

The Christian Family, Lesson 1- “How Family Priorities Are Established”

Reading Assignment: Deut.6:1-9; Prov.13:20; Matt.6:19-34; 1Cor.5:1-13; 9:24-27; 1Cor.12:12-27; Eph.4:28; 6:4; 1Thess.4:11-12; 1Tim.4:16

Series Aim: To establish or re-establish God as the central focal point of our lives as *individuals*, and especially as *families*.

Objectives of the first three lessons:

- 1) Understanding the *need for* and *how to* establish spiritual priorities in our lives, and those of our children;
- 2) How to manifest those priority choices to our families; and,
- 3) Understanding how priority choices affect our families.

Study/Thought/Discussion Questions

1. As a parent, does your life more resemble 1Thess.4:11-12, or a “continual exercise in crisis management”? In either case, why is this so?
2. More than anything else, priorities are choices of *attitude* and *commitment*. Matt.6:19-34 manifests the importance of “priority choices” in several different, but related, areas of our lives. Please identify each area and describe what priority is being commanded in each of the passages below:
 - a. vv.19-21,
 - b. vv.22-23,
 - c. v.24
 - d. vv.25-32,
 - e. vv.33-34
3. When one member of the family fails to keep his or her priorities properly focused, why and how does it affect the rest of the family (cf. 1Cor.12:12-27)?
4. Who has the primary responsibility of maintaining proper priorities in the family?
5. **Establishing and maintaining the right priorities for your family starts with three simple things:**
 - a. **Taking charge of your life and the life of your family.** Rather than being a helpless passenger on an out-of-control bus headed for a rough ride and sure crash, take the wheel and pedals and drive it to the correct destination!
Husbands/fathers, how do you do this, Eph.5:23,25-33a; 6:4?

Wives/mothers, what's your role in the process, Prov.31:10ff; Eph.5:22,24; Titus 2:4-5?

Parents, are you *steering* and *controlling* the bus, or just *riding* while the children drive? If the latter is true, and aside from the obvious and inevitable "crash," what else is wrong with this picture?

b. Control your environment and circumstances as much as possible.

There are and will be things that are beyond your control, 1Cor.5:9-10.

But are the "beyond my control" things really the ones that most influence and affect our (and that of our family's) commitment to God, or is it the ones we could control but fail to do so as much as we should, cf. 1Cor.5:1-8,11-13? Please explain your answer and provide examples.

Consciously decide and *prioritize* where you live, where, when, how much you work, and how and how much you play relative to God (cf. Matt.6:19-34), and the impact these factors have on your family positively and negatively, 1Cor.9:24-27!

c. Create and maintain the proper environment for family- one that has God as the priority. *Bad company* corrupts good morals **at home too, Prov.13:20.**

Are you aware of, and do you control what television, books, art, music, and people come into your home? Do they *assist* or *detract* from godly priorities?

What steps can you take to control the influences coming into your home to ensure they assist (rather than detract from) godly priorities?

Please carefully read Deut.6:1-9 and list the commands given the Israelites to help them create and maintain the proper home environment and priority for their families.

The Christian Family, Lesson 1- “How Family Priorities Are Established” Answers

1. As a parent, does your life more resemble 1Thess.4:11-12, or a “continual exercise in crisis management”? In either case, why is this so?

It is hard for parenting NOT to turn into a “continual exercise in crisis management”- unless we decide and commit to making it something else. As parents, we have not only the *right* but also the *responsibility* to keep our priorities in order and maintain a proper perspective on things. Obviously, this means putting God and His interests first, and thereby ordering and controlling our lives so that the spiritual and eternal takes precedence over the physical and temporal.

Note from the passage (1Thess.4:11-12) that *ambition* to “*lead a quiet life and attend to your own business and work with your hands*” is part of the command from the previous verse to “*excel still more,*” v.10b. This makes it a **spiritual** priority.

Additionally, the prescribed “*quiet*” (*life*) is translated from the Greek word, *hesuchazo*, which sometimes means *to be silent*- and thus the *absence of noise*, but it also means *to rest, cease from labor, and to lead a quiet life, said of those not running hither and thither, but stay at home and mind their business* (Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon). So, while *too much noise* is perhaps under consideration, the more likely emphasis is *too much activity!* We have to learn to say “no”- to our children, our work, our friends, and even ourselves. Take control!

2. More than anything else, priorities are choices of *attitude* and *commitment*. Matt.6:19-34 manifests the importance of “priority choices” in several different, but related, areas of our lives. Please identify each area and describe what priority is being commanded in each of the passages below:
 - a. vv.19-21, Use the right *bank* for the proper *treasure*. Are the *things of God* your **primary** concern, or the *things of this life*, cf. 2Cor.4:16-18? Does your attitude and commitment manifest or deny this priority choice?
 - b. vv.22-23, Maintain the proper *vision* (including both *perspective* and *focus*- KJV uses “*single,*” cp. Jas.1:8; 4:8). “Blinders” were/are put on draft animals to keep focused on the right path and to prevent distractions that lead to failures to *walk the strait and narrow*, cf. Matt.7:13-14.
 - c. v.24, Understand and make a conscious choice with regard to *whom you serve*- then stick to it, cp. Matt.13:3-8,18-23; 19:16-22.
 - d. vv.25-32, Remember that *this life* is not what “it” is all about, cf. Luke 12:15; the *next one* is, Col.3:1-2; 2Tim.2:4.
 - e. vv.33-34, Make the *daily choice* to put *the kingdom of God and His righteousness first* (*protos* can mean *first in time or place*, and *first in any succession of things or persons*, but here more likely refers to *first in rank, influence, honor; chief; principle*), cf. Gal.2:20; 6:14.
3. When one member of the family fails to keep his or her priorities properly focused, why and how does it affect the rest of the family (cf. 1Cor.12:12-27)?

When/if one member of the family fails to keep his or her priorities properly focused it affects all of the others **because they are interconnected**- just like the *individual members* of the spiritual body or family. If the *husband/father* does not maintain proper priorities, the *wife/mother* and *children* suffer. Likewise, if the *wife/mother*

abandons her proper priorities, the *husband/father* and *children* suffer. Additionally, and as per the illustration given in the text, if the *eyes* (sight) do not work properly, the *ears* (hearing) and *hands* (touch) have to work doubly hard for the *body/family* to function at all. But the *body/family* will never function at its full potential unless all its members maintain their proper priority and function!

4. Who has the primary responsibility of maintaining proper priorities in the family?

This responsibility falls to the *head* of the family- the *husband/father*, Eph.5:23; 6:4. So, *husbands/fathers, lead- it's what you're put in this position to do!*

5. **Establishing and maintaining the right priorities for your family starts with three simple things:**

- a. **Taking charge of your life and the life of your family.** Rather than being a helpless passenger on an out-of-control bus headed for a rough ride and sure crash, take the wheel and pedals and drive it to the correct destination!

Husbands/fathers, how do you do this, Eph.5:23,25-33a; 6:4?

- 1) Get *your life* and *priorities* straight. Lead first by *example*, cf. Acts 20:17-28a (where Paul reminded the Ephesian elders of his own *example* of leadership to/of them), see also Rom.2:17-23.
- 2) Teach the proper spiritual priorities to your wife, cf. 1Cor.14:35; and to your children, Eph.6:4. It is both unfair and unproductive to expect and demand what hasn't been taught and explained, cf. Rom.4:15.
- 3) Encourage proper spiritual priorities through example and positive reinforcement (Eph.6:2-3).
- 4) Discipline includes *education* and *encouragement*, but without punitive measures for failure to comply, usually fails. God is our perfect example, and He uses *punitive/corrective discipline*, Heb.12:4-13. If you fail to discipline your children, others will do so, cf. Deut.21:18-21.

Wives/mothers, what's your role in the process, Prov.31:10ff; Eph.5:22,24; Titus 2:4-5?

The wife's role is to be *supportive* and *helpful* of her husband's decisions provided they do not contradict God's laws, or require her to do so, cf. Gen.2:18; Eph.5:22,24.

Therefore wives/mothers, be wives and mothers first and foremost! Anything else can be a plus, cf. Prov.31:10-31, but be sure it is not a distraction from your primary role. Also from Prov.31, note:

- Her role as *helpmeet* to her husband, vv.11-12,23,28b-29;
- Her role of *provision* to her household, vv.13-16,21,24,25,27;
- Her role of *taking care of herself*, vv.17-18,22,25;
- Her role of *helping the poor*, vv.19-20;
- Her role of *teaching*, vv.26.

Parents, are you *steering* and *controlling* the bus, or just *riding* while the children drive? If the latter is true, and aside from the obvious and inevitable "crash," what else is wrong with this picture?

It places a burden upon the children for which they are neither equipped or prepared- that of determining the priorities for the family, and directing it in them. Parents are the “nucleus” of the family. They are the most important part of the family “cell.” To illustrate the truth of this, please consider: Can the children produce and provide for the parents, or do the parents produce and provide for the children. Therefore, the husband/wife relationship HAS to be the most important one in the family because it sustains the others! If we allow the children to either: produce the husband/wife, or determine and direct the family, we have it backwards!

b. Control your environment and circumstances as much as possible.

There are and will be things that are beyond your control, 1Cor.5:9-10.

But are the “beyond my control” things really the ones that most influence and affect our (and that of our family’s) commitment to God, or is it the ones we could control but fail to do so as much as we should, cf. 1Cor.5:1-8,11-13? Please explain your answer and provide examples.

Paul did not rebuke the church at Corinth because one of their members committed sin, cf. 1Cor.15:1. Such was a circumstance that was beyond their control, vv.9-10. He rebuked the church because they *failed to control what they could have controlled- i.e. they became arrogant, v.2a, boasted, v.6, and refused to discipline and/or remove the sinner from their fellowship, vv.2b-5,7-8,11-13*.

If the boss says I have to work inventory this Sunday, that’s one thing. If the boss asks for volunteers to work inventory this Sunday, and I want the overtime pay, that is another matter entirely, Matt.6:25-34.

If my “ox fall(s) into a well,” that is one thing, cf. Luke 14:5. If I *push my ox into a ditch*, and then *build a fence around the ditch and throw corn to him*, that is another matter entirely.

If I am sick on Sunday morning, and can’t or shouldn’t attend worship, that is one thing. If I stay out all night Saturday partying with my friends, or stay up all night watching movies, and then don’t *feel like* attending bible class and worship, that is another matter entirely.

Many other examples could be given, but hopefully these will suffice. The bottom line is this: Did environment and circumstances *prevent* me from putting God first, or did I fail to control my environment and circumstances to the degree that I could have, and then use them as an excuse? While these examples pertain to attending bible class and worship, the same holds true for other matters of environment and circumstance as they relate more specifically to the family. Did Junior miss bible class Wednesday night because environment and circumstances *prevented* putting God first in this way, or because his parents allowed or encouraged him to sign up for extracurricular activities *knowing* that such would preclude his participation in mid-week bible class?

Likewise, we cannot *always* control our kids’ environment- especially when they’re necessarily away from home, but such is not really the point. Do we *fail* to control their environment to the degree that we can *when it is* within our power (and prerogative) to do so? Take charge and be a parent! Your

children don't need you to be their best friend; they need you to be a parent and say "no" (and mean it) from time to time. Don't abrogate your duties to the Internet, or other people or their children, they are *your* children and you are *their* parent- act like it! You say you can't keep them off their phones, social media, or the Internet? Who bought them the phone or computer, and who pays for the monthly cell service or WIFI connection? Be a parent- take control!

Consciously decide and *prioritize* where you live, where, when, how much you work, and how and how much you play relative to God (cf. Matt.6:19-34), and the impact these factors have on your family positively and negatively, 1Cor.9:24-27!

- c. **Create and maintain the proper environment for family- one that has God as the priority.** *Bad company* corrupts good morals **at home too**, Prov.13:20.

Are you aware of, and do you control what television, books, art, music, and people come into your home? Do they *assist* or *detract* from godly priorities?

The *form* of media is not really this issue- there are plenty of *godless, trashy, and immoral books* that can be read also. Granted, books are harder to conceal, clear, or erase than is media on electronic devices, but do you monitor those devices? Are there any safeguards in place for and on them?

Do you *make it your business* to know your children's friends by having them into your home so that you can get to know them? Do you "safeguard" your children's friends to be sure that they are positive influences on them? Do you *eliminate* those who aren't?

What steps can you take to control the influences coming into your home to ensure they assist (rather than detract from) godly priorities?

- 1) Set the proper example- get your *personal* priorities in order;
- 2) Clearly communicate what the proper priorities will be for family; then,
- 3) Learn to say "No" and mean it- give it *teeth*!

Please carefully read Deut.6:1-9 and list the commands given the Israelites to help them create and maintain the proper home environment and priority for their families.

vv.1-4 (generally), *listen* and *obey* God's commands;

vv.5-6, *love God* and *take His words to heart*

v.7, *teach God's words to your children constantly*;

v.8, set the proper *example*; and,

v.9, create a *home environment* of godliness by promoting His word/ways.

The Christian Family, Lesson 2- “Manifesting God as the Priority to Our Families”

Series Aim: To establish or re-establish God as the central focal point of our lives as *individuals*, and especially as *families*.

Objectives of the first three lessons:

- 4) Understanding the *need for* and *how to* establish spiritual priorities in our lives, and those of our children;
- 5) How to manifest those priority choices to our families; and,
- 6) Understanding how priority choices affect our families.

Review of the previous lesson on Establishing God as the Priority of Our Families:

- God must be the center of our lives;
- We must control our environment and circumstances to the degree possible; and,
- We must control our lives and that of our families rather than allowing them to control us.

Study/Thought/Discussion Questions:

1. Manifesting God as the priority of and to our families may involve **major** changes if we’ve been walking by “*the desires of the flesh*” as in Gal.5:16-21. What do these verses indicate that we need to understand and do to “*walk by the Spirit*” instead?
2. If, on the other hand, we have been at least attempting to *walk by the Spirit*, manifesting God as the priority of and to our families will likely involve perhaps **subtle** but **consistent** changes in the overall pattern of our home life. How can we incorporate the individual attributes (*love, joy, peace, etc.*) of “*the fruit of the Spirit*” in everyday living for our families?
3. In this lesson, we will consider **3 simple ways** we can begin to manifest God as the priority to/of our families. Please answer the questions following each of them.

Begin early to speak of God to your children, cf. Mal.3:16; Deut.6:1-9. This means that children should be caused to notice that God is so much a part of our lives that we include Him in our most simple conversations and thoughts.

- a. How can we incorporate God’s *name* in our daily speech? (cf. Matt.12:34-37)
- b. How can we use *prayer* to help manifest God as the priority of the family? (cf. Matt.6:7-15)
- c. How can we manifest our *trust* of God to our children? (cf. 1Pet.5:7)
- d. How can we manifest our *love* for God to our children? (1John 3:14-24)
- e. How can we manifest our concern/regard for *spiritual things* to our children? (cf. Matt.6:33)

Show your children that God is real to you and them. A child’s world has much in it that is “make believe.” If we do not work to make God *real* to them, He can

easily slip into that *make believe* real for them- much like the fanciful tales of children's books and movies.

- f. How can we help them realize that "Bible stories" are not "fairy tales"?
- g. Simple misconceptions of a child's perspective, such as the difference between God *reigns* vs. *rains*, can contribute to the difficulty of making God "real" to/for them. How do we help correct this?
- h. How can we help them to see that "miracles" are different from "make believe" events in fairy tales and children's movies?

Teach your children respect for authority by manifesting it yourself toward the Word of God. A child's attitude toward any and all authority comes first and foremost from his parents' attitude toward authority- especially God's!

- i. What do children learn about respect for God's authority when they see or hear their parents *fib* to protect themselves or others? (cf. Eph.4:28)
- j. What do children learn about respect for God's authority when their parents do not make the time or have the commitment to attend bible class and worship services regularly? (cf. Matt.6:33 and Heb.10:22-25)
- k. What do children learn about respect for God's authority when parents speak fondly of their "sins of youth"? (cf. Rom.6:21)
- l. What do children learn about respect for God's authority when parents *bend* the rules of government (and God!) or speak against its leaders? (cf. Rom.13:1-7; 1Pet.2:13-17; and Acts 23:1-5)
- m. What do children learn about respect for God's authority when their fathers and mothers do not fulfill their God-given roles and responsibilities to one another or them? (Eph.5:22-34 → 6:1-4)

In order to teach our children to respect God's authority, we must first *demonstrate* such ourselves. Then, we can also teach them the *practicality* of God's authority- that it is not just *theoretical*.

- n. How can we help them see that God's word provides the answers to life's many problems? (cf. 2Pet.1:3; 2Tim.3:15-17)
- o. How can we help them see that God expects us to follow/obey the answers He provides? (cf. Jas.2:14; Luke 6:46)
- p. How can we help them see that God's answers are the best way for us? (cf. Deut.6:2-3; Heb.12:3-11)
- q. How can we help them see that man's thoughts and ways- even ours as parents, pale in comparison to God's thoughts and ways? (cf. 1Cor.1:18-25)

The Christian Family, Lesson 2- “Manifesting God as the Priority to Our Families” Questions & Answers

1. Manifesting God as the priority of and to our families may involve **major** changes if we’ve been walking by “*the desires of the flesh*” as in Gal.5:16-21. What do these verses indicate that we need to understand and do to “*walk by the Spirit*” instead?

Understand: a) *the flesh* and its *desires* are opposed to *the Spirit* and its *desires*, v.17a; b) the *desire of the flesh* = doing the things that *you please* (instead of what the Spirit says), vv.16,17bvv.16,17b; c) for the Jew (Christian or otherwise), being *led by the Spirit* = *not under Law* (of Moses); d) *practicing the deeds of the flesh* = *shall not inherit the kingdom of God*, vv.19-21.

Do: a) *walk by the Spirit*, v.16a; b) *put off or lay aside the deeds of the flesh* (implied).

2. If, on the other hand, we have been at least attempting to *walk by the Spirit*, manifesting God as the priority of and to our families will likely involve perhaps **subtle** but **consistent** changes in the overall pattern of our home life. How can we incorporate the individual attributes (*love, joy, peace, etc.*) of “*the fruit of the Spirit*” in everyday living for our families?

This was meant to be primarily a **thought** or **discussion** question, but these are a few suggestions.

- Have *visible reminders* of these attributes prominently visible in your home.
- Have a family bible study that explains what each of them means, and emphasizes their importance in making/keeping God the priority in our daily living.
- Reference them (or the *visible representative reminder* of them) when someone in the family- child or parent, is being *unloving, impatient, etc.*
- Include the appropriate attribute in explaining why a particular act or behavior fails to put God first and *walk by the Spirit*, especially when administering discipline.

3. In this lesson, we will consider **3 simple ways** we can begin to manifest God as the priority to/of our families. Please answer the questions following each of them.

Begin early to speak of God to your children, cf. Mal.3:16; Deut.6:1-9. This means that children should be caused to notice that God is so much a part of our lives that we include Him in our most simple conversations and thoughts.

- a. How can we incorporate God’s *name* in our daily speech? (cf. Matt.12:34-37)

Be sure to identify and credit God as the *giver of all good things* (cf. Jas.1:17). For example, “I’m so glad God let me be your mom/dad.” Or, “Look at that beautiful sunset God gave us to enjoy this evening.” Or, “Aren’t these grapes God gave us delicious?”

Conversely, when bad behavior is experienced or witnessed, “Is that way God wants us to treat one another?” For many children, unfortunately, the only time they hear God’s name is when a parent is cursing!

Deut.6:1-9 (as we noted in the previous lesson) is obviously a great text to consider in these regards. Speak of God and His ways to your children

diligently, when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up. What we must realize is that the home is the only teaching institution that God instituted to educate our children regarding spiritual matters. The church can assist, but the primary responsibility is the home *generally*, cf. 1Tim.2:15; 2Tim.1:5 → 3:15, and fathers *specifically*, Eph.6:4! Our children should be caused to notice that God is so much a part of our lives (everyday), that we have Him in our most simple conversations and thoughts, cf. Mal.3:16!

- b. How can we use *prayer* to help manifest God as the priority of the family? (cf. Matt.6:7-15)

In the words of Paul to the Thessalonians, “*pray without ceasing,*” 1Thess.5:17. Mealtimes and bedtimes are great opportunities to use prayer to help manifest God as the priority of the family, but by no means are they the only times. When a child is sad, worried, or hurting (physically or emotionally), pray with them in petition for His watch-care and provision. When there are moments of great joy and happiness, pray with them in thanksgiving.

As parents, we must teach them *when* to pray as much as *how* to pray! Just helping them to memorize Matt.6:7-15 is not sufficient. Help them to understand what each item in that prayer means, and why it is important.

- c. How can we manifest our *trust* of God to our children? (cf. 1Pet.5:7)

A couple of things come to mind in this regard: 1) Let them see and hear you “*cast all **your** anxiety upon Him;*” and, 2) Help them to *cast **their** anxiety upon Him*. When they are worried or concerned about something, pray with them for His protection, provision, and watch-care. In other words, *live Matt.6:25-34 before them, and help them to do likewise from their youth up!*

However, there is another application that is equally important, and perhaps even more in keeping with the context of 1Peter. When your children are mistreated by others, as in 1Pet.2:18-23; 4:12-19, help them to “*entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.*”

- d. How can we manifest our *love* for God to our children? (1John 3:14-24)

Not unlike every other area, children learn as much, if not more, of our love for God by our **example** as by our **words**. We must manifest **our** love for God by: 1) showing our appreciation of being “*children of God,*” vv.1-2; 2) *purifying ourselves* by keeping His commandments, vv.3-10,22a,24a; 3) loving *His children-* our *brethren* in words and deeds, vv.11-18; 4) living *confidently* in His love, vv.19-24. But keep in mind that we must *feel* and *do* these things in ways that our children can both hear AND see! Don’t just *make* them attend worship and bible class, tell and show them why it is important to you. Include them in preparing for and giving to others. Involve them in the process so that they can see how **you** love and serve God!

- e. How can we manifest our concern/regard for *spiritual things* to our children? (cf. Matt.6:33)

Help them, through both *education* and *encouragement (example)*, to understand:

- The proper *value-system*, Matt.6:19-21; teach them what is really *valuable*;
- The proper *perspective*, Matt.6:22-23; teach them to see things *clearly/singly* with the right *focus*;
- The proper *Master*, Matt.6:24; teach them the importance of making a conscious choice to serve God rather than self and Satan; “It’s not about what *I* want, but what *God* wants;” and,
- The proper *priority of life*, Matt.6:25-34; teach them not to worry about *physical* things but to put *spiritual* things first- that school homework is less important than bible study, that extracurricular and sport activities are less important than worship and bible study.

Show your children that God is real to you and them. A child’s world has much in it that is “make believe.” If we do not work to make God *real* to them, He can easily slip into that *make believe* real for them- much like the fanciful tales of children’s books and movies.

- f. How can we help them realize that “Bible stories” are not “fairy tales”?

Make a clear distinction between the “make believe” and the *reality* of biblical stories- one is *pretend*, and the other *really happened*, cf. Rom.15:4; 1Cor.10:6-11. Such is not a one-time explanation, but should be repeated as necessary with each occasion.

- g. Simple misconceptions of a child’s perspective, such as the difference between God *reigns* vs. *rains*, can contribute to the difficulty of making God “real” to/for them. How do we help correct this?

Do some research and “digging” to find an age-appropriate Bible or Bible Story Book for them. Then, as they mature, repeat the process until they are old enough to understand a *real* Bible.

- h. How can we help them to see that “miracles” are different from “make believe” events in fairy tales and children’s movies?

Don’t just emphasize the *wonder/awe* of a miraculous event, but help them to understand *why* it occurred- that it had a purpose beyond the *physical phenomena* itself. Also, emphasize the *concepts* involved with the miracle. Stress Daniel’s faithfulness and trust more than the lion’s mouths being shut, cf. Dan.6:22 (see also 3:16-18). And certainly, endeavor to help them understand the attributes of God demonstrated through the miracle- His power and His willingness to discipline, as well as His love, mercy, goodness, etc.

Explaining the concept of “God” to a biblically ignorant adult can be challenging enough, let alone to the immature mind of a child. Let Jesus help. He was God *in the flesh*, the God-man. In the *person* of Jesus Christ, we/they can see the otherwise *invisible* God, cf. John 1:18; Heb.1:3!

Teach your children respect for authority by manifesting it yourself toward the Word of God. A child’s attitude toward any and all authority comes first and foremost from his parents’ attitude toward authority- especially God’s!

- i. What do children learn about respect for God's authority when they see or hear their parents *fib* to protect themselves or others? (cf. Eph.4:28)
They learn the lie that man can be *selective* with regard to his obedience to God's laws, cp. Jas.2:1-12.
- j. What do children learn about respect for God's authority when their parents do not make the time or have the commitment to attend bible class and worship services regularly? (cf. Matt.6:33 and Heb.10:22-25)
They learn the lie that God's authority is less important than our *needs and wants*.
- k. What do children learn about respect for God's authority when parents speak fondly of their "sins of youth"? (cf. Rom.6:21)
They learn the lies: 1) that youth is a time to *sow wild oats*, cp. Gal.6:7-8; or, 2) that sin is *more fun* than living *godly*, cp. Jas.4:4; Heb.11:25; and/or, 3) that Christians wish they could live something other than godly lives- that their heart is not really in it, cp. Mk.12:30.
- l. What do children learn about respect for God's authority when parents *bend* the rules of government (and God!) or speak against its leaders? (cf. Rom.13:1-7; 1Pet.2:13-17; and Acts 23:1-5)
They learn the lie that respect for God's authority is *theoretical* more than *practical*- that it only matters when it doesn't really matter.
- m. What do children learn about respect for God's authority when their fathers and mothers do not fulfill their God-given roles and responsibilities to one another or them? (Eph.5:22-34 → 6:1-4)
They learn to disrespect and disregard God's authority regarding their own responsibilities, cp. Col.3:21.

In order to teach our children to respect God's authority, we must first *demonstrate* such ourselves. Then, we can also teach them the *practicality* of God's authority- that it is not just *theoretical*.

- n. How can we help them see that God's word provides the answers to life's many problems? (cf. 2Pet.1:3; 2Tim.3:15-17)
Use God's Word to show them the answers to *their* problems. Don't just tell them not to do something, show them where and why God says such is inappropriate. Or, on the positive side of things, show them examples of how God helped bible characters with similar problems, and assure them that He will help them too if they put their trust in Him.
- o. How can we help them see that God expects us to follow/obey the answers He provides? (cf. Jas.2:14; Luke 6:46)
Old and New Testament examples can be of tremendous benefit in this regard. Also, emphasize the *rewards* (both temporal and eternal) of obedience, as well as the *detriments* (also both temporal and eternal) of disobedience.
- p. How can we help them see that God's answers are the best way for us? (cf. Deut.6:2-3; Heb.12:3-11)

Emphasize God's omniscient wisdom- that because He created us, He knows what is best for us. Personal examples of when you thought and acted as if you knew more than God, or what was better than He did, but were proven wrong by time and experience can help. Don't be afraid to tell your children of times when you were wrong- but obviously, some discretion may be required with which examples you choose. Be sure such examples are age-appropriate for your children.

We must also help them to see that God's way isn't a list of *don'ts*, *can'ts*, and *shouldn'ts*, but that every command, admonition, and restriction is given **because He loves us** and **wants the best for us**.

- q. How can we help them see that man's thoughts and ways- even ours as parents, pale in comparison to God's thoughts and ways? (cf. 1Cor.1:18-25)

Explain and demonstrate that *your* requirements of/for them are based in God's Word- that you're not just "making this stuff up" as you go! In this regard, help them to understand that you are subject to and dependent upon God in much the same ways that they are subject to and dependent upon you. Also, add that you are trying to prepare them to be adults who love, respect, and obey God by helping them to do the same to you now as children.

The Christian Family, Lesson 3- “How Priority Choices Affect Our Families”

Series Aim: To establish or re-establish God as the central focal point of our lives as *individuals*, and especially as *families*.

Objectives of the first three lessons:

- 7) Understanding the *need for* and *how to* establish spiritual priorities in our lives, and those of our children;
- 8) How to manifest those priority choices to our families; and,
- 9) Understanding how priority choices affect our families.

Review of the previous lesson on Reflecting Priority Choices to Our Families:

- Begin early to speak *of* God before and to your children;
- Help your children see that God is *real* to you and them; and,
- Show your children your respect of authority- first and foremost through your respect for the authority of the Word of God.

Study/Thought/Discussion Questions:

1. **Our priority choices are supposed to, and do affect our families.** Please answer the questions that illustrate this truth:
 - a. How did Abram’s decision to put God at the center of his family, and make Him the priority of their lives, affect his family? Gen.12:4-8

 - b. How did Abram’s priority choice create a *spiritual legacy*? Gen.18:16-19

2. **Children learn what they live.** Please answer the questions below in these regards:
 - a. How difficult is it for a child that is reared in a bilingual household to learn that “second language” when it is part of their everyday home life?

 - b. How does this relate or compare spiritually to the choice of having God as a priority for the family?

3. **Too often, we try to provide *things* instead of *environment* for our families.** Please explain how having God as the priority of our families affects our choices in the following areas:
 - a. *Nice home* or a *spiritual home*, cf. Eph.5:28,22; 6:1-3; 1Tim.4:7-8?

 - b. *Good neighborhood* or *good friends* and *neighbors within the family of God*, cf. Prov.13:20; Rom.12:9-16?

- c. *Good education or a foundation of biblical knowledge* from which comes a *lasting faith*, cf. 2Tim.1:5; 3:15?
- d. *Nice/popular things or a caring, loving, and compassionate home*, cf. Matt.6:25-33; Luke 12:15; 1Tim.6:6-11?

4. **Given these things (above), what do all parents owe their children:**

- a. **The best example of a Christian that you can show them.** Note Jesus' estimation of John the Baptist in Matt.11:7-11. What kind of parents did John have, cf. Luke 1:5-6?
- b. **Love and affection, Eph.5:25; Titus 2:4.** Be prepared to discuss the following in class: "Children who not shown/taught to both *give* and *receive* love in **appropriate** ways, will learn **inappropriate** ways to *give* and *receive* what they think is love."
- c. **Understanding and sympathy, Prov.4:1-9.** What happens when children are given *excessive* amounts or *inappropriate* types of *love, affection, understanding, and sympathy*? What happens when they are given *insufficient* amounts or types of the same?
- d. **Discipline, 1Tim.4:7-8; Prov.13:24.** Proper *discipline* includes three Elements: Education (what the *right* thing is); Encouragement (explanation and example of why it is the *right* thing, and how to do it); and, Enforcement (punitive/correction measures when the *right* thing isn't done). This is how God- our *Perfect Parent*, *disciplines* us, cf. Heb.12:1-11. Identify which verses of this passage manifest each of the three elements of discipline.
- e. **Knowledge of God's will, Rom.10:17; Deut.6:1-2,6-9.** What can you give or provide for your child(ren) that is more important than: the *knowledge* of God's will, and the *proper respect* for it? (Additional Thought Question: Do your current *priority choices* reflect your answer to the previous question?)
- f. **Encouragement to serve Christ, Phil.2:12-16; 4:13.** Let your children learn *from your example, encouragement, and expectations* the spirit of love and optimism that is such a vital part of serving Jesus Christ by making it visible to them on a **daily** basis. Thought Question: Do your current *priority choices*, and your *example* of them, encourage or discourage your child(ren) from being a loving and optimistic servant of Christ?

The Christian Family, Lesson 3- “How Priority Choices Affect Our Families” Questions and **Answers**

Series Aim: To establish or re-establish God as the central focal point of our lives as *individuals*, and especially as *families*.

Objectives of the first three lessons:

- 1) Understanding the *need for* and *how to* establish spiritual priorities in our lives, and those of our children;
- 2) How to manifest those priority choices to our families; and,
- 3) Understanding how priority choices affect our families.

Review of the previous lesson on Reflecting Priority Choices to Our Families:

- Begin early to speak of God before and to your children;
- Help your children see that God is *real* to you and them; and,
- Show your children your respect of authority- first and foremost through your respect for the authority of the Word of God.

Study/Thought/Discussion Questions:

1. **Our priority choices are supposed to, and do affect our families.** Please answer the questions that illustrate this truth:

- a. How did Abram’s decision to put God at the center of his family, and make Him the priority of their lives, affect his family? Gen.12:4-8

They moved, along with all of their possessions, around the Arabian Desert from Ur of the Chaldeans ultimately to the southern part of Canaan, the Negev, Gen.11:31; 12:1,9. Obviously, this was no small commitment or task. Ur was a wealthy, populous, and sophisticated center of southern Mesopotamia, but was also a center of paganism. (The original call of Abram was issued while he was in Ur, Gen.15:7; Neh.9:7; Acts 7:2. Terah, Abram, Sarai, and Lot went as far as Haran and settled there until Terah died, and then they moved into Canaan proper, cp. Gen.11:31; 12:4-9.)

They left behind their extended family and friends, Gen.12:1. This was not just a test of Abram’s faith, but was a necessary isolation from his idolatrous family, cf. Josh.24:2.

The point? Making God the priority of his family meant that Abram would have to move them away from their pagan ancestral community, and away from their idolatrous family, cf. Matt.10:34-37; 2Cor.6:14-18.

- b. How did Abram’s priority choice create a *spiritual legacy*? Gen.18:16-19

Notice v.19 carefully. God chose Abram “***in order that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice; in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him.***” Abram was chosen to create a spiritual legacy throughout his generations that would culminate in the blessing of “*all the families of the earth*” through Jesus Christ, Gen.12:3; Gal.3:26-29. Note also Gen.26:1-4 → 5 where the prospering of Isaac was tied back to the faithfulness of Abraham in these regards!

Obviously, generations of descendants can be spiritually blessed through our efforts to make God the same kind of priority in our life, and that of our family, as did Abram!

2. Children learn what they live. Please answer the questions below in these regards:

- a. How difficult is it for a child that is reared in a bilingual household to learn that “second language” when it is part of their everyday home life?

Learning a *second language* is not difficult at all when it is: *started early*- preferably from the beginning of life; *done concurrently* with the first; and is a *part of everyday life*.

- b. How does this relate or compare spiritually to the choice of having God as a priority for the family?

The comparison is this: making God the priority of our family is not difficult when we *start early*, *stay consistent*, and make it our *way of life everyday*, 2Tim.3:14-15; Matt.11:28-30.

3. Too often, we try to provide *things* instead of *environment* for our families.

Please explain how having God as the priority of our families affects our choices in the following areas:

- a. *Nice home or a spiritual home*, cf. Eph.5:28,22; 6:1-3; 1Tim.4:7-8?

While there is nothing wrong with providing a nice home for our families- we all should want to provide good things for our family, cp. Acts 14:17; Jas.1:17; Matt.7:7-11, note Paul’s point from 1Tim.4:8b, “*godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.*” (see also Matt.6:25-33)

- b. *Good neighborhood or good friends and neighbors within the family of God*, cf. Prov.13:20; Rom.12:9-16?

We seek and buy/build homes in good and safe neighborhoods for our families, and again, there is wisdom in such, cp. Gen.13:10-18; chp.19, but shouldn’t we put at least as much if not more effort into finding a church family with which to *cast our lot* and build spiritual relationships? Who wouldn’t want *spiritual neighbors* such as those in Rom.12:9-16?

- c. *Good education or a foundation of biblical knowledge* from which comes a *lasting faith*, cf. 2Tim.1:5; 3:15?

As in the previous questions/examples, no one is suggesting that a quality secular education is a bad thing (note the word *quality* here- an “education” that leads away from God or belief in Him is not a *quality* education!). But what we must realize is that even a secular education of good quality is only going to benefit the possessor for the span of their *physical* life, and only do so in *physical* ways. The trap a lot of well-meaning Christian parents fall into is that of emphasizing and putting a tremendous amount of time, energy, and money into their child’s *secular* education and then just hoping that he/she “educates themselves” *spiritually* when they get older. Is that what God expected of Abraham, cf. Gen.18:19? Is that what God expected of parents under the Law of Moses, cf. Deut.6:1-9,20-25? Is that what God expects of fathers under the Law of Christ, cf. Eph.6:4; Col.3:20-21? Is that what Lois

and Eunice did for Timothy, cf. 2Tim.1:5; 3:15? Of course not! Please take time read and meditate upon Prov.1-7.

- d. *Nice/popular things* or a *caring, loving, and compassionate home*, cf. Matt.6:25-33; Luke 12:15; 1Tim.6:6-11?

As with most things, this also is about priorities. While *nice things* are not bad or wrong in and of themselves, *our attitude* toward them certainly can be not only deleterious but also sinful. *Money* is not “*a root of all sorts of evil*,” but “*the love of money*,” and that which it can buy, certainly is, 1Tim.6:10. We would all do well to not only remember Jesus’ words in Luke 12:15, but to also endeavor to instill the principle of them within our children through demonstrating the proper choices in these regards to them.

4. **Given these things (above), what do all parents owe their children:**

- a. **The best example of a Christian that you can show them.** Note Jesus’ estimation of John the Baptist in Matt.11:7-11. What kind of parents did John have, cf. Luke 1:5-6?

Much had been predicted for John, Luke 1:15-17, and according to Jesus, he seems to have fulfilled it all, Matt.11:7-11. But lest we overlook it, note the example John had from Zacharias Elizabeth, “*And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commands and requirements of the Lord*,” Luke 1:6.

- b. **Love and affection, Eph.5:25; Titus 2:4.** Be prepared to discuss the following in class: “Children who not shown/taught to both *give* and *receive* love in **appropriate** ways, will learn **inappropriate** ways to *give* and *receive* what they think is love.”

Unless we teach our children that biblical/divine/true love:

- Is *selfless* rather than *selfish*; Eph.5:25; Titus 2:4;
- *Establishes* rather than *requiring* a value, Rom.5:8-10;
- Must be *practiced* rather than just *spoken*, Eph.5:1-2; and,
- Embodies the characteristics, attitudes, and actions *prescribed by deity* rather than the *dictates and descriptions given by humanity*;

the world (Satan and those controlled by him) will supplant *love* with *lust* at worst, or distort love until it is unrecognizable as such and leaves them unfulfilled and incapable of fulfilling anyone else at best.

- c. **Understanding and sympathy, Prov.4:1-9.** What happens when children are given *excessive* amounts or *inappropriate* types of *love, affection, understanding, and sympathy*? What happens when they are given *insufficient* amounts or types of the same?

Giving children *excessive amounts, or inappropriate types, of love, affection, understanding, and sympathy* produces only *perpetually immature* and *self-centered* adults, cf. Prov.14:1-6. Destruction or destructive tendencies also result from *insufficient amounts* of the same. Either way, it leaves them all to vulnerable to Satan and the world.

- d. **Discipline, 1Tim.4:7-8; Prov.13:24.** Proper *discipline* includes three Elements: *Education* (what the *right* thing is); *Encouragement* (explanation and example of why it is the *right* thing, and how to do it); and, *Enforcement* (punitive/correction measures when the *right* thing isn't done). This is how God- our *Perfect Parent*, *disciplines* us, cf. Heb.12:1-11. Identify which verses of this passage manifest each of the three elements of discipline.

From Heb.12:1-11,

- *Education*, vv.1-2;
- *Encouragement*, vv.3-6; and,
- *Enforcement*, vv.7-11.

Though the verses above can be seen to “fit better” with a different aspect of discipline than those listed, the important thing here is to realize: 1) God disciplines us through these methods/avenues; and, 2) We, therefore, should incorporate all three of them into our efforts to discipline (treatment suited to a *disciple*) our children!

- e. **Knowledge of God's will, Rom.10:17; Deut.6:1-2,6-9.** What can you give or provide for your child(ren) that is more important than: the *knowledge* of God's will, and the *proper respect* for it? (Additional Thought Question: Do your current *priority choices* reflect your answer to the previous question?)

See also 2Pet.1:2-3 where “*the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ our Lord*” is prayed for and emphasized. Now note that “*everything pertaining to life and godliness*” is achieved through “*the true knowledge of Him*” (v.3).

There is nothing you can give or provide access to that is more important to your children's future- *physical and spiritual*, than the *knowledge of God!*

- f. **Encouragement to serve Christ, Phil.2:12-16; 4:13.** Let your children learn *from your example, encouragement, and expectations* the spirit of love and optimism that is such a vital part of serving Jesus Christ by making it visible to them on a **daily** basis. Thought Question: Do your current *priority choices*, and your *example* of them, encourage or discourage your child(ren) from being a loving and optimistic servant of Christ?

If your *current* priority choices, **and** your exemplification of them, do not *encourage* them from being a loving and optimistic servant of Christ, they are **discouraging** the same....and thus need to change!

The Christian Family, Lesson 4- “The Role of the Husband/Father”

Series Aim: To establish or re-establish God as the central focal point of our lives as *individuals*, and especially as *families*.

Objectives of the first three lessons:

- 10) Understanding the *need for* and *how to* establish spiritual priorities in our lives, and those of our children;
- 11) How to manifest those priority choices to our families; and,
- 12) Understanding how priority choices affect our families.

Objectives of the next three lessons:

- 1) To examine and emphasize the biblical role of the husband/father in the family.
- 2) To examine and emphasize the biblical role of the wife/mother in the family.
- 3) To examine and emphasize the biblical role of the child/children in the family.

Study/Thought Questions:

1. At what point is a “family” created? (cf. Gen.2:18-25)

2. Why is the answer to the previous question such an important consideration for us today? (cf. Prov.13:15)

3. Think for a moment about the terms typically used to describe the role of husband/father: **Provider, Leader, Teacher, and Protector**. Are these *physical* or *spiritual* descriptions or synonyms for the role? Please explain your answer.

4. **Provider**- What is the husband/father expected to *provide*:
 - a. For his family *physically*? Matt.7:9-12; 1Tim.5:8

 - b. For his family *emotionally*? 1Pet.3:7;

 - c. For his family *spiritually*? 1Cor.14:34-35; 1Pet.2:2; Eph.6:4

 - d. Thought Question: What do these *provisions* require of the husband/father with regard to his *maturity*?

5. **Leader**- How is the husband/father expected to *lead*:
 - a. In regard to *successes* and *failures* in the family? (What does a *good leader* do in respect to successes and failures?)

 - b. When the family is not *growing* or *progressing* physically?

- c. When the family is not *growing* or *progressing* spiritually? (cf. 1Pet.2:2; Heb.5:11-14)
 - d. In regard to the ultimate *spiritual* goal? (cf. Col.3:1-2; Eph.5:23,25-27; 6:1-4)
6. **Teacher-** What are some of the *physical* things a husband/father typically teaches his family?
- a. *Knowledge* is required to *teach*- either physically or spiritually, Prov.14:6b; John 8:32. What should a husband/father do when his wife/children need to know something about which he has no specific knowledge? (cf. Ezra 7:10)
 - b. To be a *teacher* in and for his family, the husband/father must first *recognize the need* (cf. Eph.6:3-4), and then be willing to *learn/teach* and *teach/learn* (Heb.5:11-4 → 12:1a).
7. **Protector-** Stop and think for a moment about the efforts husbands/fathers take to ensure the *physical* safety of their families. Now, what should husbands/fathers do to ensure the *spiritual* safety of their families from the following passages:
- a. 1Thess.5:17?
 - b. 2Tim.3:14-17?
 - c. 1John 2:15-17?
 - d. Prov.13:20?
 - e. 1Tim.1:3-11?
 - f. Matt.10:16?
 - g. Jas.4:1-4?
8. Conclusion- some things to contemplate:
- a. The *spiritual* husband/father does the same kinds of things a good *physical* husband/father does, only he does them better, and with *spiritual* goals and objectives in mind.
 - b. Good *physical* husbands/fathers fulfill their role somewhat *naturally*- because it is in their nature.
 - c. Good *spiritual* husbands/fathers fulfill their role *naturally* as well, if they are *spiritual* themselves (and thus, it is *in their nature*).

The Christian Family, Lesson 4- “The Role of the Husband/Father”

Series Aim: To establish or re-establish God as the central focal point of our lives as *individuals*, and especially as *families*.

Objectives of the first three lessons:

- 1) Understanding the *need for* and *how to* establish spiritual priorities in our lives, and those of our children;
- 2) How to manifest those priority choices to our families; and,
- 3) Understanding how priority choices affect our families.

Objectives of the next three lessons:

- 1) To examine and emphasize the biblical role of the husband/father in the family.
- 2) To examine and emphasize the biblical role of the wife/mother in the family.
- 3) To examine and emphasize the biblical role of the child/children in the family.

Study/Thought Questions:

1. At what point is a “family” created? (cf. Gen.2:18-25)

A “husband” and “wife” constitute a “family”- whether or not children are ever added or not. Therefore, they *leave* their parents and *cleave* to one another in this new and independent relationship. Obviously, children are typically born into this new family, cf. 4:1ff, but the husband and wife are nonetheless a “family” with or without them.

2. Why is the answer to the previous question such an important consideration for us today? (cf. Prov.13:15)

According to God’s order, the relationship and roles of *husband/wife* come first, then *father/mother*. However, there are at least a couple of notable problems in our current society regarding these things:

- All too often, *children* produce the “family” rather than the other way around. This is not to say that a “family” cannot be ultimately *successful* when starting off backwards, but it must be first acknowledged that such has occurred.
- Also, and equally all too often, while the essentiality of a “husband” ought to be obvious to the intended construction of the “family,” and “father” should be equally axiomatic when children are added to the “family,” neither are necessarily part of the constructs of “family” today. It ought not to be this way, but too often it is. Such is NOT God’s intended order, Gen.2:18ff, nor is it in the best interest of our families specifically, or society as a whole, Prov.13:15b!
- To begin to repair our families, and thus the backbone of “society,” we must firstly return to God’s order of the *husbands* and *wives* producing *children* instead of the other way around, and then secondly, we must faithfully fulfill the roles of *husband/father* and *wife/mother* according to God’s order.

3. Think for a moment about the terms typically used to describe the role of husband/father: **Provider, Leader, Teacher, and Protector**. Are these *physical* or *spiritual* descriptions or synonyms for the role? Please explain your answer.

“Yes,” to all of the above! However, while the *physical* aspects of these descriptions or synonyms are generally understood- and even marginally practiced, by even those who have no real knowledge or regard for God’s ways, the *spiritual*

applications are obviously much less understood and practiced- even by those who claim knowledge and regard for God's ways. Let's see if we can help to alleviate (and improve) at least some of this problem through a better understanding of what God expects of *husbands/fathers*.

4. **Provider-** What is the husband/father expected to *provide*:

- a. For his family *physically*? Matt.7:9-12; 1Tim.5:8

Most, even among the heathen, are at least aware of the responsibilities of a *father* to provide "*good gifts to your children*" (Matt.7:11), and "*provide for his own*" (Greek word *ho*, translated as "*his*," is in the masculine form, plural sense, and genitive case) which would certainly include his *wife*. Certainly, *food, shelter, and clothing* would be the essentials, cf. 1Tim.5:8.

- b. For his family *emotionally*? 1Pet.3:7;

The *husband* is also to provide **companionship** ("*live with your wives*"), **understanding** ("*in an understanding way*"), and **honor** ("*grant her honor*"). And from Eph.5:25ff, *husbands* should also provide their *wives* with **love** (v.25) and **nurture** (v.29a, *ektrepho-* to nurture; *bring up* to maturity) so that she is and feels *cherished* (v.29b, *thalpo-* to warm or keep warm).

There are also passages that imply (if not directly stated) emotional provisions the *father* owes his children: *non-provoking discipline*, Eph.6:4; *non-exasperating encouragement*, Col.3:21; *loving, purposeful, strengthening*, and *exemplary discipline*, Heb.12:6-13.

- c. For his family *spiritually*? 1Cor.14:34-35; 1Pet.2:2; Eph.6:4

The husband is to provide *spiritual instruction* to both his *wife*, 1Cor.14:34-35; Eph.5:26-27, and children, Eph.6:4; Deut.6:1-25. This would include, as needed *spiritual milk*, 1Pet.2:2, and *spiritual meat/solid food*, Heb.5:13-14, as necessary for essential growth and development to maturity. Obviously, one cannot *provide* what he does not possess. In order to *teach*, one must first *learn*. However, such is a never-ending process of *learning* and *teaching*.

- d. Thought Question: What do these *provisions* require of the husband/father with regard to his *maturity*?

When a man marries, he is rightfully expected to "settle down" (in the sense of "growing up" and becoming *selfless* rather than *selfish*) and be responsible for the provision of his family. This is also true in spiritual terms as we have hopefully come to realize from the above questions and answers. Is your family *spiritually illegitimate* because you are failing to provide for them in this way?

5. **Leader-** How is the husband/father expected to *lead*:

- a. In regard to *successes* and *failures* in the family? (What does a *good leader* do in respect to successes and failures?)

We've likely all heard that a *good leader* "shares glory in successes" and "accepts responsibilities in failure." Certainly there are exceptions- especially regarding the latter, cp. John 17:12ff, but by and large the axiom holds true with regard to spiritual leadership also.

Likewise, a *good leader* does not excuse *failures*, but is compassionate toward them, and works to turn them into *successes*, cp. John 8:4-11 and Mark 6:34.

- b. When the family is not *growing* or *progressing* physically?

There are 3 essential elements to *physical growth* and *maturity*: 1) nutrition; 2) freedom from disease; and 3) exercise. When one of these is lacking, a *good leader* a) recognizes and identifies the preventative problem; and, b) provides that which is lacking and/or removes the inhibiting factor.

It should be noted that when *physical* growth and maturity is not occurring, there is no shortage of effort or resources that are committed to correcting the situation- and such should certainly be the case! However....

- c. When the family is not *growing* or *progressing* spiritually? (cf. 1Pet.2:2; Heb.5:11-14)

As with a lack of *physical* growth and progress toward maturity, there should be no shortage of effort or devoted resources toward removing the impediment(s) and provision of the essential elements of *spiritual nutrition*, 1Pet.2:2; Heb.5:13-14; *spiritual freedom from disease*, Heb.12:1-2; and *spiritual exercise*, Heb.12:3-17.

- d. In regard to the ultimate *spiritual* goal? (cf. Col.3:1-2; Eph.5:23,25-27; 6:1-4)

The ultimate *physical* goal of leadership in the family is their *independent maturity, well-being, and security*. The same is true in regard to *spiritual leadership!* The ultimate goal of *spiritual leadership* is an *independent maturity* wherein: the “*senses have been trained to discern good and evil*,” Heb.5:14; *right* is chosen because it is “right” and *pleases the Lord* rather than just Dad, Eph.5:10; *spiritual well-being* is achieved and *eternal security* is achieved, Col.3:1-3; 2Pet.1:5-11; and a *spiritual legacy* has been created and nurtured into existence, cf. Gen.18:19!

6. **Teacher-** What are some of the *physical* things a husband/father typically teaches his family? *Morality. Survival skills. Problem-solving. How to throw a curveball!*

- a. *Knowledge* is required to *teach*- either physically or spiritually, Prov.14:6b; John 8:32. What should a husband/father do when his wife/children need to know something about which he has no specific knowledge? (cf. Ezra 7:10)

Ezra “set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel,” Ezra 7:10. Such knowledge is not gained by osmosis, but by *diligent labor*, Prov.14:4,6b! In addition to *knowing the truth*, one must also “*abide in My word*” in order to receive the *freedom* which it produces, John 8:31-32. The point is this: If we (as husbands/fathers) do not possess what our family (wife, or wife/children) needs, we *work* to attain it- the same is true with regard to their *spiritual needs!* If we do not know what they need to learn, we must diligently labor to attain it ourselves that we may *teach/provide* it, 2Tim.2:15 → 1:5 → 3:14-15 (also cp. 1Tim.4:14-16).

- b. To be a *teacher* in and for his family, the husband/father must first *recognize the need* (cf. Eph.6:3-4), and then be willing to *learn/teach* and *teach/learn* (Heb.5:11-4 → 12:1a).

7. **Protector-** Stop and think for a moment about the efforts husbands/fathers take to ensure the *physical* safety of their families. Now, what should husbands/fathers do to ensure the *spiritual* safety of their families from the following passages:
- a. 1Thess.5:17? “*pray without ceasing;*” also, see Luke 18:1-8
 - b. 2Tim.3:14-17? Set the right example; teach *the sacred writings*; use the Scriptures for *teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness*, cp. Ezra 7:10.
 - c. 1John 2:15-17? Provide knowledge regarding: the dangers of *loving the world; the lust of the flesh; the lust of the eye; and the boastful pride of life*.
 - d. Prov.13:20? Set boundaries regarding *with whom* and *how* socializing is done.
 - e. 1Tim.1:3-11? Be sure to understand, and then teach, the *proper use and goal of instruction in the word*.
 - f. Matt.10:16? Educate regarding *wolves* (deceivers/destroyers in the world, cf. 7:15) and *sheep* (our vulnerability/dependence), and *serpents* (wise in the ways of the world) and *doves* (purity/innocence).
 - g. Jas.4:1-4? Educate regarding, guide through, and protect from *worldliness and its dangers*.
8. Conclusion- some things to contemplate:
- a. The *spiritual* husband/father does the same kinds of things a good *physical* husband/father does, only he does them better, and with *spiritual* goals and objectives in mind.
 - b. Good *physical* husbands/fathers fulfill their role somewhat *naturally*- because it is in their nature.
 - c. Good *spiritual* husbands/fathers fulfill their role *naturally* as well, if they are *spiritual* themselves (and thus, it is *in their nature*).

The Christian Family, Lesson 5- "The Role of the Wife/Mother"

Series Aim: To establish or re-establish God as the central focal point of our lives as *individuals*, and especially as *families*.

Objectives of the first three lessons:

- 13) Understanding the *need for* and *how to* establish spiritual priorities in our lives, and those of our children;
- 14) How to manifest those priority choices to our families; and,
- 15) Understanding how priority choices affect our families.

Objectives of these three lessons:

- 4) To examine and emphasize the biblical role of the husband/father in the family.
- 5) To examine and emphasize the biblical role of the wife/mother in the family.
- 6) To examine and emphasize the biblical role of the child/children in the family.

Study/Thought Questions:

9. Why is it important for a woman to become a "wife" before becoming a "mother" (at least 2 reasons, please; cf. Gen.2:18-24; 4:1-2; Titus 2:3-4; Heb.13:4)?

10. After each of the passages below, explain what a "wife" should learn before becoming a "mother."

a. Eph.5:22-24,

b. Titus 2:4-5,

c. 1Pet.3:1-6,

d. Eph.5:33,

e. Rom.7:2-3

11. What is the difference between "*natural affection*" (as in Rom.1:31) and *learned love* (as in Titus 2:4? Please explain your answer.

12. Where or when is the wife/mother *forbidden* to "teach," and why? (cf. 1Tim.2:8-14)

13. Where and when is the wife/mother *supposed* to “teach,” and why? (cf. 1Cor.7:13-14,16; 1Pet.3:1-2; 1Tim.2:15; Prov.1:8-9; 6:20; 31:26)

14. Please answer the following from Titus 2:3-5.

a. When does a wife/mother transition from *younger* to *older*? (No, I’m not looking for trouble, and yes, the answer is in this text!)

b. What, specifically, is the *older* wife/mother to teach the *younger* wife/mother? (At least 6 please, and explain what each one means.)

c. Why are these things important?

15. Conclusions:

a. Wives/mothers, be the kind of wife you want your son to marry and your daughter to be, and the kind of mother you want your grandchildren to have.

b. But even more importantly, be the kind of wife/mother God expects you to be, and teach your children (sons and daughters) these things and fruit will be born to the Lord for generations to come!

The Christian Family, Lesson 5- “The Role of the Wife/Mother”

Series Aim: To establish or re-establish God as the central focal point of our lives as *individuals*, and especially as *families*.

Objectives of the first three lessons:

- 1) Understanding the *need for* and *how to* establish spiritual priorities in our lives, and those of our children;
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Objectives of these three lessons:

- 1) To examine and emphasize the biblical role of the husband/father in the family.
- 2) To examine and emphasize the biblical role of the wife/mother in the family.
- 3) To examine and emphasize the biblical role of the child/children in the family.

Study/Thought Questions:

1. Why is it important for a woman to become a “wife” before becoming a “mother” (at least 2 reasons, please; cf. Gen.2:18-24; 4:1-2; Titus 2:3-4; Heb.13:4)?

- 1) To respect God’s order, Gen.2:18ff → 4:1-2;
- 2) To allow time to learn one another, and to be a *suitable helper*, Gen.2:18; 1Cor.11:8-9;
- 3) To allow time to learn to love her husband- especially when he’s not being very *lovable*, Titus 2:4;
- 4) To allow her husband time to learn his role/responsibilities as a *loving head* also, Eph.5:25-32, so that her *respect* can grow, Eph.5:33;
- 5) To allow time to become *dedicated* to one another through *purity*, Heb.13:4.

The sad reality is that many couples think that having a baby together will “fix” or “help fix” their marriage. If it does, the “marriage” will probably only last until the children are grown and gone. More accurately, if couples have not learned to be *husband and wife*, adding *father and mother* will likely make the existing problems worse rather than better.

2. After each of the passages below, explain what a “wife” should learn before becoming a “mother.”

- a. Eph.5:22-24, to *subject herself* (to *arrange or order* oneself under another’s control) to her husband. “Yes,” this should be in response to his *sacrificial love and provision* for her, but sometimes it must be in spite of the absence of the same (cf. 1Pet.3:1-2). Such should be done *willingly* and *joyfully* rather than *begrudgingly* or out of mere *sense of obligation*, because she realizes such pleases God (and her husband)! This requirement underscores the importance of a proper choice of a husband who is, or at least has the potential to become, worthy of her love, trust, honor, respect, and commitment.
- b. Titus 2:4-5, to *love* (*phileo-* to have *warm, tender, and friendly* feelings for him- to become *friends* or be *friendly*) her husband. This is not always easy when he is not being very *lovable*, cf. 1Pet.3:1-2!

- c. 1Pet.3:1-6, to *win* him back to obedience to God, if necessary, through *chaste and respectful* behavior; to learn the value of *internal over external adornment*; to *mold her own heart* into conformity with God's expectation and pleasure.
- d. Eph.5:33, to *respect* her husband, and treat him with *respect*. It may well be that he, too, needs time to *grow into* his role and its responsibilities before adding to them with children.
- e. Rom.7:2-3, to be *dedicated/faithfully committed* to him until death. I realize words to this effect are often included (perhaps less so now, however) in wedding vows, but time is needed to *cement this bond* together before extra responsibilities/roles are added. Truly becoming *one flesh* doesn't happen with a wedding, a license, and a honeymoon; it takes a little time, and often hardship to mature and become complete. Adding children too soon often shifts our thoughts to more "pressing" matters and leaves the essential elements of dedication and commitment unresolved and incomplete. First things need to come first, in these regards.

3. What is the difference between "*natural affection*" (as in Rom.1:31) and *learned love* (as in Titus 2:4? Please explain your answer.

First of all, two different words are utilized. Rom.1:31 uses *astorgos* (literally, *hardhearted; unloving; without natural affection; see also 2Tim.3:3*), and Titus 2:4 uses *phileandros* (*phileo- warm, tender, friendly, affection; to be fond of coupled with andros- man, or husband*).

And obviously, at least from the NASB, one is *natural* and the other is *learned*. Thus, *astorgos* is deemed to be more intrinsic- as the instant affection of a mother toward her newborn; and the other is one that must *learned and developed-* born out of decision and commitment, which the adoption of a child, or the marrying of a husband, well illustrates. The *love* which is *learned* is, therefore, not "goosey" infatuation, and is certainly not "lust" (inordinate desire), but is instead the product of mature appreciation, sincere respect, and true dedication, cf. Matt.19:3-6; Rom.7:2-3; Gen.2:18ff; 1Cor.11:8-9; Prov.31:11,23,25-27.

4. Where or when is the wife/mother *forbidden* to "teach," and why? (cf. 1Tim.2:8-14)

From the context (vv.1-8), and from 1Cor.14:26-35, the *public assembly of the church* is not the domain/realm in which a woman is to teach, cf. Acts 18:24-26. The reasons given in the text are: 1) *creation order*, 1Tim.2:13; and, 2) *Eve's deception/transgression*, 1Tim.2:14. Though *speaking "in a tongue"* is under consideration in 1Cor.14:27ff, Paul makes an appeal "*just as the Law also says*" in v.34 which seems to be based on the quotation in v.21 of Isa.28:11ff.

Simply put, the *public assembly* is not the realm or domain in which God expects a woman to teach. He has given that responsibility to men, cf. 1Tim.2:7-8.

5. Where and when is the wife/mother *supposed* to "teach," and why? (cf. 1Cor.7:13-14,16; 1Pet.3:1-2; 1Tim.2:15; Prov.1:8-9; 6:20; 31:26)

Having removed the woman from *public proclamation*, God has given her responsibilities to teach in the *private* realm. Please note that she **is** to *teach*:

- Her *unbelieving husband* that he might be *sanctified*, 1Cor.7:13-14,16;
- Her *disobedient husband* that he might be *won back to the word*, 1Pet.3:1-2;

- Her *children* that they might *continue in faith, love, sanctity, and self-restraint*, [1Tim.2:15](#); [Prov.1:8-9](#); [6:20](#); [31:26](#); and,
- Other *younger women* that they might become *loving, sensible, pure, home-makers* who are *kind, submissive to their husbands, and honor God and His word* through their conduct, [Titus 2:4-5](#).

6. Please answer the following from [Titus 2:3-5](#).

- a. When does a wife/mother transition from *younger* to *older*? (No, I'm not looking for trouble, and yes, the answer is in this text!)

There are a couple of considerations here:

- 1) She is *older* when she has *matured* sufficiently to be *reverent in behavior, free of malicious gossip, free of enslavement to wine, and able to teach what is good*, [v.3](#); cf. [Heb.5:12-14](#).
- 2) She is also *older* when there are *younger* women present who need her *instruction* regarding the things she has *learned or mastered*, [vv.4-5](#). For instance, a woman who has successfully raised two or three of her children- though she may still be in the process of raising more, can certainly *teach* another woman who is attempting to raise her first child.

What must not be overlooked is that when one is *old enough* to have learned through the instruction of others, God's word, and experience, how to be the kind of *wife* and *mother* that pleases God, she is old enough to teach those *too young* to have yet learned these things- regardless of the specific ages involved!

- b. What, specifically, is the *older* wife/mother to teach the *younger* wife/mother? (At least 6 please, and explain what each one means.)

Note the specifics provided by the text:

- 1) *Love of family* (including *husband* and *children*), [v.4](#). As shown previously, this *phileo* love of *warm, tender, fond, affection* born out of decision, appreciation, and commitment- even when they are being *unlovable*, cf. [1Pet.3:1-2](#).
- 2) *Sensible*, [v.5](#). The Greek word from which *sensible* is translated is *sophron*, and means *of sound mind, self-controlled*. It is also rendered as "*prudent*" in [1Tim.3:2](#), and seems to suggest *having good sense* and capable of *reasonableness*. Marriage and child-rearing is not the time for reckless self-indulgence for the wife/mother, or the husband/father ([Eph.5:25](#)).
- 3) *Pure*, [v.5](#). The Greek word here is *hagnos*, and refers to *clean, innocent, modest, perfect, chaste, pure*, cf. [2Cor.11:2](#); [1Tim.5:22](#); [1Pet.3:2](#). As sexual *purity* seems to be the primary application, *older* women are to teach the *younger* women how to *dress, speak, and socialize* with purity.
- 4) *Workers at Home*, [v.5](#). Literally, *oikourgous* is the combination of *oikos* (home, household) and *ergon* (worker). Understand that *oikos* generally refers not only to the *house*, but also to its *occupants*, cp. [Prov.31:27](#). Such does not imply that she is strictly *home-bound*, as [Prov.31:16,24](#) and [Acts 18:2-3,26](#) make clear, but it does have this *primary* responsibility.

- 5) *Kind*, v.5. Unfortunately, this trait and its associated actions are typically thought of as *inherited* rather than *taught* and *learned*. *Agathos* is also rendered as “good” in Matt.7:18 and 1Pet.2:18, but also is defined as *useful*, *beneficial*, and *generous*, cf. Eph.4:28-29; 6:8.
- 6) *Subject to their own husbands*, v.5. Obviously, this has been previously covered. Suffice it to add that *hupotasso* is the same word utilized in Rom.13:5, and the same concept as in 1Cor.11:3. It does not imply *slavery* nor forbid *independent thought*, but it does require one to *humbly* and *voluntarily submit* and *arrange* themselves *under* the control of another, cf. 1Pet.3:1-6.

c. Why are these things important?

They are important not only for the good they do to the individual *younger women* and their families, but also “*that the word of God may not be dishonored*,” v.5. That is, that God nor His word be put to shame through neither ignorance nor negligence in these matters before the world, cp. John 17:20-21; 1Cor.5:1; 6:1-10; 1Tim.6:1.

7. Conclusions:

- a. Wives/mothers, be the kind of wife you want your son to marry and your daughter to be, and the kind of mother you want your grandchildren to have.
- b. But even more importantly, be the kind of wife/mother God expects you to be, and teach your children (sons and daughters) these things and they will bear fruit to the Lord for generations to come!