

## **Biblical Manhood**

(Getting Back to the Basics)

By Pastor Kelly Sensenig

I remember watching a parade that was connected with our annual street fair. One highlight of the parade was when a dozen skilled riders on unicycles came riding down the street. They were moving back and forward on the unicycles and putting on a real show. The people enjoyed watching them and cheered as they went riding on down the street. We all know that a unicycle is a vehicle with one wheel. We also know that a traditional bike is much more common and easier to ride because it has two wheels. However, when one wheel is removed the traditional bike is no longer a normal bike. It becomes a unicycle instead of a bicycle.

As I reflect on unicycles and how they differ from the traditional bicycles I also draw the analogy how today's sexual roles and the male/female distinctions are being blurred in our society and land. Instead of trying to maintain a dual sexual role and distinction within society, the two genders are trying to become one, much like a unicycle changes the concept of the traditional two-wheel bike and creates a one-wheel vehicle. So the unisex philosophy of today is comparable to a unicycle. This is because the unisex philosophy attempts to take traditional sexual distinctions and Biblical sexual roles, which were once practiced within a society, and make them into one. There is a blending together of sexual roles and distinctions today causing our society to become a unisex society that is comparable to a unicycle, which has taken the traditional concept of a bicycle and made it into a single wheel vehicle.

Today many are trying to ride on one sexual common wheel. They have broken down the common distinctions and roles between men and women causing a unisex look and equal roles within marriage. The unisex philosophy has also made its mark upon the modern-day church with a vast number of women preachers now preaching in church ministries and taking on leadership roles and positions that are forbidden by Scripture. Rebellious women preachers are the result of the unisex feminist philosophy that had paraded this land

since the 1960's. We see the unisex philosophy in the woman's liberation or feminist movement, the disintegration of sexual roles in the home, and in the common physical appearance between men and women of today in their outward dress and overall appearance. The point is this. When a society begins to blur the physical distinctions between men and women, when a society abandons the Biblical roles of men (manhood) and women (womanhood) by creating a unisex philosophy, it's then that a society becomes comparable to a unicycle that has only one wheel. Our world today is riding on one unisex wheel as it attempts to blur the traditional and Biblical distinctions among the sexes in every area and arena of life (home, church, appearance).

How would you answer this son's question: "Dad, what does it mean to be a man and not a woman?" How would we answer the daughter's question, "Mom, what does it mean to be a woman and not a man?" A lot of energy is being given to minimize the distinctions between manhood and womanhood but every Bible believer needs to have solid Biblical answers for their children concerning the God-ordained roles in the family unit.

John Piper said:

"The tendency today is to stress the equality of men and women by minimizing the unique significance of our maleness or femaleness. But this depreciation of male and female personhood is a great loss. It is taking a tremendous toll on generations of young men and women who do not know what it means to be a man or woman. Confusion over the meaning of sexual personhood today is epidemic. The consequence of this confusion is not a free and happy harmony among gender-free persons relating on the basis of abstract competencies. The consequence rather is more divorce, more homosexuality, more sexual abuse, more promiscuity, more social awkwardness, and more emotional distress and suicide that come with the loss of God-given identity."

Bible believers recognize how essential manhood and womanhood are to our personhood. Masculinity and femininity are rooted within us by nature. Our present-day society has distorted God's plan for the home and family. As a result, we find ourselves living in the very "upside down" world that the prophet Isaiah described in Isaiah 29:16:

“Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the potter's clay: for shall the work say of him that made it, He made me not? or shall the thing framed say of him that framed it, He had no understanding?”

The modernized society of today and the so-called “evangelical feminists” of our time have turned the world upside down by jettisoning the traditional and Biblical roles of manhood and womanhood through a type of unisex philosophy. We must return to Biblical manhood and womanhood and rediscover the full joy and blessing that comes from God when we obey His Word (Joshua 1:8). *The Bible does not leave us in the dark about Biblical masculinity and femininity.* God’s unchanging pattern of truth for both men and women can be witnessed in the creation order, validated throughout the Old Testament, and reconfirmed in the New Testament epistles. God has never changed His plan for the sexes. What God starts in Genesis He reconfirms in the epistles (church truth) allowing us to see God’s unwavering purpose for man and woman and His disgust with the unisex philosophy. When man rejects Biblical authority (Tim. 3:16) and wrongly interprets the Bible (2 Tim. 2:15) he arrives at inaccurate conclusions regarding Biblical texts. Therefore, we must correctly interpret what God says about manhood and womanhood and not allow societal norms, human reason, personal experience, and individual situations to enter into our interpretation of the Bible, as we seek to discover God’s mind concerning the sexes and the unisex philosophy. Truth matters and is worthy striving for today (2 Cor. 13:8) in the midst of the sea of feministic interpretive confusion which emphasizes inaccessible data and complicated contextual problems, so much so, that they put others in despair and cause them to lack confidence in understanding Scripture. I’m tired of reading the hermeneutical oddities that are devised to reinterpret and corrupt (2 Cor. 4:2) the apparently plain meanings of Biblical texts to support feministic interpretations. The bottom line is this. Controversy is necessary where truth matters and serious error is spreading. We must take heart that the battle for truth is being fought. We must also get in the battle (2 Tim. 4:7).

One thing is certain. God alone has the right and authority (Dan. 4:34-35; Isa. 46:9-11) to determine the roles of men and woman. God alone has the right to define how Biblical manhood and womanhood

are to be expressed in everyday living. Today our world is promoting the unisex philosophy and because of this God's people need to rise above this movement and philosophy (Col. 2:8) and remember how God has designed the human race to remain distinct in relationship to their manhood and womanhood. The promotion of a unisex philosophy (the blurring of God-given sexual distinctions and roles) represents rebellion toward God and the natural gender order that He has established in creation. The unisex philosophy and feminist movement of today is rebellion and all rebellion is likened to the sin of witchcraft (1 Sam. 15:23).

The Bible teaches that men and women are to fulfill different roles in relationship to each other. God charges or commands the man with the unique role of leadership over the woman and bases this role difference on the permanent fact of creation and not cultural norms as many claim today (see 1 Cor. 11:3, 8-9, 14; Eph. 5:23, 31-32; 1 Timothy 2:11-14). Man has a unique leadership role over the woman and this is based on the permanent facts of creation – not temporary cultural norms. The different roles between men and women are not the result of culture or the fall of man as some suggest but they are traced back to the way things were in Eden before sin warped our relationships (Gen. 2:18-24). Roles for men and women were created by God and then became corrupted by the fall (Gen. 3:16). They were not created because of the fall. They were created by God from the beginning.

So what does it mean to be a man or a woman? Or we might ask what does it mean to be a man and not a woman. Or what does it mean to be a woman and not a man? Thank God that He has not left us without witness concerning the true meaning of masculine and feminine personhood. We will discover this as we study about *Biblical* manhood and womanhood and how God makes a clear distinction between the two sexes. The world has its own ideas but God has the absolute standard (Isaiah 8:20). Only as we study the sexual distinctions between a man and woman, as stated in Scripture, can we begin to erase the unisex or unicycle philosophy from our minds. In this unisex and androgynous age both adults and children are confused about their identities and the roles God wants them to fulfill in regards to their manhood and womanhood. This is due to the ever-increasing worldly slant of society, the media, and feministic teaching.

In the midst of this androgynous sea of lost identity God's Word tells us in clear and unmistakable terms His plan for the family unit and exactly how manhood and womanhood (sexual distinction) needs to be maintained.

Could this mean the end of feminism, as we know it? The January 20th issue of Time magazine had a cover story stating that men and women are different. Quote, "Because they are born that way." The Bible teaches that there must be sexual distinction in the marriage in relationship to God-given roles and duties. Over the years the media and society in general have been pushing the unisex philosophy into the home life. The man is no longer portrayed as the leader in the home nor is the woman expected to be a homemaker. In fact, roles are portrayed and promoted as being reversible. In our day even the liberal element in the church is attempting to bring a unisex emphasis into the home and church by redefining the term "head" in the Bible (1 Cor. 11:3) and dismissing man from his leadership role and his God-given right to be an authority figure in home or church life. Christians who are faithful to God's truth must denounce the unisex push and feminist agenda targeted for their homes if they are going to have Biblical homes that honor God and which function according to God's established Biblical patterns. The nullification of distinctive male-female roles has caused the collapse of the traditional and Biblical home life as God planned from the beginning of creation.

Let's get back to the basics and remind ourselves of the major Biblical roles that a man and woman are to fulfill in home life. In doing so, we can rid our minds from the unisex philosophy, which is so prevalent in our society today. Please note that in this particular study we are going to focus on the subject matter of "Biblical Manhood." For a study dealing with the role and place of women in the home setting see the author's study entitled, "Biblical Womanhood."

### Biblical Manhood

In this study we are going to focus on the man's roles and responsibilities as a husband and provider of the family unit. Every man must know what God expects of him and then follow God's blueprint for his marriage and life. When he does the marriage and home will be truly blessed by God.

## 1. The man is the provider (supplier).

From the beginning, man was given the responsibility by God to be the family bread-winner. God said to Adam, "in the sweat of your face you shall eat bread" (Genesis 3:19). From that day on, the male of the human family has been primarily responsible for providing the material needs of his family.

1 Timothy 5:8 says:

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

This verse clearly teaches that the man ("his household") is the leader of the home and is expected to make provision for both "his own" (widows who are flesh and blood – see vs. 4; Ex. 20:13) and then "his own house" (immediate family). Even the Lord Jesus made provision for His mother's care as He hung on the cross (John 19:26–27). This is manliness or masculinity. It finds its roots in the personhood of man – what a man is by nature and design from God. When a man fails to provide for his family's needs because of laziness and lack of commitment to his masculinity role then the husband or father is worse than an unbeliever, since even many non-Christians understand and fulfill their family responsibilities. You might miss some things in Scripture, but you cannot miss this.

The husband or father who is lazy and does not provide for his home also denies "the faith" (the body of revealed truth that Christians believe) which consistently maintains that those who are true believers should care for one another (Gal. 6:10; Matt. 7:12). Any believer who fails to obey this command is guilty of denying the truth of compassionate Christian love (John 13:35; Rom. 5:5; 1 Thess. 4:9). When a Christian fails to do this for his own house, he denies by his actions the very truths which Christianity teaches. We must also remember that a Christian can also bring reproach on the name of the Lord in a way that an unbeliever cannot do. Let's state it in simple terms. A man who is able, and does not do his best to provide the material needs of his family, commits a great sin. In the words of the Scripture, he is worse than an infidel.

The man's responsibility is to provide for his wife and family. This is at the heart of what true and Biblical manhood means (Luke 11:11-13). Every man should have a sense of responsibility to lead and provide for his wife and home. If a man does not have a kind responsibility and sense of commitment in providing for his home then his masculinity is immature and distorted. Piper says, "mature manhood senses a benevolent responsibility before God to be the primary provider for his family." The kindness aspect is brought out in such verses as Ephesians 5:21 and 25 where servanthood and sacrifice are stressed in the marriage arrangement (see Gal. 5:13; Luke 22:26). A true provider and leader is always a servant. Always! More on this later.

From the very beginning the man had the responsibility to provide for his family. This manhood trait was evidenced following Adam's creation (Gen. 2:15). Even before the family unit came together Adam knew instinctively that he was to take care of God's garden and that he had a God-given responsibility to work. This same manhood responsibility is also evidenced after the Fall by Adam tilling the ground to raise food for the family (Genesis 3:17-19). One must remember that the curse in Genesis three was designed to make the natural spheres of life for both the man and woman more difficult and frustrating. *The curse would not change God's creative roles or primary responsibilities for men and women but cause them to become more strenuous.* This would be true in the area of physical labor, childbirth, and rearing children. Eve is cursed with a much more difficult experience in giving birth and caring for the household and children (Gen. 3:16) whereas Adam as the breadwinner would have difficulty and hardship in providing food for the family (Gen. 3:19).

Biblical support for the idea that the man has the primary responsibility to provide for his family's needs was also evidenced in the children of Adam and Eve as the two sons are seen keeping sheep and tilling the ground (Gen. 3:2). More proof is found in other Old Testament texts (Gen. 30:30; Deut. 20:6). The husband, as generally stronger, has the primary responsibility to use his strength to protect and provide for his wife and family (1 Peter 3:7). When there is no bread on the table it is the man who should feel the main pressure to do something to get it there! This is because God has

charged him to express his manhood role in this manner. There is a complete absence of evidence to support the alleged reversal of roles for family provision. Nowhere can we find Scripture encouraging women to be the primary means of support while their husbands care for the house and children. Certainly women can help in provision as time and circumstances allow her (Genesis 2:18; Proverbs 31:24).

There is an internal testimony built into a man's heart that says, "I don't want to be dependent on a woman to provide for me in the long term. I want to be the one responsible to provide for the family, the one my wife looks to and depends upon for support." I have never personally met a man who does not feel some measure of shame at the idea of being supported by his wife in the long term. On the other hand, there is something in a woman that says, "I want my husband to provide for me, to give me the security of knowing that we will have enough to buy groceries and pay the bills. It feels right to me to look to him and depend on him for that responsibility. I have never met a woman who did not want her husband to provide that sense of security for her.

## 2. The man is the protector (caretaker)

### a. Physical protection

Deuteronomy 20:7-8

"And what man *is there* that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her. And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man *is there that is* fearful and fainthearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart."

Deuteronomy 24:5

"When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: *but* he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken."

This truth of men being the protecting element in a family is seen in connection with how men would be the ones responsible for going to war and providing protection for their families and the nation. In

Nehemiah 4:13-14 it says how the people were to fight for their brothers, homes, wives, and children, but it does not say they were to fight for their husbands! When women start being put in the front lines during times of war then our nation has come to a very low spot in its existence. It's the responsibility of men to fight wars and this gives proof that God has built into society a sense of manhood that calls for protection and care over women and children. The Bible teaches that it's a disgrace to a nation when its warriors become women (Nahum 3:13). This by the way is something that many soldiers in battle have done throughout history to protect their families and homelands.

The fact that men went to war proves that God sees man as the protector of the family. The man is to be the protector of his wife and children. This too is part of Biblical manhood. In Matthew 2:13-14 Joseph was told to protect Mary and baby Jesus by taking them to Egypt. Ephesians 5:25 says, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." This verse reveals that a husband's love should extend even to a willingness to lay down his life for his wife. Biblical manhood that is mature will cause a man to provide protection and care for the wife and family. There is something built into a man's existence that tells him that he is to be the one who protects the family unit. If an assailant threatens two ladies with a lead pipe mature masculinity will sense a natural God-given responsibility to step forward and protect the ladies. The same is true about the home life. The man is to be a protecting servant to the wife and family and be willing to suffer for the sake of his wife and children. In doing this the man bestows honor on the wife as the weaker vessel (1 Pet. 3:7) and follows the natural inner sense of responsibility that God has placed within every man to protect his wife and family.

If it's the woman who must get up at night when a sound is heard in the kitchen or a strange noise downstairs then something is wrong with a man's manhood. There is a reason why women and children are put into lifeboats first. It's not because men are better swimmers; it's because of manhood. This action like many others belongs to masculinity which calls for a man to accept danger and protect women and children (1 Cor. 16:13, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong").

Most fathers are quick to provide physical protection for their children. Dr. George Truett told about a man who many years ago was driving his wagon with a team of horses on a country road. Somehow, the horses became frightened, and they rushed on despite all his efforts to restrain them. Eventually, he was thrown from the wagon, but he held on to the lines, as on and on the frightened horses ran. He was dragged over fields and rocks and stones and bushes. His neighbors saw him and called to him to let go (to release the reins), and yet he held on until at last his weight brought the horses to a standstill. When the neighbors came up and found him bleeding and bruised so that in a little while he died, they could not restrain their protest. "Why didn't you let the horses go; why didn't you turn them loose?" He whispered in reply, "Look in the wagon." They looked in the wagon, and there was his two-year-old boy. The father had given his life to save his little boy from tragic death. Such behavior is commendable and is worthy of our applause, and I'm sure there are many fathers today who would have shown the same commitment, and would have done the same thing. However, we must be just as diligent to protect our children from spiritual danger.

#### b. Spiritual protection

She was blond and beautiful, with azure eyes and a tumble of tawny curls. At three years of age, she would climb into her daddy's lap, snuggle up with a wide, satisfied smile, and purr, "This is my safe place!" And so it was.

The father is not only to provide physical protection to his family but also spiritual protection. It's his responsibility to protect the family unit from spiritual harm and pitfalls. God places the responsibility for spiritual protection squarely on the shoulders of the man. The Bible teaches that the father should lovingly shelter and protect his son or children from the world system by giving them sound advice and instruction. This is illustrated in the book of Proverbs as Solomon speaks about the advice and mentoring a godly father should give to his son in order to help protect him from the many pitfalls and traps of life (Proverbs 1:15; 2:1-4; 3:1-4, 11-12; 4:10-15, 20-23; 5:1-3; 6:20-23; 7:1-3; 23:15-17; 23:26; 24:21-23). This sheltering (not smothering) or protection that a father gives to his children through a teaching and reproofing ministry is a necessary part of

fatherly leadership, so that children will be able to face the world without parents someday, when they grow to maturity. Spiritual protection is one of the most basic and needful ministries that parents are expected to give to their children as they grow and mature. The modern mentality of evangelical freethinking has blind-sighted many present day Christians to this timeless aspect of parental spiritual protection, sheltering, and love.

As men, we can protect our children spiritually by not allowing them to be unnecessarily exposed to evil teaching and influence. Some may argue that this is sheltering the child, but nowhere in Scripture is there even a hint that children are to be knowingly and openly exposed to evil. To the contrary, Romans 16:19 reminds us to be "simple concerning evil" or unwilling to mix with evil in any way. Our children must learn this in their early and formidable years. Jeremiah 10:2 warns us that we should "learn not the way of the heathen." This is just as true today as it was when it was written. Our children must learn this when they are young. If more fathers would mentor their children when they are young the children would not end up getting tattoos all over their bodies, drink booze, and live for money, sex, and engage their lives in carnal diversions and fleshly pursuits.

When a father does not provide spiritual shelter for his children he is not being a real father to them. Sheltering and protecting a child from the world system teaches our children that the world system is something that is evil and that which displeases God. Think of it this way. **What children are taught is of supreme importance, but what they are not taught and exposed to is also a serious matter.** For example, consider the effect which television has on a child. Most of the values portrayed on television are opposed to Biblical values and virtues. Fathers need to realize that their children are invested with a soul that is influenced by the things they see and are allowed to watch. Then too, think how bad music and friendships can eat away at the lives of our children like a spiritual cancer. A loving father will protect his children from those people, places, and things that could adversely affect the spiritual lives of his. This is not only right but loving (Romans 12:9). Biblical manhood is expressed in the way a father will lovingly shelters and protects his children from the world system (1 John 2:15-17). A man who does not take the initiative to

shelter his children from evil influence is not expressing Biblical manhood.

Some undiscerning Christians today will tell us that providing too much spiritual protection and sheltering for our children will keep them from functioning in the real world. This is faulty and unbiblical reasoning. Our children get enough contact with the real world in their everyday normal lives. As our children mature they will know what's going on in the real world. They don't need to have evil influence and be placed in those atmospheres during their early and formidable years that could sway and steal away their hearts (Ex. 34:16; Ezra 9:11-12; 1 Kings 11:2). Furthermore, what they don't know in their younger and more formidable and innocent years certainly won't hurt them. Innocent children are those who have been well taught, loved and sheltered from harm and corruption (Ps. 17:8; 57:1; 61:4; 91:4; 1 Thess. 2:7). God the Father shelters and protects His children by providing spiritual stability for their lives as they pass through the trials of life. He keeps His children from spiritual collapse. Our Heavenly Father provides a place of refuge for us and earthly fathers should do the same thing for their children. Proverbs 14:26, "In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge." Our children do need a place of refuge in this wicked world and the father needs to provide this refuge with loving protection and care. God the Father sets the fatherly example and pattern that all fathers should follow (Psalm 46:1-2). Therefore, godly fathers who possess true manhood will provide loving spiritual shelter or protection for their children. They will not allow their children to be influenced and overtaken by the world system.

We must be diligent to protect our children from spiritual danger. A dad who is a real spiritual man must take great care to teach his children (Prov. 22:6) what is "fleshly" and what is "after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1) and attempt in every way possible to place his children in the right kind of environments that will not hinder their spiritual learning, development and walk (Ps. 119:63). A father must show his children how our ungodly culture uses certain styles of music to promote Satan's values, sensuality, greed, and emotional appetites that are against righteousness. Many times dads do not wholeheartedly commit themselves to the matter of separation, as

they should. This causes their offspring or children to grow up in either a lukewarm state (Rev. 3:15-16) or a totally insensitive and calloused state to the teaching about God's holiness. For instance, how can a home thoroughly desensitized to the awful wickedness of sin through television, music, and carnal worldly lifestyle ever expect its children to be holy and separated believers? If a father gives his children a weakened form of New Testament Christianity they will never get New Testament Christianity! The truth of Exodus 20:5 and 34:7 must apply to those parents who fail to instill the principles of Biblical separation into the lives of their children – "... visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me." It's always the children who come up on the short end of the stick. For instance, Deuteronomy 7:3-4 warns about the importance of Bible separation, as it relates to our children, when saying, "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly."

When parents become lenient in the types of friendships and partners they allow their children to become involved with it's only a matter of time until they are corrupted by the world (Nehemiah 13:23-24). Teaching children the principles of Bible separation and how to establish good friendships is part of the parenting and protecting responsibility. Saying no and giving insightful instruction is all part of parental authority and child rearing. Dad, don't allow the worldly philosophy and culture to influence you and lead your children away from a godly lifestyle (Rom. 12:1-2). The more that a father exposes his children to the Bible, separated truth, godly music, and good language skills, the more comfortable they will become with those things that are good for them and right (1 Sam. 12:23). Tim Fisher says: "You may be tempted to say, 'But isn't that brainwashing?' Yes! The question is not, 'Are my children going to be influenced when they are young?' Rather the correct question is, '*Who* and *what* are going to influence my children when they are young?'" Our children won't always live in our homes, so we must instill in them standards and convictions for living that will protect them when they are on their own. This is so very true and it once again confirms why we need to provide spiritual protection and mentoring for our children during their

times of youth. Biblical manhood provides this type of spiritual protection. Remember this. The most important of all times in life is that of youth. This is the sowing season; the harvest comes later!

### 3. The man is the pioneer (leader).

David Blankenhorn in his 1995 book, "Fatherless America," says "the culture change from a stable, two parent home to the father's abandonment of his responsibilities of marriage and parenting is America's most urgent social problem. The father's absence is the main reason for unhappy homes, many current social problems, and is a national crisis of our time." The family is in trouble in America because men fail to be the leaders God wants them to be. The results of men not obeying God have been disastrous. The great need is for men to repent of their sins, to really come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and then to be obedient to the commands of God from His Word. Men must be the leaders God desires them to be. There is more to being a father than just producing children. The lack of leadership by the father today is the most important factor in the breakdown of the American and Christian home. God's plan is for male leadership in the family. God doesn't play by our rules or march to the beat of earthly drummers. His truth is absolute and the man is to be the spiritual leader in the family unit. All arguments regarding the equalization of the sexes fade into nonsense when one looks into the Word of God.

How far away has the church moved from a godly and Biblical view of family life? Unfortunately, with the push of feminism and all the other isms today in the church we have moved far away from traditional family values that make up a strong family. If I were to put my finger on one devastating sin today, it would not merely be the so-called women's movement but the lack of spiritual leadership by men at home and in the church. The most important factor in the breakdown of the home is fathers not fulfilling their Biblical role of leadership in the home. A Christian man is obligated to lead his family to the best of his ability. If his family is crunched financially because of improper use of funds it's the man's fault. If his family never reads the Bible together or seldom goes to church on Sunday, God holds the man to blame. If the children never have devotions with God it's the man's fault. If the children are disrespectful and disobedient, the primary

responsibility lies with the father. Men need to begin guiding their families today and fulfilling their God-given responsibility for leadership.

In the day when the automobile was first becoming popular, a man purchased a brand new Model-T Ford. He drove it proudly onto a busy street, where it promptly stalled. No matter how hard he tried, the owner could not get the newfangled contraption started. Just as he was about give up, a chauffeured limousine pulled up behind him and a wiry, energetic man got out. "Let me give you a hand," he said. After tinkering with the Model-T for a few moments, the smartly dressed man said, "Try it now." The man did and the car started at the first crank. "How did you know what to do?" the owner asked in amazement. "It's not hard when you know these cars as well as I do," the stranger replied. "I'm Henry Ford."

In a similar way God has created and designed the plan for the home. Because of this God knows what works or what is required to keep a home in spiritual order. One thing is for sure. It takes the confident and spiritual leadership of a man to keep a home moving in the right direction. God's Word establishes some important qualities and requirements for male leadership that needs to be exhibited and practiced within the home or family unit. Biblical manhood is expressed when men take their role as the leader of the family unit and this is what we want to address in this part of our study.

How does a man lead the family unit?

a. He leads by example (model leadership)

1. The good example of walking with God.

It's no secret that model leadership begins with the man having a personal walk with God (James 4:8). There are some brief statements in the Bible that express to every man the importance of possessing a daily walk with God.

Genesis 5:22 says,

"And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters."

Men, will you note that after Methuselah was born to Enoch he purposed in his heart to walk with God in communion and fellowship for he knew the responsibility that was his to raise his child for the Lord. The point is this. You can't raise a child properly if you do not walk with God yourself. So the Scriptures repeatedly say that Enoch walked with God throughout his days upon earth (Gen. 5:24). The Bible expects the man of the household to stay close to God. He is to cultivate a deep relationship with God like Enoch so that he might stay strong spiritually and set the proper example and role model of walking close to God. A man must express to His children by example what it means to walk in communion with God ("fellowship one with another" – 1 John 1:7). The glorious example of walking with God will leave an indelible print upon our children and future generations.

Genesis 6:9 records:

"These *are* the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man *and* perfect in his generations, *and* Noah walked with God."

Men, are you committed to walking with God in the midst of a culture that has gone sour? We live in the midst of a "crooked and perverse generation" (Phil. 2:15) and it takes a close walk with God to counteract all of the moral and spiritual pitfalls. There is a great need in this present hour and in these last days for the man of the household to commune with God. As the leader we must set the example of walking close to God. This is a lifelong commitment and clarion call for every man today.

## 2. The godly example of expressing virtues.

The most important step in leadership within the home is that the man is lead by the Lord! The point is this. The man cannot be ungodly and lead in a godly manner (Titus 2:13-15). You cannot do things that are wrong and effectively lead your family in what is right. If you are going to model proper leadership you must seek to live a spiritually clean life before God. A man of any Christian household must possess godly virtues (2 Pet. 1:2-10) that can be witnessed by his family and demonstrate to them the way God wants his children to live.

The man as the leader must set an example of spiritual strength and stability, not allowing the flesh (Rom. 13:14) or Satan (2 Cor. 2:11) to gain a foothold in his life, nor allow any evil practice or habit in his own life (Heb. 2:1), which will influence his children in the wrong way. The man must walk in the light of God's holiness (1 John 1:5-7) and seek to live a balanced separate life from the contamination of the world system (1 John 2:15-17; Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 7:1).

Proverbs 20:6 says, "Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness: but a faithful man who can find?" The spiritual syndrome of proclaiming one's own goodness (loyalty to God) means that many men who claim to be good, or living right before God, are guilty of false advertising. Most men do not produce as much as they talk. Those who claim to have spiritual virtues and values attached to their lifestyle many times are not telling the truth. What a man says may not necessarily be true of his spiritual condition in life (1 John 1:6, 8). Stop lying about yourself and deceiving yourself. The Bible says that talk is cheap. Most men can outwardly talk about their own spiritual goodness but their lifestyle does not really match what they say. Their life does not advertise spiritual living in the home and in the work force. Solomon asked, "but a faithful man who can find?" the rhetorical question implies that such a man is indeed difficult to find. In other words, Solomon is saying that a faithful, trustworthy, or dependable man is a rare find. This is the man who is faithful to God, who is not going to compromise with the world system, and who is going to maintain spiritual stability in his life. This is a man who is going to live for God and be an example before his family in the way that he lives and the things that he says. His virtues will replace the vices in his life. He will live for the world to come instead of the world of today (Matt. 6:19-21).

Many men trumpet forth their own reliability ("goodness") until the crisis comes, or the tough times of life arrive, and then what do they do? They fold up and do not continue to serve the Lord and live for Him. God wants men to be faithful or dependable in the way that they live out their lives for in the next verse Solomon is going to talk about the spiritual integrity that a man is to possess before his family. For now we must ask this question: Is there a faithful man that can be found in your home? As men we need to set the example of faithful

living before the Lord so that our families will witness our integrity and true spirituality in the home setting.

Proverbs 20:7 goes on to say, “The just *man* walketh in his integrity: his children *are* blessed after him.” What a promise this is for every man who takes God’s Word seriously. God promises that when the man of the household possesses spiritual integrity in his life that his children will receive a great blessing. The blessing will be that they have a dad who is a spiritual example. The children can witness his spirituality and faithfulness to God and in turn recreate it in their own lives. The blessing would also come later in the children’s lives as they grow up living and serving the Lord. The godly and spiritual example of men within the home setting greatly influences the practices of the children. They acquire godly habits from their dads that will mark their lives as well. Thus, they are “blessed after him” through the example that he has set day after day throughout their lives. Dad, what are your children witnessing in your life? How do they see you as a dad? What kind of life are you living before them and beside them in the home arena of life? What a blessing children have who possess dads that love God and who serve Him. We need more dads who are a spiritual blessing to their children instead of a spiritual blight upon their lives. Men, are you a blessing or blight to your family?

The little poem describes the adverse influence that dads can have on their homes when they fail to live out a spiritual life of integrity that is pleasing to God.

“There was a crooked man  
Who walked a crooked mile.  
He found a crooked sixpence  
Upon a crooked stile.  
He bought a crooked cat,  
Which caught a crooked mouse,  
And they all lived together  
In a little crooked house.”

This poem underscores the importance of the man possessing a spiritual life that honors God and which influences the lives of his family in a positive way. If the man is going to be a spiritual leader he

must be spiritual! He is going to have to learn the secret of walking under the Spirit's control (Eph. 5:18). The man as the leader of the home must seek to walk in the Spirit's person, power, and presence (Gal. 5:16; 25) so that his life might be characterized by victorious (Gal. 5:17) and fruitful (Gal. 5:22-23) living. There is a recurring statement in the Old Testament, which emphasizes the principle of setting a proper example: "He walked in the ways of his father" (1 Kings 22:43; 2 Chron. 34:1-2). We read in these verses how the son followed the godly example that the father set (2 Kings 14:1-3; 15:1-3, 34). Only on a few occasions do we find where a king reversed the evil practices of his father, and walked in righteousness (2 Chron. 29:1-2). In the majority of cases, if a king was evil, then his son who ascended to the throne, walked in the same evil way or pattern, and often to an even greater extent (2 Kings 14:23-24 with 15:8-9; 2 Kings 17:1-2 with 1 Kings 16:8-14). Fathers need to realize the power of influence which they have on their children. The failure on the part of the father to set a godly example allows Satan to bring destructive temptations to his children. For the most part our children are going to mimic the way that we live and act. The little poem expresses it this way:

"His little arms crept 'round my neck,  
and then I heard him say,  
Four simple words I can't forget,  
four words that made me pray.  
They turned a mirror on my soul,  
on secrets no one knew;  
they startled me; I hear them yet.  
He said, I'll be like you!"

### 3. The guiding example of committed service

The man of the household should be a man that is willing and ready to serve the Lord and get his entire family to serve the Lord. He should be interested in committing his family to God's work and service (Rom. 12:11). Men of today need to stand up like Joshua and say, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15). In the days of Joshua the men were challenged to take their stand and serve the Lord. We need committed dads today who are willing to make this decision. Some of you dads are faltering and

failing in your example of commitment to God's service and work. Since you have not made the decision to really serve the Lord then how can you expect your family to do so? Take your stand men and don't back down. Lead your family in the way of right living and get them to church and teach them the principles of Bible separation so that they will know right from wrong. Don't back down! Stand in the gap! Do what is right. Be committed to serving the Lord yourself and then get your family involved in serving the Lord.

In Joshua 14:7-9 Jephunneh said:

"Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the LORD sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land; and I brought him word again as *it was* in mine heart. Nevertheless my brethren that went up with me made the heart of the people melt: but I wholly followed the LORD my God. And Moses swore on that day, saying, Surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever, because thou hast wholly followed the LORD my God."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary puts it this way:

"Standing before General Joshua, his old friend and fellow spy (Num. 14:6), 85-year-old Caleb (Josh. 14:10) told the story of that never-to-be forgotten day, 45 years before (v. 10), when the 2 of them stood alone against the other 10 spies and the cowardly mob. For Moses had sent 12 spies into Canaan (Num. 13:2); 2 of them were Caleb and Joshua (Num. 13:6, 8). When the spies returned 10 of them praised the land itself but fearfully concluded Israel could not conquer it (Num. 13:27-29, 31-33). Caleb, however, dared to disagree (Num. 13:30), and when the fears of the people threatened to bring national rebellion Joshua joined his colleague in urging the people to trust God for victory (Num. 14:6-9). For Caleb's leadership against the unbelieving spies and people, God singled him out for blessing and promised him a special reward (Num. 14:24; Deut. 1:36).

Caleb's testimony (Josh. 14:6-12) was simple. He had spoken on that memorable day according to his convictions. He did not minimize the problems—the giants and the fortified cities—but he magnified God. To him, God was greater than the biggest problem. Caleb had faith in *the power of God*. Not so the other spies. They magnified the problems and thereby minimized God. But Caleb would not follow the

crowd. He did not once consider sacrificing his own convictions in order to make the majority report unanimous. Instead he followed the LORD his God wholeheartedly (cf. v. 14).”

Did you catch what this man said? Jephunneh said, “I wholly followed the LORD” and because of this God promised that His children would be blessed in the future. This is the principle that God’s Word establishes. As the dad takes the lead and decides to serve the Lord or wholly follow Him then the children will in return be blessed. This has always been true. When men decide to give themselves completely and wholly to God’s service then the children will find themselves in the place of spiritual benefit and blessing. Dad, how about you today? Are you and your family following the crowd or the way that the world is going? Are you allowing the world and society to decide what is right for you and your children? Caleb followed the LORD his God wholeheartedly (vs. 14). And in doing so his children would be blessed with a wonderful future inheritance.

Listen to the commentary on this man’s life. Joshua 14:14, “Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day, because that he wholly followed the LORD God of Israel.” What a testimony. I wonder if this is your testimony and story today? Dad, God wants you to get very serious about serving the Lord faithfully and getting your children involved in the work and service of the Lord. We need dedicated dads today who are willing to take this challenge. Are you willing to “wholly” or fully dedicate (commit) yourself and family to God’s service and house? Are you willing to take the challenge? God is asking you this question: “Choose you this day whom ye will serve.” This is a question that cuts through all of the politics and procedures of churchy Christianity and gets right to the heart of the issue. Men, are you going to serve the Lord or not? You will notice that we are challenged in Joshua 24:15 to “serve the LORD” instead of our own interests, goals, desires, hobbies, and wants. This is a direct challenge to the men to give themselves wholly to God instead of their own fleshly interests and ambitions (Luke 9:23). The cross of surrender and sacrifice is not an option when it comes to true spiritual manhood.

Dad, God holds you responsible for your family and how much or how little they are serving the Lord. You need to get up, wake up, and light up today (Eph. 5:14) and commit yourself and family wholly to God and for His service. The Bible says “choose you this day.” This means there is no time to waste. Make up your mind! Life is a choice and serving God is a choice. Don’t make the wrong choice! Biblical manhood is expressed when men choose to serve God and make the decision that their families will also serve the Lord with them. When a dad makes this commitment he is expressing true leadership and Biblical manhood within the family unit.

It’s interesting to observe that the regular congregational worship and instruction given to God's people included the entire family. Although Pharaoh thought that it would be sufficient for only the men to go into the wilderness to serve the LORD, Moses stated: “We will go with our young and with our old, with our sons and with our daughters, with our flocks and with our herds will we go; for we *must hold* a feast unto the LORD” (Exodus 10:9). This should be the same response that every dad should have today. They should lead the entire family to God’s house, or to church as it is today, and the family should follow the man’s leadership. The Lord commanded that all of God's people attend His feasts (Deuteronomy 16:11,14). The word of God was to be read to all the congregation: “Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that *is* within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And *that* their children, which have not known *any thing*, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it” (Deuteronomy 31:12-13). The point is this. The man is to be the leader and see to it that his family gets to church. The children don’t decide – dad decides! The man of the household must set the example and see to it that his family is in God’s house. When some of His disciples sought to take children away from hearing the Lord's words, Jesus said, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14).

So we have seen the importance of the man leading by example. A dad or man within the family unit needs to set the example. This is very important for the family unit. The children need to observe a dad

who is sold out for God. They will be greatly influenced by a dad who they can see is real and one that practices what he preaches. As Wendell Heller once said: "It's not always what is *taught* but what is *caught* that is important." *Dads teach much more by their actions than they do with their words.* We are to produce as much as we talk. As children witness their dads living for God, walking with God, and serving God, it's then that they will seek to duplicate their dad's example. My thoughts are directed to a poem that I heard many years ago.

"A careful man I ought to be,  
A little fellow follows me.  
I do not dare to go astray  
For fear he'll go the selfsame way.  
I cannot once escape his eyes,  
What e're he sees me do he tries.  
Like me he says he's going to be –  
The little chap that follows me.  
He thinks that I am good and fine,  
Believes in every good word of mine.  
The base in me he must not see –  
The little chap who follows me.  
I must remember as I go,  
Thru summer's sun and winter's snow  
I'm building for the years to be –  
That little chap who follows me."

We have seen under this point that that the man of the household is to lead by example. He is to demonstrate the good example of walking with God, the godly example of expressing virtues, and the guiding example of committed service.

A mechanic had worked hard all day at the shop. Later in the evening, at his home, a friend saw him catching baseball with his son. Surprised, he called out, "Bill, aren't you tired after a day's work?" "Yes," came the answer, "Of course, I'm tired." "Why then are you out there catching a ball?" questioned the friend. The wise father answered immediately, "I'd rather have a backache tonight than a heartache later on."

I cannot help but think of the words that Paul shared with Timothy. They should be the clarion call for all men today. Listen to them and heed them.

1 Timothy 6:11-12

“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.”

Someone once asked, “Who you are, when no one’s looking?” This is a soul-searching question. Dad, who are you? Timothy was called upon to be a man of God at all times. This is God’s call to every man in our present hour. It’s a call to Biblical manhood. Of course, the opposite of a man of God is a man of sin. But Timothy was to be a man of God, a man who would make others think of God and a man who would glorify God by his actions. When a man flees the carnal delights of the world system (vv. 6-8), follows after righteous living (virtues that are of eternal value), and fights the good fight of faith (the Christian faith) he is practicing Biblical manhood. He is being the man of God that is needed within the family unit in the midst of this wicked generation. He will also confess or share his faith (“good profession”) to many people, most assuredly, to his family. This will have a profound and lasting impact upon the family.

There are times when running away is a mark of cowardice! Nehemiah said, “Should such a man as I flee? (Neh. 6:11). Men, don’t back down. Don’t give in to the system that is against God and allow it to engulf your life and the lives of your children. As men we must purpose in our hearts not to defile ourselves (Daniel 1:8) and then set the example for our children.

“Standing by a purpose true,  
Heeding God’s command,  
Honor the, the faithful few!  
All hail to Daniel’s Band!

Dare to be a Daniel,  
Dare to stand alone!

Dare to have a purpose firm!  
Dare to make it known!"

There is a fight to be won and victory to be experienced in your own personal life and the lives of your family. We must set the example and fight against all those things that are ungodly and not allow them to enter our household. We can be sure of one thing. A dad who lives in defeat and has given up the fight will have the tendency to produce children who will also live in defeat and never get into the fight against unholy and ungodly living. As men we must lead by example.

### It's Not Always Easy

"It's not always easy to smile and be nice,  
When we are called to sacrifice.  
It's not always easy to put others first,  
Especially when tired and feeling our worst.  
It's not always easy to do the Father's will.  
It wasn't so easy to climb Calvary's hill.  
But we as His children, should learn to obey;  
Not seeking our own but seeking His way.  
It's not always easy to fight the good fight.  
But it is always good and it is always right!"

b. He leads by teaching (tutoring leadership).

A preacher once called upon a home of a new couple that was visiting the church. Her husband was a massive man and he greeted the preacher when he came. He no sooner got in the door when the man said, "If you want to talk about religion you will have to talk to my wife, for all the religion in this home is in her name." Here was a man who was not man enough to take the lead in spiritual things. Men, God wants us to be the kind of leader who teaches our children from the Bible the unchanging truths and principles that will help them to form convictions and deal with the pressures and problems related to life.

Some "church family experts" think that the Bible contains many passages on the importance and technique of family worship. Actually, it does not. But the general tone of both Old and New

Testaments certainly implies that the home is the central source of spiritual teaching in God's plan. This can be seen in the set of verses that we are now going to examine. God expects the men to rise up and become spiritual teachers to their children.

Fathers are charged with the tremendous responsibility of providing their children with the teaching of God's Word. God expected Abraham to be a spiritual leader in his family when He said in Genesis 18:19, "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." This certainly gives us God's mind on the subject of male leadership. God expects the man of the household to teach his children and bring them up in the ways of the Lord. If more dads would take this to heart their families would be committed to living a deeper spiritual life. Abraham had the responsibility to direct His household in the will of God so that they might learn how to live and do what is right. There is no replacement for such training as this. There is no replacement for a spiritual dad who is willing to give commands to his children and teach them discipline in their young and formidable years of life.

At a key time of crises in his life Jacob recovered leadership in his family by emphasizing God's word and worship in the family. Who can forget Jacob's flight back to Bethel?

Genesis 35:1-4

"And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that *were* with him, Put away the strange gods that *are* among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which *were* in their hand, and *all their* earrings which *were* in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which *was* by Shechem."

The first 15 verses of this chapter record Jacob's return to Bethel, about 15 miles south of Shechem. Jacob had made vows to God earlier at the place called Bethel where the Abrahamic Covenant was confirmed to him. These vows included making Yahweh his God, making Bethel God's house, and pledging to tithe to God (28:10-22). God called Jacob to return to the land where he had made these vows. Some of you fathers need to get back to Bethel. Perhaps God is calling some father today to get right with Him. As a dad you need to go back to the place where you made your vows to follow God and get things right again. You need to also set up your own altar within your home where you once again can lead your family in worship of God. Tell the children to bring their CCM music to you and all the other idols and "strange gods" (vs. 2, 4) that are bogging them down in their lives. Dad, it's your responsibility to clean up your children. Jacob took the initiative to clean house from a spiritual perspective. This is a true expression of Biblical manhood. When a man examines his own life and is willing to return to the God that He loves and take his family with him he is practicing Biblical manhood.

Jacob was man enough to stand against the world's attack upon his family and do something about it. He took the initiative to get rid of the junk in his household and get the family back to the place of blessing and worship with God. Some of us dads need to do the same thing with our families. We need to get rid of those things in the lives of our children, which are interfering with their dedication and commitment to God's House and Word. Men, God expects us to go back to Bethel and take our families with us. This is the man's responsibility. Are you man enough to do something about your family? Or are you going to crawl into a hole and not lead your family in the way of righteousness (Prov. 12:28). God holds us responsible to teach our children the truth and see to it that they walk in a path that it pleasing to God.

The responsibility of men to teach their families can also be seen in the commands that God gave to Israel. Although both parents have a dual teaching role in their children's lives (Ex. 13:14; Deut. 6:20) the men as spiritual leaders had a special responsibility to make sure they were instructing the children and teaching them right from wrong. Deuteronomy 6:2 makes it clear that God is addressing the men and that men were expected to be leaders for he emphasizes the "son"

and “thy son’s son” which evidently refers to passing on the torch of leadership throughout the future generations. It was the man who was in charge of keeping his family following God’s laws. It was the man who was to take the lead role of teaching the children of the household what is right and wrong in the following verses. Children need to hear truth and be instructed by the leader in the family unit. They need to hear God’s truth from the lips of the father who is the authority figure in the home life and setting.

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

Deuteronomy 11:18-19 is similar:

“Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”

The man as the leader of the home was in the position to impress the commands of God on his children’s hearts. The moral and Biblical education of the children was accomplished, as God’s Word became a natural topic of conversation, which occurred anywhere and anytime during the day (v. 7). The man was expected to talk to his children about God’s Word and lead them in a right and holy way. The expression to tie the commands of God upon one’s hand and head were taken literally by some later Jewish readers and this is why the practice of phylacteries was begun. Phylacteries were two small black leather cubes containing pieces of parchment inscribed with specific Biblical verses. They were often worn by orthodox or conservative Jewish men during weekday morning prayers.

My point is this. What good is there in possessing a box with Bible verses plastered to your hand or head if you are not really practicing what God wants you to do or desire to follow God? The commands given by God in these verses of Deuteronomy are probably symbolic and emphasize the need for the man to follow God’s truth in

relationship to his actions or what he does (hand) and maintain wholesome desires through a mind (frontlets between the eyes) that is controlled by the law. When a man keeps his mind and life clean he can have an effective testimony and witness to his children. He will be ready to talk to his children about spiritual things as verse seven suggests. Dad, if you have God's Word in your mind, and you are practicing God's Word in your everyday living, then you will talk to your children about God's truth and apply it to their lives when you sit down at supper, when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and pray with them at night before they fall asleep (vs. 6). This is what God expects of fathers. We must pass the torch of truth along to the next generation if our families are to maintain spiritual stability and separation from the world system that is against God (Rom. 12:2).

These passages are speaking about filling our homes at all times with spiritual things. We should be free to talk about spiritual things with our children just as normally as you would discuss anything else. Family worship and spiritual times with our children should not become like "wooden ritualism" or like a sterile practice of tying boxes on foreheads and wrists. Fathers are given the direct responsibility to train and teach their children the difference between right and wrong by applying God's truth to their lives.

People say today, "Our children should find out for themselves what is right and wrong so that they will be able to cope with society." One man told me that he was sending his children to public school so that they can learn to deal with real problems and cope with the real world. This kind of reasoning and philosophy is absolutely unscriptural and is resulting in much tragedy among our young people today. **Young people do not *find out* what is right and wrong. They must be *taught* what is right and wrong. *It's the God-given responsibility of parents to teach their children the difference between right and wrong and provide a stable environment that will be conducive to godly living in their early formidable years.* Parents must take great care to teach their children (Prov. 22:6) what is "fleshly" and what is "after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1) and attempt in every way possible to place their children in the right kind of environments that will not hinder their spiritual learning and walk (Ps. 119:63).**

Proverbs 4:1

“Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding.”

Proverbs 6:20-23

“My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, *and* tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and *when* thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment *is* a lamp; and the law *is* light; and reproofs of instruction *are* the way of life.”

Children do catch on. It may take some time but they will learn to do what is right if a dad is faithful in teaching them. The same is true in the realm of dog training. It takes time and consistency. A professional animal trainer once said, “I was disturbed when my own dog developed a bad habit. Every time I hung my wash out on the clothesline, she would yank it down. Drastic action was called for. I put a white kitchen towel on the line and waited. Each time she pulled it off, I scolded her. After two weeks the towel was untouched. Then I hung out a large load of wash and left to do some errands. When I came home, my clean clothes were scattered all over the yard. On the line was the white kitchen towel! The point is this. It takes a while but sooner or later training will pay off.

Deuteronomy 32:46

“And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law.”

Children need to be commanded to do what is right and follow God. This is parental responsibility and dad must take the lead role in this area. Children need to learn the importance of obedience to God and they need to hear it from their father who is the leader and authority figure in the home. The father must take the initiative to train his children to follow God and His holy purpose for their lives. He must teach them to have a heart for God. He must instill in them the importance of following the Lord at all costs and keeping their heart soft toward spiritual things. Of course, children learn by example.

Deuteronomy 5:29 says,

“O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!”

Dad, do you really want your child to turn out right? Do you want them to love God and follow His will for their lives? Do you want things to be “well with them” from a spiritual perspective? Then you must stay on the right track and follow the truth. If you move off the beaten path your children will follow you down the same path. Dad, if you want God’s true blessing upon your life and the lives of your children then allow God to melt your heart and control your life (“O that there were such an heart in them”). You have about eighteen years to impress upon your children the importance of loving God and living for Him and setting the example by personal obedience. For the most part children follow the example of their parents. Dad, what is the gospel according to you? What kind of example are you before the family? What are your children witnessing? What are you teaching your children?

A young man was to be sentenced to the penitentiary. The judge had known him from childhood, for he was well acquainted with his father—a famous legal scholar and the author of an exhaustive study entitled, “The Law of Trusts. “Do you remember your father?” asked the magistrate. “I remember him well, your honor,” came the reply. Then trying to probe the offender’s conscience, the judge said, “As you are about to be sentenced and as you think of your wonderful dad, what do you remember most clearly about him?”

There was a pause. Then the judge received an answer he had not expected. “I remember when I went to him for advice. He looked up at me from the book he was writing and said, ‘Run along, boy; I’m busy!’ When I went to him for companionship, he turned me away, saying “Run along, son; this book must be finished!’ Your honor, you remember him as a great lawyer. I remember him as a lost friend.” The magistrate muttered to himself, “Alas! Finished the book, but lost the boy!”

The man is commissioned by God to be the leader in the family unit. Men, you have a commission by God! God is calling you to Biblical

manhood. Are you willing to be a man in your home and raise a family that will honor God? As a dad, we are called upon to teach our children about purity of living and how to conduct oneself in society. This is seen in the proverbs. The proverbs have much to say about Biblical manhood.

Proverbs 23:22 says:

“Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.”

Proverbs 23:26-33 goes on to say:

“My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways. For a whore *is* a deep ditch; and a strange woman *is* a narrow pit. She also lieth in wait as *for* a prey, and increaseth the transgressors among men. Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things.”

Men, we had better teach our children about sex and what God expects of men. We need to warn them against the modern day whores of our society and how women try and flaunt themselves before men. We need to teach them how to have victory and what to avoid if they are going to be victorious in life (vv. 27-28). My friend, we live in a day when modesty has taken a back seat. Our society is moving back to heathenism. They wear less clothing and puncture themselves with spikes and all kinds of gross body markings today. It's very important that we teach our young men to “learn not the way of the heathen” (Jer. 10:2), guard their eyes from whorish dressed women, and remind them to live pure in the midst of a sex-crazed world and heathenistic society (see Proverbs 2:1, 16; 5:1-3, 8; 6:1, 24-25; 7:1-5). The man who finds a good woman should show his son how to avoid a bad one. Men, this is our responsibility. Young men need a lot of advice and direction today about women. It's the job of dad to instill in the hearts of the young men to stay on guard and live close to the Lord.

Then too, we need to warn them about booze (Prov. 23:31). We live in an alcohol soaked society. The smart dad will teach his son and children to not even look at wine with the intent to drink it. Dad, if you teach your children to steer clear of the booze and bars you will save your children from a future of woe and unhappiness. People say today, "Just a little booze won't hurt anyone." You talk to the dad who sees his son hanging out at the bars and picking up "strange women" (Prov. 23: 33) and you will talk to a man whose heart is broken. Dad, God holds you responsible for teaching your children about wine, women, and song. All three of these can steal the hearts of our children. May God cause us as dads to rise up and see the importance of leveling with our children about sex, alcohol, satanic sounds, and the other heathenistic practices that are invading our culture today. The texts of Scripture clearly reveal that every dad needs to teach his children to steer clear of immodest or whorish dress, booze, tattoos, and carnal and fleshly music that takes a young person down a path to which there seems to be no return. Dad, God is summoning you to get on the ball and take the initiative to instill godly values and important teachings in your children's lives and hearts before it's too late.

One grown child recounts her years in the home. She speaks how her father would not have been particularly interested in a book about fathering, although he did like to read. One day when he was reading in the living room, her brother and herself decided they could play basketball without breaking anything. When I took a shot that redesigned the glass table, my mother came in with a stick and said, 'If I had my way, I'd bust you in half.' Without lifting his head from his book, my father said, "Why would you want twice as many?" The Bible teaches that the father is not to be passive in his teaching and disciplinary work with the children. He is not to sit idly by on the lazy-boy chair and let mom do all the discipline and training. Dad is to have a vital role in teaching and disciplining the children as the leader of the family unit.

The Proverbs portray a dad who is speaking to his son and giving him sound advice on how to live. The dad who wonders how much of a teacher he needs to be would do well to go to the school of Solomon. Dads should teach their children to keep the right company (Prov. 2:1, 12-15; 4:1, 14-15). One thing is for sure. Our children need to

know what kind of close friends they are to have and what kind of people they need to avoid if they don't want to be affected in a spiritually adverse way. Young people need to be taught discernment today concerning those kind of people they should develop close friendships with and those who will not be advantageous to their Christian way of life. Dads also need to teach their children to trust in the Lord or walk by faith (Prov. 3:1, 5-6), to respond to God's chastening (Prov. 3:11), to be wise (Prov. 3:12-14; 4:1, 7, 11) and keep their hearts pure (Prov. 4:23-27). Dads need to teach their sons to not be lazy but learn the importance of hard work (Prov. 6:1, 4-11). Fathers need to teach their children the things that God hates (Prov. 6:16-19). May it be said by every child of every father here today that "he taught me" (Prov. 4:4). Dad taught me! This is the greatest thing any child could ever say of their father. The great tragedy with many dads today is that they fail to teach their children right from wrong. Christian dads today need to rise up and teach their children about sex, alcohol, rock music, gambling, church attendance, giving, work, and how to live wisely in the midst of a wicked society. Rise up oh men of God! Below is a little saying about fathers that I like.

#### What Father Teaches

- He teaches kindness by being thoughtful and gracious even at home.
- He teaches patience by being gentle and understanding over and over.
- He teaches honesty by keeping his promises to his family even when it costs.
- He teaches courage by living unafraid with faith, in all circumstances.
- He teaches justice by being fair and dealing equally with everyone.
- He teaches obedience to God's Word by precept and example as he reads and prays daily with his family.
- He teaches love for God and His Church as he takes his family regularly to all the services.
- His steps are important because others follow.

Fathers, are you providing for your children, not only materially, but more importantly, spiritually? Are you protecting them by not allowing evil practices in your own life, and by not exposing them to evil

influences? Are you diligent and consistent in praying for your children? May God help each of us to realize anew the importance of taking the responsibility of a father seriously. It costs much to be a real father. But is it worth it!

Fathers were responsible for teaching their children God's words in the time of David. Dads of this generation have the same responsibility. Listen to what God says.

Psalm 78:1-8

“Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. We will not hide *them* from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know *them*, even the children *which* should be born; *who* should arise and declare *them* to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation *that* set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.”

Please note that it was the “fathers who told us” (vs. 3) referring to how the fathers in Israel were expected to teach their children the great things God had done for the nation. Verse 4 suggests that the fathers were to teach their children to praise the Lord and to rely upon God for strength. The father must also teach the children to reflect and meditate on the wonderful things that God has done for His children (“his wonderful works that he hath done”). We need to tell them of God’s salvation, victory, joy, peace, and fulfillment that He gives to our lives. When verse four says “We will not hide them from their children” it suggests the possibility that some fathers would not effectively share with their children the important things related to God’s praises, strength, and His great works. In other words, they would not express to their children the God-filled and dependent life that they are to live. Dad, how about you? Have you been sharing with your children the importance of walking with God, praising Him,

depending on Him, and understanding what God has done for them? Listen, it's our responsibility as the father to take this initiative and implant within the hearts and minds of our children the things that they need to know about God and life with God.

The text also reveals that it was commanded that the fathers should share with their children God's unchanging truth ("which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children" – vs. 5). We see how important it was for the fathers, who were the leaders in the family unit, to take the time and instruct their children regarding the testimony and law that God had given to His people. The father was to make these things known to his children. He was to take the initiative to teach God's Word to the children and show them how to follow God's truth and live out their lives within a Biblical framework. The reason for fatherly training and the instruction of children regarding truth and what is right

Something wonderful happens when you indoctrinate your children, impress upon their hearts the truth of God's Word, and show them what is right to do and how to live. They become what you are and teach! Verses six and seven verify this:

"That the generation to come might know *them*, even the children *which* should be born; *who* should arise and declare *them* to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments."

The results of training and instilling truth in our children's lives will bring forth a generation of children that will rise up and live for God. They will set their hope in God's promises and not forget what God has done for them. They will keep His commandments. This is the result of fatherly training! Men who get the job done and teach their children how to live holy will see the fruit of their labors in the lives of their children. Something else needs to be added. Fathers who teach their children right from wrong will keep the spiritual chain linked together. They will beget children who will rise up and teach their children the same things ("who would arise and declare them their children" – vs. 6). Children who are well taught will keep the spiritual chain linked together. The point is this. Godly fathers who teach their children right from wrong will beget godly children who will in return

teach their children the same truths and godly values. God does not recognize the generation gap that we have today between the older and younger generation. If fathers had taught their children the Biblical and godly values of music we would not have worship wars in the church. Churches would not have an old-fashioned service for the older generation and a contemporary rock concert service for the young people if dads have taught their children correctly. The church would not be inundated with worldly and carnal music that feeds the flesh instead of the spirit if dads would be taking their leadership responsibility seriously. If fathers would teach their children to stop living like heathen people with pins popping out of their mouths, noses, and eyes we would not have such a generation gap in the church today. Dad, God expects a lot from you. He has made you the leader of the family. It's your responsibility to teach your children right from wrong and impress upon their heart the truth of God's Word.

The worst attitude that a parent can adopt is to say, "I am not going to force religion on my children, I am going to let them make up their own mind when they are old enough." This mindset is absolutely unbiblical and absurd. Some ill-advised and undiscerning parents make the claim that they will not influence their children in making choices and decisions in matters of religion! Why not? The ads will! The press will! The TV will! The neighbors will! The forces of sin will! The politicians will! We use our influence over flowers, vegetables, animals and many other things in life. Shall we ignore our own children? When it comes to raising children we must be the predominant influence in their lives in matters of faith and spiritual matters. To come to any other conclusion is ludicrous, nonsensical, and unbiblical.

Other New Evangelical philosophies say, "I'm going to let my children decide for themselves whether or not to drink alcohol, attend the Movie Theater, play cards, smoke, gamble, and what they can handle in matters of TV, magazines, and dating. This kind of reasoning is unsound and unbiblical. It is absurd and destructive to our children's lives. There is not one ounce of spiritual sense in this way of thinking or philosophy. Dad, if you adopt this attitude and come to this conclusion you will end up leaving your children open to the wolves and world system. During their impressionable years the world will force its views on your children. Godless teachers and companions

will end up molding and fashioning their tender minds and hearts. *If you don't indoctrinate your children then someone else, or something else, will.* Some things are worth repeating. **Young people do not find out what is right and wrong. They must be taught what is right and wrong.** God holds the father for the spiritual instruction of the children. How your children see the world depends on what you show them. God has placed a big responsibility on every father to show the children right from wrong and teach them morals, ethics, and how to deal with the real world.

“I took a piece of plastic clay  
And idly fashioned it one day,  
And as my fingers pressed it still,  
It moved and yielded to my will.  
I came again when days were past --  
The bit of clay was hard at last;  
The form I gave it, it still bore,  
But I could change that form no more.  
I took a piece of living clay  
And gently formed it day by day,  
And moulded with my power and art  
A young child's soft and yielding heart.  
I came again when years were gone --  
It was a man I looked upon;  
He still that early impress wore,  
And I could change him nevermore.”

A father can neglect his duties according verse 8 – “And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that set not their heart right, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God.” Dad, is this you today? Have you been stubborn and rebellious or unwilling to do what God wants you to do? Have you been steadfast with God? Are you faithfully serving Him? What are you doing for God? Is your heart right? Where is your heart today? How close are you to God and what does God mean in your life? Let me tell you one thing. God expects us to live it and demonstrate it to our children. Stop being a fool! Our children deserve a father who is sold out for God and who will set a godly example for them. They deserve a dad who will teach them right from wrong and help them to establish right priorities and principles that they will need to embrace

and follow the rest of their lives. Don't be like these fathers that are mentioned in verse eight. They were failures.

Fathers are very much responsible for bringing their children to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and to teach them about truth, God, and Christian living. How terrible when a dad lives carelessly and when he throws dangers in their pathway by the way that he lives. Jeroboam was the first king of the northern kingdom of Israel. Because Jeroboam was a wicked king and condoned idolatry, we find this arresting statement in 1 Kings 22:52: "Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." Fathers likewise are invested with authority in the family, and thus have much influence on their children, either for good or for evil. They can involve their children in activities that cause them to sin. They can do things with their children, teach them things, and say things, which will cause them to live in rebellion against God. The way we live and talk can adversely affect our children and cause our children to sin. May it never be said of us that we made our children to sin!

The New Testament clearly reveals the importance of the Father teaching his children. The Father is to lead by way of teaching (tutoring leadership). This is brought in Ephesians 6:1-4.

Ephesians 6:1-4

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

The Bible teaches that parents should teach their children to obey. If children are going to obey their parents they must be taught obedience. If left to themselves, children will be rebels, so it is necessary for the parents to train their children to obey and do what is right in life. This involves teaching them discipline the old-fashioned and Biblical-fashioned way. The Bible has much to say on this topic.

Proverbs 22:15

"Foolishness *is* bound in the heart of a child; *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."

Proverbs 23:13

“Withhold not correction from the child: for *if* thou beatest (smite, hit) him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat (smite) him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.”

It takes nothing less than old-fashioned discipline to train a child to obey and do what is right. Parents must take the board of education and apply it to the seat of learning if they want their children to learn obedience. Nothing is more disrespectful and shameful to a dad and mom than a child who is a rebel, who disobeys, and who talks back to his parents. I remember being with an evangelist one day. We were at the farmer’s market. The evangelist overheard a little boy of about eight speaking back to his parents and creating a ruckus. The parents didn’t know what to do and kept walking away from the child. It was then that the evangelist spoke up and said, “Sonny, do you know what that it is when you talk back to your parents? That’s called sin.” The little boy got awful quiet and went along to meet up with his parents. Well, mom and dad need to discipline the children to obey them and if they do this early on in the child’s life they will save themselves from a lot of heartache, misery, and shame.

Proverbs 17:25

“A foolish son *is* a grief to his father, and bitterness to her that bare him.”

Proverbs 19:26

“He that wasteth *his* father, *and* chaseth away *his* mother, *is* a son that causeth shame, and bringeth reproach.”

Proverbs 29:15

“The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame.”

Popular humanistic psychology is teaching that you should never spank your child as a measure of discipline. God’s psychology is radically different! Years ago, the Duke of Windsor said, “Everything in the American home is controlled by switches except the children!” This is very true. This is true. We have TV remotes to run our TV’s and keys to run our cars. What we also need is a good switch to run our children. Today the children are running the homes instead of the

parents and the results are tragic. My car mechanic told me how his mom used to come after him with the big wooden spoon to teach him obedience and right from wrong. One preacher recalls the account when his daddy sent him out to the woodshed. He could hear the feet of daddy walking toward the shed. The leaves were crunching under his feet and he could almost feel the fires of hell upon his bottom side! But he knew he deserved what he was getting and is eternally grateful for a dad who was willing to teach obedience to his children.

A mother and father decided to use psychology in raising their children instead of straight talk and discipline. For example, at bedtime they would say to the children, "Would you like to take your doll to bed or your teddy bear to bed?" You see, the beauty of this is that in either case the child is choosing to go to bed. But the whole system collapsed when the three-year-old, who was never allowed to go out after supper, said to her parents one evening, "Do you want me to go out the back door or should I go out the front?"

The father is a leader and part of that leadership involves disciplining the children with old-fashioned German discipline. In short, he must give them the old one two to straighten them out. The humanistic claim that spanking our children will mar their self-image for the rest of their lives is psychological babble. Let's stop listening to the humanistic child experts of our generation. Where have they brought us? What have they done for our children? Their advice has brought great heartache upon our homes and nation. Psychology is not the answer. What God says about raising children is the answer. Dad, get your paddle out and don't be afraid to use it. We hate our children if we fail to paddle them. You say, "Preacher, eat your words." No, I will not eat my words for they are God's words.

Proverbs 13:24

"He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."

If you tell me that you love your child too much to spank him you are lying. The Bible says that when we fail to spank and properly discipline our child we demonstrate an unloving spirit toward them. If a dad does not want to paddle his child he is declaring that it does not matter to him if that child turns out to be a disgrace to society and a

follower of the world instead of a follower of Jesus Christ. Failure to discipline in a Biblical fashion means that a dad does not care enough to see his child grow up with morals, integrity, and a heart bent toward godly things.

One dad said, "In my more exasperated moments as a parent, I'm tempted to believe that Mark Twain's philosophy is the one to follow: When a kid turns thirteen, stick him in a barrel, nail the lid on top, and feed him through the knot hole. When he turns sixteen -- plug up the knothole. But not even that plan will work. Neither you nor I have ever seen a teenager who could get enough food to survive through the knothole of a barrel! No, what we need most is God's perspective on family life and discipline." How very true!

Hebrews 12:5-8

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons."

This passage in the epistle of Hebrews conveys to us what a loving father does for his children when they are disobedient and straying. He brings the rod against them. Just as the heavenly Father disciplines his wayward children so an earthly father is expected to discipline his children. This is clearly affirmed by this passage and tells us what God expects from earthly fathers who want to be like the Heavenly Father. They need to discipline them with the rod and reprimand them when they do wrong.

Hebrews 12:9-11 goes on to make the parallel to earthly fathers:

"Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the

present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”

The Scriptures teach that fathers should take the lead responsibility in correcting their children. Why do good earthly fathers correct their kids? So that their offspring might show them reverence (respect) and obey what they command. The heavenly Father and earthly father are seeking the same results in the lives of children. They want children who become partakers (sharers, partners) of his holy way of living. They want children who yield forth a righteous manner of living that will last a lifetime. The heavenly Father and earthly father do not want their children to be pampered babies; they want their children to become mature adults or sons and daughters who can be trusted with the responsibilities of life. Therefore, they must be chastened and learn discipline when young so that in the end they might follow a holy and righteous path that is pleasing to the Lord.

It is true that “no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous” (Heb. 12:11). Every child can attest to this fact and so can some of us as we turn back the clock. One preacher spoke of the time when he and his brother were playing ball in the house. They had been warned about doing this time and time again. One day they broke the lamp on the coffee table and they knew they were in big trouble. Without even saying anything they took the strap out to dad and said that they needed to be whipped. Why? The children knew that they deserved to be punished for being disobedient. Happy is the child who knows this! It’s true that both parents must take the initiative to teach children to obey but dad has a big part in this teaching process as the head or leader of the family unit.

The Bible records the sad results of dads and parents neglecting to properly train their children, either by being bad examples to them, or failing to discipline them properly. David pampered Absalom and set forth a bad example, and the results were tragic. Eli failed to discipline his sons and they brought disgrace to his name and defeat to the nation of Israel.

Proverbs 30:17 says:

“The eye *that* mocketh at *his* father, and despiseth to obey *his* mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles (vultures) shall eat it.”

Kids, do you want to save your eyeballs from the vultures? Then obey your parents. Obviously the writer is talking about poetic justice in a symbolic fashion. The rebellious child will receive appropriate judgment. The eye that mocks dad will be plucked out. Solomon is painting the picture of a dying animal in the wild. As soon as the animal is too weak to fend for itself the vultures would come and begin their dreadful work. Invariably they begin by picking out the eyes. The Old Testament demanded the death penalty for disobedient children (Lev. 20:9) but Solomon is not referring to this. Solomon is no doubt speaking with symbolic language. Not every disobedient child will be eaten by the birds. This scene reminds Solomon of an important lesson. Disobedient children get what is coming to them. Although they will not literally have their eyes eaten out by vultures he reminds us that there is a bad end for rebellious children. *A bad beginning results in a bad ending.* A son who defies his parents and despises them is heading for disaster in life. The birds will catch up with him and pick out his eyes. When children throw away the chart, compass, anchor, and helm they are going to sink their ship later in life. Poetic justice will be served.

Coming from a desert culture this scene would be impressed upon the minds of people. If a boy decided to disobey his father and wander away from the tent or house he may stray too far and fall into a ravine. After several days they might find the boy and his remains. His eyes have been plucked out by the ravens and his flesh consumed by the vultures. This is a graphic proverbial lesson. The child must learn early to obey father and mother, not only because they are his parents, but since God has commanded children to obey their parents (Eph. 6:1). Disobedience brings God’s judgment upon children. They will find themselves in the desert of life missing out on true spiritual blessing and satisfaction and the vultures will be circling them waiting for the time to swoop down and destroy their lives. The modern-day vultures that destroy the lives of disobedient children are found in the world with its rebellious music, dress, drugs, sex and such like. Disobedience to parents is rebellion against God (1 Sam. 15:23). Dad, if you don’t teach your children obedience and right from

wrong, they don't stand a chance at living a holy and righteous life in this world. The vultures will get them and pick their eyes out! Is that what you want? Do you really want your child to fall into some deep pit with no way out and have the world's vultures peck his eyes out? The parents have a tremendous responsibility. They have been given a little life to train and mold for God and eternity.

It takes discipline and consistency to teach our children obedience but the pay-off is big! Children who learn to obey will be blessings to their parents instead of a blight. Our children must learn, while they are little, the importance of obeying authority. When parents teach their children properly they will honor their parents and be blessed ("that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth") – Eph. 6:3. As a general rule, obedience fosters self-discipline, which in turn brings stability and longevity in one's life. Paul was stating a principle: when children obey their parents in the Lord, they will escape a good deal of sin and danger and thus avoid the things that could threaten or shorten their lives. This verse is not talking about avoiding physical harm (sickness, cancer, and premature death) but avoiding spiritual harm and causing your life to be shortened by living a wicked lifestyle. The point is this. You are actually giving your children a blessing when you discipline them and teach them obedience. They will as a result of proper training experience spiritual stability and blessing in life.

Ephesians 6:4 says:

"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Both parents are to have a teaching impact upon the children's lives. However, the father of the home shoulders a large responsibility in disciplining and teaching the children right from wrong. The father is first warned not to "provoke" (arouse) his children to "wrath" (anger). In other words, a dad is not to consciously try to arouse anger in his children's lives by unjust or unfair treatment, calling them names that hurt them, or showing favoritism toward one child over another. In his latter years, even Isaac pampered Esau, while his wife showed favoritism to Jacob; and the result was a divided home. We can provoke or stir up our children to wrath when we show favoritism toward them. Dads must be careful that they express equal love to

their children while raising them. Love goes a long way (1 Cor. 13:4-8).

In summary, a dad can provoke his children to wrath then he picks on them and calls them names like stupid or dumb or when he only tells what is wrong with them without bringing any kind of encouragement into their lives. A dad can irritate his children unjustly through over-protection (smothering them in life – especially as they get older), favoritism, pushing for achievement, or not allowing them to just be children and have fun in life. Other ways to irritate them is through neglect, distrust, cruel words, unjust punishment, and a warning that you will withdraw your love if they do something wrong (“Daddy won’t love you any more if you do that”). Don’t you ever say this to your child. Dad, your love for you child is to be unconditional (Rom. 8:38-39). Children will also be aroused to a place of anger when they feel that they are only a bother to their parents or an intrusion into their lives. Lack of love by the parents toward their children can create resentful attitudes that are hard to break.

Colossians 3:21 gives this similar warning:

“Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged.”

God wants the dad to be an encouraging father instead of a discouraging father to his children. Fathers are commanded by God to impart and inspire encouragement in the hearts of their children. Praise your children for what they do that is right; convey to them your love and care for them; explain your concerns about their spiritual future. Talk to them about God, about obeying the truth; read and pray with them. In doing these things you will encourage them. A dad or father needs to encourage his children from the early ages to be morally discerning people and men and women of godly character. It will not just happen. As a dad, you must take the initiative to encourage them on in godly living and doing what is right. It should be the natural fatherly instinct to encourage the children in doing what is right, living for God, and pursuing God’s will for their lives. Many dads will encourage their children to play sports, do well in school, and make it in the real world but what about making it with God? While the father teaches he must encourage them with fatherly love and compassion.

Ephesians 6:4 goes on to say “but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” The word “nurture” means tutorage (education and training) and the word “admonition” means to give counsel, advice, and warning. As a leader and father you must teach the children not to lie, cheat, steal, and many other basic things that are part of living a life that is honoring to God. We used a bar of soap when it came to lying. This method may be tasteless but it still seems to work! The dad must teach the children the importance of living for God and putting Jesus Christ first in their lives. He must stress and teach the children the importance of prayer, devotion, faithfulness, sacrifice and service to the Lord. A dad must teach the importance of being in God’s House. You must encourage them to grow in the Lord and to use their talents and gifts to serve Him. You must teach them the meaning of living by faith and the lessons of godliness and giving. You must teach them how to experience peace and joy in life even when things are difficult. There is much education and counsel that needs to be repeatedly given to children throughout their growing and formidable years and dads are responsible for taking the lead in teaching the children. In the later years the father must be ready to give advice and counsel about dating and how to conduct oneself in purity and respect with the opposite sex. The dad needs to teach his children how to work hard and save money and manage a home. In every way he needs to see to it that his children are ready to face the world financially and spiritually, and prepared to live for God when they are out of the home.

A dad recalls listening to his child say something that stunned him. “One evening I was babysitting the local bank manager's 6-year-old son, Jimmy, and my eldest daughter Elizabeth - 5 years of age. They were the best of friends and attended Sunday School together but this one evening they got into a little argument. I had just added a log to the fireplace and stoked it. As I returned to my lounging chair I heard my daughter say, ‘My Father was very brave to get that close to the fire.’ Jimmy snapped back, ‘My father is braver than your father!’ For a few minutes they argued the point and then Jimmy said, ‘Well, I know someone braver than your father!’ Elizabeth replied, ‘who?’ Jimmy quickly answered, ‘Jesus Christ, that’s who.’ There was a long silence and then my daughter said, ‘Next to Jesus, my dad is

second!' At that moment I realized the tremendous influence that a father has over his children.”

Dad, our influence and impact that we have upon our children cannot be overly stressed. What we teach them and what we live before them will leave an indelible print upon their lives. You can mark this down as being true and then put the challenge before yourself to do something about it for the years to come. According to God's Word, the father is to assume the primary responsibility of instructing children in the truths of the Bible. Of course, this does not mean that the father will do all the teaching (Prov. 1:8; 6:20), but the father is to be the child's primary instructor since he is to be the leader. Judges 2 tells the sad account of a generation of fathers who knew God, but they failed to take time to bring up their children in the admonition of the Lord, with the result that those children served Baal rather than the Lord.

I cannot think of a more effective method of spiritual instruction in the home than a daily family devotional time, when the entire family gathers to be instructed from God's Word and to pray. The father, if possible, should be the leader, and the format of instruction should be suited to the child's age. Younger children like to hear parents read Bible stories, and from those stories practical applications can be made for daily living. There is no better place for a child to be taught from the Scriptures, than in his own home and from his own father. This is true from a specific devotional time and speaking to your children in the normal routine of life (Deut. 6:7). 2 Timothy 3:15 gives this reminder to all parents: “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.” Dad, if you start teaching, training, counseling, and disciplining the children in the Scriptures (truth) when they are young you will save yourself a lot of heartache, misery, and woe later on in life. You will also raise children that will grow up living a decent and respectful life that is honoring to God.

Dad, added to your teaching role is your prayer role. Are you a praying father? You can teach your children right from wrong but you had better put the wings of prayer to your teaching and training. Training and prayer go hand in hand. It is important that fathers pray

for the children and family. I believe Job was one who recognized the importance of prayer, for in Job 1:5 we read that he made it a habit to intercede for his children by praying for them and sanctifying them before God.

Job 1:5

“And it was so, when the days of *their* feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings *according* to the number of them all: for Job said (in prayer to God), It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.”

Fathers commit a great sin when they fail to pray for their family. One father who lived near the Mississippi River was a man of great wealth. One day his oldest boy met with an accident and was brought home unconscious. Everything the man could humanly do to restore the injured son was done but it was all in vain. Time passed, and after a terrible suspense, the son recovered consciousness. "My son," the father whispered, "the doctor tells me you are dying." "Oh!" said the boy, "You never prayed for me, father; won't you pray for my soul now?" The father wept. He had never prayed. He was a stranger to God. He didn't know how to face a crisis. And in a little while, that soul, unprayed for, passed into eternity. What a tragedy!

God has committed our children to us, and part of our responsibility is to pray for them. The Apostle Paul was a father, perhaps not a physical father, but a spiritual one. Those who were converted to Christ under his preaching were his special children. In his letters to the churches, which he had started, it is instructive to see how many times he assures his spiritual children that he does not cease to pray for them.

Colossians 1:9

“For this cause we also, since the day we heard *it*, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.”

Paul realized that one of the duties of those in spiritual leadership is to pray for those under that leadership. And he set a good example for all physical fathers to follow. Perhaps there are fathers who are

grieving over children that are walking on the wrong path. Maybe you have done all you could to raise the child in the right way, and have lived a godly life before him. I encourage you to be consistent and diligent in praying for the son or daughter. We are given the biblical promise that "the fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). Praying fathers keep their children off of wicked paths and spiritual detours in life.

"Father, hear us, we are praying.  
Hear the words our hearts are saying.  
We are praying for our children.  
Keep them from the powers of evil,  
From the secret, hidden peril.  
Father, hear us for our children.  
From the worldling's hollow gladness,  
From the sting of faithless sadness,  
Father, Father, keep our children.  
Through life's troubled waters steer them.  
Through life's bitter battles cheer them.  
Father, Father, be thou near them.  
And wherever they may bide,  
Lead them home at eventide."

c. He leads by serving – (servant leadership)

Years ago, the Salvation Army was holding an international convention and their founder, Gen. William Booth, could not attend because of physical weakness. He cabled his convention message to them. It was one word: "OTHERS." This should be the heart and desire of every father and husband. His aim as the leader is to protect, help, and serve others.

Jesus said in Luke 22:26:

"But ye *shall* not *be* so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."

This is an important reminder to every father and leader within the home. We must remember that God has called us to servant leadership. A good leader is a good servant. Jesus was Lord of all and He served! Jesus said, "I am among you as he that serveth" (vs.

27). Jesus sets the example for all true leaders. "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15). Mature masculinity and leadership will always express itself in serving the wife and family. A leader should never express himself with a cold demanding demeanor. Rather, he should demonstrate a servant's heart and attitude toward the family. If more men would become Christlike in their marriage and within the home setting it would solve multitudes of marriage and family problems. The remedy for home problems is a spiritual dad or husband who is willing to serve his family. Leadership and service are like the heads and tails on a coin. They go together. They cannot be separated without destroying the coin. In the context of male leadership over the wife Paul emphasized the importance of possessing a servant's heart and attitude in the marriage and family relationship.

Ephesians 5:23

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."

Ephesians 5:25-26

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

Jesus Christ is the head of the church and He was willing to sacrifice His own life for His people. Jesus Christ is represented as the leader of the New Testament church, and as the leader (head) He willingly gave Himself upon the cross in sacrificial suffering and substitution, so that the church might be spiritually cleansed from all her sins. What a great sacrifice! What a servant's heart! Jesus Christ, who was Lord of all the universe and head of His people, was willing to give of Himself and serve. He served the church by sacrificing himself upon the cross. Jesus hung on the cross so every dad and husband might see the greatest example of a leader who was willing to serve and sacrifice for those who He loved. Indeed, all true leaders are servants!

During the American Revolution a man in civilian clothes rode past a group of soldiers repairing a small defensive barrier. Their leader was shouting instructions, but making no attempt to help them. Asked why

by the rider, he retorted with great dignity, "Sir, I am a corporal!" The stranger apologized, dismounted, and proceeded to help the exhausted soldiers. The job done, he turned to the corporal and said, "Mr. Corporal, next time you have a job like this and not enough men to do it, go to your commander-in-chief, and I will come and help you again." The man who spoke was none other than George Washington. Here was a leader of a nation who was willing to serve. How about you dad? Are you willing to serve your children? Are you willing to serve your wife? A selfish leader is a disgrace to God's design for leadership and Biblical masculinity. A selfish dad and husband who must always have his way will find his wife and home life miserable. The greatest strength of a leader is his service to others. Jesus Christ is the greatest example of servant leadership.

Philippians 2:5-8

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

As a father and husband God expects us to be a servant leader. Whenever we try to be a leader without serving we will sink the ship. Each one of us as dads and husbands must adopt the same humble mind of Christ ("Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" – Phil. 2:5). Men, this is the mind that says, "I will serve my family and give myself for them. I will sacrifice my time, talents, and treasure for them. I will see to it that they are protected and cared for on a daily basis. I will spend time with them instead of working my whole life away. I will be committed to my family and be there for them. I want to meet their needs and help them through the difficult times of life." This is Biblical masculinity. This is true leadership. A leader is a servant at all times. Let us never forget this. And may the prayer of my heart always be. Make me a servant today!

The Dead Sea is so salty that it contains no fish or plant life. What accounts for this unusual condition? There are absolutely no outlets! A great volume of water pours into this area, but nothing flows out. Many inlets plus no outlets equal a dead sea. This law of nature may

also be applied to the father and husband of the family unit. It's a law that explains why many believers are so unfruitful and lacking in spiritual vitality. It's possible for some people to attend Bible conferences, listen to religious broadcasts, study the Scriptures, and continually take in the Word as it is preached from the pulpit, and yet seem lifeless and unproductive in their Christian lives. Such individuals are like the Dead Sea. They have several "inlets" but no "outlets." To be vibrant and useful believers and spiritual leaders, we must not only "take in" all we can, but we must also "give out" in service to others!

d. He leads by loving – (loving leadership)

The Bible teaches loving leadership. This can be seen in that great passage found in Ephesians 5:25-33. I like to title this section of Scripture, "When a Man Loves a Woman." Listen, leaders who love are leaders who will be able to keep their wives and families moving in the right direction. We dealt with some of these verses already in our last point but they are worthy of reiteration for this important point on loving leadership. When a man loves a woman he will go to great lengths to please her, protect her, and pour out his heart to her in acts of service, sacrifice, and sympathy. The man is presented as the head or leader of the family unit.

Ephesians 5:23

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."

The Bible clearly defines the man as the head of the home unit (1 Corinthians 11:3). The ideal behind headship stresses authority and leadership even as Christ is head of the Church and the sole authority over its members (Eph. 1:22). As the human analogy suggests, the head is the leader of the rest of the body. The head gives the orders to the body so it can function. The body does not give the orders. The body responds to what the head tells it to do. This is the way it is to be within the home setting and marriage. The man is the leader. He is to the wife what the head is to the human body. He guides the house and gives the orders. He takes the lead and takes charge. There can be no question about the meaning of this analogy. Only a feminist with an axe to grind will miss the clear

teaching of God's Word. This tells us that the man shoulders a tremendous responsibility to be the kind of leader that God expects. As the head God expects the man to be a spiritual leader and see to it that his family is following God's will for their lives and moving in a godly direction. As the head of the family and wife the man must take the initiative and lead in decision-making and spiritual leadership. He must see to it that his family is in church and that his family is growing and prospering spiritually. Biblical manhood is expressed when men step up to plate and take charge of their families and wives. Nevertheless the leader or head of the family unit must understand what kind of leadership is ordained and effective. Paul makes it very clear that only loving leadership will work. Anything less than genuine loving leadership will result in marital division and family turmoil.

When a man loves a woman he will express love to her in four ways:

1. He will express a sacrificial love.

Ephesians 5:25

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

When a man loves a woman he will sacrifice his life for her. The way Christ loved the church was by sacrificing Himself on the cross. John W. Peterson wrote: "There is no greater love!" It is true. How could Christ express any greater love than to offer Himself on the cross for you and me? Jesus hung on the cross and went through terrible atrocities and suffering for His bride. The relationship that Christ has with the church is presented in the analogy of a relationship that a man has with a woman in the marriage. The church is the bride of Christ (Rev. 21:9; 2 Cor. 11:2) and He loved the church and was willing to give everything for her – even His own life. Men, this passage of Scripture should challenge us to be more like Christ in our marriage by manifesting loving leadership to our wife. Christ's love for His bride was a true expression of Biblical manhood. It was a sacrificial love. Paul is comparing the way Christ loved the church with how the husband is to love his wife. He is to love her in a sacrificial manner. He is to give himself to her and for her. No husband as a true spiritual leader should be selfish or domineering. The husband should not insist on having his way all the time. A wise

leader will take into consideration his wife's feelings, opinions, and needs. He is to have sensitivity, consideration, and respect for her. He will try to please her in all that he does (1 Cor. 7:33, 1 Cor. 11:11-12). He pleases her by considering her feelings and being sensitive to her needs and wants in life. He is to be a very compassionate leader who wants to sacrifice his time and life for her in every way (1 Peter 3:8). This is the kind of loving leadership that God expects from the man.

Men, if you are not giving yourself to your wife, through loving sacrifice, then you need to start allowing the Holy Spirit to manifest a newfound love in your heart toward the bride that God has given you. You need to start expressing sacrificial love toward her by taking time for her, meeting her needs, fellowshiping with her, helping her along, and reaching out to her when she needs your strong hand. When a man loves a woman he will sacrifice his life for her. Never forget this.

## 2. He will express a purifying love.

Ephesians 5:26

“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of 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.”

When a man loves a woman he will seek to purify her life. This is what the text is saying. Verses 26-27 give the reason why Christ died for the church. Christ sacrificed Himself for the church so that He might cleanse the church of all her sins and give her a clean and spotless position before God's presence. For this reason (cleansing) the Lord Jesus will return and find a bride that is spotless and prepared to meet Him (“That he might present it to himself a glorious church”). The marriage ceremony is in view. When the Rapture takes place the church will be caught up to meet the Lord and there is going to be a marriage of Christ and his bride – the New Testament church. The Jewish custom of marriage is in view. The church is pictured as being espoused to Christ today as His bride (2 Cor. 11:3), awaiting the consummation of the marriage, when we physically meet the Lord in the air. The point is this. Jesus has prepared the church to meet him. The consummation of the marriage is at hand and Christ has

prepared the church by purifying her with His sacrifice on the cross, so that she is ready to meet Him when He returns.

The teaching of Christ's relationship to the church has a direct parallel and application to the way the husband is to love his own wife in the marriage relationship. Verses 26-27 suggest that the husband as a leader will seek to keep his wife pure and cleanse her from sin and wrong living. He is to have a cleansing or purifying affect upon her life as he guides her by the Word of God. Men, this is why we need to take time in the Scriptures with our wives and families and point them in a spiritual direction. This is why we need to obediently follow the truth and do what is right. We are to do this so that our wife and families will live holy lives that are honoring to God ("that it should be holy and without blemish" – vs. 27). This is what loving leadership is all about. It involves keeping the wife and family pure or clean. It involves keeping the wife and family on the right spiritual track. The man's role and responsibility is to maintain a pure and wholesome atmosphere in the home and direct his wife and family in the way of truth and righteousness (Prov. 8:20). He is to make sure that his family stays on target spiritually and that they are living for Christ and serving Him. It's the responsibility of the man to lovingly express to his wife the manner of holy living and do what is right, so that his family will be influenced in a godly or holy way, instead of a worldly and liberal way.

So many husbands today do not take the spiritual lead and seek to have a family that is deeply interested in holy living and doing what is right. Instead, they are bent on living their own life, doing their own thing, and having their own fling, forgetting about the tremendous responsibility God has placed on them. Men, God expects that we love our wives in a holy way or a purifying manner. He wants us to lead our wives into a holy lifestyle and the way that is pleasing to God (1 Pet. 2:5). Someone wrote: "A leader is a person with a magnet in his heart and a compass in his head." The magnet that men are to have in their heart should be drawing them close to the Lord and His holiness (1 Pet. 1:16). The compass he has in his mind should be the truth of God's Word (Col. 1:9) so that he might have a purifying effect upon his wife and entire family.

As a train was about to leave a large railroad station, the conductor began to take tickets. Looking at the ticket of the first passenger he remarked, "Friend, I think you're on the wrong train!" "But," replied the man, "the ticket agent told me this was my train." After a little discussion, the conductor decided to check with the ticket agent. Before long, it became clear that the conductor was on the wrong train! The point is this. When the leader is lost, how can the followers be going on the right track? When the husband is on the world's train then how can he ever expect to have a purifying effect upon his wife and family? Men, we need to reevaluate our lives today and see if we are expressing the kind of love (purifying love) that we should have toward our mates ("that is should be holy and without blemish").

### 3. He will express a caring love.

Ephesians 5:28-29, 33

"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church."

"Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence *her* husband."

When a man loves a woman he will care for her and meet her needs. The general truth that is proclaimed in these verses cannot be misconstrued. As a man cares for his own body, so he is to care for and protect his wife. He will seek to protect her from heartache, harm and disappointment in life. He will cherish her as his own special prize and pearl of great price. The Biblical pattern of male leadership has always been to care for and protect the wife (1 Tim. 5:8). The word "nourisheth" (vs. 29) suggests that the man seeks to meet the needs of his wife. He does not allow her to fend for herself. The man is to be there and help her through life. When she needs strength the man must give her strength. When she needs encouragement the man must give her encouragement. We must remember that a man is the divinely ordained provider and protector of his wife and therefore must meet her needs in a loving and caring way. She is to be a treasure to the man, which must be cherished and cared for at all times. This is brought out in the word "cherisheth" (vs. 29). This word actually means to warm with body heat and describes a bird

sitting upon her nest. If we get this picture in our mind we will understand in a better way how much loving care a husband should provide for his wife.

A husband is to provide a secure, warm and safe haven and environment for his wife. He is not to shove his wife out into the cold, hard, and cruel world and let her fend for herself. This is not Biblical manhood. He must provide and protect and give security for her and be the kind of spiritual leader that God wants him to be. He should come to her rescue in all areas of life even as Christ came to rescue the church by becoming “the Saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23b). As Christ is the savior of the body or church, so the husband should in one sense be the savior of the wife. It’s his responsibility as the leader to express loving care for his wife and seek to meet all of her needs. God has called men to be personal saviors to their wives. They are called upon to reach out and rescue them from harms way and provide special shelter and provision for their lives so that they might have their needs met in life. This is Biblical manhood. The knight in shining armor does give an accurate picture of what God expects of a man.

There are some women who come to church and remark, “The pastor is not meeting my needs.” Well, the truth of the matter is this. The pastor is not to meet the needs of other women! He is only called upon to meet the needs of his own wife. Each husband is commanded by God to be the kind of leader that cares for his wife and meets her needs. Men, some of you need to straighten up spiritually and start being the kind of leader that God wants you to be toward your wife and family – a loving caring leader. What you need to do is embrace the kind of manhood that God’s Word proclaims and put it to practice in your marriage. If you do your wife will respond to you with submission and reverence (“reverence her husband”). It’s much easier for a wife to respond to a husband who is loving her in a Biblical fashion. When a man loves a woman he will care for her and meet her needs.

4. He will express an unbreakable love.

Ephesians 5:30-31

“For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.”

When a man loves a woman he will not leave her. He will cleave to her all the days of her life. Actually there are two important points in this verse. First, the man must leave the family and form a new family that has a newly established base of authority. One great barrier to successful marriages is the failure of one or both couples to “leave” their parents. When two people leave their families it means that a new family unit begins with the marriage and the couple’s relationship of authority and responsibility to their parents has been severed. Parents are not to control the lives of their children once they leave the nest. Second, although the man is to leave his parents he is never to leave his wife. Never! The two form a new relationship whereby they are “joined” or cemented to each other in a new family relationship, which is unattached to the previous one (Gen. 2:24). The idea of being glued together in a new relationship speaks of an ongoing loving bond, a love that is to be unbreakable and lasting. This is what marriage is all about. It consists of a loving and secure bond that is never to be broken. God has never condoned divorce in the Bible. God still hates divorce.

Malachi 2:16

“For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away.”

God has not changed the blueprint for marriage in the midst of a society that has become totally calloused toward the permanence of marriage. Divorce among Christians must stop. We must stop mimicking the unsaved in our marriages. Divorce destroys what God has ordained to be unbreakable. God intends for the marriage unit to remain glued or cemented together in an unbreakable love and devotion to one another. Young man, when you come to a woman and ask for her hand in marriage you leave the prenuptial agreements in the lawyer’s office. You come to your woman knowing that she is going to be your partner forever and that God wants you to stay glued together for life. Marriage is for life and true love in a marriage will keep it from the divorce courts. Do you know why? It’s because the Bible says, “Charity never faileth” (1 Cor. 13:8). Whatever happened to those vows, “In sickness and in health?” and

“Until death do us part?” Do they really mean anything anymore? They should to the obedient Bible-believing Christian.

A certain preacher was preaching in the Midwest one day, when a woman came to him with a little girl at her side. This woman showed by the cast on her arm and some scars on the side of her face that she had been in the hospital. She said, "I was in the hospital because of a very serious fire. There were burns over two-thirds of my body. My husband walked into the hospital room, took one look at me, and said, 'You're not the woman I married.' " He left her to marry someone younger and more beautiful. Human love says, "As long as you stimulate me, as long as I can be proud of you, as long as you're beautiful, I can love you. If you change, my love for you changes." However, the Biblical definition of a husband's love for his wife involves the use of God's word: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh" (Eph. 5:31). When a man loves a woman he will not leave her for a younger model. He will not leave her because of her appearance and physical problems. When a man truly loves a woman he will always love a woman!

The little poem tells us how things are changing in this world of ours. Some things are for the better but others are for the worse. It goes like this:

First dentistry was painless;  
Then bicycles were chainless  
And carriages were horseless  
And many laws, enforceless.  
Next, cookery was fireless,  
Telegraphy was wireless,  
Cigars were nicotineless  
And coffee, caffeineless.  
Soon oranges were seedless,  
The putting green was weedless,  
The college boy hatless,  
The proper diet, fatless,  
Now motor roads are dustless,  
The latest steel is rustless,

Our tennis courts are sodless,  
And our new religions, godless.

Men, although many things are changing around us God's Word has not changed concerning His plan and purpose for men. Biblical manhood is evidenced when the man of the household takes his responsibilities seriously and seeks to be the kind of man that God wants Him to be as a father or husband. Although many things change, manhood should never change, since God designed manhood back in Genesis. This brings us to our final point as we study about men.

e. He leads by taking charge (authoritative leadership)

The man has the God-given authority to take charge and make decisions in the family. He is called the head of the family unit as we have seen in our last point.

1 Corinthians 11:3

"But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God."

The term head connotes leader and authority figure. Christ is head of the church and this means He is the leader and authority over the Church.

Ephesians 1:22

"And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church."

Colossians 1:18

"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."

These verses teach that Christ is head of the church and link His headship with "all things under his feet" and "that in all things he might have the preeminence." This clearly relates headship to authority and leadership. The same is true in the marriage relationship. The man is to be head of the wife or the leader and

authority figure over the wife. He is called by God to take charge and lead the wife. The human analogy suggests that the head is the leader of the rest of the body. The head gives the orders to the body so it can function properly. The body does not give the orders. The body responds to what the head tells it to do. This is how God has designed the marriage unit to function. The man is the leader. He is to the wife what the head is to the human body. As the head or leader the man must take the lead. He must take the initiative to lead and direct his wife. He must take charge. Men, God has put you in charge. This is Biblical manhood.

A man will take charge in four areas:

1. He takes charge the physical realm.

The man in the marriage relationship is to be the primary initiator of physical or sexual relations. He is to take the lead in this important area of marriage. He is to be a leader in sexual relations. This is natural and right. God has built this into a man's nature. He is to be a physical leader. He is to possess a strong but tender, delicate, understanding, and affectionate approach to the physical part of marriage. It's the man who takes the woman in his arms and grips her with his manly grasp and strength. The Song of Solomon clearly portrays the man being the leader of the wife in the area of physical relations and the wife responding accordingly. This is what we are going to see. God created sex and in the context of the marriage relationship (Heb. 13:4) it becomes a beautiful expression of love in the marriage. Hollywood has polluted sex but the Bible sanctifies it in the context of marriage. In one sense we must take sex out of the closet while at the same time keep it out of the gutter. We must know what God teaches about this subject so that our marriages can function the way God designed them to function in Genesis.

The Song of Solomon records the physical love between a woman and a man. Many drown this Song in types and shadows to such a point that they miss what God is really trying to teach. A man is to be a leader in the physical realm of marriage and the woman responds to his loving advances and embrace upon her life. The Song of Solomon is the beautiful expression of physical love between a man and woman.

Song of Solomon 2:4

“He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.”

In this verse the bride is thinking back to the time when her beloved shepherd husband took the physical lead and brought her into the banqueting house of romantic sexual love. It's the man who normally initiates the physical relations in the marriage unit and makes the bedroom into the banqueting room! This is what the beloved wife is remembering. Sexual intimacy in marriage is a special blessing. The wife is remembering her man's physical love and as she does the joybells start ringing in her heart. As she recalls the tender love of her manly initiator she can only say, “his banner over me was love.” In those days a banner was used to display colors and pictures that would identify certain groups. The Shulamite said that her husband was like a banner to her. He displayed his love to her and she responded to him. *Beneath this banner of her husband's loving sexual intimacy she found all that her heart desired.* Beneath the banner of marriage love there is beauty and physical fulfillment according to God's design. I detest how Hollywood has polluted the beauty of sexual love. Sex is not dirty. Hollywood has made it dirty. Hollywood makes everything dirty. May God help us to see the beauty of sexual love in marriage. The Shulamite woman was touched and fulfilled under the banner and beauty of the man's initiating love. Let us understand that the man brings the woman to the banquet house. This is built into his manly existence.

Song of Solomon 2:6

“His left hand *is* under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me.”

This points to the strong and yet tender touch and loving embrace of the man. Every woman needs this in a marriage. Here the stage is set for physical love. This bride was emphasizing the warm, protective, and loving embrace of her man and how this made her experience acceptance, love, and fulfillment. Men, our women need the loving embrace. This is the way God made them. If you haven't noticed, women are different than men!

Song of Solomon 2:8-13 reads:

“The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice. My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over *and* gone; The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing *of birds* is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines *with* the tender grape give a *good* smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.”

Here the husband lover is pictured as coming to initiate sexual love. He is like a gazelle hopping across the mountains. And what does this antelope man say? “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.” This is the initiating move of the man for physical relations. He takes the lead in this area and gets the wife to see the beauty of physical intimacy – “The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing *of birds* is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.” That is love! It is descriptive of the beauty of sexual intimacy in the marriage. Physical love is something that is beautiful and awe inspiring. God made it this way.

Proverbs 30:18-19

“There be three *things which* are too wonderful for me, yea, four which I know not: The way of an eagle in the air; the way of a serpent upon a rock; the way of a ship in the midst of the sea; and the way of a man with a maid.”

The physical love of a man with a woman in the context of the marriage is something that is wonderful and which strikes a sense of awe and wonder. God has created sex, as something that is full of beauty and charm, much like an eagle that is soaring through the air, like a snake slithering across a rock, and a ship that is moving through the midst of the seas. There is glory, beauty, and wonder in all of these things and God is behind them all.

Men, we should bring our women into the banqueting room, as we have seen, and seek to spend precious time with our wives in the midst of these fast-paced days and our long work schedules. We are often overworked and under-motivated for marital intimacy. We must

take time and make it a sense of priority to keep the fires burning in our relationship. There are too many foxes in this world that can spoil the vines of marital bliss and happiness (Song 2:15). Some of those foxes that spoil the vines are busy work schedules, business, bitterness in the marriage relationship, and other women who catch the heart and eye of the husband. Beware of the little foxes!

When the pastor asked his church body to fill out "Encourage Me" cards and turn them in with the offering, he received the following from a little 9-year-old girl:

Dear Pastor,  
My daddy is sick and needs help.

As it turned out, the little girl's father had moved out of their home and moved in with his girlfriend leaving the little girl, her two brothers, and her mom behind. When will fathers stop breaking the hearts of their children? When will husbands stop having affairs with other women?

Men, we must keep an eye on the vine and make sure no jackals work their way into our marriage relationship and destroy the beauty of sexual love and intimacy. Marital physical love is not a job but a blessing. It's a blessing and gift from God and we should protect it and cherish it in the context of marriage. Perhaps some of you couples must once again hear the birds singing and smell the roses again in your marriage. There is a real sense of joy and wonder when a man takes the physical lead in a marriage relationship. The time of the singing of *birds* will once again come upon your marriage. Some of you need to bring back the springtime to your marriages and keep the beauty of physical love on the table.

Song of Solomon 5:1

"I am come into my garden, my sister, *my* spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice; I have eaten my honeycomb with my honey; I have drunk my wine with my milk: eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

The man's garden is reference to the physical delights of his wife's body. The descriptions of "myrrh with spice," "honeycomb," "honey" "wine," and "milk" are all descriptive of the beauty of sexual intimacy

and love. All of these items brought great delight to people and so the garden of sexual intimacy and love brings great delight to the man and wife. Once again we see the man taking the lead in his garden. He comes into the garden as the initiator and leader and seeks to bring fulfillment to both himself and wife. There is a sense of real loving leadership in this matter of initiating physical love in the marriage.

Song of Solomon 5:2

“I sleep, but my heart waketh: *it is* the voice of my beloved that knocketh, *saying*, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, *and* my locks with the drops of the night.”

The bride is dreaming (“I sleep”) and she sees her husband knocking at her door requesting physical intimacy with her. He is pictured as knocking at the door and patiently waiting for her to open the door so that they can have physical relations. Once again we see how the man is to take the physical lead in the marriage. He often knocks at the door and seeks to promote the joy of marital love. Of course, the truth that the man is the leader in the area of the physical does not mean there will be no feminine pursuit in sexual relations (Song of Solomon 1:2; 3:1; 7:11) but hers will in effect only be an invitation for the man to do the kind of initiating that God has built into his male existence. God has built into a man’s very being the natural inclination and leadership in the area of physical relations. It’s part of his manhood to initiate the loving physical relationship between marriage partners. Every wife must remember this and every man must become a caring, loving, considerate, and sensitive initiator in this area of marriage.

2. He takes charge in the spiritual realm.

This has already been seen in the multitudes of verses that we have studied concerning Biblical manhood. Let me reiterate one verse that we shared earlier.

Joshua 24:15

“And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that

were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

The text tells us that the man is to be the spiritual leader of the family and take charge (“but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD”). Men, I challenge you today to see what God is telling you. It’s not your wife’s house but your house. It’s your responsibility to make sure that the family is serving the Lord. It’s your responsibility to see that the family is in church. It’s your responsibility to teach commitment, faithfulness, and sacrificial living to your family. You must take charge. Someone said: “A family altar would alter many a family.” This is true. Men, God want you to be the spiritual leader. There is no other option. God says, “This is the way it is.”

I teach trumpet students in the basement of my home. In my basement I have a sign with Uncle Sam on it. He is doing the usual thing of pointing his finger. But on this sign he says, “I want you to practice everyday.” Well, God is pointing his finger at each man here today and He is saying something. What is he saying? He is saying, “I want you to be the spiritual leader in your home.” Men, what is your response to God’s challenge? When are you going to make up your mind to do what is right? When are you going to change? When are you going to do something about your call to Biblical manhood and leadership?

A particular Christian man faithfully brought to church a young blind man who had no transportation. He always sat with the blind man, helping him sing the hymns by saying the words into his ear. As he would say the words the blind man would then sing the words out loud with him. This particular man was a Christian leader if ever there was one. This is because he took the initiative to help this blind man worship the Lord. In a similar way each man within the family unit is called upon to initiate worship and create an atmosphere in the home that is conducive to godliness and holiness.

The man is to be the spiritual leader of the household. Headship certainly implies spiritual leadership. A head is designed to guide the rest of the human body and allow it to function properly. In a similar manner the man within the marriage and family unit is given the

responsibility to guide his household in a spiritual direction and keep it functioning accurately from a spiritual perspective. He is to take the initiative to stand up and lead the family into the will of God, the Word of God, and to the House of God (church). The children need to know that daddy is the leader and they will know this, as he seeks to have devotions and prayer with the family, and when he discusses what is right and wrong with the family. *The man sets the moral and music standards of the home.* He says what can be viewed on TV and what can be listened to on the radio. Men, in a day when utter vileness and filth can be readily viewed on the TV, it becomes even more important that you keep your family free of what I call trash TV. In a day when fleshly or carnal music is taking control of the hearts and minds of young people and many Christians, we as men need to rise up and set a godly music standard for our homes, refusing to allow the contemporary perverted sound of rebellious rock music to invade our homes. Men, take your stand! Make the commitment to keep your family pure. When you put the Lord first in your life (Rom. 12:1-2) He will perform great things in your home. What you thought may be the end and a hopeless case may very well turn out to be a new beginning! Give God all the keys of your heart and He will bless your life and family.

#### 1 Chronicles 12:32

“And of the children of Issachar, *which were men* that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them *were* two hundred; and all their brethren *were* at their commandment.”

The men of Israel were to be leaders who understood the times in which they lived. They were to be men who knew what Israel needed to do and the steps that needed to be taken. Notice that they were called “heads” (who were always the men) indicating their leadership. Also, notice how the brethren were called upon to follow their spiritual leadership. This is exactly the pattern God has established for the home. The man is called upon to understand the times and know what his family should do. A man must be able to discern the drift of the times. The man of the household today is to understand what is going on in the world and the church and steer away from pragmatism, New Evangelicalism, mysticism, and every other ism that invades our homes and churches. The man, as the spiritual

leader, must see what is going on. He must have *discernment* and take a stand against those things that are worldly, carnal, and harmful to the spiritual welfare of his family. He must also see the drift of his family and do something about it. He cannot afford to not take action lest his family ends up in shambles.

Someone wrote: "A leader is a man who knows the road, who can keep ahead, and who can pull others after him."

This is very true. The man then sets the moral and musical climate of his home. He teaches and tells his children what is right biblically, musically, and spiritually. The man says what kind of church the family will attend. The man says what will be given in the offering plate on Sunday. In doing this he is taking on the role of spiritual leadership and seeking to lead his family in a godly direction. The man is to make sure that his family walks with God and develops holy patterns in their lives and a servant's heart toward Christ. He is to motivate and teach spiritual truth and righteous living to the family. Success in our homes doesn't depend on what happens at the White House, but what happens at your house. "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

During the Nazi occupation of his country in WWII, King Christian X of Denmark noticed a Nazi flag flying over a Danish public building. He immediately called the German commandant, demanding that the flag be taken down at once. The commandant refused. "Then a soldier will go and take it down." said the king. "He will be shot," threatened the commandant. "I think not," replied the king, "for I shall be the soldier." Within minutes the flag was taken down. This reminds us how the man, as the spiritual leader, must stand his ground and do what he knows is right. There comes a time when a man must make up his mind to do what is right. When he does he becomes the kind of man that God wants him to be. Dad, what does the future hold for you and your family?

### 3. He takes charge in the relational realm.

The man is to take the lead in building an atmosphere of love, trust, and fellowship within the household. His wife and children should sense that the home is a safe haven and place of comfort, love, and

fellowship. The man must keep the relational fires of family love and fellowship flaming. We read something very disturbing in the Old Testament concerning one household.

Genesis 25:28

“And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of *his* venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob.”

When one reads this verse they can immediately conclude that sooner or later division and heartache would come to Isaac’s household. And it did. Because Isaac and Rebekah favored one child over the other the household eventually became a place of lying, hatred, and distrust (Gen. 27:1-42). The household became unglued when favoritism was displayed to individual children. All the trust, fellowship, and love that were once displayed in the home had now disappeared. Now there was only hatred, distrust, lying, and the intent to even kill (Gen. 27: 41-42). What happened? Dad did not do his job of fathering those two boys and showing the same kind of love toward both of them. He did not establish the right kind of relational atmosphere in the home that was conducive to acceptance, fellowship, and security. Instead, he chose to favor one child and this led to disaster in the household. Isaac, as a dad and husband, needed to maintain a home atmosphere that was united and free from deceit. Today each dad is responsible to foster a loving and pure atmosphere in the home and this is done when a dad loves his children, seeks to be fair, and maintains a home environment where there is equal love, acceptance, and a non-sectarian spirit.

Jesus said in Mark 3:25 that if “a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.” The same is true of a family. And if the man is to be the head of the house and wife (1 Cor. 11:3) then it’s the man’s responsibility to keep the house from becoming divided. The Scriptures speak of the home being the man’s household (Gen. 18:19; 35:2; Ex. 1:1 – “his household”) implying that he is the leader and must take responsibility for the home’s relational atmosphere and everything that goes on in the home. If the man does not maintain an environment of loving acceptance, trust, and fellowship among all the family members there will come a time when division will occur. Many families today are divided because a dad was not willing to keep the family relationally united. God says everything must be done with

order (1 Cor. 14:40) and this certainly would include keeping the home in relational order, where the family fellowships together, and lovingly embraces one another. Many fathers are so involved and engrossed with their jobs and work schedules that they cannot keep their homes in order. But God holds the man responsible for maintaining a close relational bond in the family. When we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ God is not going to count how many hours we worked overtime or how much money we had in the bank but how we kept our families tied together spiritually and relationally. When the family is split and fighting it's because dad was not there to keep things in proper relational order.

“The crown of the home is godliness;  
The beauty of the home is order;  
The glory of the home is hospitality;  
The blessing of the home is contentment.”

Some of you men need to go home and get your house in order. You need to start taking the initiative to make things right between family members and begin to heal up some old wounds. It's the man's responsibility to keep the family glued together in a day when many families are becoming unglued. Men, Satan wants to destroy your family. Are you going to sit by and allow him to dismantle your family right before your eyes? The state of the average home is at an all time low. Family relationships are severed because of sin and lack of time spent together. The average American family rarely sits down and eats supper together and fellowships around the table (Rev. 3:20). They eat on the run and move about at such an alarming pace that the relational aspect of family living begins to break down. Many dads are rarely at home to keep the relationship aspect of the home functioning.

One mother told of hearing her pre-school son talking to another 4-year-old boy on the front steps. "Where is your daddy?" he asked. "I've never seen him." "Oh, he doesn't live here," came the reply. "He only sleeps here."

The man needs to keep the family fellowshipping together around the table, loving one another, and trusting one another.

Someone wrote:

“The family should be a closely knit group. The home should be a self-contained shelter of security; a kind of school where life's basic lessons are taught; a kind of church where God is honored; a place where wholesome recreation and simple pleasures are enjoyed.”

A reporter came to a fire one day where a house was steadily burning down to the ground. He noticed that there was a little lad standing by with his mom and dad. The reporter said, "Son, it looks like you don't have a home any more." The little boy answered courageously, "We have a home--we just don't have a house to put it in."

#### 4. He takes charge in the decisional realm.

The man is to be the final say in the home. He is to be a leader in the decision-making process of the family unit. The Bible gives the man the right and mandate to lead in all decisions within the setting of home life. He is to be a leader that can make up his mind and move with spiritual direction and assurance that he is leading the wife and family in a proper direction. He can make decisions knowing that God has given him the authority to do so. Rooted within masculinity is the man's desire to lead in the decision-making process of the home. He is not practicing Biblical manhood if the woman makes the final decisions in the home. A woman who strives to do this is not practicing Biblical femininity nor is she willing to allow her man to express the dignity of Biblical manhood. We will say more on this when studying the role of the woman in the family setting.

The analogy of the head to the rest of the human body once again suggests leadership in the decision-making process. Since man is the head of the wife (Eph. 5:23; 1 Cor. 11:3) he is given the authority to be a leader in the realm of decision-making. The head on the human body makes the decisions for the rest of the body to follow. When God created the man he created the man to be the leader of the wife and family unit and this manly leadership quality becomes a special reflection of God's image (1 Cor. 11:7). The Scripture gives an important testimony of Abraham.

Genesis 18:19 says:

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

The fact that Abraham commanded his household indicates that he was practicing Biblical manhood. There was no mistake about it. Abraham was in charge within his family. He took the initiative to lead and make the spiritual decisions for his family and what he said was the final say (“Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord” – 1 Pet. 3:6). The fact that Sarah called Abraham her lord or master indicated that he was the leader. She was a godly woman who submitted to his leadership, which included the role of decision-making. How about your family? In many families mom is in charge instead of dad and the children know it. Dad’s voice means nothing. He has no authority to make the final decision and lead the family in God’s way and the right way. Is your home out of order? If so, you need to get back to God’s order and see the Lord once again bless your marriage. Only when we follow God’s blueprint do we receive the greatest blessing in our marriage. Sir, are you henpecked within your marriage? I must say this as a pastor today. God has not called me to beat around the bush. As a man you need to get out from under your wife’s apron strings and start practicing manhood! You need to go home and hug your wife, give her the biggest kiss you could ever give her, and say to her, “Honey, I love you and the kids and today I’m taking charge of the house that God has given me.” I can also say this today. Men, if you are willing to do what God has called you to do you will never be sorry. Both your wife and family need a man in the house. Men, if you really love God and want to honor God in your marriage then you will learn to practice Spirit-filled submission to godly leadership (Eph. 5:18, 22).

Did you hear about the man who was shamefully intimidated by a bossy, domineering wife? During an argument, she began chasing him around the house with a broom. Finally he dashed into the bedroom, dove underneath the bed, and slid back toward the wall as far as he could. Prodding him with the broom handle, his wife shouted, "Mortimer M. Milktoast, you come out from under there!" Cowering in the darkness, he cried out in a trembling voice, "I won't do it! I don't have to. I'm the master of this house!" That humorous

story reminds us of some tragic real-life situations in which Christian men do not provide strong leadership in their home.

Of course, being a leader and making the final decision does not mean the wife is incapable or unable to make any decisions. There are many decisions a wife must make throughout an average day that will enable her to be the kind of helper that God wants her to be toward her husband (Gen. 2:18). A man must never smother his wife and treat her as a child who is incapable of making good and right decisions related to family living. Out of necessity the wife will make decisions about the children and those matters that pertain to normal and everyday home activity. Her ability to make these decisions will enable her to fulfill the role of a wife and mother. In addition, the decision-making process does not always have to be, nor should it be, unilateral (all one-sided). A man can seek the input of his wife, adopt her ideas, and listen to her advice concerning the various details of living. This non-unilateral relationship is implied in the love that governs the marital relationship (Eph. 5:25), the equality of personhood that is implied by being created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27), and in the status of being fellow-heirs of the grace of life (1 Pet. 3:7). As men we must understand the needs of our wives and “dwell with them according to knowledge” (1 Pet. 3:7). We must learn the marital secret of catering to the concerns and needs of the wife that God has given to us treating them with the highest dignity, honor, and respect. The Bible says it this way: “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God” (Eph. 5:21). This was said in the context of the marriage relationship. We are to submit to one another’s needs and many times this will be reflected in the kind of decisions that are made by the man. In making decisions he will consider his wife’s needs and ambitions.

When a man truly loves a woman it will keep the man from becoming a tyrant and ogre, or some kind of fairy tale monster in the marriage relationship, barking around commands and pulling his wife around by her hair. This certainly is not Biblical manhood. Unilateral decision-making (one-sided decision making) is usually not the mark of good leadership. This kind of behavior generally comes from laziness, insecurity, or inconsiderate disregard for the wife. The man does submit to the needs of the woman in many ways and should honor her input and advice in many of the normal decisions of life. However,

the man is never called upon to submit to the lead of the woman in the marriage. **Submitting to her needs is one thing but submitting to her lead is another thing!** When a woman's voice overrides the man's voice the man has lost control of the marriage and has forfeited his manhood. Every man and wife needs to understand this today. It must be understood that the man is to be the overriding decision maker since he is the leader and authority of the family. This is the way God designed the marriage unit. *Biblical masculinity must accept the burden of the final say in disagreements between husband and wife.* When two are on a horse only one can be in the front. The one who is holding the reins is to be the husband. *In every good marriage decision-making is focused on the husband.* He leads in the decision-making process. His say is final and the children and the wife need to understand this so that the home can function according to God's design and blueprint. We often say, "When all else fails, read the blueprints." Well, we should change the saying a bit: "Before everything fails, we should follow the blueprints." Our homes should be precious to all of us and ordered by God.

"Home, where our feet may leave, but not our hearts;  
The chain may lengthen, but it never parts."

Biblical manhood needs to be expressed in the Christian home today for a home to maintain Biblical balance and blessing. Christian men today need to rise up out of a culture that has gone adrift and become what God has called them to be. God is looking for men who will take their stand in relationship to their own personal lives, homes, and families. If we are going to get back to the basics of Biblical and family living then the man of the household must become the kind of spiritual leader that God intended him to be in the midst of a "crooked and perverse generation" (Phil. 2:15).

"Rise up, O men of God! Have done with lesser things.  
Give heart and mind and soul and strength  
To serve the King of kings."