

The Family – It's Important To God

By Wendy Tatro

LIVING WORD MISSIONS

Table Of Contents

A God Of Order

God's Order For Mates

The Role Of The Wife

The Role Of The Husband

The Virtuous Mother

Christian Parenting

Scriptures From The Amplified Bible On The Family

God's Love In Me...

A God Of Order

As we look at the Word of God, we see that an American did not write it. Jewish people in the Hebrew culture wrote it, and the Hebrew culture is not like the American culture. That is the wonderful, awesome thing about the Word of God. It spans ages and cultures, and it relates to everyone. The first thing that you need to establish in a book on the Christian family is that God instituted the family. In Gen. 2:18-24, we read

And the Lord God said it is not good that man should be alone, I will make him a helper comparable to him. Out of the ground, the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them.

Whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. Adam gave names to all cattle, to all the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. Adam was naming the animals and he noticed there were a male and a female counterpart to each of them, but he saw that there was not a helper comparable to him. One definition of the word helper or helpmate is 'one comparable to.'

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam and he slept and He took one of his ribs and He closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, He made into a woman and He brought her to the man. And Adam said, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman for she was taken out of man." Therefore man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they shall become one flesh.

The King James says, He will leave his father and mother and shall cleave. The word "cleave" means to be joined to, join together, adhered like glue. This is the context that God had when He created man and woman. He instituted marriage by giving the woman to the man, and then we read in scripture, Therefore shall man leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife. This is the institution of marriage in scripture. Then, in Gen. 1:27 we read, So God created man in his own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them. Then God blessed them.

I did a study on this word blessed because I thought I was going to come up with some deep meaning and it just means a benefit. He saw that what He had made was good and so He gave them benefits. He blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion." This then is the institution of the family. The institution of marriage, family, and children began with the creation of man and woman. All throughout the ages God was trying to bring forth Gen. 3:15. This is the purpose for the institution of marriage.

In Malachi 2:15, God is speaking with men about divorcing their wives, and he says, And why did I give you these wives? He goes on to say that it was because He desired a godly offspring. He gave them the ability to reproduce. This is the purpose of the family and of children. God created man because He wanted fellowship with mankind.

Romans 1:20 says,

For since the creation of the world His visible attributes are clearly seen being understood by the things that are made even in His eternal power and Godhead so that they are without excuse.

This verse is referring to Ps. 19:1. In the Amplified Bible it says,

The firmament shows and proclaims His handiwork, day after day pours forth speech and night after night shows forth knowledge. There is no speech or spoken word from the stars. Their voice is not heard, yet their voice is evidence, in evidence goes out through all the earth, their sayings to the ends of the world.

These scriptures are saying that God's creation speaks of and for Him. The stars and the planets, the order that we see in the world, and daytime and nighttime have never ceased through all the ages. The seasons have never ceased or changed; the order of them has never changed. These things speak of God and His order. Order is part of God's nature. In the Amplified Bible I Cor. 14: 33 says, For He who is the source of their prophesying is not a God of confusion and disorder, but a God of peace and order. In chapters 1-2 of Genesis, we see the order of creation. God did not suddenly "boom" everything into creation. He took time and each day He created something separate. Gen. 1:1-2 says, In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void. This indicates there was a creation and then there was a place where we see Satan's rebellion. Then after that, the earth was without form and void. God could have chosen to leave it that way, but He did not. God is not a God of disorder, but a God of order and of peace.

In verse 3 we read, the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. As we read the description of creation, we can see order. In Gen. 6 God is giving Noah instructions to build the ark. This is an example of the order of our God. He says, Make yourself an ark of gopher wood, make rooms in the ark and cover it inside and outside with pitch. And this is how you shall make it. He says, this is the length the ark shall be, and He tells him a length. This is the width the ark shall be, and He tells him a width. This is the height the ark shall be, and He tells him a height. He says, you shall make a window for the ark, and you shall finish it to a cubit form above, and set the door of the ark in its side, you shall make it with lower, second and third decks. This is an orderly God. He is not leaving things to chance. He is giving Noah very specific directions, and it gets more detailed as they go.

In Gen 8:22 God is speaking after the flood and he says, While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest and cold and heat and winter and summer and day and night shall not cease. There has just been a flood that has destroyed the earth with the exception of the inhabitants of the ark. He is reestablishing His order in the earth through seedtime and harvest.

In Ex. 18 we see God establishing order among the Israelites. After the Israelites leave Egypt, Moses is having difficulty overseeing their problems. His father-in-law Jethro comes and advises him by saying,

Moreover, you shall select from all the people able men such as fear God, men

of truth hating covetousness and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all times.

This time God is establishing order in the earth among the people.

In Ex. 20-23, God gives the Ten Commandments, the law of the altar, laws concerning servants, violence, animals, property, moral principles, justice, the Sabbath, and three annual feasts. God wants order in every aspect of our lives.

In Ex. 25-28, He gives very specific, detailed instructions for building the tabernacle, right down to the place where He tells how many hooks are to be on the curtains. He tells them exactly what colors of which fibers they are to use in creating the tent and the curtain and so forth. He is a God of specifics, detail, and order.

There are four institutions placed in the earth by God: governments, work, church, and family. Any time that God has placed an institution in the earth, He has given us guidelines for that institution. That is why we are talking about God being a God of order. When we know that He is a God of order, and that He has established and ordained the family, then we know we can go to the Word of God and we can find in His Word those things, which govern the family. When we line ourselves up under those scriptures in obedience, we will reap the blessings. It is that way in any part of our Christianity. That is why we are laying this foundation.

God ordains governments. Romans 13:1-4 makes reference to this. Be obedient to those that are over you. He has ordained the institution of work according to I Tim. 5:8. If one does not work, to provide for his family, he is worse than an infidel. He has instituted the church. There are four references in regard to the church. The gates of hell would not prevail against His church. There was not yet a church, but the church was coming. In Matthew 16 and Matthew 18, Jesus makes reference to the church, but then in these two passages, I Pet. 5:1-5 and I Cor. 14:26, God is giving order to the church. There are the two references to the family, Eph 5:22-23 and Eph 6:1. This is one of my favorite scriptures in the Bible. Children, obey your parents in the Lord. That is the first scripture I taught both of my children, and they both know it.

God has established order in the life of the individual Christian by giving us priorities for our lives. A priority means something that you will give attention to. The very first priority in the life of every Christian should be his fellowship with God. In Ex. 20:3 we read, you shall have no other gods before Me. This is the place in scripture where we find the Ten Commandments. Verse 4 says,

You shall not make for yourself any carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them. Then you shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

The first three commandments that were given to Moses for the people of Israel pertained to the worship of God. God should be primary in every Christian's life. We are not necessarily talking about the amount of time spent in a day because most people have to spend more hours of their day working than in worship of God. We know we pray without ceasing and our hearts are always turned toward God, but we are not

talking about the actual hours spent.

The next priority in the life of a Christian would be the family. I think the Ten Commandments reveal that also because the very next commandment that is given in verse 12 says Honor your father and mother. The first three Commandments pertain to worshipping God; the very next thing God said was to honor your father and mother. I think that is significant for us. Your first priority is your fellowship with and worship of God.

Your second priority is your family. God said at the very beginning of creation that a man shall leave his mother and father and shall cleave or cling to his wife. It also says to be fruitful and multiply. Your family should be the second priority in your life. Some people have that out of order, and their work is the second priority in their lives. For many people in the world, work is their first priority and God has no place. In a Christian's life God is number one and family is number two.

We will now break that down. We must say that your spouse is to be a priority over your children. We do not mean that you should neglect your children for your spouse, but what we mean is this: God said leave your father and mother and cling or cleave, or be joined to your wife. Your children are some day going to leave you. At the point that your children leave you, there is only a wife and husband remaining in the family. If for eighteen or more years you have neglected that spouse for the children, you will not have much of a marriage left. That is why children are second to spouse. When you have little children you know that those little children, especially if you are a mother, take the majority of the hours of your day. Again, we are not talking about hours spent, and we are not talking about neglecting children for your spouse. You do have to realize that when you have children, you cannot neglect that spouse for the all the years that you are raising those children and expect to have the blessings of God in your marriage.

The third priority should be a Christian's work. II Thes. 3:10 says, for even when we were with you, we commanded you this: if anyone will not work, neither will he eat. You must work. If you do not work, there is nothing for God to reward. We know that in the Christian life, you are expected to work. II Chron. 15:7 says, your work shall be rewarded. I Tim 5:7-8 says,

And these things commanded they may be blameless, but if anyone does not provide for his own and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

The Amplified Bible says worse than an unbeliever that does so. God says a Christian who will not provide for his family is worse than an unbeliever. He is not saying that you are damned because of that, but the third priority in a Christian's life should be work.

The fourth priority should be your church. In the Christian life, if the Holy Spirit is leading you, you are seeking His will and His direction. When you are in God's perfect will all four of these will line up. You will not have a problem with any of them. Our pastor used to say there should not be a conflict between fellowship with God, the family, church and work. If you will remember Heb. 10:25, Not forsaking the assembling

of ourselves together, you will be able to keep church in its proper place.

Regardless of whether you teach church above work or work above church, when you are in God's perfect will, God will lead you in those things that you should do pertaining to church work. He will lead you in the secular work that you are doing if you are not a full time minister. You will have time for all.

So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them. Then God blessed them and God said to them be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subject, have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth. Gen. 1:27-28

This is God's order for marriage. In the beginning God created the male and female to be equal. We know that because verse 28 says, Then God blessed them. He blessed them both. And God said to them, be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it, have dominion over the fish of the sea... He was not talking only to the man when He said that. Therefore, we see by this scripture that God created man and woman to be equal.

In the beginning, woman was created from man, but ever since that time, man has come from woman. This is something else that shows us that God has created man and woman to be equal. This is important to remember as we learn about love and submission. Many times, the worldly view of submission has been a negative one because it has been perverted, but we are going to try to correct that.

In the beginning God created man and woman to be joint heirs. Both were to be recipients of the blessings because we are joint heirs with Jesus. We have the same privileges as Jesus does in the eyes of the Father. This is how God created man and woman in the beginning. Before sin entered into the world, love ruled. There was no sin on the earth. There was no evil, no rebellion, and there was no need for the husband to rule or for the wife to submit.

Go with me to Gen.3. This is the serpent speaking to Eve and he says in verse 4, You will surely die. He is taking to her, trying to convince her to partake of the fruit. Verse 5 says, For God knows in the day you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing good and evil. This is very likely the first time that Eve ever heard of evil. There was perfection in the Garden of Eden and love ruled. At this point, she hears something from the serpent that says, God knows that you will be like Him knowing good and evil. In verse 22 after the fall God says, Behold, man has become like one of us to know good and evil. That is what came to pass. That is the point where we know sin entered into the earth. That is how we know that love ruled before this point. There was no evil; if there is no evil then there is only love. Go back to verse 15. Father God is telling them what will happen.

I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. To the woman he said, I will greatly multiply your sorrow in your conception, in pain you shall bring forth children, your desire shall be for your husband and he shall rule over you.

When we read that He says to the woman, your desire shall be for your husband,

that does not sound like a bad thing. We should desire our husbands, but our understanding of that word is not what this meant. In the original Hebrew, that word means a number of things. Desire in this verse means to run after or over or to overflow. This is the curse that we have to deal with today in marriages. The curse was that the wife's desire would be to overflow or take over her husband. That is the problem in marriages.

At the end of that verse, Father God says, He shall rule over you. Rule means to have rule or to have dominion over. This came about because now there is evil and rebellion in the earth. Love is no longer the rule. As a matter of necessity, God had to place a function in the earth to deal with rebellion.

Adam and Eve had rebelled against God; they had disobeyed, and now that was in the earth. The disobedience was there, the rebelliousness was there, and it had to be dealt with. God could have taken His hand off, and left the earth in that state. Adam and Eve would have reproduced, their children would have been rebellious, and there would have been no control in the earth. As you read earlier, God is a God of order. God did not choose to create man and then just let there be chaos on the earth. He kept trying to bring man out of a chaotic state. God, in His wisdom, created a function to control rebellion. Someone needed to be the person in authority, and God, in His wisdom, put the man in authority. The wife, then, was to submit to her husband's authority. This was the curse of the law, and this was the old covenant. We no longer live in the old covenant. Praise God, we live in the new covenant. There is a different and better provision for us. This is God's direction for wives.

We are now in the new covenant according to the New Testament. Gal. 3:13 says that Jesus has redeemed us from the curse of the law, but rebellion and sin are still in the earth. We, as Christians, have been redeemed from the curse of the law, but this function still has to be in the earth because there is still rebellion.

Although we are Christians, and we have the love of Christ in us, is there anybody who ever walks in it perfectly all the time? I don't and I don't think you do either. Some of you probably do better than I. Although we do have Christ living in us and we have the love of God living in our hearts, we do not always submit to that. In the new covenant, love again is the rule. This is the wonderful thing that Jesus has done for us. He has redeemed us from the curse of the law and love is now the rule when we submit to it. However, in the husband and wife relationship, we still have to have a function to control rebellion. It has a little different flavor than it did in the Old Testament. Read Eph. 5:22 and 33.

Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as to the Lord, for the husband is the head of the wife, as also Christ is the head of the church. And He is the savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let wives be to their own husbands in everything. Nevertheless, let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

This is God's direction for wives. I Peter 3:1-4 says,

Likewise, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands that even if

some do not obey the Word, they without a word may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct, accompanied by fear. Do not let your beauty be that outward adorning of arranging the hair, of wearing gold or of putting on fine apparel, but let it be the hidden person of the heart with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

This is God's direction for wives, to submit to our husbands. In I Pet. there are two aspects that are dealt with. One of them talks about our behavior. The other one is your inner self, your spirit man. I Pet. 3 says that we should be chaste in behavior. The word chaste means modest and pure. This is the way the Christian woman should behave; her behavior should be modest. When we think of this, we usually think of dress, and that is one aspect of it, but the Christian woman's behavior should also be modest and pure. For example, there should be no inference of evil as far as innuendoes toward the opposite sex. She should be gentle and respectful.

In the busyness of a woman's day, especially if she is a wife and a mother, she can get so caught up in all she is doing that it seems she is always rushing. I do this so much myself; I find that I am not being gentle with my children, my husband, or with other people. I Pet. 3:4 says, But let it be the hidden person of the heart with the incorruptible ornament of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

Some people have taken this verse to mean that you cannot wear jewelry and you should not be dressed a certain way, but that is not what he is saying. He is talking about the difference between your outward appearance and your inner self. The Amplified Bible says, do not let your beauty be merely that of outward adorning. It is not saying that you should not dress nicely or that you should not take care of yourself physically. We have all seen women whose adorning is merely on the outside. They go to great lengths to take care of their clothing, hair, nails, etc., but there is emptiness inside. There is no beauty that emits from the inside. That is what Peter is cautioning against. In fact, we should spend more time building up and beautifying the inward man and our spirit man than we spend on the outside. We do not necessarily neglect the outward man, but there should be more attention spent on the inward man, because you will not have a gentle and peaceful spirit without giving attention to your inner man.

God's Order For Mates

In Gal. 3 the word submit means to get in order under something, and that is the whole point. We want God's order in our marriage and in our family in general. The word submission simply means to get in order under something. Submission is not a negative thing; submission is a fact of life. Many times when we hear teaching or we think in terms of submission, we only think in terms of the scriptures that apply to the wife submitting to the husband. But, we all have to submit in many areas of our lives.

Scriptures tell us that we are to submit to governments. That means that the system of government is ordained, but not every government is ordained. There are dictators, and primarily they are men, who have been cruel and have led repressive regimes, which have tortured and killed people. We are not saying that God has ordained those people, but He has ordained the system of government to rule people. Men and women must submit equally to those authorities. For example, we submit to the authorities that are established by governments. When we do not submit, we are under penalty of the law. There are people who are in jails and prisons today because they refuse to submit.

This is why we need to teach our children to submit to authorities that are on the earth. This will help them learn to submit to God. Submission is just a fact of life. It is not something that God put in the earth only for women; it is merely a function to control rebellion. In Gal. 3:27 we read, For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

This scripture proves that we all must submit. There is neither male nor female spiritually. There are differences between men and women emotionally and physically, but spiritually there is no difference. Spiritually men and women are the same. Neither men nor women are more able to be more spiritual than the other. Spiritual things are given to both equally.

Many people in the world would have us believe that submission is a negative thing, and that it causes us to be inferior to another person. Jesus, above anybody else, should be our example in this. Jesus submitted to the disciples at the Last Supper when he washed their feet. He was serving them. Although he knew that the religious leaders of his day were wrong, there were times when Jesus submitted to their authority.

There is one time when we do not submit and that is when someone requires us to do something that is beyond the guidelines of scripture. When someone wants us to submit to something that is ungodly, we do not have to submit in that area because, above all else, God is our highest authority. We submit to our leaders except when they would request or require us to do something outside of God's authority. Jesus submitted to the religious leaders of his day, except in the cases where they were outside the guidelines of scripture. When He came to the temple and found the people selling and buying, He drove them out. In that particular situation, they were outside the guidelines of scripture, so He did not submit Himself to them. He took authority over them.

This is our guideline in all things in regard to submission. Whether we are submitting to a boss, our pastor, teacher, husband, or to anyone, we must ask

ourselves whether or not the request is a godly request.

I Cor 11:3 says, But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ. If Jesus would submit himself, can we say that we are inferior when we submit ourselves to those that God has put in authority over us? We should not. Wives are to submit to their husbands, and husbands are to submit to Christ. When this is the order and the rule for the family, love again will be the rule, just like it was in the beginning.

This is the new covenant. Jesus has redeemed us from the curse of the law, and in the new covenant Jesus has put us back in the place where mankind was in the beginning when God placed man and woman in the Garden of Eden. Love can now be the rule, and in each situation, as we allow love to be the rule, submission is not a negative thing. It is merely a function in the earth whereby we can serve one another. That is all that it is; it is not a negative thing. For wives, there is protection in that.

I personally appreciate the fact that my husband is the one in authority in our family. God has placed in him the wisdom, the ability, and the equipment that he needs to lead our family. He receives direction from God for our family. When he shares that with me, God witnesses to my heart that it is true. It is then an easy thing for me to submit. There is protection in submission.

Look at Heb 13:17 and you will see what I mean.

Obey those who rule over you and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief for that would be unprofitable for you.

The Amplified Bible says,

Obey your spiritual leaders and submit to them, continually recognizing their authority over you. For they are constantly keeping watch over your souls and guarding your spiritual welfare as men who will have to render an account of their trust. Do your part to let them do this with gladness and not with sighing and groaning for that would not be profitable to you either.

He is talking about spiritual leaders such as, pastors, leaders of the church, apostles, prophets, evangelists and teachers. There is protection in submitting to those God has placed over us in authority. We submit to our spiritual leaders because God has placed them as watchmen over our souls. They should be teaching us in such a way that they are feeding us the Word of God. We should be growing up spiritually under their leadership. There is protection in that. A pastor who is led by the Spirit of God and who pastors in the Spirit of God will know when people in his congregation have a need.

The first real pastor that we ever had was in a denominational church when we were first married. We were in that church for about five years. That pastor was a good man. He was born again, but he was not filled with the Spirit until just before we left that church. In fact, he was filled with the Spirit at the same time we were. He was a very intellectual man and he would read Brother Hagin and Brother Copeland's books, but he just would not receive what was in them. He had to analyze everything. You can not analyze with your mind all the things that pertain to God and the Holy Spirit. You have to

just receive many of them by faith. Sometimes they will not make sense to our minds. This pastor was a good man who had a love for people, but he was not really pastoring in the Spirit. We would come in with a need and he would not know that because the Holy Spirit was not leading him.

After we were in that church for about five years, the Lord spoke to us and said that we were to go to Bible school. We moved to another state to attend Rhema Bible Training Center for two years. While we were there, the Lord supernaturally drew us to the church that we knew we were to attend. We would go to church on Sunday morning, and we would have a need in our life; maybe it was a financial need, or maybe it was some problem with strife. That pastor, either by a prophecy, a word of knowledge, or by something the Lord had given him to minister through the Word of God, would meet those needs every single Sunday. By the time we left church, our needs were met. That is the way pastors should be pastoring.

We should be submitting ourselves under godly leaders like that in our lives. They should be the godly, Biblical example of a pastor or a spiritual leader who is leading the people and being led himself by the Holy Spirit. There is protection in submitting ourselves to godly leaders who will minister to us by the Word of God and by the Spirit of God.

This is the way husbands should also rule their families. When we say that, we do not mean rule like a dictator. We are talking about leadership that is led by the Spirit of God. The gifts of the Spirit should be manifest in your family, as well as in the church. In our personal lives, we should train our children, by parenting with the gifts of the Spirit.

Many times, when we are talking about submission, women may ask, "Well, what about when our husbands are wrong?" Sometimes they are wrong. They make a decision and it is a wrong decision. If I know it is a wrong decision, do I submit to that? Yes, you do. Let me tell you why. Husbands are people and wives are people and we are going to make mistakes. We are learning to walk in the Spirit, and we are learning to follow after the things of God, but we are not always going to do it perfectly. We grow and we learn in these things.

There will be times when a husband will make a decision, and it may not be correct. It could be because he is a new husband, just learning the things of God, or because he is just learning to lead his family according to the direction of the Holy Spirit. Is there some provision in scripture where God says, "OK, then wives take the rule?" No! The rule is still the same; wives are still to submit to their husbands. But, God honors your submission, and He will protect you in that.

I experienced this while we were living in Liberia. We had just started having the extension schools in outlying counties in Liberia. We started seeing that vision come to pass as different students in the Bible Training Center came forward. They believed that God was going to have them go to different parts of Liberia the next year. Russ knew that he had to watch over them, lead them, and have contact with them.

He was feeling pressure to do something to help these young men who were going into the outlying counties of Liberia. Someone from the States came with the offer

of an airplane. What would you say? "No, I do not want your airplane." You would say, "Of course," because you could see this expanding and growing God's vision. With the offer of an airplane came all the responsibility, including finding a hangar for that airplane. Russ had to get permission from the Ministry of Transportation in Liberia to have a hangar, to have the airplane, and on and on. There was a lot of red tape. There were a lot of procedures and things he had to go through just to be able to bring it into the country. In the pressure of all that, a man came to our house and he started telling Russ that he could help him to get the hangar and many other things. I do not even know all that the man said to Russ, but the man was a liar and a thief. He came while Russ was in the middle of decisions for the ministry and our personal life. The ministry was growing with extension schools going out the next year in the counties. In the midst of all this, the man literally deceived him. Every time that man came to our house, and he kept coming and coming to our house, he would bring letters that he had forged. He was trying to convince Russ that he was from the Ministry of Transportation. I knew that man was a thief. I was absolutely sure in my heart. Our house girl at that time would say to me, "That man is a thief." I knew it, she knew it, and many other people knew it; but that man was able to deceive Russ because he was under so much pressure.

I do not know of any other time we have ever experienced this to that degree in our lives, and he learned a great deal from that experience. I knew Russ believed this man, and this man was wrong. What was I going to do? I had a couple of different options. I went to Russ and I told him that I sensed in my heart that this man was not right. I believed that the things he was saying were wrong. I showed Russ that the letter the man brought was not on official letterhead from the Ministry of Transportation. Russ could not see it. It ended up that Russ gave him an amount of money to do some things that Russ thought were legitimate. We do not pay bribes, we do not pay under the table, and we do not pay dash, but Russ thought the man was legitimate.

I saw that every time I would say something to Russ, I was making him more and more defensive. I did what I could do; I shared my concerns with him, but I began to see that the more I said to him, the worse it was going to be. As a wife, you are not the Holy Spirit; you cannot open the eyes of your husband's understanding of something.

I backed off; I just prayed that the Lord would protect us in the situation, and that is exactly what happened. The man could have taken great advantage of us. However, the man only got a little bit of money, and we never felt any lack in the ministry. Russ was the leader and head of our house; he had to make the decision for himself. Although he made a couple of wrong decisions in that situation, he had to learn for himself.

As the wife, if you try to usurp the authority, or if you try to take the rule, God cannot bless in that situation because two wrongs do not make a right. If you try to take the authority and you say, "I am justified in it because my husband is wrong in this particular situation," God cannot honor that because you have gone outside the guideline of scripture. When God gave man the rule over the house, He made a provision there for protection if the rest of the family will line up under it.

That is my word to the wives. Even if your husband is not saved, there is no different provision in scripture for the wife of the unsaved husband. We just read in I

Pet. 3 to submit to our husbands even if they do not obey the Word. If they are not saved, they can be won by our godly lifestyles. They can be won primarily by the fact that we submit to them in love, and by other aspects of our behavior. If your husband is not a born again man and you are refusing to submit to him, do you think you are living Christ-like before him? No, you are not. You are very likely inhibiting him or preventing him from the light of the glorious gospel.

We just talked about God's direction for wives; this is God's direction for husbands. Eph 5:25 says,

Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it. That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the Word. That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish--so husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.

Husbands, this is a little tidbit for you. If you want to really meditate on a scripture that will really give you insight for your marriage, it is the very last part of verse 28. He who loves his wife also loves himself. The husband that loves his wife loves himself. The benefits of loving your wife come back to you. Meditate on that.

In the New Testament, husbands are told to love their wives three times, but women are told to submit to their husbands five times. That would indicate to me, and I think to you, that there is a major problem in marriages with wives submitting to their husbands, and also with husbands loving their wives. A wife's love is a responsive love. Husbands who will love their wives will have wives who do not have a problem submitting to them. Many times, the problem in submission is the problem of the authority.

We have read, Husbands love your wives. A husband can have a number of thoughts in his mind as to what that means. I want to give you some examples of love. The word in the Greek for this kind of love is agape, which means the God-kind of love. I want to show you the God-kind of love. Romans 5:8, But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were yet still sinners, Christ died for us. This is God's love. Even when some of us were evil and sinful, God's love was strong. He sent Jesus for us. When we accepted Jesus as our Savior, He took us into His family. That is God's love.

If a husband is using that as his guideline for love, when things go wrong in the family, or he has a complaint about his wife, he does not throw love out the window. The husband's love is to be agape love, the God-kind of love. God's love was such that when we were still sinners and evil in what we were doing and in our hearts, God loved us.

Another example on love is Romans 8:35-39.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? (Or we could say the "love of God"). Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? As it is written, for your sake we are killed all day long, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet in all these

things we are more than conquerors throughout Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

That is the love of God. That God's love will never wane for us is the inference here. This is agape love; this is the kind of love that husbands are to have for their wives. They are to co-rule their family with the husband being the leader and the wife the helpmate. She is to line up under his leadership and he is to love her with unselfish, godly, agape love. In the matter of their personal relationship, they are to submit to each other because we read in Ephesians 5:21, submitting to one another in love.

If you are a minister of the gospel, you will be anointed to preach or teach the Word of God. However, as a minister, you are no more anointed to live the Word of God than any other person. For example, God may give me an anointing to teach, but it is no easier for me to live these things than it is for you. It is no easier for Russ and me to live these things in our marriage and our family than it is for you. As I share these things with you, I am not trying to elevate us in any way. I want you to know that we have the same difficulties that you have, and we fail at times, too. You will be anointed to preach or teach the Word, but you have to live the Word like any other person. There is no special anointing to walk in faith. There is no special anointing to believe God for finances or healing. We all have to do that the same way. We all have to get in the Word of God, fellowship with the Father, and grow in our faith.

The Role Of The Wife

God's intention for a wife is to be a helpmate to her husband. I am not saying that some should not be single. Paul says in I Cor., I would have you to be the same as me, and he was not married. But, we know that in the beginning, God created them male and female and that the man was told to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife. We know that marriage is ordained of God. I am dealing specifically with the role of the wife, but I am not trying to exclude women who are not married. You need to know how to minister this even if you will never be married because many of the things we are sharing apply to women in general.

In Gen 1:27 we read, So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them. In Gen 2:18 we read, And the Lord God said it is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a helper comparable to him. That is what the New King James says. The King James says, a helpmeet for him. In the Amplified Bible, Gen 2:18 says,

Now the Lord God said it is not good, sufficient, or satisfactory that man should be alone. I will make him a helper, meet or suitable, adapted, complimentary for him.

If you compliment someone, you complete them; you have traits or abilities that are different than theirs and yet you enhance one another. The two together make a good whole. This is the context in which the scriptures are talking about the woman as the helpmate; she is to be the completor.

"The woman in the beginning was created to complete the man in God." That was the whole purpose. God could have left the man alone. He did not have to cause the man to go to sleep, take a rib from his side and create the woman. He had a purpose when He did that. The reason was that God said that it was not satisfactory or good for the man to be alone. He made a helpmate comparable to him. The Amplified uses the word adapted. The woman was intended to adapt to the man. That was the intention in the beginning. We will see that word many times in the scriptures that we will be reading.

Proverbs 12:4 in the Amplified scriptures says. A virtuous and worthy wife, earnest and strong in character is a crowning joy to her husband. But she who makes him ashamed is as rottenness in his bones. Proverbs 18:22 says, He who finds a true wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord. Proverbs 19:14 says, Houses and riches are the inheritance from fathers, but a wise, understanding and prudent wife is from the Lord.

Many women do not realize this, but the most important thing to gain from these particular scriptures is that the wife was meant to be a helper, not a hindrance. This is a very important point that wives need to understand. You can be a very great hindrance to your husband. When my husband is getting ready to go minister the Word of God, I can be a help to him or I can be a hindrance to him. You can see in our life how I could be a hindrance to Russ in that area. I know you are thinking, "Well, you are in the full-time ministry," but even if you are not in the full-time ministry, this is the case. God has a

calling and a purpose for every person. If you are married and you are a wife, then you can keep your husband from the fulfillment of God's will in his life.

What do you think he would feel like if he were leaving on a Saturday morning to come to Freetown Bible Training Center (FBTC) and I was going around the house criticizing, complaining and grumbling? What kind of impression would I leave with him as he came to minister the Word of God on Sundays? I could be a very great hindrance, and I have been at times. A wife is to be a helper but she can be a very great hindrance if she is not conscious of that fact. We just read that the scripture says when a man finds a wife he finds a good thing. You are not being a good thing if you are being a hindrance. If you are not adapting to him, you are not complimenting him, and you are not ministering to his needs. You are to be a good thing and a helper. You are to complete the man in God by ministering to him in such a way that you draw from him those things God intended for him to be. As wives, we should encourage our husbands to use the gifts, abilities, and talents that God placed in them, so that they can be all God has called them to be.

It is the same in reverse; a husband can inhibit his wife in that way also. But, we are speaking specifically about the role of the wife right now. Let us look at, I Cor 11:7-9, For man ought not to wear anything on his head in church. This is referring to a custom of that day. For he is the image and reflected glory of God. That is his function in government, which reflects the majesty of the divine rule. Ruling his household and his family is a man's governmental function. I do not mean rule in a negative way as a dictator. I am talking about leading your wife and your children in love by setting a godly course for your family. Your wife and children will submit to that because they see the wisdom of God in your life. But woman is the expression of man's glory. This means that he cannot be a leader or ruler when there is no one to lead or rule. Therefore, she is the expression of his rule, his majesty, and his preeminence.

For man was not created from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created on account of, or for the benefit of woman, but woman on account of and for the benefit of man.

The reason wives are told to submit is because women were created for men. This is a crucial thing that wives need to realize. In the daily activities of our households things may not be going just the way we want them to go and we can become very critical and negative. However, we need to realize that man was not created for us; we were created for him. We were given to complete him in God. We were created for that purpose.

Col. 3:18-19 says,

Wives, be subject to your husbands, subordinate and adapt yourselves to them. As is right and fitting and your proper duty in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, be affectionate and sympathetic with them and do not be harsh or bitter or resentful toward them.

The wife is to adapt herself. It is a wise husband who will heed the counsel of his wife because, as I shared earlier, in the busyness and the pressure of the ministry and the work Russ was called to do, there was a situation where he was really deceived.

Because I did not have that pressure, I could sense by the leading of the Holy Spirit that something was wrong. I was right and he was wrong.

However, there have been many times when he has been right and I have been wrong. We are talking about the woman adapting herself to the man. There are many areas in Russ's relationship, and mine where he has strength and I have weakness. There are areas where I have strength and he has weakness. A couple in unity will be drawing from one another's strengths. We talked about the fact that spiritually, men and women are created equal. There are gifts and talents that Father God has placed in a wife that the man needs. If she is the completer of him, there are things God has placed in her that he needs. A wise husband will be drawing on the strengths that his wife has that he does not have. That is submitting in love. That is humbling yourself in certain areas.

The word submit just means to yield. If you are walking down the sidewalk and someone is walking towards you, and you are both walking right at one another, what will happen if you both keep walking? You will bump into each other; you'll crash. One person has to yield, do they not? Maybe you both yield and move to the side. That is what yield means; it means to give way to another. Submission is not a negative thing, but something that is very necessary in a family and in a husband and wife relationship. Just like those two people walking toward one another on the sidewalk, there are times when there has to be one person yielding to the other. If there is a situation where someone has to make the decision, it is the husband, because he has been given that authority. All we need in submission is a loving, cooperative partnership.

There are many differences between women and men. A woman is created differently than a man. This is not to say women are better; there is just a definite difference. As people in general, and especially as a husband and wife, if we do not realize that God has placed a difference in men and women, then we will expect our spouses to react to situations as we would react. When they do not, conflicts arise. Many conflicts in marriage arise simply because men and women do not think and react in the same way because they have a very different emotional make-up.

There are also obvious physical differences. There is a movement in the United States called Women's Lib that is absolutely absurd. This was very popular in the United States when I was a young teenager in the 70's, and it has progressed. Maybe in the very beginning it was an honorable thing, because there was a time in the United States when a man and a woman had the same job, many times the man would be paid more. Maybe that came from the fact that years ago the man was always seen as the provider for the house, and so although he was doing the same job as a woman, he would be paid more. Out of that situation came the movement for women's equality. We have seen these kinds of things in various times throughout history, but the present movement in the United States started in the very late 60's. It grew to the place where there were women who were trying to say that there was no physical difference between men and women. They were trying to give examples of Olympic athletes to show that women could have as much strength as men could. God created them man and woman, male and female, and He intended for there to be differences. We know there are physical differences.

We know that spiritually there is no difference, but emotionally there is a great difference. If we have not been taught this, there can be great conflicts in marriages as well as in relationships between men and women in general. I just want to share some things with you in that regard.

Women tend to be more personal than men are. When Russ comes home from some activity or crusade, I might ask how it went. He will say, "Fine." But, I want to know more than that, so then I start to ask him questions and he will give me some light answers, but it is never to the degree of detail that I want to know. Every answer I get is "Well, it was OK." Women are more personal than men are. They become entwined personally with people and situations around them. Men deal with situations more objectively. There is strength in both of these. There are times when the sensitivity of a woman is needed. Other situations require a man's objectivity. I am not trying to elevate either the woman or the man in this because both have their strengths.

Women have deeper interest in people and feelings. That is not to say that men do not have a deep interest in people, but a woman's interest will be more detailed. She will want to know more intricate things. If you hear two women conversing, they are going to be talking about little details. If you hear two men talking, they will be talking in generalities. That is not to say one is bad and one is good, but it will help you if you know the difference.

When God gives a man to a woman and a woman to a man, He intends for them to compliment one another in this area. Women tend to be a little bit more emotional than men. Women who are not grounded in the Word of God can be very emotional. They can even allow their emotions to cause them to become hysterical. You will notice that women tend to worry more than men do when they are not rooted in the Word of God because they are more affected by their emotions.

Men tend to think logically and objectively while a woman tends to become one with her surroundings. A woman is concerned with the attractiveness of her home. When women have the means to do it, they decorate their homes. Many women do not have the means to do that, but in a situation where the woman has the means to do that, there is something placed in her by God that makes her want her surroundings to be attractive. She likes nice, pretty things in her home. You, as a husband need to be aware of this need in her. Sometimes a woman may desire something that you think is frivolous or unnecessary, but she needs these things because she becomes more involved with her surroundings than you as a man do.

A man relates to people and he relates to situations, but he does not usually allow them to become a part of his identity or how he sees himself, but a woman will. I will give you an example. If a little child accidentally gets hurt, even if it is not serious, you should deal with the husband because he will see it objectively. If harm comes to a lady's child, her emotions are so entwined with the child that she might not act logically. You have seen women who are just hysterical at times. These are primarily women who are not rooted in the Word of God. However, most women will become more entwined with people in a personal way, whereas a man can stand back and see the whole picture and be more objective about it.

A woman needs time to adjust to change. This is a major cause of strife and

conflict in marriages at times. If a husband and wife, living up country and having a difficult time making it, are offered a job in Freetown, he can immediately see the benefits of that. If he goes to his wife and tells her that next week they are moving to Freetown, the wife will be completely undone because the husband just says something and expects his wife to just see it the way he sees it and see the benefits of it. She will not necessarily see that right away. She can easily become fearful of a situation like that because a woman needs time to adjust to change. It does not mean she cannot adjust, it just means she needs time. As a husband, the way you help her in that situation is to gently give her some indication that changes are coming. Over a period of time, she will warm up to it and she will be fine.

As a wife, anytime you have a situation in your own marriage, where change is coming, if the Spirit of God is leading you, God will witness those things in your heart. That is a wonderful thing for a woman, because as God witnesses it in her heart, she can become adapted to it, and then it is not a difficult thing.

I know in my own situation, God will start speaking something to me in my heart, and Russ will come and say "We are going to Africa." That will not be a hard thing for me because God was already speaking that to my heart. In marriages where the people are not born again and are not being led by their spirits, this is a great source of conflict and strife.

You may have heard of women's intuition. We speak of that a lot in the United States. The Holy Spirit leads us all, but because of the sensitivity that God has placed in a woman, many times she will know things intuitively. She will sense them because she is more in tune with the circumstances and the details of the situation. Because a man is looking at the overall picture, not at the details, he may not sense these things. A man is wise to heed the advice of his wife in these areas.

There are great differences between men and women, and we do not always understand them. In general, a woman has a keen sensitivity. In general a man has toughness or strength; there is a big difference. If either one of these areas is not balanced with the Word of God, it can be negative. A man can be very harsh and demanding with his wife and children, and that is not a good thing. But, it is a strength when it is used in the right way. A woman's sensitivity was intended to be a positive thing, but it can also be a negative thing when she allows it to make her anxious or even hysterical.

I want to illustrate this by comparing the buffalo and the butterfly. The American buffalo is also called a bison, but most people in the United States refer to it as the buffalo. There are African buffaloes, so you know that a buffalo is a very strong animal. You will find the American buffalo in areas where there are four seasons of the year: spring, summer, winter and fall. Winters in the United States can be very cold. The buffalo can stand the bitter cold wind and it does not harm him. He is not moved by it. The buffalo can stand that kind of weather and just face it. The man in his emotional temperament is similar to a buffalo.

The woman, on the other hand, is more like the butterfly. A butterfly is very delicate and fragile. What would happen if you exposed a butterfly to the bitter cold wind? It would damage it. Many women are not the godly examples they should be and

many men are not the godly examples they should be. However, the godly example of a woman emotionally is that of a butterfly, a delicate, fragile thing. She is not fragile to the point that she would be easily hysterical or anxious, but she is sensitive. If a butterfly was sitting right here and I waved my hand, the butterfly would sense it and take off. That is the way a woman is emotionally; she is sensitive to her surroundings. A man is like the buffalo. He can stand that freezing cold wind if he is grounded in the Word of God.

In a husband and wife relationship, he should be the strength and she should draw from and lean on that strength. It is a positive thing. It should not be extreme where he is harsh, but as we just read in one of the scriptures, he is to treat his family with gentleness. Yet, the woman is to be the more sensitive, gentle one.

We have seen women who are harsh and very calculating, not gentle. My personal feeling is that a woman, unless she has been grounded in the Word of God, will respond that way if men have treated her harshly. When a man is ministering to the needs of his wife, she will be what God intends her to be. When a woman is ministering to her husband, he will be the strength to that family that God intends him to be. God created each to compliment the other. That is the godly principle.

We are going to get into some things now about ministering to your husbands. In the Amplified Bible Eph.5: 33 says, However, let each man of you without exception love his wife as being in a sense his very own self, and let the wife see that she respects and reverences her husband.

If a wife respects and reverences her husband she notices, regards, honors, prefers and venerates him. The word "venerate" means to worship and esteem him. She defers to him, praises him and loves and admires him exceedingly. A wife who wants to minister to her husband will understand that he has a very great need to be admired. When a young man is dating a young lady, very quickly he will see whether she admires him or not. If it becomes obvious to him that she does not admire him, he will not spend time with her anymore.

If you are married, think back to your courtship. You can probably think of specific things you said and did, which showed him that you admired him. That is what drew him to you. Men have a great need in this area; they have a need to be admired. This is not to belittle men, because God has placed this need in them. A man who is married to a woman who does not admire him is not having that need met.

That is why you see that many times when men have extra-marital affairs, the other woman is not very attractive. What draws him to her many times is the fact that she admires him and gives him attention. He probably has a wife at home that does not appreciate him for who he is or what he does for the family. Many times that is what draws him to another woman. This is not to condone that kind of behavior in any way. I am simply showing you how it happens, especially in non-Christian situations.

I am going to give you some specifics, and I am going to be very practical. A man wants a woman to admire his manly qualities. A man is intended to be masculine, and a woman is intended to be feminine. The godly example of a woman is a feminine

woman, and the godly example of a man is a masculine man. A man needs to have his masculinity admired. Physically, she should admire his strength and his muscles. Use your imagination and you can come up with some good things. I am not trying to embarrass you, but I am trying to be practical. You could admire his achievements, his dependability in his job, his faithfulness to his job, or his ability to make good decisions.

Other things you could admire, especially if he is a born again Christian, are his high ideals and noble character. When you see him stand up for right instead of giving in to wrong, you should admire and praise him for that. We live in a world today where many men are yielding to the easy ways to go, bribing, stealing, and so forth. These are little things we may never even think of, but the positive qualities that you see in your husband are the things that you should admire in him and you should tell him so. If you will just let the Holy Spirit lead you, He will reveal some things you can do, and some things you can say, that will show him that you admire him. You can admire your husband, but if you never say it with your mouth, you will not meet his need like you will if you speak words of admiration and tell him the things you admire about him.

A man tends to be more logical. He sees in literal terms. He sees the overall picture of things, where she sees the minute details of her life. You might say, "Well, he never makes good decisions." If you will start in faith praying for him and being positive instead of negative, you will see him start improving in that area. If you want to improve your marriage relationship or you want to improve your children's dispositions, you start speaking words of faith over them, not just once a day but consistently as a way of life. You will then see change.

In Gen.1: 27 we read, So God created man in His own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. In Gen 5:2 it says, He created them male and female and blessed them and called them mankind in the day they were created. In the King James Bible, it says, He called them Adam. When God created man, He created man for fellowship. Remember we said he saw that there was a male and female counterpart for all the animals, but there was not one comparable to Adam. God created Adam for fellowship, but Adam could not fellowship with God because God has no peer. Peers are those who are like you and are on the same level as you are. Even though Adam was created in His image, they were not on the same level.

God, in His love for Adam, created Eve; He said, It is not good that man should be alone, I will make him a helpmeet or a helpmate or a helper for him. In Gen 2:7 we read that God formed man. Then in Gen 2:22, it says that He made woman. Every version of the Bible that I have read used two different words. God formed man from the dust of the earth, and yet when he created woman, He took her from His side. The scriptures use different words. He formed man and made woman.

God has in his nature both the masculine and the feminine. When he created Adam, he created him in his image, and so Adam in the beginning had both the attributes of the masculine and the feminine. Father God then took the rib from Adam and created Eve from that rib. We see then the difference between men and women. Father God left in Adam the tough, masculine, disciplinarian. He put in Eve the feminine, tender, nurturer. That's the basic difference between men and women. We need to recognize the basic differences between men and women. Once we realize the

differences, we can appreciate them as strengths that God gave us. We can better deal with one another and have a more compatible marriage.

The next main responsibility of a wife is to be the keeper of her home. Look at Proverbs 31:27 in Amplified scriptures. This is commonly referred to as the chapter on the virtuous woman. In talking about the virtuous woman it says, She looks well to how things go in her household, and the bread of idleness, gossip, discontent, and self-pity she will not eat. Also look at Titus 2:3-5 in the Amplified Bible.

Bid the older women similarly to be reverent and devout in their deportment as becomes those engaged in sacred service, not slanderers or slaves to drink. They are to give good counsel and be teachers of what is right and noble so that they will wisely train the younger women to be sane and sober of mind, temperate, disciplined, and to love their husbands and their children. To be self-controlled, chaste, homemakers, good-natured, kind-hearted, adapting and subordinating themselves to their husbands, That the Word of God may not be exposed to reproach, blasphemed, or discredited.

The King James says keepers at home. In our language today, we would not say keepers at home; we would say homemaker. I shared my background with you, and I did not have a good example of a Christian wife and a Christian mother. Consequently, God had to develop that in me.

When the woman is the keeper of her home, she is ministering to her husband in many ways. She is providing food that he appreciates and likes, and this is a very real part of the wife's responsibilities. To be very honest, when Russ is at home, I prepare things that he likes to eat. When he is not home, I prepare different things because there are foods that the children and I like that he does not. A wise wife who is trying to minister to her husband will be aware of things like cooking foods that he likes and taking good care of his clothes. You can minister to your husband by being a good keeper of the home.

Another scripture that talks about keepers of the home is I Tim 5:14, Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. The Amplified Bible says to guide the house, and that is what the wife is to do. The first thing that a godly wife is going to insure in her house is that there is a godly atmosphere. In I Cor 5:9-11 it says,

I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people, yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world or with the covetous or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But, now I have written to you not to keep company with any one named a brother who is a fornicator or covetousness or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even to eat with such a person.

Paul is exhorting the Christians about the kind of people they keep company with. He is saying do not even eat with such a person, and that is making reference to having them in your home or being in their home. As keepers of our homes, we want to

insure that there is a godly atmosphere in our home. If you are concerned about ministry to your husband and children, any kind of ungodliness in your home is going to keep them from becoming the fullness of what God has for them in their lives.

In order to serve God the way that we need to serve Him, there needs to be a godly atmosphere in our home. You should be aware of the kind of music that is being played in your home, whether it is on the radio or a tape recorder or from any other source. In Proverbs 4:23 it says to guard your heart for out of it come the issues of life. To guard your heart means to stand and watch your heart. Something gets into your heart through hearing or seeing. Your ears and eyes are a gate to your heart. In the Psalms 101:3 David said, I will set no ungodly thing before my eyes. Your home should be an example of Godliness in every way. Your home is a testimony to Christians who are not as mature as you are. It is a testimony to people who are not Christians. Your home and your lifestyle in every area should be a testimony of God's goodness in your life and His provision. If you are walking in the Word of God and if you are walking in His ways, you are guarding these things so that there is a godly atmosphere in your home at all times.

You should not associate closely with ungodly people. There are people that you work with and people that you know and maybe they were friends before you were saved and you want to keep in contact with them to bring them to the Lord; that is fine. But, you do not need to fellowship with them closely because in many cases, instead of you bringing them up, they bring you down. This is why Paul is saying not to have close fellowship with people like that. Keep open to them, be kind to them, and leave a door open so that when they are ready to receive the gospel and they need prayer, they will come to you. They should not be fellowshipping often in your home. There should be enough light in your home that the darkness in them feels uncomfortable there. We are talking about spiritual things, but also about natural things too.

When Russ and I had been married about four and a half years we were filled with the Spirit. The Lord then began dealing with our hearts about some things. Neither one of us had really ever been into rock music or that kind of thing. But, before we were Christians, there were certain kinds of music that we liked that were not necessarily sinful, but they were not edifying. We just had some old record albums that we had kept all those years. We never played them and we were not really even interested in them, but we still had them. When we were filled with the Spirit and the Lord started speaking some things to our hearts, we took the albums and we threw them away. We did not even want them in our house anymore. They were not necessarily affecting anybody because nobody was listening to them, but we were just trying to purge so that in every area we could be a testimony to the Lord. That should be your desire. There should not be any hidden things that you do not want seen. Everything should be a testimony for the Lord.

Eph.4:29 says, Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification that it may impart grace to the hearers. This is a very important aspect of a godly atmosphere in your home. If your children hear you always criticizing other people and tearing other people down, that is an example to your children, and it is not a godly one. Some people say that Christians come home from church on Sunday and they have the pastor for lunch. That is an expression that

means they just go back over the church service and they criticize and tear apart the pastor and the service. You are an example to your children whether you like it or not. Everything you do is either a positive or negative example. It is either one that draws them closer to the Lord or one that pushes them away. Raising our children is a very sacred responsibility. We must always strive to set a godly example before them in every area. Your example in your conversation is going to affect your children. There should be no ungodly conversation, such as criticism going on in your home. So many times as Christians we say negative things about other people. We say we are doing it to pray for them, but we forget to pray most of the time. I am talking to myself too. Eph. 4:32 should be our guide. And be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you.

Ps. 127:4 says, Children are like arrows for a mighty man. An arrow is something you shoot ahead of you. That is what our children are, arrows that we are shooting into the future and we want them to represent God. The whole purpose of having children is that God wants a godly offspring in the earth.

Our home should be an example of courtesy and manners. I do not remember anybody really teaching me manners as I was growing up. I remember as a young teenager when my grandmother would take us to a restaurant once in a while, she would teach us a little bit of table etiquette. But, I do not remember anybody ever teaching me that when guests come in to your house, you should greet them. When we were kids people would come into our house and we would just look at them, walk past them, and not say anything. We were not really taught manners as children and we need to do that with our children. Our homes should be an example of courtesy.

We cannot expect little children to behave like adults because it is a process. We are training them and we should be an example to them of these things in our home. We should be as courteous to our family members as we are to any visitor that would come into our house. I am sure you have heard it before, but we tend to be more loving and more giving to those that are further away from us than to those that we are close to. Our children should see a husband being courteous and loving to his wife. Our children should see a wife being courteous, loving, and giving to the husband, their father. Men, you are an example to your children of a husband. If you have sons, you are being an example to them of the husband that they are going to be when they grow up. Women, you are an example to your children of what a wife should be. If you are not the godly example that they need to have, then they are going to have to somehow make that up. In my own life, God had to teach me many things because I did not have a godly example of a wife and mother. The scripture says to honor your father and mother and I do honor her, but I see there was a lack when I was growing up. The effect it has had on me is that I am going to do better with my children than my mother did with me.

In I Cor 14:33, we talked about God being a God of order. I firmly believe that our homes should be examples of orderliness and Godliness. When a non-believer walks in your house there should be order in both the natural and the spiritual. If there is all kinds of confusion and problems and the house is just a big disorderly mess, they are going to walk in with a problem and they are going to say, "There is no answer for me here," and walk back out. You are going to try to witness to them and they are not going to be

ready to listen to you.

Whether you have much or you have little, you can take care of what you have. When God sees a grateful heart in you, and that you appreciate the things that you have, He is able to bless that and give you more. Many times we see people who do not have much, but we do not see them taking care of the little bit that they have. I have had many examples in my life when I have had something to give and I thought, "I have given this to this person before, but he did not take care of it or appreciate it. I am going to find someone who needs it just as much but who will appreciate it and take care of it." I believe God is also that way. God will bless you to the extent that you will believe Him. God will bless you to the fullest extent that He is able. When you close doors for His blessings, the blessings stop.

If you are not a person who has a natural sense of organization, pray for it. I am a very organized person, but God has put that in me. That is nothing for me to brag about. In my kitchen, everything has a place. If you are not a person that has that, find someone that has a gift like that and you draw from it. Ask her to come to your house and help you put things in order. Tell her that you want your house to be a testimony for other people. Be humble enough to know that you have a need and go to someone and ask for help. Pray for God's wisdom and, at the same time, God will help you. God will send somebody to help you in that way.

Col. 2:5 says, For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in Spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. I believe that is both spiritual and natural. You find a correlation most of the time. We heard Brother Hagin make a comment once and he said that he could tell what kind of minister someone was going to be by going into his office and looking in his desk drawer. That is not always true, but most of the time it is. If you find a person whose life is so disorderly that there is just confusion around them all the time, that is probably the way that person is in the spiritual realm, also. There are also those that are so concerned with perfection and order that they are neglecting the Spirit. You have to be balanced. There should be order in your life spiritually and naturally. The wife is the one primarily responsible for that.

The woman is essentially the one that sets the tone in the home because she has been given the godly task of being the keeper of that home. That is not to say that the husband does not have anything to do with it, or that the children do not have anything to do with it, but, primarily, in a home the wife sets the tone.

If you set your day up so that you get up before the children and your husband, you will have time with the Lord to pray and to be in the Word of God. You can take time to set the day in order. You will have authority in your life over the power of the enemy. You set the course for your day by taking authority at the beginning. You do not go rushing into the day without praying and let the devil just control your whole day with circumstances and problems. If you get up at the last minute, then you are late and the children are late. You are rushing around trying to get them dressed and fussing at them. You all leave the house in a big uproar with everyone upset. You have set the tone for your family's whole day.

But, if instead, when you get up, you pray and spend time in the Word, you set a

tone in your house of godliness, by inviting the Holy Spirit's presence to be there. You can then wake your children up calmly, spend time talking to them, and encourage them in the morning. They will get up peacefully, get dressed, and eat something good for breakfast. As you send them off to school, you will kiss them and tell them you love them. Again, you have set the tone for your family's whole day, but what a difference!

That is not to say you are not going to have problems, but if you are prepared, you are better able to deal in the Spirit rather than in the flesh with those problems. You will be able to hear God better in the midst of the situation. If you will set that tone properly by praying and taking authority in your household, then you' will see a tremendous difference. You will see peace where there was confusion, and you will see love where there was strife.

I read one book that talked about the wife being a thermostat. That is not as clear to you as it would be to those of us from a place where there are four seasons. In some parts of the United States in the summer time it is hot and in the wintertime it is very cold. Many homes will have an air conditioning system and a heating system. There is a little thermometer somewhere in the house that is on the wall. You set that thermometer around 70 degrees. In the wintertime when it is very cold outside and the temperature in the house starts to drop below 70, that thermostat turns on the heat. If it is summer time and it starts getting too hot in the house, that little thermostat on the wall turns on the air conditioner. A wife is a thermostat in her home. If she is frustrated and upset, the rest of the home is going to be that way too. If she is at peace, being gentle and tender with her children and her husband, that is the atmosphere that is going to be in that home. The wife primarily sets the tone.

This is not to say that a husband can be contentious all the time and only the wife is responsible for the atmosphere. A godly wife will recognize her responsibility in that area and she will set that tone. If you do not know that you are responsible for that, you will not pay any attention to it, and you will just be upset all the time when the atmosphere is not good. Many times if you are busy and there is confusion or strife going on, if you will just stop and take a closer look at the situation, most of the time it is because you have been that way as a wife. Whatever the situation is, if you will just stop, take authority over it, and minister to the need, you will change the tone. You will get it back on track where it is supposed to be, but you need to be aware that you have a responsibility in that area, and that you can control it.

Proverbs 31:17 says, She girds herself with strength, spiritual, mental, and physical fitness for her God-given task. Nowhere in Proverbs 31 does it talk about working in the church as the woman's task. The work that Proverbs 31 is taking about is her work for her family and in her household. We just read right here that this is her God-given task and it is her work with, and for, the Lord. If you are a wife and especially if you have children, your number one ministry in life is to your husband and your children. God instituted the family before he instituted the church. The church did not come into existence until about 2,000 years after the establishment of the family. God instituted the family first, and that is your primary responsibility as a wife and mother. Your church work is not your primary responsibility, and if it is, then you are neglecting the first priority that God gave you. If you have made your church work, your work for the FBTC, or anything else a priority over your husband and your children, you will see

problems in your family. I guarantee it because you are out of God's order.

If you are having problems in the area of finances, health, or your marital relationship, the first thing you should check is your priorities. Are they in order? Is your fellowship with God number one? Is your relationship with husband second? Are your children third? Is there neglect in any of those areas? If there is, then that is where you are opening the door for problems. This is not a popular thing among some people, but I believe it is the truth.

If you look at any of the outstanding women in ministry in the world today, you will find that they are not mothers of little children. Gloria Copeland is a tremendously anointed woman of God and a tremendous teacher, but do you know that she does not have little children at home? She never entered the ministry until her children were grown. I know of many anointed women like that, who are tremendously used of God, but they do not have little children at home. I will make a statement here and I believe that I will stand on it. You will not find a woman in full time ministry who is in the perfect will of God neglecting her little children at home. If you have children, God has given you the responsibility to train them in the things of God. He has not given your relatives the responsibility to train them. He has not given one of your employees the responsibility to train them. He has given it to you. At the end of this life when you go to heaven, you are the one who will answer for how those little children have been trained in the things of God. Maybe you have been very involved with things in the Freetown Bible Training Center. When we at FBTC make a request for people to work, we are not expecting the women to neglect their husbands and children in order to do those things. You might ask, "Who is going to do the work of God if I do not do it?" I believe the older women and the younger women who do not have little children will.

There are times and seasons in our lives. There was a time before I had my children when I was very involved in a lot of different things that I am not involved in now. When you have little children, training them should be a priority in your life. If you are leaving them at home with someone who does not know the Word of God and maybe is not even a Christian while you are out working for the Lord, your priorities are wrong.

There is a saying we hear often in the States, "You are going out to win the world while your family is going to hell." Many times when Christian parents have rebellious children, you can look back and see that when those children were younger, the parents were not training them in the things of God. Maybe they were doing very righteous and worthy work in their church, but they were not training their children. Those little children often rebelled when they became big children. God will hold you responsible for that. God has given you the responsibility to those children, and if your church work is more important than they are, it shows up as rebellion. Let us pretend that there is a big scale up in heaven. If you put all your church work on one side, and your children who are not saved because you did not train them in the way they should go on the other, which do you think is going to carry more weight?

The Role Of The Husband

You are never going to be effective in the ministry, whether you are a man or a woman, if your home is not in order. If there is not unity in your marriage, and your children are not being trained properly, you will not be effective in the ministry. You can try it, but you will not have the fullness that God intended for you in the ministry if you do not have order in your family. It is better to take some time off from ministry to put those things in order. Russ and I have drawn back from ministry when we have seen a lack in our family. You might think that is wrong because he is called to be a missionary and the director of the FBTC; but when we see a lack in our family, we must address it because that is our number one priority. We love the students, but we know he is not going to be effective if our family is not in order.

Five times in the New Testament, wives are told to submit to their husbands. Only one time in scripture in Titus 2:4 are wives told to love their husbands. A lot of times in the New Testament, husbands are told to love their wives. The word that is used every time when husbands are told to love their wives is the word *agapeo*. That is a verb and its corresponding noun is the word *agape*, which means godly love.

There are several different Greek words that are used, in the scripture for love. They represent different types of love. If I say I love my husband, that is a different kind of love than if I say I love my children. The love for your child is *paturo* love, which is different than the love you have for your spouse. If I say I love ice cream, that is a different love, also. We use the term love rather loosely at times. In the English language we only have one word for love and we use it in many different ways. You will know what I mean by the context in which I use the word. However, in the original scriptures, there were different words for the word love and they were very specific.

Agape is godly love and its most outstanding characteristic is that it is unconditional. Romans 5:8 is a good example of God's unconditional love. But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. You know that scripture well. That is the perfect example of *agape* love. While some of us were cursing God and choosing not to believe and obey Him, He gave Jesus for us. In regards to our salvation, we did nothing to be worthy of the gift that God gave of His son. There was nothing we could do. The scriptures say that is *agape* love. This unconditional, unselfish love that gives and serves is the love that husbands are told to love their wives with. I am stressing this because many times we see the husband becoming dissatisfied with the wife for whatever reason and choosing to say, "I do not love her anymore." Yet, God says a husband's love is to be unconditional and unailing.

We are going to be studying I Cor. 13, but we have to understand Romans 5:5 to understand how I Cor 13 can work in our lives. Romans 5:5 says, Such hope never disappoints or deludes or shames us for God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. The love of God put was in your heart at the very moment that you were born again! God placed it there. When the Holy Spirit was imparted to you, through salvation, the love of God was imparted to you also. It is a fruit of the Spirit and this spiritual fruit will grow just as all fruit grows.

When you first see mangos or plums on a tree, you see the small, green fruit. Is it

mature and ready to eat? No, but as the months go by that fruit grows bigger and the color changes. When the color changes and becomes just right, we know it is mature and ready to eat. It is the same way with the fruit of the Spirit. That is why the scripture refers to these characteristics as fruit. A deposit of spiritual fruit is put in your spirit when you are born again and then it is your responsibility to nurture that fruit to maturity. You do that by feeding yourself the Word of God. Then, in your spiritual life, you must exercise that fruit. The more you exercise the fruit of the Spirit, the more it will grow in your life.

If you will apply I Cor. 13 to your life, it will change your marriage and every relationship you have in your life. We sometimes refer to I Cor. 13 as the love chapter because it is very specific as to what godly love is. If the love of God is shed abroad in your heart, then it is in you. You can read I Cor. 13 from the Amplified Bible like this, "God's love in me endures long, it is patient, it is kind, is never envious." It never boils over with jealousy, means I never boil over with jealousy. Is not boastful, means I am not boastful. When I read it like this I make it personal. Does not display itself haughtily, means that I do not display myself haughtily. Is not conceited, means that I am not conceited. Make it personal by saying, "I am not arrogant, inflated with pride, or rude. I am not unmannerly, I do not act unbecomingly, and I do not insist on my own rights or my own way." Are you following me? I am making it personal by changing some of the words a little bit. "I am not self-seeking, touchy, fretful, or resentful. I take no account of the evil done to me." You can see the difference when you make it personal. "I pay no attention to a suffered wrong." That means that I pay no attention when someone does wrong to me. "I do not rejoice at injustice or unrighteousness, but I rejoice when right and truth prevail. I bear up under anything and everything that comes." When we meditate on this portion of scripture, we are not going to say "I do not love my husband anymore," or "I do not love my wife anymore." We will say instead, "I bear up under anything and everything that comes. I am ever-ready to believe the best of every person."

I Cor. 13 and other scriptures relating to godly behavior should be something you read and meditate on every day. If you will make a commitment to meditate on this for just a few minutes at the beginning of everyday, you will see a tremendous change in your life. This is a good example of setting your day in order spiritually.

If someone comes to you with a criticism about another person, or the devil puts a negative thought about your spouse in your mind, your response will be, "No, I am ever ready to believe the best of every person. My hopes are fadeless under all circumstances. I endure everything without weakening." This is your response because God's love in you endures everything without weakening. It never fails or fades out.

There is no place for divorce in the Christian marriage because if both husband and wife have the love of God deposited in their hearts, that love will never fail or come to an end. You see how foolish it is when we hear Christian couples say that they do not love each other anymore. That cannot be true, because the love of God was placed in their hearts. They may choose not to love, but as a Christians, things of this sort are simply a matter of the will. The love and ability of God has been put in all Christians so you cannot say, "I can not love that person." You can say, "I will not do it," but you cannot truthfully say, "I can not do it." We do say that, but we are not being truthful

because you can do all things through Christ who strengthens you. In this area of loving your spouse or any other person, it is a matter of your choice, an act of your will. It is the act of exercising the fruit of love that has been placed in your heart.

God intends for a husband to love his wife with agape love. The one time in scripture that women are told to love their husbands, a different word is used. That word is *filandros* and it means affection. The wife's love is a responsive love. It needs to be nurtured and fed. When it is, there will be no problem because she responds to the love she receives from him. This is a key to the husband and wife relationship. That is why Eph 5:28 says, He who loves his wife, loves himself. If the husband is treating the wife the way he should, she will not have a problem with submitting to his leadership because her love is a responsive love.

If he is not nurturing that love, and he is not attending to her with the godly kind of love, there is nothing good for her to respond to. This is the reason the final responsibility for a relationship lies with the husband. It is not to say that the woman can act contentious and not have responsibility in it, but just as the husband is the final authority, he has the final responsibility before God for that relationship.

Eph. 5:25-31 says,

Husbands, love your wives just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it. That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water of the Word. That He might present it to Himself a glorious church not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing. But that it should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it just as the Lord does the church. For we are members of his body, of his flesh, of his bones, for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church, nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself and let his wife see that she respects her husband.

Look at some of the individual words that are used in these scriptures. First of all, the most outstanding characteristic about the husband's love for his wife is that it must be sacrificial. He is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. We see many men who behave in selfish ways towards their wives and families, and yet Christ's example of love is a sacrificial, selfless one. Our greatest need was for a sacrifice for our sin. Jesus gave His life for the church in order to meet that need. The word sacrifice means to give up something for a higher cause.

In every situation where a husband prefers someone to his wife there are problems in the marriage relationship. If there are problems in your own marriage relationship and you are a husband, I would advise you to examine this area of sacrifice in your own life. You are to leave your mother and father and those that had authority over you as you were growing up. You are to cleave to your wife. If you are a married person, your husband or your wife should be the one person that you have the most intimate personal relationship with. You should have a closer relationship with your

spouse than you have with anyone else. That includes your parents, siblings, and friends. We find that in many marriages, men will prefer their friends to their wives and family. If you do this, you are out of God's order, and it will cause problems in your marriage.

If you are going to have an intimate relationship with your spouse, you must feed that relationship. It will only come about if you pay attention and give priority to it. If you are spending more time with your friends than with your wife, she is not your priority. If you are not nurturing that relationship, I guarantee there will be problems. I can make a bold statement like that because you are out of God's order. This same principle applies to women. There are some women whose husbands are not nurturing them emotionally, and so they turn to lady friends. They spend a lot of time with lady friends and they neglect the relationship with their husband. You, too, are out of God's order and there will be problems in the relationship.

A husband's love is to be sacrificial in the area of finances. In the choices you make about how to delegate finances, your family should take preference over your own desires. A man, who is wasting money on alcohol, tobacco, and foolishness like that, is not making his family the priority in his life. Even if you are not doing things such as that, if your family has needs and you are not providing for those needs, you are out of order.

A husband's love is to be purifying. The word "purify" means to make pure, to free something from guilt or blemish. We read in scriptures that Jesus sanctified the church by the washing of water by the Word. When there is a problem in your marriage relationship because your wife has done something wrong, you deal with it the way that Jesus deals with the church. He deals with us spiritually through the Word of God. We read in Hebrews 12:6-7 about God chastising us as a father. Some people interpret that to mean that God causes calamities in your life to chastise you. This is not a correct interpretation. In that scripture it shows the difference between a spiritual father and a natural father. God chastens us in our hearts with His word. If we are condemned by it, we choose to repent. That is the way a husband's love should be in his family. When there is a problem in the family, you should not be shouting and demeaning your wife and your children. You should be dealing with situations with the Word of God. You should go to the Word of God and minister it to your wife and family. You should minister the Word of God to your family. You should be doing that on an ongoing basis so that the foundation of your life and family is the Word of God.

A husband's role is much like that of a pastor. When there is a problem in a church, the pastor deals with it according to the Word of God. He counsels with people who are having or causing a problem. He shares the Word of God with them and prays for and with them. The role of the husband in the family is much the same. In I Tim. 3:2 and also in Titus 1:7 there are references to the person who desires the role of a bishop. He must be the husband of one wife and must be able to rule his family well. If he is not able to rule his family, he is not going to be able to rule the family of God. He needs to be protecting his wife and children, spiritually and naturally. He needs to be guarding, overseeing, and shepherding. His wife and his children are his little flock. A pastor learns to pastor first in his family. Even if you are not going to be a pastor, you can still use this principle in your family. In whatever ministry you are called to go into, you need to minister to your family first. When you are successful with your own family,

then you can minister to other people.

The husband's love is caring. The word care means to be concerned for something. A husband's love should reflect a tender concern for his wife and children. Many times the problem with husbands in relationships is their harshness, yet a husband's love is to be tender. There is to be gentleness there in regards to his wife and his children that comes through the Word of God. When you nourish your relationship with your wife, she will respond.

As a husband, you should be a man of God. I was meditating on this and the thing that kept coming to my heart was "stand up and be a man." If you are going to love your family in the way that God intends, you have to be a man of God. Fellowship with God must be the first priority in your life. Your relationship with your wife is not going to be any better than your fellowship with God. If you are neglecting your fellowship and your relationship with God, then you are going to have problems in all other relationships of your life, starting with your family. You know in your heart when you are spending sufficient time with the Lord. You can always spend more, but there will be a satisfaction in your heart when you are reading the Word of God, meditating on the Word of God, and spending time in prayer with the Lord. When you are not doing that, there is a void there because you know that you are not doing what you should be doing.

If there are problems in your relationship with your wife or your children, you need to read and meditate on scriptures that relate to those problems. You need to be a man of God and a man of the Word of God. Spend time with the Lord getting direction for your family. Then your family will know that direction comes from God and there will be no problem with them submitting to it.

You should be a man that commands respect. You command respect by your attitudes and the way you carry yourself. I believe I can use my husband as an example in this regard. I believe many people respect him, but I have never heard him say, "Respect me." You can see by his actions that he is a man of the Word of God and that his direction comes from God. Therefore, he commands respect. I know that the few times that he has made a mistake in regard to direction, but his heart was still after God. Men, if you will be this way with your wives and your family, you will never have problems with them submitting to your leadership. I know that Russ's heart is to please God. As long as I know this, I can overlook a mistake if he makes one. That is not to say that we have not had times of disagreement, but in general, our family can respect him because he seeks after God.

He is after God's direction and I know that I have a responsibility in that too. I should depend on him for spiritual leadership. If he's hearing from God and he presents godly direction to me, I must be willing to follow it. That is where my responsibility comes in. I should see him as the pastor of our family. If I place that demand on him spiritually, he will be more inclined to yield to that himself.

For example when a minister is ministering before you as a congregation, in the church or even here at the FBTC, you place a demand on that person spiritually. If you just sit there and do not pay attention, you are not placing a demand on them spiritually. There is a force in your spirit that you can use to draw on someone. Maybe you have

shared Christ with someone and as you have ministered salvation, you just feel in your spirit that they are pulling that out of you. As a student of the Word of God, you do the same thing. Whether you are at the FBTC or a church service, you should be putting a spiritual demand on that minister of God. When you will do that, your needs will be met. I told you about the pastor we had in the United States when we were going to Bible school. I told you that every time we went into his church for a service he met our needs. Part of the reason is because we saw him as pastor and we placed a spiritual demand on him; we yielded to the spiritual gift in him. If you do not yield, you can come in here and sleep and you will get nothing. You will not get your needs met. However, if you place a demand, you will get your needs met.

In a family, you need to do the same thing. Wives should depend on their husbands for the spiritual direction for their family. Whether he is here or gone, I pray for Russ several times a day asking the Lord to give him His direction, wisdom, and utterance in every situation. Wives, if you will do that for your husbands, you will see them start to yield to the Spirit of God more and start to lead your family in a real godly way.

If a husband's love is nourishing in the natural realm, he will be providing for his family. If your husband does not have a job or if his job is not providing for the needs of your family, always remember that the husband is not the source of your life. God is the source of your life in every area. I Tim 5:8, tells us that husbands are to provide for their families. If your family is in line with God's laws of giving and Christian stewardship and there is unity between husband and wife, you will see your needs met.

If you are not working but you have the opportunity to work, you will not have God's provision, because you are not in line with the scriptures. If you have a job and you are not tithing, you are not going to see God's provision because you are stealing from Him. In Malachi 3:8 we read that the person who does not tithe is stealing from God. You cannot be blessed to the fullest extent because you are out of order. Luke 6:38 says, Give and it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over. Give as the Holy Spirit gives you direction. Husbands and wives should be in agreement on these things.

Our tithe is not even a question. Russ and I do not even discuss that; we give our tithe regularly. We give monthly offerings that are above our tithe to several ministries. We do this on a regular basis. Then, the Lord will put additional places to give on Russ's heart. He will also put things on my heart and we will share these things. There are times when Russ will give and I do not know about it, and there are times when I give and I do not tell him about it. But, he does not give in such a way that it causes our family to be in need and I do not, either. If you will line up these things in your life according to scripture, not only will all of your needs be met, but God will give you the desires of your heart. Russ and I are very blessed in our life, but the reason we are very blessed is because God taught us His Word in regard to giving. When you are a big giver, you are a big receiver. You cannot out give the Lord.

I am encouraging you to get your marriage relationship in order. There should be no walls of bitterness or unforgiveness between the husband and wife. When there are no hindrances between you, then a power of agreement and authority that is like

nothing else on earth will be there. In the area of provision for your family, this is of utmost importance. If a husband and wife will get in agreement about a job for that husband, and there are no hindrances between you, like disunity, you will see that come to pass. But, you then need to stand in agreement for the provision for your family beyond that.

As a husband, you need to protect your family spiritually and naturally. The husband is the person with the utmost authority over the family. If the devil is operating in his family, it is because the husband is not taking his place of authority over him. He is allowing the devil to operate. The wife has authority also, but this is primarily the husband's role. When the husband is not using his authority, then, of course, the wife can step in and exercise her authority. But, God's best is for the husband and wife to be in unity, and for both to be in authority over the devil.

A husband should be spiritually guarding and defending his family all the time. It should not be that, when a problem crops up you start praying against the devil. You should take that authority, surround your family daily and prevent problems before they start by laying a foundation in the Word of God for your life and the lives of your family. Then when a problem does come, you will quickly overcome it.

When a problem or crisis comes to you and you do not already have the Word of God in your heart for that problem, you are not in the barrel; you are under the barrel. You have to get out from under the barrel before you can take care of the problem. When you are keeping yourself built up in the Word of God, you are setting your authority over your family in the area of sickness, finances, strife, rebellion in your children and all those areas where the devil would like to come in and cause problems. If a problem crops up and you are defending your family in that way, they will quickly get over it because you have already ministered the Word of God to them. You just call them to attention and say, "Hey, the devil is trying to do something here. Let us all stand in unity against him."

If I cherish something, it is dear to my heart. A husband is to see his wife as something to be cherished. We read scriptures earlier that said a man who finds a wife finds a good thing. You should view your wife that way. Your wife should be valuable and precious to you. If a husband sees his wife both spiritually and naturally this way, he will defend, protect and take care of her. She will then respond back in such a way that your relationship will be sweet. In I Pet. 3:7 in the Amplified Bible it says,

In the same way you married men should live considerately with your wives, with intelligent recognition of the marriage, honoring the woman as physically the weaker, but realizing that you are joint heirs of the grace, God's unmerited favor of life in order that your prayers may not be hindered and cut off. Otherwise you cannot pray effectively.

This scripture makes reference to the physical and the spiritual characteristics of an individual. The wife and the husband are spiritually equal, but she is physically weaker. I believe that is also making mention of her emotional side. The wife does not have the same strength emotionally that the husband does. Remembering the difference between a butterfly and a buffalo, a wife is more like a butterfly emotionally and the husband is more like the buffalo. When I Pet. 3:7 says to live with her in

consideration of the marriage relationship, he is saying for you to realize the differences between you and minister to your wife's needs. This is a key for husbands; a wife has specific emotional needs that are different from yours, and if you will minister to them, you will see an immense difference in the marriage relationship.

One of the main things that we see in this verse is that a loving husband will show consideration to his wife. Consideration just means being thoughtful, which may not seem like a very powerful thing to apply in your life, but it is in terms of the husband and wife relationship.

In I Cor. 7:3 in the Amplified Bible it says, The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights. The word conjugal means matrimonial, so these are the matrimonial or marriage rights of the woman. Goodwill, kindness and what is due her as his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. These scriptures are saying it is the wife's right to be treated with goodwill and kindness. We have made some references to that, but I want you to see that this is not my idea. At the end of that verse, it says and likewise the wife to her husband. Therefore, it is also the husband's right to be treated with goodwill and kindness by his wife. We do not always see this in marriages, but this is our mandate in scripture.

In times past, chivalry was much more a part of people's lives than we see today. Chivalry means giving courteous attention. You may have seen movies or read books where a man would take off his coat, and put it over a puddle of water for a lady to step on so she would not wet her shoes. That is an example from times past, but there are examples that are applicable in our own lives today. Courteous attention to your wife today might be opening a door for her or helping her with heavy tasks or objects.

From where our house is situated I can see a great distance, and there are a lot of homes in the area. When I am standing by a window washing dishes or working, I can look out and see the activity of the people around us. The men, who are not Christian men, just sit. The ladies are the ones working all the time. Maybe the work is not too hard for these women, but these men are not being courteous. If you are not accustomed to giving courteous attention to your wife, you are going to have to use your imagination and start working on this because perhaps you are blind to a lot of things that you could be doing to help and to show your consideration.

One of the real principles in the marriage relationship that many men do not know is that a woman needs for her husband to minister to her uniqueness. The word "unique" means unequaled. I want to know, as a wife, that in Russ's eyes there is no one equal to me. In the husband and wife relationship, the woman needs for that uniqueness to be ministered to. She needs for her husband to show her, not just through his words, but also through his actions, that to him there is no one like her in the entire world.

In the beginning when a lady and man are courting, they do minister to one another's emotional needs. The man will show the lady in many ways that she is special to him. If that were not the case, the relationship would not go further. Many times after they are married they become so comfortable with one another that they take one another for granted. The whole idea of ministering to the woman's need to be the unique person in his life is just left out.

A woman needs communion with her husband. One of her greatest needs is for intimate conversation. A man does not necessarily have this need, but a woman does. A husband, who is not sensitive to this, will have a wife who goes through life trying to get his attention in many ways. Eph. 5:28 is a key scripture for men. The man, who loves his wife, loves himself. If you are ministering to her needs emotionally, she will automatically respond back to you in a positive way because the love that is in her is a responsive love. There is great enrichment in the marriage relationship when these key principles are given attention and nurtured.

A woman has a great need for intimate conversation. There should be a time set aside everyday for husband and wife to talk together alone. There have been times in our lives when Russ and I have been so busy that we have let the ministry or other aspects of our lives interfere with our time together. There was tremendous lack in our relationship, which lead to problems.

We have learned in our relationship that having time every day to talk together is essential. Your own individual lifestyle will determine when that time will be for you. The important thing is to make the time together a priority. You need time to talk about things that are on your heart or any concerns that you have. Because a woman is more sensitive, there may be issues in her life that her husband is not really concerned about. A small concern can turn into a big issue in a marriage relationship when it is not dealt with properly and promptly. If you will take a specific time every day and be devoted to it and not say, "If we have the time, we will do it, and if we do not, we will not," you can avoid many problems.

Of the two of us, Russ is the visionary; he sees the big picture. In our staff meetings with the missionaries and national staff, he is always sharing the vision. Russ helps me by showing me the big vision. He needs to do that because I can get so caught up in my responsibilities in the ministry and our family, that I can sometimes get frustrated. All I can see are these little, detailed activities that I am responsible for. I do not always get to see the fruit of our ministry because I am not here very much, primarily because of our children. I do not see all the students being ministered to every week. I do not go to the crusades every night when we have crusades. However, Russ encourages me by reminding me of what the Lord is doing through us. I encourage husbands to include their wives in their vision, even if you are not in full time ministry, because you are called to some ministry in your life. If you are involved in secular work, you are probably working in children's ministry, praise and worship, or some other aspect of ministry. You should have a goal and a vision for your family that your wife and children are in agreement with. Put this work before your whole family so that everyone can be in unity.

If you do not have a vision as to how your family is to be used for the kingdom of God, get before God, and He will give you one. He does not want you just floundering saying, "We are frustrated Christians, because we are not doing anything for the Lord." I believe God has a purpose for families. There needs to be unity in your family, so that you can all be fulfilling that purpose that God has called you to. I believe God has a goal and a vision for families.

Perhaps there is not unity between you as husband and wife because your

spouse is not attending FBTC, or she does not know these things that we have been presenting from the scriptures. I encourage you to come together and share with one another. If there are areas in your relationship that are not right, take time before the Lord and pray to know His timing in this. Then repent and ask forgiveness of one another. When there are problems in a relationship, many times those problems are not going to be resolved until you stop and discuss them. You simply share from your heart and repent of some things. There needs to be a point where you start over.

Maybe the wife or husband will start to learn some things, they will start to see where they have been going wrong, and they will try to do better. One mate is not even aware of what the other is attempting to do; consequently, the other mate just continues the negative habit or response. The one that was trying gets frustrated and disappointed.

For there to be unity and agreement in a marriage requires a lot of work. If you do not work at keeping your marriage in order, inevitably there will start to be problems. If you do not nurture it, your relationship will start to deteriorate. It will not get better because neglect never helps a marriage relationship. The devil is out to destroy your family.

During our first year as missionaries to Guatemala, we were having a crusade. Often our crusades were out in remote cities, but this one was in our own city where we were living. Before the crusade one night Russ was praying and the Lord said to him, "Do you know how the devil can destroy the effectiveness of this crusade?" He gave several answers to the Lord, but the Lord said, "The primary way that the devil can destroy the effectiveness of this crusade is by causing problems in families." Russ understood Him to mean the missionary families. At that time we were not directors of the work; we were in training for a year, doing menial jobs. I worked at an office and Russ did construction work, and then half the day we were in training. The Lord spoke that to Russ' heart. He began giving Russ a picture of how the devil would cause problems in marriages by dividing husbands and wives. Hands were laid on the sick, but a lot of times the sick would not be healed because people who were not in unity were coming to the crusade. The Lord was showing us that this is a primary way that the work of God is rendered ineffective.

At the end of I Pet. 3:7, it says that your prayers may not be hindered and cut off. Otherwise, you cannot pray effectively. I do not think we have fathomed the power that is available through agreement between a husband and a wife. If we would start striving for unity, we would start seeing agreement in the area of prayer like we have never seen before. I want to challenge you to seek this. This is the primary way that the devil will bring ineffectiveness in the kingdom of God. He is out to destroy marriages. He is out to destroy your children by causing them to be rebellious. We have the Word of God, and if we will walk in the truth and the Spirit of God, instead of in our flesh, we will see victory in this area.

Col. 3:19 says, Husbands, love your wives. Be affectionate and sympathetic with them and do not be harsh or bitter or resentful toward them. The word sympathetic means hearing another's mental state. This is just what I have been talking about. Peter said love your wife in an understanding way; realize that she is more sensitive than you

are and that she has different emotional needs. If you are sympathetic, you understand another's mental state, and minister to it. We should do that for everyone, but especially for our spouse.

For the most part, a woman needs affection more than a man does. That is not to say that a man does not need it, because he does. When I talk about affection I am not necessarily talking about the sexual act, but I am talking about giving your spouse attention. In England during World War II there was a lot of bombing going on and an organization took the babies that were in the city out to the countryside. People were taking care of several babies in their homes, but there were so many of them that the people were just propping the bottles up with a pillow and they were not holding and loving the babies. They said that these babies literally started dying. At some point someone had a revelation about what was happening, and they changed the procedures. They started holding the babies when they fed them, letting the babies see people's faces, and giving them the affection they needed. The babies immediately started to improve. This need for affection is something that has been placed in people by God.

I want to encourage you as a husband to meet your wife's need for affection. She needs time everyday to talk to you about her needs and concerns. She may share some need or concern that may seem trivial to you, but you need to be considerate enough to see that she is concerned about this particular issue because she has a different emotional makeup than you do. Minister to her through affection during this time of conversation. As you minister the Word of God to her, you can help her to mature in areas where she has a problem with worry and anxiety. In I Pet. 3, Peter tells women not to be anxious and wrought up, but to have a peaceful spirit. If your wife is not able to be in agreement with you due to worry or concern, minister to her and she will mature in this area.

The husband is the head; Christ is his example. Eph. 5:23 says, For the husband is head of the wife as also Christ is head of the church. In I Cor 11:3 it says, But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of the woman is man and the head of Christ is God. The important point here is that the husband is the head, but Christ is his example. It is an example of love and sacrificial giving. The husband should not be a dictator for he too is under authority. He is not the ultimate authority in the family; God is. He is God's representative.

God has established the husband as the delegated authority in the family. God is a God of love. The husband who rightly represents God will govern his home motivated by godly love, not motivated by his own selfish desires. It is his responsibility to minister to the spiritual, emotional and natural needs of his wife and children.

The Virtuous Mother

We know that Proverbs is a book of wisdom. Chapter 31 is the last chapter and it talks specifically about the virtuous woman. In the Amplified scriptures, Proverbs 31:10-12 says, A capable, intelligent virtuous woman, who is he who can find her? This indicates that it is uncommon to find a virtuous woman.

She is far more precious than jewels and her value is far above rubies or pearls. The heart of her husband trusts in her confidently and relies on and believes in her securely so that he has no lack of honest gain or need of dishonest spoil.

We read in verse 10 that her virtue is strength of character. She is earnest, capable, and intelligent. Previously I encouraged the husbands to be men of God. A woman needs to be a woman of God. We need to be women who cannot be persuaded to do something that is contrary to the Word of God, because we are women of conviction. Our strength comes from the faith that we have in the Word of God. The virtuous woman has strength of character, but you will not have strength of character without the Word of God. Unless you are grounded in the Word of God, you will waver when it comes to difficult situations.

We read that her value is above rubies or pearls. To the husband of the virtuous woman, she is more valuable than natural things because she is given to him by God to be his helper. Verse 11 says,

The heart of her husband trusts in her confidently and relies on and believes in her securely so that he has no lack of honest gain or need of dishonest spoil.

If my husband can trust in me confidently, rely on me in all situations, and believe in me securely all the time, I am a blessing to him. If you are a virtuous woman, wife, and mother, your value to your husband and to your children is above rubies, pearls, and expensive natural things.

There are women who cause their husbands great problems in the financial realm because they have no restraint in their spending. This is just one example of how you can be a tremendous blessing or a tremendous detriment to your husband. The woman who desires to be a blessing is more valuable than these natural things because he can trust in her. I am not elevating myself, but Russ knows he can trust me not to go out and spend some huge amount of money that we do not have to spend. I hope you are the same kind of wife. Being content with what you have goes right along with that. All these things work together.

Verses 13-24 talk about a number of the activities of a virtuous woman. Her activity is spiritual and natural. One is not left out for the other. An important key to this chapter is that the virtuous woman's activity is, first of all, spiritual. Next are the natural responsibilities that she has as a wife and a mother. You cannot neglect the spiritual. Verse 16 says,

She considers a new field before she buys or accepts it, expanding

prudently and not courting neglect of her present duties by assuming others. With her savings of time and strength, she plants fruitful vines in her vineyard.

The world and society tries to make women conform and men perform. You do not need to please anybody in your life more than you need to please God. When you have direction from God in your heart, you should be seeking to fulfill that in your life regardless of what people and society say you should be doing. The reason I am bringing this up is that in many other cultures there is this push for women to be involved in activities that take them outside the home. Verse 16 says, She considers a new field before she buys or accepts it, expanding and not courting neglect of her present duties by assuming others. Do not allow your culture, society, family, friends, or anyone else to make you feel like you need to conform to their image of a woman.

When someone comes to me and they want me to do something, I have several things to consider. It may be a very good thing that they want me to do. They may want me to teach some sessions in their church or a Bible study. Before I say yes, I am going to consider, like verse 16 says, that new field. I am to consider that I have fields I am already taking care of in my life. I have responsibilities that I know have been given to me by God. Often, these good ideas from people are not God's ideas. Frequently in the church setting, people will come to you when there is a need for someone to do a particular job. People want you to conform to what they want you to do. You might look like you have time to do it, but you may not be the one God wants to do it. Doing it may cause you to neglect your family. You do not need to conform to someone else's image; you only need to be concerned with what God has put in your heart to do.

In this culture it is looked down upon if an educated lady is just at home, taking care of her children. When we lived in Liberia, I was a real oddity. People did not understand why I chose to stay home with our children. I did not want someone else training or taking care of our children because that is my God-given responsibility. This chapter talks about God-given tasks, and I believe these are the ones I have been given by God. To be very honest, I do not care what people think. I know it is a responsibility given to me by God and when I get to heaven God is going to say, "What did you do with those children?" What kind of response would it be if I said, "But so and so thought I should be doing this?" God will say, "What did I tell you to do?" That is all we need to be concerned about.

Some of the things that are mentioned in Proverbs 31:19-24 are outside her home but they all relate back to her family.

She lays her hand to the spindle, her hands hold the distaff, she makes for herself coverlets, cushions and rugs of tapestry, clothings of linen and she makes fine linen garments and leaves others to buy them.

I believe it is God's best for the woman to be in the home. I do not believe it is God's best for the woman to be outside the home, especially if she has little children. There are times and seasons in God, and there are times and seasons in our lives. I believe very strongly that if you as a woman have young children, that is the time and season in your life when you need to be home.

You cannot properly train your little children and guard your household if you are working outside your home. The exception is when a woman is a single parent and the husband is not there. God will give you grace in that difficult situation, but it requires faith and a lot of work. If you feel it is God's will that you do some more things outside your home after your children start school or are grown, that is fine. Be sure to always consider Proverbs 31:16.

She considers a new field before she buys or accepts it, expanding prudently and not courting neglect of her present duties by assuming others. With her savings of time and strength, she plants fruitful vines in her vineyard.

I am interested in planting only fruitful vines in my vineyard. Every opportunity that comes in your life is not necessarily one from God. You need to evaluate whether these things are of God by continually striving to hear the voice of the Spirit. I am talking about this in relation to the wife working outside the home even if it is church work. If you are a mother of young children, you need to consider that they require a lot of time. I believe the mother needs to be spending as much time as possible training her children in the things of God.

The first part of I Pet. 3, In like manner ye married women be submissive to your own husbands, is referring to women.

Let not yours be the merely external adorning with elaborate interweaving and knotting of hair, the wearing of jewelry or changes of clothes, but let it be the inward adorning and beauty of the hidden person of the heart with the incorruptible and unfading charm of a gentle and peaceful spirit which is not anxious or wrought up but is very precious in the sight of God.

Verse 3 tells us that a virtuous woman's activity is done with a peaceful, quiet spirit; she is not anxious or wrought up. That is very precious in the sight of God, and it will be precious in the sight of your husband and your children as well. For it was thus, with pious women of old who hoped in God. You cannot have a quiet and peaceful spirit if your faith is not in God and your strength is not coming from God in His Word. I Pet. 3:5-6 says,

They were accustomed to beautify themselves and were submissive to their husbands, adapting themselves to them as secondary and dependent upon them. It was thus that Sarah obeyed Abraham, following his guidance and acknowledging his headship over her by calling him lord. And you are now her two daughters if you do right and let nothing terrify you, not giving way to hysterical fears or letting anxieties unnerve you.

We have already said that women are much more sensitive emotionally, but it does not have to be a negative thing. You can allow that sensitivity to direct your life in a positive way. It should not cause you to be anxious, worrying, and wrought up all the time. The virtuous woman has a quiet, gentle, peaceful spirit because her hope and trust are in God.

The virtuous woman's priorities are discussed in Proverbs 31:15-17. She rises while it is yet night and gets spiritual food for her household and assigns her maids their

tasks. It sounds like she is setting her day in order spiritually. She girds herself with strength, spiritual, mental and physical fitness for her God-given task and makes her arms strong and firm. It is so important for women to realize that being a wife and mother is a God-given task.

People will try to make us think that we are wasting our time putting years of our lives into our children, homes, and families. I am more interested in my family prospering in the kingdom of God than making some company more prosperous. The virtuous woman sees her work much like a business. My business in life is to cause my children and my husband to be successful for the kingdom of God. That is more important than any other natural business I can think of. Can you think of one more important than that? I cannot. It does not bother me a bit that the Lord has chosen for me to invest myself in my children and husband. That is the best investment of my time and energies that I know of. I feel that it has much more eternal value and return than any other thing I could do with my life

In verse 20 we see that her second priority is others; she opens her hands to the poor, she reaches out her filled hands to the needy whether in body, mind or spirit. Her third priority is herself; she is last. Mark 6:33 says, Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you.

As a woman, if you will give to your husband, your children, and to others, then you will receive back. God always makes sure that we receive back. We do not have to look out for ourselves in that area because sowing and reaping is a principle in the Word of God. Verse 23 says, Her husband is known in the city's gates when he sits among the elders of the land. Proverbs 12:4 says, A virtuous and worthy wife, earnest and strong in character is a crowning joy to her husband, but she who makes him ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.

In the Old Testament, the city gate was a place where the people would assemble for public deliberation, like today's courtroom. Issues would be decided and judged at the city gates. It was a place where you would go to hear news, or attract the attention of dignitaries because important people were at the city gates. It says that the virtuous woman's husband is known at the city gates, which means he is a prominent person in his society. The inference here is that her ministry to him has enabled him to become this prominent person. Proverbs 12:4 says, She is a crown to her husband. A crown is a mark of royalty or honor. Remember, we said you could be a helpmate or a hindrance.

Proverbs 31:25-27 addresses her attributes. Strength and dignity are her clothing. We just read in I Pet. 3 that we are not to be concerned merely with our outward clothing and appearance. If strength and dignity are her clothing, she is more concerned with the inner man. Her position is strong and secure; she rejoices over the future, delighted in the time to come, knowing that her family is in readiness for it. She is not worried about whether her children are going to become rebellious or stray. She is not worried about hard times financially in her family. She is prepared for that, because she has ministered the Word of God to her family.

If we go back to verse 21 we read, She fears not the snow for her family, for all her household are doubly clothed in scarlet. This is a reference to salvation because in

scripture scarlet represents the blood of Jesus. She is not worried about the days to come because her children are born again Christians. She is not fearful that they are going to stray because she knows that the Word of God says, Train your children in the way that they should go and when they're old they will not depart from it. Because she has prepared her family spiritually by teaching the Word of God, she has a peaceful and gentle spirit.

Read what verse 26 has to say about wisdom and kindness. She opens her mouth in skillful and godly wisdom and on her tongue is the law of kindness, giving counsel and instruction. You are not going to have any wisdom or instruction that is going to help your family or others if you do not draw that from the Word of God. You can talk to people, but you are not going to have something that ministers life to them unless you get it from the Word of God.

Proverbs 31:28 lets us know that there are rewards in store for a virtuous woman.

Her children rise up and call her blessed, happy, fortunate and to be envied, and her husband boasts and praises her saying 'Many daughters have done virtuously, nobly and well with the strength of character that is steadfast in goodness, but you excel them all.

This scripture is just so exciting to me because this man is saying that many daughters have done virtuously, but you have excelled them. Look at the many daughters in the Old Testament. You have done better than Sarah that drew her strength from God to conceive in her old age and bear Isaac. You have done better than Miriam, who led the Israelites in praises to God. You have done better than brave, courageous Deborah, who was the righteous judge over Israel. You have done better than Esther, the queen who laid down her life for her people. You have done better than Hannah, the devoted mother of Samuel, whom she only had for a few years, but put God's Word into him. When she gave him to Eli, the priest, to raise, he became one of the most prominent prophets in Israel. You have done better than Ruth. Ruth was the daughter-in-law who was so devoted that she laid her life down for her mother-in-law. This man is saying that all these women have done well, but you have excelled them all. I want my husband to look at me this way.

The key to the nature of the virtuous woman is her relationship with the Lord. Her strength comes from the Word of God and her fellowship with the Lord. You will not be a virtuous woman unless you are a spiritual woman whose priority is striving after the things of God. Her life reveals the strength of character to do what is right regardless of what other people want her to do, or think she should do. Lastly, she is an asset to society as well as to her family because she is full of godly counsel and wisdom.

Christian Parenting

I love the subject of Christian parenting. I want to challenge you to increase your vision about children. You are destined to raise your children in the same way you were raised unless you renew your mind to God's methods of parenting and act according to His Word.

Maybe you were raised in such a way that you would not mind raising your children in the same way. I have told you about my background, and I am determined that I am going to train my children in the way they should go. I believe you are too. Do not allow your family to be cheated of God's best by the traditions of men. Col. 2:8 says, Do not be fooled by the traditions of men. I do not have any problem with tradition as long as it does not contradict the Word of God. If you were raised in a family with godly traditions and were trained in the Word of God, praise God for that. If you were not, do not raise your children the same way.

Once our daughter, Rebecca, asked me if I had been born again when I was a little girl? I explained to her that I had not been born again until I was 21 years old. She then said, "Mommy, that is the wrong time to be born again. You should have been born again when you were young like Elizabeth and I were. If you do it that way, you will not have to do any bad things when you grow up."

There are several things that I want you to see in Psalm 127:3-5.

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is his reward, like arrows in the hand of a warrior so are the children of one's youth. Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them.

The Amplified Bible says, Happy, blessed and fortunate. They shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate. It says children are a heritage from the Lord, like arrows in the hand of a warrior. Children are arrows that we shoot into the future. You can shoot that arrow into the future to help the kingdom of God or to help the kingdom of Satan. Jesus said, If you are not for me you are against me. There is no neutral place.

Maybe you have seen someone shoot arrows in real life or in a movie. You must aim an arrow for it to hit the intended target. Your children have to be aimed in the direction that you want them to go. If you just let them do what they want, they will be rebellious. If you want children who are going to be effective for the kingdom of God instead of rebellious, you must aim those children and that means training them.

The Amplified Bible says, happy, blessed and fortunate is the man who has his quiver full of them. Arrows go inside of a quiver so a warrior with many arrows would be successful. As a Christian, the more children you have, the more blessed you are. Some people think, "My children are not a blessing; I do not feel happy and I do not feel fortunate to have these children." The reason for that is that you have not trained them according to the Word of God. If you are training your children in the way they should go, then they will be obedient children. They will be a blessing to you and to the kingdom of God, whether they are big or little.

Many times people have children and do not see their purpose. Sometimes we just see them as inconveniences in our lives or as something negative that has happened to us because we have to be responsible for them in so many different ways. I want to challenge you to realize that God has a purpose for your children. He has a purpose for every child that is born, even if that child is not born under the best of circumstances. He has a purpose for that child's life, and that purpose will not come to pass unless that child is trained properly.

As you examine Mal 2:14-15, you will see that these verses are talking about wives who have been divorced by their husbands.

Yet you say for what reason, because the Lord has been witness between you and the wife of your youth with whom you have dealt treacherously. Yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

Verse 15 goes on to say, Did he not make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. God seeks godly offspring. Look at Joel 1:3. It says, Tell your children about it, let your children tell their children and their children another generation. He is talking about telling your children the things that God has done. In this situation, he is talking about something in particular, but we can apply this to children. The purpose in training children in the things of God is so that they will pass that training on to the next generation. Each generation, if properly trained in God's principles, will train the next generation. When God created Adam, He intended for Adam to train his children. He planned for Adam to train Cain and Abel and then Cain and Abel were to have children, and they were to train those children and so on. It did not happen; people have been found lacking from the beginning. We have been very negligent in this area, but this is God's purpose for children.

Psalms 112:1-3 gives us more insight from God's Word on parenting.

Blessed is the man who fears the Lord, who delights greatly in His commandments. His descendants will be mighty on the earth. The generation of the upright will be blessed, wealth and riches will be in his house and his righteousness endures forever.

We are reading this scripture today because God desires for your seed, your children, your offspring to be mighty upon the earth. He does not intend for them to just pass through life, make a little affect here and there, and finally go to heaven. As we go through these scriptures you will see that He means mighty on the earth both spiritually and naturally. He wants their financial and physical needs met; he does not want them to be poor, bedraggled, and defeated by the devil all the time.

The next thing He says is that the generation of the upright shall be blessed. The generation that your children grow up with is to be blessed because of your children's presence on the earth. Your children should be making such an impact that their peers are blessed just from being around them. They will be blessed because your children will be ministering the things of God to them.

Verse 3 assures us that God intends for you and your children to have wealth and riches, both spiritually and naturally. If you have the Word of God and you are walking in it, you have righteousness that can endure riches and wealth. Many times

God is not able to prosper people because they are not established in the Word of God. Riches and wealth can greatly harm you if you are not mature enough to handle them. He intends for you to prosper, but you must be established in His Word before He is going to put that into your hands. He does not want you to fall because of riches and wealth, but God's intention is for you and your children to prosper because you are grounded in His Word.

All of these are a result of regulating our lives according to God's Word. Wealth and riches will not be in your house, your children will not be mighty on the earth, and your children's generation will not be blessed if you are not founding your life on, and training your children in, the Word of God.

Psalm 25:12-13 says,

Who is the man that fears the Lord, him shall he teach in the way he chooses. He himself shall dwell in prosperity and his descendants shall inherit the earth.

This is saying that God will teach you in the vocation that He has called you to in life. Since we are talking about Christian parenting, I choose to read it this way. He will teach you in the way that you choose to parent. God will show us how to properly train them in the ways and the things of God. The scripture then says, He himself shall dwell in prosperity and his descendants shall inherit the earth. We know that we cannot inherit the whole world, but the word earth is referring to land or property. God wants your children to prosper. One way they will do that is by inheriting the earth.

God wants us to raise a generation of people for Him. He cannot use people who go through life without making an impact; that is not what God is interested in. God is interested in making an outstanding generation of children that will grow up and impact their generation for Him. I believe with all my heart that this will be the last generation. Many respected men of God have been telling us that we are in the last days. I believe our children are going to be the last generation to bring in the harvest.

Instead of your shame, you shall have double honor and instead of confusion they shall rejoice in their portion. Therefore in their land they shall possess double, everlasting joy shall be theirs. For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery for burnt offering. I will direct their work in truth and will make with them an ever-lasting covenant. Their descendants shall be known among the Gentiles. Is. 61:8-9

We are talking about our descendants. In the Amplified Bible it says, All who see them in their prosperity shall acknowledge them that they are the posterity, or the seed whom the Lord has blessed. We specifically read verse 8 because we are talking about the work of training our children. If we are to do it in the proper way, it is work. I said earlier that if you want to guarantee rebellion from your children, just do nothing. It is a guarantee I can make with assurance because if you do not train your children in the way they should go, they are going to rebel. They will rebel, against you and against God. But, in verse 8 we have a promise from the Lord. He says, I will direct their work in truth.

We know from what we read in Proverbs 31 that for the virtuous woman, the care

of her household and the training of her children are God-given tasks. In other places in scripture we are also given directions for fathers in regards to their children. We know that not only is child training work, it is a task that has been assigned to us by Father God Himself. We have a promise that He will direct that work. That is important because if we do not have direction from Him, we are not going to be successful. Here is a promise we can stand on, Their descendants shall be known among the Gentiles. The Gentiles to us are the unbelievers in the world. We are reading here that our descendants shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring, our grandchildren, among the people. In the Amplified Bible it says, all who see them, not just some, in their prosperity shall acknowledge them, that they are the posterity or the seed.

Remember that God is not interested in another generation of people that are not going to affect the earth for Him. He is interested in us training our children. He is interested in our children being known among all the Gentiles or people of the world as prosperous and prominent. In whatever endeavor He leads them in, people are going to take notice of them, and say, "What is your secret?" They can say, "My secret is God," because they are doing their work for His honor and for His glory.

We know from Deuteronomy 8:18 that the purpose of prosperity in our lives is to spread the gospel. If you are starving yourself, you are not going to be able to spread the gospel. We are to have all our needs met so that we are reaching out beyond ourselves with the gospel. That is the purpose of prosperity, and that is what God is interested in doing for our children and us. He wants prosperous, prominent people that will bring glory and honor to Him. If you do not train your children in the way they should go through God's Word, they will not be a prosperous, prominent people who bring glory and honor to Him.

In verse 8 of Isaiah 61 it says, and I will make with them an everlasting covenant. A covenant is a contract involving two parties where each party has a part to play. God is telling us that in the aspect of training our children, He will guarantee their success if we do our part. Our part is to ensure their obedience by training them in the ways and things of God. If we guarantee their obedience, God guarantees their success in their life's calling.

Every promise of scripture depends on something that we have to do. This is true even with salvation. If you believe in your heart, and if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus Christ, then you will be saved. There is a part we play and there is a part God plays. In regards to our children, we must do our part, which is to heed His direction. He will then do His part, which causes them to be successful. Their success will bring Him glory

Eph. 6 should be the first scripture that you teach your children. We taught both of our children to obey Daddy and Mommy. That is the preschool version of Eph 6:1-3. As they got a little bit older, they understood the word parents and we would say obey your parents in the Lord for this is right. Next, we would tell them to honor Daddy and Mommy. When they understood this, they started to understand what an attitude was because honor is an attitude. Obey is an action and honor is an attitude. When they would not honor us, we would tell them that they were not honoring Daddy and Mommy in order to teach them what it meant and why. Eph 6:1-3 says,

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.

The promise that is being spoken of is in Deut. 5:16. Moses is speaking to the Israelites and he is reviewing the Ten Commandments. In verse 16 he says this.

Honor your father and your mother as the Lord your God has commanded you that your days may be long and that it may be well with you in the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

We again have a promise from God, and we have a part that we play in it. If you honor and obey your parents, you have the promise from God that it will be well with you and you will live long on the earth. That is a promise from God, which is still a promise even if you are an adult. We have mothers and fathers even though we are grown. According to the Ten Commandments, we must still be careful to honor our parents. When you are an adult, you cannot always obey, especially if you are a Christian and your parents are not, but you can still honor them.

The devil may be trying to put some kind of incurable sickness on your body. If you have honored and obeyed your parents, you have a promise from God that you are going to live long on the earth. This is not something to be taken lightly. Because it is a promise from God, it is an important concept in our children's lives.

This was the first commandment that Moses gave to the Israelites that had a promise attached to it. When we are teaching our children to obey and honor Daddy and Mommy, we must also teach them the promise. The promise from God is that it will be well with them and that they will live long on the earth.

This is an important aspect of discipline. When children are disobedient, we have to explain to them that the reason Mommy and Daddy are disciplining them is because we want it to be well with them. You can use some example such as, "Remember when you disobeyed Mommy when I told you not to play on the steps; you disobeyed Mommy and you fell down and got hurt. You did not obey Mommy, so it did not go well with you." This is something that you must teach them.

If you have any fear in your heart with regard to your children, if your children will obey and honor you then it will be well with them; it is a promise to you from God. Maybe you have a fear that your children will die early, because of some sickness or some accident, or maybe you have a fear that they are not going to be well taken care of in life. Whatever that fear is, if you will guarantee their obedience by training them in the way they should go, then you can approach Father God. You can say, "Father, your Word says that if we train our children in the way they should go and cause them to obey us and honor us, it would be well with them. Amen." This is scripture to conquer all fears that the devil would put in your heart concerning your children. You have a part to play in it because you must guarantee their obedience. We have a part and then God will fulfill His part of the covenant.

Daniel and his three Hebrew friends are an example of how things can go well. Daniel and Meschach, Shadrach, and Abednego were ten times wiser than the wisest in their time in all of Egypt. They were ten times wiser because they honored God and

because they knew of the covenant that they had with God. God is no respecter of persons and we have a much greater covenant today. If your children have obeyed and honored you through this covenant, you can expect them to be healthy, safe, prosperous, and successful.

Benjamin Bloom and some researchers at the University of Chicago did a five-year study of 120 superstars. These were tennis players, concert pianists, sculptors, world-class mathematicians, scientists and Olympic swimmers. These were the best and the brightest in their fields. From this study they found that superstars are not simply born, but they are brought up that way. They discovered that even though their talents might differ, there was one similarity between all of them. It was not their income level or their intelligence, but the fact that they all had parents who were very attentive to them and tried to encourage them in their strengths and abilities. That was the one thing they found that was the same in their childhood experiences. Their parents recognized a gift or ability and then nurtured it.

This is a worldly study, but it is telling us as Christians that God has placed in every child abilities, talents, and gifts. The reason that those gifts and those abilities are put there is for the calling that God has placed on their lives. If we as parents will nurture that through encouragement and proper training, they will succeed in life and be prominent people that will glorify God.

Deut 21, starting with verse 18, deals with the rebellious son. In the Old Testament this is how a rebellious child was dealt with.

If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother and who, when they have chastened him will not heed them, then his father and his mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of his city, to the gate of his city and they shall say to the elders of the city, "This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice, he is a glutton and a drunkard." Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death with stones. So you shall put away the evil person from among you and all Israel shall hear and fear.

The important thing here is that the stubborn and rebellious son that is spoken of was considered rebellious because he would not heed or obey the voice of his father and mother.

You are your child's greatest example of God. Maybe that sounds funny, but from the time when that child is an infant, you are God's representative to that child. If your children do not learn to obey your voice, it will be very difficult for them to learn to obey God's voice. How many of us does God have to speak to several times before we listen? If we had been trained by our parents to listen and obey the voice of authority, how much better trained spiritually would we be today? By the time you are 21 years old, if you had been trained and trained and trained to obey the voice of authority, you will obey it. What will happen when you hear God's voice? You will obey it without question.

Many children were trained to ignore the voice of authority, and that is why so

many people today are in prison and have so many problems in their lives. They were not trained to obey their parents' or teachers' authority. Eventually, many did not obey policemen, the authority of government and law in their life.

The evil that is being spoken of in verse 21 is rebellion. The rebellious act was not obeying the voice of the father or the mother. Notice that it is talking about the voice of both the father and the mother. This is a reverse of Eph 6:1-3 which says, Obey and honor, then it will be well with you and you will live long on the earth. In Deut. 21 we see that to disobey and rebel will cause things not to be well with you; you will not live long on the earth. These people were stoned to death for disobeying and being rebellious.

In the Living Bible I Tim. 3:4 says, He must have a well-behaved family with children who obey quickly and quietly. These verses are referring to the person who aspires to be a bishop, but to have well-behaved children should be the goal of every parent.

Our goal in training our children should be that when we speak to them and they hear our voice, they will obey quickly and quietly. That is referring to both obedience and honor. Quickly is relevant to obedience; that is an action. Obeying quietly has to do with honoring you, and that has to do with the attitude. This is what we are striving for in training our children: We want them to obey us quickly and quietly. You need to train your children. When Elizabeth was younger and did something wrong, I would have to discipline her. I would tell her what she did wrong. "You did not obey Mommy quickly and quietly." She might have obeyed, but she stomped off as she did it. The action was right, but the attitude was wrong. Both have to be right.

We can do that with God sometimes. The Lord is speaking to us, and we are hesitant to do something. We keep putting it off until finally we say, "I know I have to do this because the Lord will not leave me alone about it. I will go ahead and do it, but I really do not want to do it." This is the very thing we have to deal with in our children. Not only does the action have to be right, but the attitude of the heart must be right as well. This is what God requires of us, so we must require this of our children.

We must train and teach our children to obey our voice the first time they hear it, not the second, third, fourth, or the fifth. Many of us have trained our children to obey our voice, but they know that the first time we tell them does not mean anything. The second time Mommy says it, it does not mean anything either. But, the third time, when Mommy is really mad, then I have to do it. Many of us have trained our children that way. Because many of us were trained that way, we are hindered spiritually. We do not obey God until He is shouting at us. We need to be quick to obey that still, small voice when it witnesses something in our spirit.

Our children must be trained to obey the first time Mommy or Daddy speaks to them in a conversational tone of voice. Conversational means the way I would talk to you if we were just having a discussion, not yelling or angry. I might say, "Rebecca, please pick that up from the floor," and she would quickly and quietly obey me. I should not have to repeat my request. I have not trained her properly if she only obeys about four times later when I am really mad. We must train our children first of all to hear our voice. It is just as easy for you to train your children to hear and obey the first time that you say something as it is to train them to do it the tenth time you say it. It is just a

matter of how you are going to train them. It is a lot less frustrating for you if you just train them properly and have them obey you the first time you say something. Not only is it much less frustrating, it is much easier on the child because you have a much more peaceful home.

You are saying, "That's nice, I see the goal, but how do we train our children?" Proverbs 1:8 says, My son, hear the instruction of your father and do not forsake the law of your mother. We instruct our children by example, but the primary way we teach them is with our voice. We tell them what to do and when to do it and how to do it. If they do not learn to hear and heed our voice, they will not be trained properly. Proverbs 4:1 says, Hear my children the instruction of a father and give attention to know understanding. We have another reference to hearing. You can be speaking, but you must teach your children to listen when you talk. When you allow them to ignore your voice, you are teaching them to ignore God's voice as well.

You are God's representative to them and you are God's voice. If you start training them early to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit, they will start listening for themselves. If you train them to hear and obey you quickly, they will carry that into spiritual things. Proverbs 22:6 says, Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it. This is a critical verse in regard to raising children. Notice that it does not just say "teach a child the way he should go," it says "train." There is a difference between the word train and the word "teach." All versions of the Bible that I have read never say teach; it always says train, because training goes beyond teaching. Right now, I am teaching you something; but if I were training you, I would go home with you and watch you with your children. I would watch over you to make sure that you were performing what I taught you.

Many times parents teach their children, but do not train them. They do not watch to make sure the child accomplishes what they have been taught to do. We are told to not merely teach, but to go beyond teaching. We must oversee our children to make sure they follow through on what we have taught them; that is training.

When you go into the army, you go through basic training. When you are in basic training, you do not just sit in a classroom for six weeks taking notes from the chalkboard. They take you out to the battlefield and through maneuvers to train you. They teach you, but then they watch over you to make sure that you carry out what they have taught you. That is what training is; that is the job of the parent. We are told to train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old, he will not depart from it, which is a promise from God.

Some people have thought that even if they train their children when they are young, they will probably still rebel. "They will rebel against God and me but eventually they will come back to what I have taught them." If we read, When he's old he'll not depart from it from the original text, the word old means hair on the chin. This is making reference to puberty and the young teenage years. This is telling us to train up a child when they are little, from infancy in the way they should go. Keep putting it in; keep putting it in; then when they get to those difficult teenage years, they will not depart from it because it is in their heart.

I know parents who have wayward children in their twenties or thirties. These

parents still believe that their children are going to come back. Praise God when they do come back, but they did not have to stray for all those years. If we will train them in the things of God from the time they are infants through the time they are in elementary school, when they get to those difficult teenage years, they will not stray. They will have the Word of God and the strength to stay in it. They will not stray or rebel because there is no need for them to. Where in the Word of God does it say teenagers have to rebel? It does not. We see it in people's experiences, but we do not see it in the Word of God.

Sometimes we have this idea that we cannot teach somebody the Word of God until they can read it for themselves or until they can understand grown up words. This is not the case. Break the Word of God into little pieces. Is. 28:10 says, For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little. That is what we do with children. We break it into little pieces, and we do not teach them everything in one day. We teach them a little bit everyday. You will be surprised at just how much they know and understand. Even when Rebecca was as young as five years old, she had learned spiritual things that I had not learned until I went to Bible School. Children are spirits just like you and I are spirits. Just because their bodies are small does not mean their spirits are small. They can understand spiritual things even before they can communicate them in their own words. We need to understand this about our children.

In Romans 6, Paul says I was alive once, and then I died. When children are born, their spirits are alive unto God. There is no spiritual death there because there is no understanding of right and wrong. There comes a point in a child's life where he understands right and wrong and if he chooses to do wrong, then it is a sin. If you will take advantage of that time and minister the Word of God to them, you will see them blossom in the things of God. Think where you would be today spiritually if you had known about the Word of God when you were five, six, or seven. Think of all the things that you would not have had to overcome once you were born again.

We take our children when they are small, and we start putting the things of God in them. We establish right habits, character, and attitudes in them. They never establish bad habits and attitudes because they learn to deal with and overcome those things as children. There is a generation that is growing up like that today. So much of the church world has not grasped this. We know to teach children and have Sunday school for them, but we have not grasped the concept that we need to minister to their spirit as little children. Many children grew up in church but were not even born again.

There are charismatic churches in the United States that have thriving, growing children's ministries. I am not talking about Sunday school, where a child sits there and is expected to just listen to a Bible story. I am talking about children's church where children are ministered to at their own levels. You cannot expect a little child to listen to a forty-five or sixty minute sermon. Instead, you take the Word of God and make it fun and exciting for them. If they can receive it, they will start putting it to work in their lives. You will see them overcome the devil and be strong in the Lord because they know the power and authority that they have. The devil has tried to keep this undercover for all these years because these little children are such little powerhouses.

We have a generation growing up right now that was trained from infancy in the

things of God. They know the power of God, and the authority that they have in the Word of God. They have a desire in their hearts to win the world for Jesus. I am convinced that these are the last days because we have a generation coming up now that knows all of this. When they come of age, the devil is in trouble. He is in trouble already with those little kids

If your child is twelve or thirteen and you have never taught him these things, **START NOW**. Do not waste a moment. If you have a teenager and you have not trained him in the things of God, the one thing you have to do is start ministering the Word of God to him. If you have this big sixteen-year-old boy, you are not going to be able to spank him. You already know that. The only way you are going to be able to deal with rebellion and disobedience is by ministering the Word of God to his heart.

Part of our responsibility, as parents is to create a desire in our children to be obedient. When you have created in them a desire to please you and please God, most of your discipline problems are taken care of.

Do not waste any opportunity to teach your child the Word of God. When your child is fearful in the night, use that opportunity to teach him the Word of God by saying, "You have not been given a spirit of fear; you have been given power and might and a sound mind; you tell the devil to go." Drill him thoroughly on how to perform his duties and appropriate the blessings of the way. He needs to know his authority over the devil because that will enable him to escape danger. Stamp these lessons deep in his spirit, and lead him to practice them until they are a part of his life and nature. Bathe him in prayer and instill the fear of God in him. Train him to love righteousness and hate iniquity, and consequently, he shall not depart from it. It is an unfailing law if we will do our part.

We are to use every opportunity to stamp the Word of God into our children's spirits. If you are walking down the street with your child and you witness somebody doing something wrong to another person, use that as an opportunity to show him how the Word of God should be applied to that situation. Teach him what that person should have done instead. If your child is sick, teach him the Word of God by saying, "We know that Jesus bore our sicknesses; you have power over the devil, so pray against this sickness."

It is a continual thing that you must do time after time, day after day. It's not something you have to struggle to do, just make it a way of life. If you keep putting the Word of God into their hearts, eventually they will know no other way. It will be a part of their very nature. It would be a part of our nature right now if we had been taught God's Word since we were little children. Many of you are just like me. There were many things in our minds that were wrong according to the Word of God and we had to renew our minds. If we start training our children the right way, they will not have to renew their minds; their minds will be new already.

One thing that is of great importance that I found through my own experience with my children is that we need to teach them to love righteousness and to hate iniquity. If your children have in them a love of righteousness, and a desire to obey God, when iniquity comes before them, they will turn away from it. They will choose God's way, because they have a desire to go His way

If you buy a little book on the alphabet, the W is almost always a witch. When Rebecca was little, she would look at something like that and she would say, "That is ungodly." She is now to the point where she will not even look at things like that. That is not to exalt Russ or me; we just put in her a love of godliness and a hate of iniquity. If you will do this with your children, it will take them very far. Just the basic love of God and righteousness and a hate of iniquity, will eliminate many discipline problems with your children.

You train the will with discipline, but you protect the spirit with encouragement, praise and affection. You can train someone's will, but if you leave out the encouragement, praise, and affection, then you will break their spirits. We are told in the Word of God not to discourage our children. We are to encourage them instead.

It is in the heart of every child to please his parents. Encouragement and praise will stir up that desire to please. If you are discouraging your child by not recognizing the good things he is doing, then that desire will diminish in his heart. The desire to please you is there, but you will squelch that if you do not encourage your child. In the Amplified Bible Hebrews 10:24 says,

And let us consider, give attentive, continuous care to watching over one another, studying how we may stir up, stimulate and insight to love and helpful deeds and noble activities.

Remember we said that part of the definition of train was to create a desire. Creating a desire and stirring up accomplish the same thing. We are to stir them up to love God, you, and others. Encouragement and praise will create a desire in our children to do good deeds. When your children obey and do something that is good, we should encourage them with praise.

You need to be more excited about your children's obedience than their disobedience. Most parents get more excited over disobedience than obedience because disobedience upsets them. We may go through years with obedient children and not encourage or praise them, because we think, "That is what they are supposed to do." That kind of thinking does not stir up a desire in them to do it again. You need to be excited when your children obey God's Word.

Much of this teaching that I am giving you, I have gotten from a couple that are pastoring in the United States. Their names are David and Roxanne Swan. When their children obey, they run around the room, throw their hands up in the air, praise the Lord, and yell, "Oh, that is so good that you are being obedient!" The more that you will do that, the more desire you will create in your children to do that good thing again.

Roxanne was talking about how she had watched so many little children learn to eat food with a spoon. They would have food all over them and all over their mothers, and she thought, "I am not going through that." She started feeding her son with a spoon. When she gave him a bite and the food would go in, and stay in, she would jump up and run around the room. His eyes would light up and he would get so happy. She would give him another bite and when it would go in his mouth and stay in his mouth, she would jump up and she would run around the room and clap her hands. This is a very small child we are talking about, but if you will do these kinds of things with your

children, you will stir up in them a desire to do good.

If they do good and you do not notice it, what is the benefit of doing it again? This is a key in disciplining. When there is disobedience, we discipline, but we need to be encouraging. When we teach the Word of God to our children, we need to encourage them to do right; we need to exhort them; it needs to be a positive thing. You need to put a lot of effort into it. The more effort you put into it, the better results you will get. This is God's law of sowing and reaping.

Many studies have been done showing that babies, infants, and children need affection to develop properly. God has put this need for affection in people. Ephesians 5:2, in the Amplified says, And walk in love, esteeming and delighting in one another as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us. Your children need to be held, touched, hugged, and kissed by their fathers and mothers. We see fathers who are not affectionate with their sons because they have been taught that it is not right or that it is not manly. Let me tell you one thing; it is godly. It is godly for a man to take his son on his lap and tell him how much he loves and appreciates him. It is godly for a mother to do that with her daughters. Show them that you esteem them and delight in them. Let your children know that you think they are wonderful. There should be times of affection between you and your children when you are just telling them how much you love them, how sweet they are, and how thankful you are for them without you ever mentioning any disobedience. These are things we need to be continually feeding our children, not just once, but many times a day for the entire time we have our children with us.

Even if you are not an affectionate person, your children need your affection. They need your affection when they are infants and when they are growing up, even when they are teenagers. They need for you to tell them you love them, and to hug them. They need for you to show in word and deed your love and appreciation of them.

Peer pressure has control over teenagers because if they were getting the love, acceptance, and approval they needed at home, they would not be out trying to get it from their friends by taking drugs and alcohol. If you look at a teenager who is doing drugs, he is not doing drugs by himself. He is doing drugs with someone else because he is doing it for their approval. If you have sowed the difference between righteousness and unrighteousness into your teenager and they have received the love and approval they need from you, they will not be looking for them from other people. That is why there is so much pre-marital sex among teenagers. They are looking for love, approval and affection. If they were getting them at home, which is the godly source of them, they would not be looking for them in places where they should not be.

Proverbs 12:25 says, Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down, but a good word makes it glad. Proverbs 15:4 says, A gentle tongue with its healing power is a tree of life, but willful contrariness in it breaks down the spirit." In Matthew 12:36-37, Jesus says that we are responsible for the words that we speak. Proverbs 18:21 and Proverbs 31:26, tell us that the law of kindness should be on our lips. We are responsible for the words we speak to our children. They should be words of praise, encouragement and strength. They should be words that build up and not tear down. Never speak words to your children that indicate that you do not love them, that you are tired of them, or that you wish you did not have them. Death and life are in the power of the tongue. Sow life

into your children by ministering words that will give them strength and ability.

Many times I hear people speaking to an adult in a kind tone of voice, but when their child suddenly runs up, they are harsh with the child. We should never do that with our children. Our children should be as precious and as valuable to us as any dear friend. Be aware of the words that you are speaking and the attitude that you are conveying to your children by the expression on your face and the tone of your voice. Make sure it one of love.

I John 4:19 in the King James says, We love Him because He first loved us. This is talking about Jesus, but the same principle is true for our children. They will love when we first love them. By sowing love into your children in word and in deed, you enable them to love others. It is difficult for a child who is not receiving love to give it.

Love is affection plus discipline. Sometimes, you hear people talk about spoiling a child. They think that too much love or too much affection spoils a child. That is just not true. Letting a child have his own way, is what spoils a child. Not disciplining him will spoil him. Love is both discipline and affection. You should never discipline without love. You have to have both. There are some parents who go to the other extreme; they love their children, but they give them so many things, and they never discipline them. They do not train them and that will not only spoil the child, it will produce rebellion. We have to combine both law and grace. Psalm 36:7 says, How precious is your steadfast love oh God, the children of men take refuge and put their trust under the shadow of your wings. Love brings security and confidence. When you love your children they will feel secure, and be able to reach out to love others.

When you have disciplined your child for something, you should not keep bringing it up and bringing it up because God does not do that with you. Let there be times between you and your child of enjoyment and affection when you are not reminding him of past disobedience or failures. Take times to build him up just for who he is, not for what he has done. He needs to hear from you that he is precious in your sight and in the sight of God.

When you will do this with your children, you will take many limitations off them. Many times our society and our experience cause us to put limitations on our children. Your children have a potential in them. If you will feed and nurture that potential, they will do things you never dreamed they could do. If they want to do something that seems strange to you, you may think, "They could not do that." Do not limit them; encourage them. Tell your children that Philippians 4:13 says, You can do all things through Christ. That verse should be one of the first ones that you teach them after they have learned Ephesians 6:1-3. Take the limitations off your children by continually ministering this verse to your children. If you will be an encourager, a builder and a strengthener to your children, you will see them excel in God. You will be amazed at what they can do.

Proverbs 13:24 in the Amplified says, He who spares his rod of discipline hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines diligently and punishes him early. The NIV says, is careful to discipline. Discipline is an art. Most of the time when parents are upset with the disobedience of their child, they discipline their child in an off-handed, off-the-cuff way. That is not godly discipline. With Godly discipline, there is a pattern of

consistency. There is a rule in the Word of God for disciplining, and we should follow that rule. When we combine that rule with love, we will see wonderful results.

We are going to study about the rod of discipline. We are not talking about child abuse, but about godly discipline. Love must be the motive for all discipline. When love is the motive of your heart, you will have God on your side in disciplining and you will have wonderful results.

Every child deserves the four A's: acceptance, approval, affection, and authority. Children need authority. We know from Proverbs that a child left to himself will embarrass his mother. He will be confused because he does not feel loved. Authority in a child's life brings security and confidence. Every child deserves that. A parent's role is to guide, guard, govern, direct, protect, and correct. You should meditate on those for a while.

Children must comprehend the fact that there is a consequence for every act of disobedience and a reward for every act of obedience. Your child will not comprehend that if you do not provide these consequences and rewards. That is your responsibility as a parent. A consequence means confrontation. Do not be afraid to confront your children when they disobey. King David had three sons that rebelled against him because he was afraid to confront their disobedience. Do not be afraid to confront disobedience. Confront it in a godly manner with the rod of correction. Reward with praise, privileges, gifts, and opportunities for your children. If you will meditate on that, God will give you some good wisdom and some good ideas in that area. There is an art to discipline, and love is the key in that art.

There are many references in Proverbs to the rod of correction. We are not going to read all of them, but I want to convince you that this is God's way of discipline.

Proverbs 13:24 says,

He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly. Proverbs 22:15 says, Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction will drive it far from him. Proverbs 29:15 says, The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother. Proverbs 23:13-14 says, Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod he will not die. You will beat him with a rod and deliver his soul from Hell.

The rod of correction is the ONLY instrument prescribed in scripture to be used in discipline. There are no instructions for using a belt, your shoe, a clothes hanger, or a wooden spoon; we are to only use the rod of correction. The reason the scripture talks about the rod is because the rod is a neutral object. You should not use your hand to discipline your children because your hand is not a neutral object. Your hand is for praying for your children; it is for touching and hugging and affection. Do not use your shoe because your shoe is to wear on your foot. Any other objects that you can think of to discipline with besides the rod are not neutral objects.

The rod of correction is a neutral object. Find a small piece of wood and make yourself a rod of correction. Let your children know that it is the rod of correction. In our house, we have a piece of wood that we use for the rod of correction and my children

call it Mr. Rod. They know what Mr. Rod is for. Mr. Rod does not do anything but discipline them. They do not like the discipline, but they know it is for their good, and it is a neutral object that is used only for that. There is no other purpose for it. If you have little children, do not get some huge piece of wood that will damage them. If you have a big, ten or twelve year old child, do not use some thin twig that is not going to affect him in any way. The rod should suit the size of your child. If you will ask God, He will give you wisdom as to what you can use for a rod.

Our understanding of what is accomplished in discipline is as crucial as the act itself. Lamentations 3:27 in the Amplified says, It is good for a man that he should bear the yoke of divine disciplinary dealings in his youth. Off-handedly slapping your child with your hand is not divine discipline. Child abuse comes when people do not pray and learn about the art of godly discipline. When you have studied the art of divine discipline and you have meditated on it, you can discipline your child in faith and get God's results.

Other forms of correction, such as restrictions are effective in temporarily altering your child's actions, but only divine disciplinary dealings will affect him forever. Other methods of discipline will have an affect on them and will change their behavior for the moment, but they will not change their heart forever. These other methods will not have permanent, eternal value in their lives.

Proverbs 29:15 says, The rod and reproof give wisdom. As the rod drives the foolishness out, wisdom is imparted. It is a divine thing that God does. We obey His Word by disciplining in a godly fashion according to His Word. As a result, foolishness is driven out, and wisdom is imparted. We all want our children to have wisdom. We all want the foolishness to be driven out.

Proverbs 3:16-17, in talking about wisdom says, Length of days is in her hand, in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. As the rod of correction brings wisdom, the wisdom brings length of days, riches and honor, pleasantness and peace to the child. Proverbs 20:30 says, Blows that wound cleanse away evil and strokes for correction reach to the innermost parts. If we want to reach to the heart of the child to drive that foolishness and rebellion out, this is the way we do it.

Your children are not going to be with you forever. When your children leave you, the Holy Spirit and the Word of God that you have put into their hearts will guide their lives. When a child disobeys in his heart you should discipline him. You should start when your child is very young teaching him the difference between what his head tells him to do and what his heart tells him to do. If you will be consistent with this, you can train any child.

Put your hand on his tummy and say, "Down here is your spirit." As you show him time after time, he will start to listen down there in his spirit. If you are being attentive to this, he will do something that tells you that he knows how to listen to his spirit. Keep instructing until you come to the place where you know that he knows the difference between his spirit and his head. When you train them to do this, you will have fewer discipline problems. You have to be consistent to diligently teach them these things.

When a child displays a wrong attitude he needs to be disciplined. We are told in scripture that the willing and the obedient will eat the good of the land. Willing pertains to your attitude; obedience pertains to your action. When Rebecca was younger, she was a very obedient child, but she sometimes had a problem with her attitude. Usually when Rebecca had to be spanked with the rod of correction it was because of an attitude, but the attitude is just as important as the action. I might say, "Rebecca, please pick up your toys." Since she does not want to do it, she stomps over there, picks up a toy and throws it in the place it is supposed to be. I must correct her because it is disobedience to have that kind of attitude.

Never discipline little children for a childish mistake. When they spill the milk on the table that is not disobedience. That is a childish mistake and we do not discipline them for that. We help them, train them, and teach them by saying, "Honey, you do not do that. You hold your cup with two hands." Whatever you need to do to train them, do it, but do not take them and spank them for spilling milk.

Proverbs 19:18 gives us our guidelines for discipline.

Discipline your child while there is hope, do not indulge your angry resentments by undue chastisements and set yourself to his ruin. Always be in control, both verbally and physically. Never discipline when you are angry, frustrated or embarrassed.

It is best to discipline your child immediately after disobedience, but if you are angry, let it wait a few minutes. Walk away, pray in the spirit, or do whatever you need to do. If your child disobeyed, sit him down, and immediately let him know that he has done something wrong. Do not use the rod of correction when you are angry because that is when you will hurt your child physically. You might be able to control your words so they do not sound angry, but anger is of the heart. It comes out even though you are trying to control your words. Do not discipline when you are embarrassed or because you are frustrated. When you discipline in anger, you do not hook up with God's divine method of disciplining and you will not have His results. This is an area, which we, as parents, need to work on by the help of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

There are no "bad guys" in parenting. Father, if you witness the disobedience, you administer the discipline. Many times mothers will put it off on the father. "When your father gets home, you are really going to get it." This is not the correct way to deal with the problem. The parent that witnesses the disobedience is the parent who should calmly apply discipline.

Colossians 3:21 says, Fathers, do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged. Never demean your child's character because this can break his spirit. When you discipline a child, say, "Honey, I love you. You are a very good boy, but you chose to do something wrong. Now, Mommy must discipline you." Never demean his character by telling him that he is bad. The behavior is bad, not the child. The child has the Spirit of God dwelling in him. They are the righteousness of God in Christ, like any other person who is born again. You communicate that he is good but he chose to do something wrong, and that is why you must discipline him.

We are going to go over the procedure for dealing with disobedience. If your child has displayed willful disobedience, you take him to a private place. In our family, it is a bathroom. You decide what is best in your house, but do not discipline your children in public. It is best not to have other brothers and sisters there especially if there is any sibling rivalry among them. This is a private experience; three people are there, you, the child, and Father God. It should be private in order to preserve the child's dignity.

Express your displeasure with his choice, and explain what he did wrong. This is your chance to train and instruct him. Be as concrete and as practical as you can with him by telling him what he did wrong and also what he should have done. You reinforce Ephesians 6:1-3. "What are you supposed to do? You are supposed to obey Daddy and Mommy. What does Ephesians 6:1-3 say?" Have them quote it to you. Proverbs 10:13 in the Amplified says this, On the lips of him who has discernment, skillful and godly wisdom is found. But discipline and the rod are for the back of him who is without sense and understanding.

Spank your child with the rod on the bottom. Do not hit his legs, back, or arms. God has provided an appropriate place on the body for spanking. The bottom is the largest muscle on the body and it is padded. It is a place that is made for the rod of correction and if you hit your child there with the rod, you will not hurt him. Child abuse comes when you hit your child too hard in the wrong place with the wrong object.

If someone asks me how many swats to give, I usually say three. It does not always have to be three; with our little children, once is usually enough. If it is something that is more severe, you could go up to three. Do not hit hard enough to harm the child, but do hit hard enough that he feels it. If older children do not take this seriously, hit a little bit harder, but still not hard enough to damage or harm the child. Strengthen do not lengthen the number of swats. Do not decide, "You have been really bad, so I am going to spank you 10 times."

Have the child stand holding on to something. It is best to have him stick his bottom out a little bit so you have a good target. This sounds funny, but if you do that every time you will not hit his back or legs. He will see by your actions and concern that you love him; you are not doing this to get revenge because he has been bad. You are doing it because you want to discipline God's way.

Pray with the child after the spanking. He can repeat after you if he is old enough to say it himself. "Father, I confess that I hit my brother and I should not have done that. I ask your forgiveness and Father I thank you that according to I John 1:9, you are faithful and just to forgive me of my sins and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness. Thank you Father, in Jesus' name. Amen." It does not have to be a long drawn out thing.

You will find that on some days you are going to have to use the rod of correction with your children many times. Use this as an opportunity to help them realize God's forgiveness. You forgive them and then if there is someone they need to apologize to, have them do it.

Next, assure them of God's forgiveness and yours. According to Isaiah 43:25, never bring up the incident again. You have disciplined and they have asked Father

God to forgive them. He does, and so you do too. When their father comes in at the end of the day, do not rant and rave and make the children relive their disobedience; it is not necessary. Discipline, and let it be over with.

Apply faith every time you discipline with the rod of correction, knowing that this is God's method of driving foolishness and rebellion from your child, imparting wisdom and peace in their place. Meditate on Prov. 2:30, 3:16-17, 22:15, 29:15; Lam. 3-27; and Rom. 14:23 for more insight on this subject.

You must add encouragement, praise and affection to the rod of correction or the discipline will not be effective; you will provoke your child to wrath.

Be sure that you have invested love, acceptance, and approval, greater than the severity of the discipline administered. If you do that you are involving yourself and your child in divine disciplinary dealings. You have sowed love into that child so now you can discipline him. You will not provoke them to wrath.

Memorize scripture with your children. Make it fun and exciting, by doing little hand motions as you memorize scripture. The key is to do things that are fun with your children in regards to memorizing scripture and having devotions with them.

In praying for your children, I would encourage you to write yourself a prayer that you pray daily for your children. Do not just pray something from your head; pray the Word of God. Here are some scriptures that you can use for references.

Deut. 6:5; Ps. 16:11, 40:8, 91:7, 91:11, 112:2, 127:3; Prov. 3:16-17, 6:22, 31:25; Isa. 54:13; Jer. 33:3; Lam. 2:19; John 14:21, 16:13; Rom. 12:10; II Cor. 6:14; Eph. 4:32, 5:1-2, 6:1-3; Phil. 4:7; Col. 3:15; I Pet. 2:2; III John 2.

If you are interested in bringing up godly children that will be mighty on the earth, that are going to do something for God in the earth, then study the scriptures. God will give you what you need. He is more interested in your children than you are.

Fathers and mothers and husbands and wives, I pray God's best for your family. Amen. Praise God!

Scriptures From The Amplified Bible On The Family

- Gen. 2:18 Now the Lord God said, It is not good (sufficient, satisfactory) that man should be alone; I will make him a helper meet (suitable, adopted, complementary) for him.
- Prov. 5:18 Let your fountain (of human life) be blessed (with the rewards of fidelity), and rejoice in the wife of your youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant doe (tender, gentle, attractive) - let her bosom satisfy you at all times, and always be transported with delight in her love.
- Prov. 12:4 A virtuous and worthy wife (earnest and strong in character) is a crowning joy to her husband, but she who makes him ashamed is as rottenness in his bones (Prov. 31:23; 1 Cor. 11:7).
- Prov. 18:22 He who finds a (true) wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord (Prov. 19:14, 31:10).
- Prov. 19:14 Houses and riches are the inheritance from fathers, but a wise, understanding, and prudent wife is from the Lord (Prov. 18:22).
- Prov. 24:3 Through skillful and Godly Wisdom is a house (a life, a home, a family) built, and 4 by understanding it is established [on a sound and good foundation], and by knowledge shall its chambers [of every area] be filled with all precious and pleasant riches.
- Prov. 31:10 A capable, intelligent, and virtuous woman - who is he who can find her? She is for more precious than jewels and her value is far above rubies or pearls. (Prov. 12:4, 18:22, 19:14).
- 11 The heart of her husband trusts in her confidently and relies on and believes in her securely, so that he has no lack of (honest) gain or need of (dishonest) spoil.
- 12 She comforts, encourages, and does him only good as long as there is life within her.
- 13 She seeks out wool and flax and works with willing hands (to develop it).

- 14 She is like the merchant ships loaded with foodstuffs: she brings her household's food from a far (country).
- 15 She rises while it is yet night and gets (spiritual) food for her household and assigns her maids their tasks (Job 23:12).
- 16 She considers a (new) field before she buys or accepts it, expanding prudently (and not courting neglect of her present duties by assuming others). With her savings (of time and strength) she plants fruitful vines in her vineyard (Song of Sol. 8:12).
- 17 She girds herself with strength (spiritual, mental, and physical fitness for her God-given task) and makes her arms strong and firm.
- 18 She tastes and sees that her gain from work (with and for God) is good; her lamp goes not out, but it burns on continually through the night (of trouble, privation, sorrow, warning away fear, doubt and distrust).
- 19 She lays her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff.
- 20 She opens her hand to the poor, yes, she reaches out her filled hands to the needy (whether in body, mind, or spirit).
- 21 She fears not the snow for her family, for all her household are doubly clothed in scarlet (Josh. 2:18-19; Heb. 9:19-22).
- 22 She makes for herself coverlets, cushions, and rugs of tapestry. Her clothing is of linen, pure and fine, and of purple (such as that of which the clothing of the priests and the hallowed cloths of the temple were made) (Isa. 61:10; 1 Tim. 2:9; Rev. 3:5, 19:8,14).
- 23 Her husband is known in the (city's) gates, when he sits among the elders of the land (Prov. 12:4).
- 24 She makes fine linen garments and leads others to buy them; she delivers to the merchants' girdles (or sashes that free one up for service).

- 25 Strength and dignity are her clothing and her position is strong and secure; she rejoices over the future (the latter day or time to come) knowing that her family is in readiness for it.
- 26 She opens her mouth in skillful and godly wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness (giving counsel and instruction).
- 27 She looks well to how things go in her household, and the bread of idleness (gossip, discontent, and self-pity) she will not eat (1 Tim. 5:14; Titus. 2:5).
- 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed (happy, fortunate, and to be envied); her husband boasts and praises her (saying).
- 29 Many daughters have done virtuously, nobly, and well (with the strength of character that is steadfast in goodness) but you excel them all.
- 30 Charm and grace are deceptive, and beauty is vain (because it is not lasting) but a woman who reverently and worshipfully fears the Lord, she shall be praised!
- 31 Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in the gate (of the city) (Phil.4:8).
- Malachi 2:16 For the Lord, the God of Israel, says: I hate divorce and marital separation and him who covers his garment [his wife] with violence. Therefore keep a watch upon your spirit [that it may be controlled by My Spirit], that you deal not treacherously and faithlessly [with your marriage mate].
- 1 Cor. 11:7 For a man ought not to wear anything on his head (in church), for he is the image and (reflected) glory of God, (that is, his function of government reflects the majesty of the divine Rule); but woman is (the expression of) man's glory (majesty, pre-eminence) (Gen. 1:26).
- 8 For man was not (created) from woman, but woman from man (Gen. 2:21-23).
- 9 Neither was man created on account of or for the benefit of woman, but woman on account of and for the benefit of man (Gen. 2:18).

- Eph. 5:22 Wives, be subject (be submissive and adapt yourselves) to your own husbands as (a service) to the Lord.
- 28 Even so husbands should love their wives as (being in a sense) their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself.
- 29 For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and carefully protects and cherishes it, as Christ does His church.
- 33 However, let each man of you (without exception) love his wife (being in a sense) his very own self; and let the wife see that she respects and reverences her husband (that she notices him, regards him, honors him, prefers him, venerates and esteems him; and that she defers to him, praises him and loves and admires him exceedingly) (1 Pet. 3:2).
- Col. 3 :18 Wives, be subject to your husbands (subordinate and adapt yourselves to them), as is right and fitting and your proper duty in the Lord.
- 19 Husbands, love your wives (be affectionate and sympathetic with them) and do not be harsh or bitter or resentful toward them.
- Titus 2:3 Bid the older women similarly to be reverent and devout in their deportment, as becomes those engaged in sacred service, not slanderers or slaves to drink. They are to give good counsel and be teachers of what is right and noble.
- 4 So that they will wisely train the young women to be sane and sober of mind (temperate, disciplined),and to love their husbands and their children.
- 5 To be self-controlled, chaste, homemakers, good-natured (kind hearted), adapting and subordinating themselves to their husbands, that the Word of God may not be exposed to reproach (blasphemed or discredited).
- 1 Pet. 3:1 In like manner, you married women, be submissive to your own husbands (subordinate yourselves as being secondary to and dependent on them and adapt yourselves to them), so that even if any do not obey the Word (of God), they may be won over not by discussion but by the (Godly) lives of their wives.

- 2 When they observe the pure and modest way in which you conduct yourselves, together with your reverence for your husbands; (you are to feel for him all that reverence includes: to respect, defer to, revere him - to honor, esteem, appreciate, prize, and, in the human sense, to adore him, that is, to admire, praise, be devoted to, deeply love, and enjoy your husband).
- 3 Let not yours be the (merely) external adorning with (elaborate) interweaving and knotting of the hair, the wearing of jewelry, or changes of clothes.
- 4 But let it be the inward adorning and beauty of the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible and unfading charm of a gentle and peaceful spirit, which (is not anxious or wrought up), but is very precious in the sight of God.
- 5 For it was thus that pious women of old who hoped in God were (accustomed) to beautify themselves and were submissive to their husbands (adapting themselves to them as secondary and dependent upon them).
- 6 It was thus that Sarah obeyed Abraham (following his guidance acknowledging his headship over her by) calling him lord (master, leader, authority). And you are now her true daughters if you do right and let nothing terrify you (not giving way to hysterical fears or letting anxieties unnerve you).
- 7 In the same way you married men should live considerately with (your wives), with an intelligent recognition (of the marriage relation), honoring the woman as (physically) the weaker, but (realizing, that you) are joint heirs of the grace (God's unmerited favor) of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered and cut off. (Otherwise you cannot pray effectively).
- 8 Finally, all (of you) should be of one and the same mind (united spirit), sympathizing (with one another), loving (each other) as brethren (of one household), compassionate and courteous (tender hearted and humble).
- 9 Never return evil for evil or insult for insult (scolding, tongue-lashing, berating), but on the contrary blessing (praying for their welfare, happiness, protection, and truly pitying and loving them). For know that to this you have been called, that you may yourselves inherit a blessing (from God - that you may obtain a blessing as heirs, bringing welfare and happiness and protection).
- 10 For let him who wants to enjoy life and see good days (good, whether apparent or

not) keep his tongue free from evil and his lips from guile treachery, deceit).

Rom. 5:5 Such hope never disappoints or deludes or shames us, for God's love has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

God's Love In Me ...

endures long
is patient
is kind
is never envious
never boils over with jealousy
is not boastful
is not vainglorious
does not display itself haughtily
is not conceited
is not arrogant
is not inflated with pride
is not rude
is not unmannerly
does not act unbecomingly
does not insist on its own rights
does not insist on its own way
is not self-seeking
is not touchy
is not fretful
is not resentful
takes no account of the evil done to It
pays no attention to a suffered wrong
does not rejoice at injustice
does not rejoice at unrighteousness
rejoices when right and truth prevail
bears up under anything and everything that comes
is ever ready to believe the best of every person
has fadeless hopes under all circumstances
endures everything without weakening
never fails
never fades out
never becomes obsolete
never comes to an end. 1 Cor.13:4-8a.