difficult to tell which woman in a group is a man’s wife, since he is laughing, joking, and making intimate comments to them all. Women can also have close association with married men, never giving honor to their husbands, as is their due. This is not Scriptural, and will cause much heartache. What does the Scripture say about my actions as a married person?

Marriage is binding. The Pharisees were trying to trick Jesus and get Him to say something that would turn the people against Him. They asked Him if it were okay for a man to put away his wife for any reason. It is in response to this question that Jesus spoke the words of our memory verse.

- 📖 Matthew records it in almost the exact words Mark used: “*And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female. And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder*” (Matthew 19:4-6).
- 📖 Paul, in his writings to the church at Corinth, taught this same principle when he said: “*And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband; But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife*” (1 Corinthians 7:10-11).

This principle needs to be considered prayerfully before the marriage contract is ever entered into. We must not think like the world around us that enters into marriage with the notion “if it doesn’t work, I’ll just get a divorce.” Knowing that God’s Word is clear about the duration of marriage would make a difference in the number of broken marriages.

Marriage is until death. Paul spent much time speaking of the state of matrimony to new churches. They were from heathen societies. Their culture and traditions meant they had many questions as to what was right and wrong. He devoted 1 Corinthians 7 to this topic. 1 Corinthians 7:39 gives another principle that makes a lot of difference in a marriage: *“The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.”* Death was the only thing that freed a person from the marriage contract.

Marriage is between only one man and one woman. Another principle that would make a big difference today is that there are no sexual relationships outside of the marriage contract. Husbands and wives do not play around; they remain faithful and true to each other. The writer of Hebrews had some sobering comments to make about this: *“Marriage is honourable in all and the bed undefiled, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge”* (Hebrews 13:4). Some may choose to play around while married, but God will be their ultimate judge. As God’s Word says: *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”* (Hebrews 10:31).

Who Should I Marry?

This question has been debated and passed around for centuries. Many times the choice was made according to the financial status of the partner, and even sometimes because of fame or position. All of these are shaky foundations on which to build a lifelong relationship. They will not last. God’s Word gives us the answer we need, and the foundation He gives will never crumble or fall.

Christians should marry only Christians.

- 📖 The first question that comes to mind is “Who is a Christian?” It is anyone who has believed? James tells us that the devils believe. Are they Christians? *“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble”* (James 2:19). Is it only those who attend my church? God does not look on the outward appearance, but on the heart (1 Samuel 16:7). How do I know someone is a Christian? James 1:19-27. Verse 22 says it best: *“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”*
- 📖 Why is the devil not a true believer? Because he will not obey. You can know for sure that the person you want to marry is a Christian when he has obeyed the gospel, which is the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ at work in his life. (1 Corinthians 15:1-4).
- 📖 *“Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the*

body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:3-6). That is why marrying within your church is encouraged. You can be more sure of what the person has been taught. You also have the opportunity to see what he is practicing in his life.

Christians should follow God's instructions for choosing a partner. God has made a distinction between those who are true believers and those who are not. He tells us repeatedly in His Word, that we should, *"come out from among them and be ye separate"* (1 Corinthians 6:17; Isaiah 52:11; Revelation 18:4).

- 📖 Many people "profess" Christianity, but they do not obey. Be careful to know the type of person you are joining yourself with until death. *"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people"* (2 Corinthians 6:14-16).
- 📖 When you become "one flesh" with another person, you become what he is. *"Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh"* (1 Corinthians 6:15-16). Be very careful and extremely prayerful!

What if I am already married to an unbeliever?

This question is an important one, since many times we come to a saving knowledge of Jesus after we have been married many years. God's Word even has answers for this situation, as He promised to meet our every need.

Should I stay or go? Being married to an unbelieving (disobedient) partner can be a frustrating and trying situation, but do not despair. Paul spoke of this dilemma to the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 7:12-16. His advice was to stay with them in the hope that they too would come to know Jesus. *"For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?"* (1 Corinthians 7:16).

How can I help save my partner? It is an old adage that "actions speak louder than words." Many times preaching will only drive the unsaved loved one further away. But what partner can stand against a godly spirit and submissive attitude in love that is seasoned with much prayer? It may not come in a day or two, but God's Word is true, so it will come. The Apostle Peter wrote of this in his epistles to the New Testament Church in 1 Peter 3:1-7. He was speaking to the saved wife married to an unsaved husband. His teachings are as follows:

- 📖 The woman must submit herself to her husband and recognize his leadership of the family (Ephesians 5:22). This is another reason why women should be careful who they choose to marry, as that person is to become the "head."

- 📖 She must conduct herself in a holy and respectful manner with a gentle and quiet spirit (1 Peter 3:4). Loud preaching and refusing to be a proper “help-meet” will never win the husband.
- 📖 She must endeavor to win her husband more by her behavior than her words. 1 Peter 3:2 says, *“While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.”* The word “conversation” here could have been translated from the original text meaning “conduct” (*Slimline Reference Edition of the Holy Bible – KJV*). Peter was actually telling wives to act correctly and their husbands would notice that God was in control of their lives.
- 📖 A woman in this situation should always live by the Word of God. It should be her comforter and advisor. Her prayer should be asking the Lord Jesus to give her patience and strength to enable her to stand the test. She should always be cautious not to return evil for evil, but to repay evil with good. The “golden rule” would apply here very well: *“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”* (Matthew 7:12).
- 📖 Be careful not to challenge your husband, as this will only bring his wrath on you. Let him know about your church activities, and always take care of his needs before leaving to go to church. If you do not, you will cause him to resent the church and its activities. Remember he has been appointed by God as the “head” of your family, and your arguments to the contrary cannot change this fact (Ephesians 5:22-24).

What if my unsaved loved one is my wife? God’s Word does not deal extensively with this situation, simply because the man is supposed to be the “head” of the home. If he loves his wife properly, she should follow him into a search for knowledge of the deeper things of God. She should also love him enough to submit to his leadership.

However, this is not a license for men to marry outside of the church of God. Men should avoid looking for a partner among unbelievers, or those who have not obeyed the gospel. Your obedience to God’s Word and way is the only guarantee you have of His promises at work in your life and marriage.

Let your attitude, behavior, talk, and walk show the world that you are a mature Christian who is practicing the Word of God. Hide God’s Word in your heart daily so you will be able to live according

*“Successful marriage is always a triangle:
A Man, A Woman. . . and God!” – Cecil Myers*

to the principles laid down by God for His children. This will only be possible with much prayer, fasting, and a steadfast belief that God means what He says. Obedience to God’s Word will bring the promised result of a happy and rewarding marriage.

Study Questions

1. What does Mark 10:6-9 indicate about marriage? _____

-
-
-
2. Explain the concept of “1+1=1.” _____
-
-
-
-
-
3. List and briefly explain the two (2) reasons the Bible gives for marriage.
- 1) _____
-
-
-
-
- 2) _____
-
-
-
-
4. List and briefly explain three (3) things the Bible says about my actions as a married person.
- 1) _____
-
-
- 2) _____
-
-
- 3) _____
-
-
5. Explain and give two (2) Scripture references for God’s instructions for choosing a marriage partner.
- 1) _____
-
-
- 2) _____
-
-

[illegible][illegible]

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

The Family – God’s Way

(Adapted from *Path to Righteousness* by Linda Poitras)

“For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him”
(Genesis 18:19).

Introduction

From the first time God made a covenant with man, it has been His priority that fathers lead their children to follow Him.

His law, given to Moses on Mt. Sinai, had at the heart, a plan for families: fathers were to be constantly training their children in God’s ways. They did not just tell them about God – they showed them. It was not just an occasional talk or visit to church. It was a continuous thing, designed by God as a constant reminder of how He intended to pass along His covenant and our faith in Him.

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

This was God’s specific plan for making sure the children of Israel never forgot who delivered them from Egypt. He meant for the fathers to always tell the children, and to live according to God’s law so they would see God’s plan in action.

However, it did not happen that way. The fathers did not obey God’s law. They did not continue to tell their children, and the result was the same as it is today: their children forgot who God was, and did not follow Him.

After the death of Joshua, the Bible says this: *“And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers; and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel”* (Judges 2:10).

Why did this new generation not know the Lord and the things He had done for them? Because their parents had not taught them. There were no written history books, nor even any Bibles to read to find information about what had taken place in Egypt. There was only the experience of

those who had been there, who had actually walked in the wilderness and seen the hand of God as He gave the land of Canaan to them. They did not share this with their children, and obviously the children did not have their own experience with God. Whose job is it to teach the children?

Husbands Are the Head of the Family

As much as men love to declare themselves the “stronger” vessel, they are not very quick to accept their God-given responsibility in the home. In most cultures and societies of the world, men are the strong-silent type, working hard to provide for the necessities of life, but seen very little in the home. They are too busy to spend time with the family, because they must provide the means for doctor bills, food, education, and a place to live. This is not God’s complete plan. We have taken the Scripture that teaches the father to care for his family (1 Timothy 5:8) to mean that he should concern himself only with the physical aspects of his family’s need.

God Ordained – The family is the most basic unit in society. Someone has to lead. God chose the man to be the leader, and He called him the “head.” *“For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body”* (Ephesians 5:23).

“God has given us the authority to guide, guard, and govern – direct, protect, and correct. In the home, the man is to be prophet, priest, and king – he is to nourish, cherish, and admonish.” – T. F.

God as Example – As head, the man is not to suppress and oppress. His example is Christ, so the husband has no excuse for not knowing how he should treat his wife and family. *“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it...So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself”* (Ephesians 5:25, 28). The fifth chapter of Ephesians gives a clear picture of the type of love a husband is supposed to have for his wife. A real “head” (husband) will never be guilty of treating his wife in a way that would hurt or demean her. She too has a definite place in God’s plan for the family.

Wives Submit to Their Husbands

“I have never seen a problem with a submissive wife when she is loved by her husband in the same way Christ loves the church.” – Dr. Leman Strauss

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord” (Ephesians 5:22). This submission is not talking about a type of slavery, or suppression by a man. God has a distinct purpose for the woman in relation to her home and family.

“...as unto the Lord” – A wife’s submissiveness to her husband is seen by God as an actual part of her obedience to Jesus (*The Full Life Study Bible*, p. 1857, note on Ephesians 5:22).

Responsibilities include love for:

📖 Husbands – Paul wrote to Titus with instructions for the aged women: *“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands...”* (Titus 2:4). This love includes their attitudes toward their family. *Webster’s Encyclopedic Dictionary* gives the definitions of these attitudes:

- Chaste – innocent of immoral sexual activity
- Discreet – able to keep silent about matters where prudence requires it
- Keepers at home – taking care of the needs at home
- Good – morally excellent, virtuous, well behaved, dutiful, kind
- Obedient to their own husbands – willing to submit to their chosen “head”

Why were these attitudes important? Titus 2:5 says: *“...that the word of God be not blasphemed.”* The Old Testament has many references to this “blasphemy,” and both Isaiah (Isaiah 52:5) and Ezekiel (Ezekiel 36:20) wrote of it and reprimanded the children of Israel for their actions.

The most graphic illustration of this is found in 2 Samuel 12. Here David is confronted by the prophet Nathan for his sin with Bathsheba, and his murder of her husband. Nathan told David that he had *“despised (made of little account) the commandment of the Lord”* (2 Samuel 12:9). This

“No amount of success in the ministry can compensate for failure in the home.” – T. F. Tenney

had given the nations round about a reason to talk. They now had ammunition whereby they could accuse the king of God’s chosen people of practicing some of their sins.

David broke at least two of the Ten Commandments (murder and adultery – Exodus 20:13-14), with no regard to any of the consequences. Bathsheba lost her husband and child as a result of her failure to love her husband and live by the correct attitudes of a godly wife. Both David and Bathsheba paid a terrible price for their sin.

God said He would bring three different things on David in punishment: *“I will raise up evil against thee; I will take thy wives before thine eyes; I will do this thing before all Israel; Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die”* (2 Samuel 12:11,14).

Until his death, David was an example of God’s judgment on a spiritual leader and father who had greatly sinned. *“Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife”* (2 Samuel 12:10).

📖 Children – *“...to love their children”* (Titus 2:4). It has always been the duty and joy of mothers to love their children. This love is best shown in her work with the father to train her children properly in the things of God (Proverbs 1:8-9; 1 Timothy 5:10). Ezekiel makes it a bit plainer when he speaks to the nation of Israel and says: *“Behold, every one that useth*

proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter” (Ezekiel 16:44). The sins committed in Israel by the mothers would be repeated in the lives of their daughters. What a message to us to be very careful with the way we live before our children.

“Guide older women into lives of reverence so they end up as neither gossips nor drunks, but models of goodness. By looking at them, the younger women will know how to love their husbands and children, be virtuous and pure, keep a good house, be good wives. We don’t want anyone looking down on God’s Message because of their behavior” (Titus 2:3-5, The Message).

Children Obey Their Parents

This commandment from the Lord lets us know what the children are supposed to do. Their task is obedience. However, it makes a big difference what their parents are asking them to do. It is supposed to be God’s Word, will, and way. Sadly, many times parents do not ask children to obey God or His Word. Children get to follow their own selfish desires, and all members of the family are unhappy and in distress. But look what God has promised to children who follow His plan: *“Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Ephesians 6:1-3).*

📖 ***“...That it may be well with thee...”*** Here, God is promising that we will be well taken care of.

📖 ***“...and thou mayest live long on the earth.”*** We are promised long life for the honor we give our parents.

When God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, He included this part because it was a special blessing. But there was a string attached. They were not only to obey, they were to teach these laws and promises to their children, thus forming the unbroken chain of a continuing pattern of walking in God’s way (Deuteronomy 4:9).

The “Buck” Stops Here!

This American expression means that the one at the top gets the credit or blame, depending on the result. As the head of the family, fathers must answer for the outcome of the lives of their children.

God has *always* had a plan for every part of our lives. He will not force us to follow it, but He will keep His Word. He will send His just punishment on those who do not obey His Word and way. This places a tremendous responsibility on the father. Children may *listen* to what you say, but they will *become* what you are.

When Abraham told Sarah to say she was his sister, did he ever dream that one day Isaac would commit the same sin with his wife, Rebekah? This seed of deceit sown in Isaac's life was reproduced in the life of Jacob. What a price Jacob paid for his deceit! First his father-in-law deceived him about the wife of his choice, and then his sons continued the same pattern begun many years before in their great grandfather, Abraham. Joseph was also Jacob's son, but somehow Joseph learned a lesson about reaping what you sow. He refused to follow in the pattern of deceit. As a result, he was blessed abundantly and used by God in a mighty way.

Fathers, be careful of the seeds you sow in the lives of your children. God has given you a place, and no matter what you think, or how much pressure is placed on you by this world, you are still the "head" of the home. All fathers will give an account for their actions toward their children; a reckoning day will come. Remember David? God forgave him, but oh, what a harvest of sorrow he did reap! The next chapter after the prophet Nathan gave David God's pronouncement of judgment on his house, his family troubles began. 2 Samuel 13 tells the sad story of incest and murder among David's children.

Let us choose to follow God's plan for our family: a godly father leading the way; a submissive and God-fearing mother supporting him in love; and well-behaved, obedient children who are taught the ways of the Lord following behind.

"Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in His ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee"
(Psalm 100:1-2).

Study Questions

1. Write the Scripture passage that is God's specific plan for making sure the children of Israel never forgot who delivered them from Egypt. _____

2. Write out Joshua 2:10. Explain what this verse means to the new generation of Israel.

3. Briefly explain how husbands are the head of the family. Support your answer with Scripture. _____

4. Give a brief definition for each of these attitudes mentioned in Titus 2:4.

chaste _____

discreet _____

good _____

keepers at home _____

5. Briefly explain the punishment God brought on David for his sins of murder and adultery. Support your answer with Scripture. _____

6. Write out Ephesians 6:1-3. List (with a brief explanation), the two promises included in these verses, meant for children. _____

7. Explain what is meant by the following statement: "The 'Buck' Stops Here!" _____

Practical Tips for Family Life

(Adapted from *Path to Righteousness* by Linda Poitras)

“My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother”
(Proverbs 5:20).

Introduction

We have already understood that God has a specific plan for all His creation, including men, women, and children. He did not create any of us with the idea that we would be poor, downtrodden people with no hope or purpose. He even planned to give us many wonderful gifts (Matthew 7:9-11). Why is it that human nature tends to believe that God has hidden the best things from us because He does not want us to know His best and greatest? This was the lie the serpent used to deceive Eve. Man has been falling for the same lie for centuries.

God wants to bless us. He wants us to know joy, peace, happiness, prosperity, and all the good things He has created. But He cannot bless us when we continue to make our own path instead of following His “Path to Righteousness.” What are some of the “good gifts” He wants to give us in our families?

A Successful and Happy Marriage

The happiness of any marriage depends on the love and commitment between husband and wife.

Love for God and His Word comes first – it is the road map to determine the whole relationship (1 John 2:3-6).

Love for the other person comes next – we should be more concerned with the needs and desires of our partner than our own (Ephesians 5:23).

Following the perfect example – Paul, in his writings to the church at Ephesus, gives this clear picture: husbands love, wives submit, and both care for the other more than themselves, just as Christ gave Himself for the church (Ephesians 22:33).

Encourage one another – a Christian husband should be very careful to help his wife fulfill her God-given role - both in and out of the home – in the community and church. A submissive wife will not be a troublemaker or gossip, but will support and bless the work her husband is trying to do for the kingdom of God (Ecclesiastes 9:9; Proverbs 5:18).

- He should praise her good points and not criticize her in front of others.
- He should let her know he enjoys her cooking and appearance.

- She should endeavor to keep his clothes clean and neat so he presents a fine picture to the public.
- She should be careful with meal preparation, both the times he will require feeding, and also the most economical way to provide for such. She should not be a waster of his hard-earned money (Proverbs 31:14-15).
- Each partner should be careful to show respect and love to the other, both in and out of the home (1 Peter 3:7). Any problems they have should be discussed in private – not in front of the children.
- Paul wrote to his “son” Timothy, admonishing him in proper conduct. His indictment toward men who did not take care of their families was quite severe: *“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel”* (1 Timothy 5:8). Husbands need to take a careful look at this Scripture, as it is not talking only about food, clothing, and shelter. Paul had been speaking to Timothy about the attitude and spirit of some of the brethren. He was speaking about the care of the whole person, not just the physical. Fathers/husbands, do not just give money and forget about the rest. Your job is much more demanding. The way you care for your family includes the time you spend training them in the things and ways of God.
- Keep the family circle tightly closed. You should never share the intimate details of family life with anyone, not even your parents. You do not need a third party to listen to your problems and make a decision about what you should do. They cannot possibly understand all the details that make up your daily lives. Satan uses the intimacy of sharing with others to cause severe breaks in relationships between men and women who were supposed to have complete confidence and trust in each other.
- There is a wise saying: “The family that prays together stays together!” Prayer is one of the best ways you can possibly find to bind your family unit together in love. It is difficult to have contention with someone who you pray with daily. God knows how to keep us loving and kind to others. Why not follow His plan?

“No man has a right to talk to his children about God until he has first talked to God about his children.” – T. F. Tenney

The Blessing of Children

God’s Word makes it clear that children are a blessing and heritage from the Lord (Psalm 127:3; Genesis 33:5; 48:4). This blessing and heritage can become a curse and hurt if we forsake the ways of the Lord. Joshua reminded the children of Israel:

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD” (Joshua 24:15).

In this same chapter, he spoke of what happens when God's ways are abandoned. *"If ye forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods, then he will turn and do you hurt, and consume you, after that he hath done you good"* (Joshua 24:20). Just because God blesses us with children does not mean that we are free to do with them as we wish. Yes, we choose our path, but we also choose our consequences. What are some things we should be careful about with our children?

Before pregnancy – The wife/mother should be concerned and careful about her state of health before, during, and after pregnancy. This concern will actually have a bearing on the health of her children. If the mother is careful about her health, this habit will make it easier to look after her children. Personal and general cleanliness are the foundations for good health habits.

During pregnancy – The wife/mother should use every available resource of medical attention during pregnancy.

- The pregnant wife should make periodic visits to the clinic or hospital where she plans to deliver. This will help ensure a safe delivery and healthy baby.
- Any necessary supplies used by the doctor or midwife should be gathered as early as possible.
- It is also during this time that she should begin preparing the supplies she will need for her child. She should not wait until she is ready to deliver, since it is less costly to look, plan, and prepare before the time arrives.
- During this period, she should do her best to work and save some things, as she will need a time of rest and recovery before returning to her normal activities. She should do her best to save some of the following:
 - Money
 - Fuel
 - Firewood
 - Non-perishable food items, such as corn, rice, dried cassava, pepper, salt, and any others that the family is accustomed to using

This pre-planning will be a great help when the baby arrives.

After delivery – A mother must be careful to keep her child immunized to prevent childhood diseases. She should listen to the advice given to avoid malnutrition and sickness in her children. Clinics and maternity homes usually have good advice about the things available that will help with feeding and prevention of disease for the whole family. She should take note of this advice and make them habits in her home.

- Caring for the baby is important, especially keeping the napkins clean and dry.
- Washing will become a daily chore, so be sure there is plenty of soap and water available. Simple cleanliness can prevent such life-threatening diseases as cholera, diarrhea, and food poisoning – all killers of small children.

- Breastfeeding is the best method of nourishment – it is the God-given choice. It is also the healthiest. However, if you do not have proper milk for some reason, be sure your baby is well-nourished from a bottle.
- You should begin training your baby in the things of the Lord immediately after birth. Children may not be able to repeat what they hear at this age. However, they will absorb the words, songs, and spirit of love that comes from Bible stories, songs, and Scripture that they hear.
- Be careful not to neglect the father after children come.
 - Do your best to make him a part of your quiet times of loving and feeding the children.
 - Have the father pray and read Bible stories while the mother holds the small child.
 - Give the father a special place of honor where he holds the child and bonds with it.
 - Any time the father is holding the child, prepare something special for him to eat.
 - Use your imagination, but include Dad.

School age children – Just because your children enter nursery school at ages 2 ½ to three years does not mean you are finished with the responsibility of training them in the things of God. You must keep a watchful eye for their progress as they interact with other children, and are exposed to methods and practices of family life other than their own.

- Find out about their progress at school.
- Make time to play with them, sing songs and tell Bible stories.
- Listen to your children's account of their activities and ideas.
- Teach them to say simple prayers with the understanding that you talk to God the same way you talk to Mommy and Daddy.
- Make sure their uniforms are clean and neat daily.
- Do your best to supply their school needs. You may even include them in this process. When older family members (grandparents, aunts, uncles) give gifts to your children, help them learn to use their resources to buy their needed items.
- Food is important at this growing stage in a child's life. Do not just give them money to spend, but prepare nutritious and healthy meals for them at home. Make sure that any money given is used well, as children always like to buy sweets.
- Take time to organize their free periods. It is a good idea to begin the responsibility of small, simple chores around the house during this time. Children need to understand they are part of the family in more ways than receiving.
- Know the type of playmates or friends they have. Peers play an important part in every child's life.
- Let your children know they are important. Every effort they make is valuable.

Discipline of Children – most parents do not enjoy this, but it is an essential part of family life. One of my favorite African proverbs says:

"A young tree can be easily bent. But if you try to bend an old tree, you will break it."

This supports the understanding from God's Word that discipline must begin early in every child trained to follow God's way (Proverbs 22:6). The Bible gives many guidelines about discipline of children. Wise parents study and follow this advice carefully.

- Who disciplines? It is a serious mistake to tell a child, "When your father comes, he will punish you for what you have done." If your children deserve correction for some wrong thing they have done, you must correct them in love. This gives them the message that both mother and father agree they cannot do bad things and get away with it. You love them and want them to be good Christians and law-abiding citizens. Tell them Bible stories that support this understanding; Jesus is not happy with those who do wrong (sin).
- Children have to be trained to love, honor, and respect authority. This is best shown in their attitude towards their father. It should include older adults of all stations, including schoolmasters, policemen, government officials, and especially their pastor. This is a vital point, since your child usually adopts your attitude towards such authority types. Do you speak well or evil of these people?
- Children need to understand that your love for them is only as strong as your desire to help them know the law of God and the land. You do not want them to commit crimes against their nation or their God and say, "But Mommy and Daddy never told me it was wrong!"
- Never discipline your child in anger. Always have a spirit of love and concern for their well-being and happiness. Pray with them after discipline times, and make sure they understand why they have been punished (Proverbs 13:24; Hebrews 12:6-7).

Conclusion

In every aspect of family life, Love is the key. Husbands, *love* your wives. Wives, submit to your husbands because you *love* them. Children, obey your parents in *love*. Discipline happens because of *love*. Without *love*, there can be no ideal family unit.

"Our greatest influence is our example." – T. F. Tenney

A time of family devotions is a vital. Deuteronomy 6 gives a clear understanding of the necessity of time spent with our family leading them in the laws and promises of God. When we set a good example, and our children see our love of God, it becomes a natural thing for them to work toward the same goal – *to please God*.

Example is always the best teacher and it will draw followers. Set the correct example for your family, and God will surely bless and reward you according to all His good gifts and plan. Let us lead the way for our families as we follow Christ down His "*Path to Righteousness*."

"But as for me and my house. . . we will serve the Lord!" (Joshua 24:15)

Study Questions

1. What does the happiness of any marriage depend on? _____

2. List and briefly explain (with Scripture reference) four (4) characteristics needed for a successful and happy marriage.
 - 1) _____

 - 2) _____

 - 3) _____

 - 4) _____

3. List eight (8) things the husband and wife can do to encourage each other.
 - 1) _____

 - 2) _____

 - 3) _____

 - 4) _____

 - 5) _____

 - 6) _____

 - 7) _____

 - 8) _____

4. What should the wife/mother be concerned about before pregnancy, with regards to her children? _____

5. List four (4) things the wife/mother should be careful about during pregnancy.
 - 1) _____

 - 2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

6. During pregnancy, the wife/mother should do her best to save what four (4) things?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

7. After delivery, what should a mother be careful to do medically? _____

8. What four (4) habits/regular activities need to be practiced in the home after delivery of a new baby?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

9. List five (5) ways to prevent neglect of the father after children come.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

10. List ten (10) practices that will help you keep a watchful eye for the progress of your school age children.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

5) _____

6) _____

7) _____

8) _____

9) _____

10) _____

11. List four (4) points to consider about the discipline of children. Support with Scripture where possible.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

12. Write the African proverb used in this lesson about the discipline of children. _____








13. How does this proverb support our understanding from God's Word about discipline?

Marriage with Purpose

“And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly”
(Acts 18:26).

“Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles” (Romans 16:3-4).

*P*risilla and Aquilla were an effective husband and wife team who worked diligently for the extension of the kingdom. Throughout the New Testament, they appeared ever willing to serve wherever and whenever needed. In the six references to this couple in the New Testament, they are always mentioned together, never separately. They made an impact on their world, even risking their lives for the sake of the gospel. They are a continuing example of what can happen when husband and a wife work together.

-  They worked together.
-  They prayed together.
-  They served together.
-  They taught together.
-  They encouraged together.
-  They were a team together.
-  They risked their lives together.

Priscilla stands out as one of the great women of the New Testament, always portrayed in team ministry with her husband.




They did not share the predicament found in the following story.

An African chief called his men together for a meeting at the town hall. He was concerned that there were no longer any genuine men left in his village. He thought that their wives were controlling them. To find out if this was true, he requested those that knew their wives ordered them around to leave the hall through the door on the right. Those that felt they were in charge of their home should leave through the door on the left. All of the men, except one, left through the door on the right.

The chief called his men together again and asked the brave, lonely man to come forward. The chief asked, “Could you share your secret?”

The man shyly responded, “When I left home this morning, my wife said to me, ‘Husband, never follow the crowd.’ ”

The *Life Application Bible Commentary (Acts)* describes four changeless qualities that enabled Priscilla and Aquilla to be a team in ministry.

-  They were committed to truth and knew how to handle the Scriptures.
-  Although they were tentmakers by trade, they were focused on ministry. They had an eye on eternity.
-  They were available with their home always open and also willing to move wherever needed. (See I Corinthians 16:19 and Acts 18: 2, 18.)

They used their home as a center for spreading the gospel. Apollos was likely invited into their home where “they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly” (Acts 18:26).

-  They were committed to ministry. Everywhere they went, lives were touched.

It Is Not Good to Be Alone

“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him . . . And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him” (Genesis 2:18, 20).

The first title given to a woman was “helper.” The Hebrew word is interpreted as “help, counterpart of himself” (*Adam Clarke’s Commentary*). According to Charles Swindoll in *Strike the Original Match*, it refers to “one who assists another to reach total fulfillment; someone who comes to the rescue of another.”

The *World Book Dictionary* defines “helper” as “a person who helps; assistant, supporter.” It defines “help” as “to provide what is needed or useful . . . to relieve a person in want, trouble or distress . . . to make more effectual; assist in bringing about; further; promote . . . to assist to attain or obtain something specified . . .to be of service or advantage to; to make better.”

Because “it [was] not good for a man to be alone,” God desired to bring someone special alongside that was “suitable for him.” (Also read Genesis 2:21-22 and Ecclesiastes 4:9-12). A suitable helper was designed for man to complement his skills and disposition and to make him complete. She is to be a perfect fit. The right wife is worth waiting for and should be chosen carefully in harmony with the will of God

“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh” (Ephesians 5:31).

“What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Mark 10:9).

Marriage works best when a husband and wife operate as a team, understanding each other and working together to accomplish the mission and purpose God has given them.

Study Questions

1. What is interesting about the six references to Aquila and Priscilla in the New Testament?

2. What is this couple an example of? _____

3. What four qualities enabled Priscilla and Aquila to have a marriage resulting in ministry?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

4) _____

4. What was the first title ever given to a woman? _____

5. What is meant by “helper”? _____

6. What qualities does God look for in a couple when He brings them together? _____

7. Provide two scriptures that show God brings couples together. _____

Additional Notes

Fathers as Family Leaders

“Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek.” (Acts 16:1)

“...We entered into the house of Philip, the evangelist, which was one of the seven; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy.”
(Acts 21:8, 9)

Men With A Mission

The Book of Acts is the story of “Men With A Mission.” As you read through this story you quickly see how men with a mission to reach the world accomplished their vision. In the midst of mass evangelism, miracles, and the Word of God spreading to the known world, it is easy to overlook an important point. Hidden within the pages of the twenty-eight chapters of Acts, there is also the hint of “men with a mission” that did their part to be Fathers; family leaders.

Timothy, My Son

As you read of the Apostle Paul finding Timothy, it is easy to pass over the fact that his mother was a believer “...but his father was a Greek.” (Acts 16:1) There was something that attracted Paul to Timothy. It is true that Timothy was “well reported of by the brethren.” (Acts 16:2) But there seems to be something more that caused Paul to ask Timothy “...to go forth with him.” (Acts 16:3) Later it becomes clear that Timothy became like a son to Paul. Paul recognized the importance of a father, a family leader, and understood that this was lacking in the life of Timothy. Therefore, he adopted Timothy as his own son. Deep within the heart of Paul was a passion to reach, not only the world, but to also make an impact on one young man looking for spiritual fatherly leadership. It seems that it is with a sense of fatherly pride that Paul writes:

“Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith...” (1 Timothy 1:2)

“This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare.” (1 Timothy 1:18)

“To Timothy, my dearly beloved son...” (2 Timothy 1:2)

Two books in the New Testament were written to Paul’s son, Timothy, to provide fatherly guidance, instruction, and leadership. These books are called 1 and 2 Timothy. These are not the only books in the Bible written to son(s). The first nine chapters of Proverbs gives thirteen lessons like a father would give his son when reaching the early teenage years. Each one begins with “my son” or “my sons.” Proverbs in the Bible and in many cultures are used to pass wisdom and truth from one generation to another. When you closely examine it, the entire

Bible was written by a loving Father who wanted to provide leadership to His earthly children; both sons and daughters.

Philip's Daughters

As Paul journeyed toward Jerusalem, the Bible unwinds for us the vivid account of the Holy Spirit testifying that Paul was going to encounter troubles in Jerusalem.

We find that Paul visited Philip and stayed with him at Caesarea. Philip had four daughters.

The Bible says that they were "...virgins, which did prophesy." (Acts 21:9) Philip was a great man of God whom the Lord transported supernaturally to witness to an Ethiopian by the roadside. At that time, he was having an outstanding revival in Samaria (Acts 8). He was also used in miracles and casting out demons (Acts 8:6-7). He was a man with a mission to reach the world BUT also was a father, a family leader. It would be unusual to have four daughters used in spiritual gifts without proper parental leadership training. Philip must have brought these young ladies up correctly. Our story also says emphatically that they were "virgins." It appears that Philip had his house under control and provided family leadership. He produced and raised four young ladies who had maintained their purity and were being used by the Lord.

"One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" (1 Timothy 3:4-5; See also 1 Timothy 3:11)

The Bible makes it clear that we must be leaders at home if we expect to be leaders in the church. We must first be able to rule (lead) our own family if we expect to become truly qualified for ministry. We must be effective at reaching our families before we will be effective in reaching our world. Our number one responsibility in evangelizing the world is the evangelism of our own children. This is our priority.

"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26)

As a family leader we could say, "What shall it profit a father if he gain the whole world and lose his own children? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his children?"

Fathers - Guides on the Road of Life

"Fathers are so special...
Sometimes, we just don't know;
How dear they are,
How blessed we are,
Until they help us grow.
And fathers are our leaders,

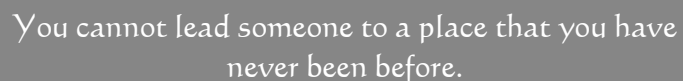
We need them to impart,
The truth,
That God will lead us on
And dwell within our hearts.”
(Linda Poitras)

John Maxwell constantly reminds us that “leadership is influence.” Much time and effort is spent today developing leadership skills to be used in the business world. However, one of the best places to develop leadership skills is right in the home. Fathers should be the number one influencers in their families. They can learn how to be effective leaders by leading small groups at home. It has been said that leaders “know the way, go the way, and show the way.”

Ed Roebert in his book, *Mastering Management in the Church* defines the word “lead” as “to go before; guide; direct; precede.” It has been said, “a leader who leads must precede.”

Daddy, Your Child is Saying

“...Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.”
(Ruth 1:16)



You cannot lead someone to a place that you have
never been before.

The role of spiritual leadership in the home has not been given to wives.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife...” (Ephesians 5: 22-23)

The husband is the head of the wife and therefore the leader of the family. The entire family must submit to the family head or family leader. However, if “Father” is not leading, the wife and children adopt the policy, “lead, follow, or get out of the way.” Someone else will become the leader and that is not the will of God. It is common today for fathers to give their leadership role over to someone else.

They often step down from their place of leadership to pursue business, money, and success in the world. They are committed to their work but not to their families. One thing is for sure; someone is going to influence the family. When the father is not a Christian or refuses to lead his family, of necessity, the mother will have to step in and provide spiritual leadership and instruction. However, this is not the preferred plan of God for the family.

In the Jewish nation, the father was responsible for the direction and spiritual guidance of the family.

A Father Knows the Way

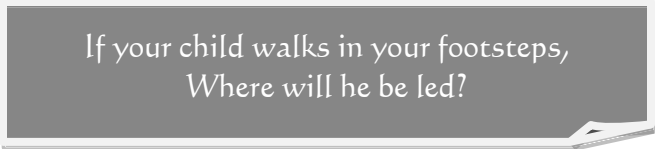
“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart:” (Deuteronomy 6:4-6)

A Father Goes the Way

Is this written to the pastor or the father; the family leader? “...Keep all the statutes and his commandments, which I command thee... (Deuteronomy 6:2)

Abraham Lincoln said, “There is just one way to train up a child in the way he should go and that is to travel the way yourself.”

A father does not say, “Get going!” But instead he says, “Let’s go!” He leads by walking. Man



If your child walks in your footsteps,
Where will he be led?

was made to lead especially in the home. The largest percentage of most congregations are ladies. Where are the men? There is no more valuable possession in life than your children. They are a heritage from the Lord (Psalm 127:3)

The Psalmist David describes a godly man as “He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.” (Ps. 15:2)

A Father Shows the Way

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children...” (Deuteronomy 6: 7)

As you read this Scripture you may be thinking that it is the responsibility of the pastor, the church, or the Sunday School to lead the children. Does your pastor sit down in your house or sleep there?

“...And shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up...and thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:7-9)

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” (Proverbs 22:6)

A Father's Prayer

"My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee." (Proverbs 6:20-22)

Proverbs 17:6 says, "Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers."

Study Questions

1. Which two books were written to Paul's son in the faith, Timothy? _____

2. Why is it said that the Book of Proverbs is another book written to sons? _____

3. What was unique about Philip's four daughters? _____

4. What is the qualification for a pastor, elder, or deacon according to 1 Timothy 3:4-5 and 1 Timothy 3:11? _____

5. As fathers, what is our number one responsibility in evangelizing the world? _____

6. How does John Maxwell define "leadership?" _____

7. How does Ed Roebert define "lead?" _____

8. If Father is not leading the wife, children adopt which policy? _____

9. A Father does not say, "Get going" but? _____

10. How did David describe a godly man? _____

11. In the Jewish nation, whose responsibility was it to give guidance and spiritual direction? _____

12. Who are the glory of the children? _____

13. According to Deuteronomy 6:7-9 when and where should we teach our children "The Lord our God is one Lord?" _____

14. Quote Deuteronomy 6:4: _____

15. Why did Paul write two books to Timothy? _____

16. What has been said concerning leaders and the "way?" _____

The Little Boy Who Follows Me

A careful man I want to be,
A little boy follows me;
I do not dare to go astray
For fear he'll go the self-same way.

I cannot once escape his eyes.
Whatever he sees me do he tries.
Like ME he says he's going to be-
That little boy who follows me.

I must remember as I go
Through sun, and rain and when the winds blow
I am building for the years to be-
That little boy who follows me.

Author Unknown (Adapted)
Original Title: "The Little Chap Who Follows Me."