

HAVING A FRUITFUL MARRIAGE

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WEEK 1: HE CREATED THEM MALE AND FEMALE

Creation of Male and Female

Genesis 1:27-28

²⁷ So God created man in His own image; **in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.** ²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

No Matriarchs or Patriarchs; just man and woman.

Genesis 2:7, 15-25 He instituted marriage before the church.

⁷ And the LORD God **formed** man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

¹⁵ Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; ¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”

¹⁸ And the LORD God said, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him **a helper comparable** to him.” ¹⁹ Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him.

²¹ And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. ²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He **made** into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

²³ And Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” ²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become **one flesh.** ²⁵ And they were **both naked**, the man and his wife, and were **not ashamed.**

- **Verse 7:** Form = yâtsar (through the *squeezing* into shape)
- **Verse 18:** A helper comparable = counterpart, one that closely resembles another, one that has the same functions and characteristics as another, one of two parts that fit and complete each other.
- **Verse 22:** Made = bânâh to *build* (literally and figuratively); hand crafted.
Man and woman are completely different: from creation.
Woman is said not to have been “taken out of man’s head to be lorded over by him, nor from

his feet to be trampled on by him, but from his side to be equal with him, from under his arm to be protected by him, and from near his heart to be loved by him.” (Finis Dake).

- **Verse 24:** one flesh, meaning inseparable
leave = *to cleave or cling to*, in Hebrew it literally means to overtake or pursue his wife.
- **Verse 25:** They were both naked and not ashamed.

Differences between Men and Women (not everybody fits the same stereotype)

Physical Differences

Men usually have greater upper body strength, build muscle easily, have thicker skin, bruise less easily, and have a lower threshold of awareness of injuries to their extremities. Men are essentially built for physical confrontation and the use of force. Their joints are well suited for throwing objects. A man’s skull is almost always thicker and stronger than a woman’s.

Women, on the other hand, have four times as many brain cells (neurons) connecting the right and left side of their brain. This finding provides physical evidence that supports the observation that men rely easily and more heavily on their left brain to solve one problem one step at a time. Women have more efficient access to both sides of their brain and, therefore, greater use of their right brain. Women can focus on more than one problem at one time and frequently prefer to solve problems through multiple activities at a time.

Dr. Paul Popenoe, differences between the sexes. Some of his findings:

- In the U.S. a female often outlives a male by three or four years.
- A woman’s metabolism is normally lower than a man’s.
- Women have larger kidneys, liver, stomach, and appendix than men, but smaller lungs.
- Women have several unique and important functions differing from men: menstruation, pregnancy, lactation.
- Women’s hormones are of a different type and far more numerous than men’s.
- A woman’s thyroid is larger and more active. It enlarges during pregnancy and menstruation.
- Women’s blood contains more water and 20% fewer red cells. Since the red cells supply oxygen to the Body’s cells, women tire more easily and are more prone to fainting.
- On average, men possess 50% more brute strength than women (40 percent of a man’s body weight is muscle; 23 percent of a woman’s body weight is muscle).
- Women’s heart rates are more rapid on an average of 80 beats per minute vs. 72 for men
- A woman’s blood pressure is often 10 points lower than a man’s, and her blood pressure will vary from minute to minute. Women have fewer tendencies toward high blood pressure—at least until after menopause.

Personality and Behavioral Differences

- Women tend to be more *personal* than men.
- Men tend to be less prone to building intimate relationships with other people.
- Women tend to find their identity in close relationships, while men gain their identity through vocations.
- Men think logically while women often think emotionally. ***When we are together we make a perfect balance.***

Public Bathrooms: Men go alone to accomplish one task. Women go in groups to talk and to freshen up.

Private Bathrooms: A man has at most 7 items in his bathroom—a toothbrush, toothpaste, shaving cream, razor, a bar of soap, deodorant, and a towel from the Holiday Inn. The average number of items in a typical woman's bathroom is over 40—a hair dryer, hair curler, hair pins, hair spray, body spray, nail polish x7, nail polish remover, nail files, perfume, and we haven't even gotten to the facial products yet!

Handwriting: To their credit, men do not decorate their penmanship, they just chicken-scratch. Women use scented, colored stationery and they dot their i's with circles and hearts. Women use large loops in their p's and g's. She'll put a smiley face at the end of the note even when she's dumping you.

Dealing with hurts: Women come together in a group and talk when they are bothered by something. Men tend to go off somewhere by themselves and clam up. When men are hurt—which they usually will not admit—they want to be left alone so they can get it out of their minds. When women are hurt, they want to pick up the phone or have a hen session to discuss it with another woman.

Telephone, texting or email: Men see these as forms of communication. They use these methods to convey facts to other people. Men will text one or two word facts or comments. Women will text back again and again before the men can send a reply of yes or no.

Communication: A woman can visit her girlfriend for hours and, upon returning home, call the same friend and discuss the same things all over again. Women communicate with the desire to understand each other. Men talk with the desire to establish the facts. Men speak in headlines while women speak in fine print.

Admitting mistakes: Most women will take the blame and admit a mistake to make peace. Most men will make excuses for themselves without an apology.

Dressing up: A woman will dress up to get out of bed, go shopping, answer the phone, read a book, or get the mail. A man will dress up for weddings, funerals, and when required by their significant other.

I Guess the Old Adage Is True: Opposites Attract

Illustrations:

- A beggar walked up to a well-dressed woman shopping on Rodeo Drive and said, “I haven’t eaten anything for days.” She looked at him and said, “God, I wish I had your willpower.”
Women see things differently.

There are two kinds of people at parties—those who want to go home early and those who want to be the last ones in the place. The trouble is that they’re usually married to each other.

Though Different, God Instituted Marriage and Called Both Partners Blessed and Equal

Genesis 1:27-28 He created him; male and female He created them. Be fruitful and multiply.

²⁷ *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God **He created him; male and female He created them.*** ²⁸ *Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “**Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.**”*

Genesis 3 The fall placed the penalty of sin between man and woman. Sin’s penalties:

- **Genesis 3:14** — Came on the serpent and the other animals.

¹⁴ *So the Lord God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life.*

- **Genesis 3:16** — Woman’s pain in child bearing, the desire for her husband, and he shall rule over you, is all the results of sin. After sin the Battle of the sexes began.

¹⁶ *To the woman He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”*

- **Genesis 3:17** — Cursed is the ground for your sake.

¹⁷ *Then to Adam He said, “Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, ‘You shall not eat of it’: “**Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life.**”*

Galatians 3:13 — Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us.

¹³ *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”)*

To Have a Fruitful Marriage, We Cannot Hold the Attitude that Men Rule Over Women

Galations 3:23 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

There is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one.

Ephesians 5:18-33 (21, 33) It is wives submitting to their husbands, it is *not* women submitting to men.

¹⁸ *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,* ¹⁹ *speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,* ²⁰ *giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,* ²¹ *submitting to one another in the fear of God.*

²² *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.* ²³ *For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.* ²⁴ *Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.*

²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,* ²⁶ *that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word,* ²⁷ *that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.* ²⁸ *So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.* ²⁹ *For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.* ³⁰ *For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.* ³¹ *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”* ³² *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* ³³ *Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

- The role of the husband is different than the role of the wife.
- The husband is to love the wife as Christ loves the church.
- The role of the wife is to submit to and respect the husband.
- God did *not* say men over women. He said the husband was over the wife, and that was the result of the fall of man. In the beginning, he created them male and female and he blessed them.

WEEK 2: SUBMISSION IS PROTECTION

Review Week 1

Genesis 1:27-28 In the image of God He created Him male and female He created them

²⁷ So God created man in His own image; **in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.** ²⁸ Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

Genesis 2:7 Form = through the *squeezing* into shape.

⁷ And the LORD God **formed** man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

Genesis 2:22 Made = literally, to *build* and figuratively, *hand crafted*

Man and women are completely different: from creation

²² Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He **made** into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

Woman is said “not to have been taken out of man’s head to be lorded over by him, nor from his feet to be trampled on by him, but from his side to be equal with him, from under his arm to be protected by him, and from near his heart to be loved by him.” (Finis Dake).

Note that the husband’s ruling over the wife was the *penalty* of sin; it was not God’s original intent in Creation.

Genesis 3:16 — Woman’s pain in child bearing, the desire for her husband, and he shall rule over her.

¹⁶ To the woman He said: “I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you.”

Ephesians 5:21-23, 25, 33 It is wives submitting to their husbands, it is not women submitting to men.

²¹ submitting to one another in the fear of God. ²² Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

³³ Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Marriage—Christ and the Church

Ephesians 5:22-23

²² *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.* ²³ *For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.*

Submission is not a bad thing; it's a good thing. God uses submission to protect us from rebellion and sin. We are told to submit to:

- **God — James 4:7**

⁷ *Therefore **submit to God. Resist the devil** and he will flee from you.*

- **Government — I Peter 2:13-14**

¹³ *Therefore **submit yourselves to every ordinance of man** for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.*

- **Employer — I Peter 2:18-19**

¹⁸ ***Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear**, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. ¹⁹ For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.*

- **Church — Hebrews 13:17**

¹⁷ *Obey those who rule over you, and **be submissive, for they watch out for your souls**, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.*

- **One another — I Peter 5:5**

⁵ *Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, **all of you be submissive to one another**, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."*

Ephesians 5:21

²¹ ***submitting to one another** in the fear of God.*

- **Husbands — I Peter 3:1-7** As being heirs together of the grace of life.

¹ *Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, ² when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear. ³ Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel— ⁴ rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. ⁵ For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to*

their own husbands,⁶ as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

⁷ Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

Many have falsely concluded that Scripture in some way or another exalts men above women. After all, Paul speaks of wives submitting to husbands and he appears to eliminate women from the five-fold ministry. I would like to carefully examine the scripture text that has lead so many to draw the conclusion that the Scripture places man over woman rather than husbands over wives.

Background of First Corinthians

- Paul established this church after 18 months of ministry during his second Missionary Journey. [Acts 18:1-17](#)

¹ After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. ² And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. ³ So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. ⁴ And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks.

⁵ When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. ⁶ But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." ⁷ And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justus,^[a] one who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue. ⁸ Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. And many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.

⁹ Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city." ¹¹ And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

¹² When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him to the judgment seat, ¹³ saying, "This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the law."

¹⁴ And when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or wicked crimes, O Jews, there would be reason why I should bear with you. ¹⁵ But if it is a question of words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; for I do not want to be a judge of such matters." ¹⁶ And he drove them from the judgment seat. ¹⁷ Then all the Greeks^[b] took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him before the judgment seat. But Gallio took no notice of these things.

- Paul was a pen pal with this church after his departure.
- **1 Corinthians 5:9** *I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.* (This Epistle is lost.)
- **2 Corinthians 12:14** *Now for the third time I am ready to come to you. And I will not be burdensome to you; for I do not seek yours, but you. For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.*
- **1 Corinthians 3:1-3** The Corinthian church was very troubled.

¹ *And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. ² I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; ³ for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?*
- This Letter to the Corinthians is Paul’s response to their letters (Paul was in Ephesus on his 3rd missionary journey)
- **Background:** Corinth was a land bridge, a peninsula city that connected two other cities. It was a port city with much commerce. It was also a very wicked city. The term “Corinthianize” meant to practice prostitution. The city’s chief deity was the goddess Aphrodite (Venus), the goddess of licentious love. A thousand professional prostitutes served in the temple dedicated to Aphrodite’s worship. Many people visited the city by traveling ships. Unfittingly, this evil culture was permeating into the church that Paul had established. The cult of Aphrodite taught that women were not in need of men and that women could procreate without man. Paul corrects this evil mindset in his letter to the Corinthians.
- The Letter of First Corinthians was a letter Paul wrote in response to some questions the believers in Corinth had asked him.

1 Corinthians 7:1 *Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*
- Much of Paul’s writing from this point forward are answers to the Corinthians’ questions.

Understanding Paul’s Teaching Concerning Women

1 Corinthians 11:1-16, key verses 3 and 11 — Neither is man independent of woman.

¹ *Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.*

² *Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you. ³ But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God. ⁴ Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head. ⁵ But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved. ⁶ For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn. But if it is shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, let her be covered. ⁷ For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. ⁸ For man is not from woman, but woman from man. ⁹ Nor was man*

created for the woman, but woman for the man. ¹⁰ For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. ¹¹ **Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord.** ¹² For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God.

¹³ Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? ¹⁴ Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? ¹⁵ But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering. ¹⁶ But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God.

- Head = Kephale meaning origin or source of life, headwaters of a river. This term is not speaking of authority; the Greek word then would be kurios = Lord or supreme. If the head meant hierarchy, then the Godhead would not be coequal (verse 3) and woman's relationship to Christ would be through the man. (*Hard Sayings of The Bible*, Walter C. Kaiser Jr., et al)
- **Verses 4-6** are a quote of the question Paul was asked by the Corinthians. Verses 7-16 are Paul's answer to their question.
- **Verse 10:** What is meant by angels seeing symbols of authority?
1 Peter 1:12 *To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.*
The angels do not understand redemption because they were not redeemed. When 1/3 of the angels fell, they were lost; when man fell, God redeemed them.
- Paul wanted to correct the teaching of the Aphrodite worshipers; therefore, he made the point that in the beginning, woman came from man and now all men come from women. But in the Lord, both are in need of each other.
- **Verse 16:** Paul concludes the whole matter of the head covering. He says we (the Jews) have no such costume, and neither do the churches of God.

1 Corinthians 14:33-40 (KJV) — Verse 34: women remaining silent in church

³³ For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

³⁴ Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law.

³⁵ And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

³⁶ What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only?

³⁷ If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord.

³⁸ But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.

³⁹ *Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.*

⁴⁰ *Let all things be done decently and in order.*

- **Verses 36 and 37** The word “*What?*” is a rebuke, a one letter Greek word used in the beginning of verse 36. This word was used 14 times in the New Testament. Paul states, “Did the Word of God come originally from **you** [man]; was it only **you** that it reached?”
- The word *silence* means *to put a muzzle on*, to not sing or say anything at all. It is complete silence. If Paul were literally commanding silence, women would not be permitted to sing, to prophecy, or to speak to their husbands in church. Yet elsewhere in Scripture, he tells them to prophecy.

Paul’s Letter to Timothy

Background of this book

- Paul founded the church of Ephesus on his second missionary journey. On his third journey, he remained there for two years. He preached in the synagogue in the school of Tyrannus and in private houses.

Acts 18:19 *And he came to Ephesus, and left them there; but he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.*

1 Timothy 1:3 *As I urged you when I went into Macedonia—remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine,*

The cult of Artemis (Diana) — who was a deity known as the mother goddess of the earth, and whose seat of worship was the temple in Ephesus — believed:

Eve was made first, so she was superior to Adam.

Eve was more enlightened because she ate of the fruit first and Adam had the left overs.

If a woman had children, she would lose part of herself.

1 Timothy 2:11-15 “Let a woman learn in silence”

¹¹ **Let a woman learn in silence with all submission.** ¹² *And I do not permit a woman to teach or to **have authority over a man**, but to be in silence.* ¹³ *For Adam was formed first, then Eve.* ¹⁴ *And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.* ¹⁵ *Nevertheless she will be saved in childbearing if they continue in faith, love, and holiness, with self-control.*

- **Verse 11:** Paul was encouraging women to learn. In Middle Eastern culture, women were not permitted to sit at the feet of a teacher. Learning with submission was an honor for the student. Now Paul includes women.
- **Verse 12:** Have, or usurp, authority over = *Authentein* – only used one time in the New Testament. It means one who with his own hands kills another or himself, one who acts on his own authority, autocratic, an absolute master, to govern, exercise dominion over one.
- **Verse 13:** Adam was formed first, clearing up the lie of Artemis.
- **Verse 14:** Adam was not deceived, but the woman, clearing up the lie that the fruit enlightened Eve.

- **Verse 15:** Women will be saved in childbearing, clearing up the lie that women lose a part of themselves in childbearing.
- What Paul command to Timothy was not a blanket statement for the whole body of Christ. It was a statement made in reference to the rebellious women who desired to rule over men according to the teaching of Diana.
- Because of these rebellious women, Paul issued this command to Timothy.

1 Timothy 5:11-15 Paul describes some of the widows in the church.

¹¹ But refuse the younger widows; for when they have begun to grow wanton against Christ, they desire to marry, ¹² having condemnation because they have cast off their first faith. ¹³ And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not. ¹⁴ Therefore I desire that the younger widows marry, bear children, manage the house, give no opportunity to the adversary to speak reproachfully. ¹⁵ For some have already turned aside after Satan.

Paul's Command Was Specific to Each Church's Situation

If Paul was speaking to all women in every generation to every church how do you explain women being silent when they are permitted to prophecy?

- **Acts 2:18** *And on My menservants and on **My maidservants** I will pour out My Spirit in those days; and they **shall prophesy**.*

Prophecy = to speak

- **Acts 21:8-9**

*⁸ On the next day we who were Paul's companions departed and came to Caesarea, and entered the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and stayed with him. ⁹ **Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied.***

Prophesied = speaking

Paul was not preventing women from ministry; he was bringing unique commands to each situation in each letter.

If Paul were preventing women from serving in ministry, how do you explain the following verses?

- **Acts 1:14** *These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, **with the women** and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers.*

500 were invited to the upper room at the ascension; only 120 went, many of them were women.

- **Acts 8:3** *As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison.*

Saul considered male and female Christians an equal threat to Judaism; therefore, he was arresting them.

- **Philippians 4:3** *And I urge you also, true companion, help these **women who labored with me in the gospel**, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.*

- **Romans 16:1-16:** Greetings to the church at Rome.

¹ *I commend to you **Phoebe** our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, ² that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.*

³ *Greet **Priscilla** and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. ⁵ Likewise greet the church that is in their house.*

*Greet my beloved Epaphroditus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ. ⁶ Greet **Mary**, who labored much for us. ⁷ Greet Andronicus and **Junia**, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.*

⁸ *Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. ⁹ Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. ¹⁰ Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus. ¹¹ Greet Herodion, my countryman. Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.*

¹² *Greet **Tryphena** and **Tryphosa**, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved **Persis**, who labored much in the Lord. ¹³ Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and **his mother** and mine. ¹⁴ Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. ¹⁵ Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and **his sister**, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.*

¹⁶ *Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.*

Paul makes mention of nine women, six by name

- **Verse 1: Phoebe** delivered the epistle to the Romans. Paul tells them that she has helped him.
- **Verse 3: Priscilla** and Aquila (Look whose name is first.)
- **Verse 6: Mary** who labored much, John mark's mother Acts 12:12
- **Verse 7: Junia** Paul's fellow prisoner (*of note among the Apostles*)
- **Verse 12: Tryphena, Tryphosa, Persis**
- **Verse 13: Rufus's mother** became Paul's mother
- **Verse 15: Julia, Nereus and his sister**

Conclusion

Why did I spend this time speaking about women in ministry while teaching a family series? I want to make it clear that though the role of the wife is different than the role of the husband, Scripture does not belittle women. Rather, it allows women to be used by God, while differentiating the roles of husband versus wife. If the church accepts the delusion that women are less than men, it will complicate our marriages and our church's ability to reach the world.

WEEK 3: GOD'S DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

A man once said marriage is a three-ring circus: Engagement Ring, Wedding Ring, and Suffering. (*I Strongly Disagree.*)

Scriptural Definition of Marriage

Marriage is not a contract — it's a covenant. A *contract* agrees to give something in exchange for something else. A *convent* gives *someone* to *someone* else. A *contract* is based on a lack of trust; a *covenant* is based on trust. In the *covenant* of marriage, two become one. Oneness is God's goal in marriage. A *contract* has an expiration date, while a *covenant* is for life. Jesus did not make a *contract* with the New Testament church; he made a *covenant* by *giving Himself* to us. In marriage, *we give ourselves* completely to our spouses.

Genesis 2:24 Oneness is God's Goal in Marriage

²⁴ *Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

Proverbs 18:22 *He who finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor from the Lord.*

Proverbs 19:14 *Houses and riches are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent [wise] wife is from the Lord.*

Proverbs 31:10 *Who can find a virtuous wife? For her worth is far above rubies.*

Hebrews 13:4 *Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*

Two of the Ten Commandments were commanded to protect marriages

- Number 7: **Exodus 20:14** *"You shall not commit adultery."*
- Number 10: **Exodus 20:17** *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."*

Same-Sex Marriage

Marriage is a covenant between a man and a woman. Anything else is lust and not marriage.

- There is no such thing as same-sex marriage or unions
- **Leviticus 18:22** *You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination.*
- **Romans 1:26-27**

²⁶ *For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. ²⁷ Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.*

Living Together

Living together does not constitute marriage. The Lord met the woman of Samaria. She had lived with five husbands and the Lord called them husbands. But how about the man she was currently living with? The Lord refused to give him the status of a husband. He said, “the one whom you now has is not your husband.” **John 4:17,18**

¹⁷ *The woman answered and said, “I have no husband.”*

*Jesus said to her, “You have well said, ‘I have no husband,’¹⁸ for you have had five husbands, and **the one whom you now have is not your husband**; in that you spoke truly.”*

The differentiation is very clear. Marriage is never a private affair. Two people are not married when they commit themselves to each other in private, without a license, but when they do so before God in the presence of witnesses.

God Intends the Marriage Covenant to Be for Life

1 Corinthians 7:39 *A wife is bound by law as long as her husband lives; but if her husband dies, she is at liberty to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.*

Spouses' Roles

The traditional roles of the husband and wife are not what I want to speak about. Traditionally, he is to work outside of the home and she is to work inside the home. This is basically how my wife and I have chosen our roles. However, I am not speaking about the traditional roles of who is working outside and who is working at home. In many cases today, both spouses are working. Who's working where does not change the biblical definition of the roles of the husband and the wife. These Biblical roles must be filled regardless of who is doing the housework or who is making the living. A stay-at-home dad is still to live up to the Biblical role of a husband. A working wife is to live up to the Biblical role of a wife.

Illustration: A farmer's boy decided to get married. His father said to him, “John, when you get married, your liberty is gone.” The boy said he did not believe it. The father said, “I'll prove it to you. Catch a dozen chickens, tie their legs together and put them in the wagon. Hitch up the two horses to the wagon and drive into town. Stop at every house you come to, and wherever you find the man is boss, give him a horse. Wherever you find the woman is boss, give her a chicken. You'll give away all your chickens and come back with two horses.” The boy accepted the proposition and drove to town. He had stopped at every house and had given away ten chickens when he came to a nice little house and saw an old man and his wife standing out on the front lawn. He called to them and asked, “Who is boss here?” The man said, “I am” Turning to the woman, the boy said, “Is he boss?” The woman replied, “Yes, he's boss.” The boy asked them to come down to the street. He then explained his reason for asking and told the man to pick out one of the horses. He said he would bring the horse back to him that afternoon. The old man and the old lady looked over the horses carefully, and the husband said, “I think the black horse is the better of the two.” The wife then said, “I think that bay horse is in every way the better horse. I would choose him.” The old man took a careful look at the bay horse and said, “I guess I'll take the bay horse.” The boy smiled and said, “No, you won't; you'll take a chicken.” — James S.

What's the Biblical Role of the Husband?

Selfless Servant Leader — Christian husbands cannot be *selfish* in the decision making.

- Because the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, he must lead as Christ led. How did Christ lead? He was a servant leader.

Mark 10:45 *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*

- Christ was willing to sacrifice on behalf of others. We, too, must be willing to sacrifice for our families

Nehemiah 4:14 *And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses."*

Comfort and Guide — Jesus, at his ascension, sent the Holy Spirit, who comforts us and guides us by leading us into all truth. Likewise, it is the responsibility of the husband to be a comfort and a guide to his family.

- **John 16:7 (KJV)**

⁷ *Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.*

You comfort your family by listening, caring, and sharing in responsibilities.

- **John 16:13** *However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

You guide your family into truth by serving them as spiritual leader.

Nourish and Cherish — To *nourish* means to sustain with nutriment; to supply with what is necessary for life, health and growth. To *cherish* means to give affection and care. To *cherish* suggests regarding or treating our family with affection and as valuable.

- **Ephesians 5:28-29**

²⁸ *So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.* ²⁹ *For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church.*

- **1 Peter 3:7** *Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.*
- **Proverbs 31:28** *Her children rise up and call her blessed; Her husband also, and he praises her*

It is *not* the role of a husband to dictate or dominate. Nor is it the role of a husband to be a passive non-leader who has no input in the family structure. You cannot lead as a servant leader while sleeping in the back seat. You must be at the wheel carefully steering your family in the obedience to God's Word.

What's the Biblical Role of the Wife?

The wife is to give aid to her husband. She is to assist him in being the head of the home.

- **Genesis 2:18** *And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper [aide] comparable [counterpart] to him."*

Aid – give support or relief to; helps promote the accomplishment of; facilitate; assistance or support.

- Do not see a support role as weak. The main beams of a structure are supporting the structure, not because of their weakness but because of their strength. To give support means that you are holding him up.
- Ask yourself, "What can I do to support my husband in God's will for our lives and in leading this family?"

Wives are to respect their husbands

- **Ephesians 5:33** *Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

Respect (Strong's): by analogy to be in awe of, that is, revere.

Respect (Webster): To view or consider with some degree of reverence; to esteem as having real worth

When the wife respects her husband, she builds his self-esteem, giving him confidence in life.

- **Proverbs 12:4** *An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who causes shame is like rottenness in his bones.*

Crown represents honor.

[The material used for the roles of the husband and wife was taken from Wanda Collins' E-Book *Before Your Wedding Day, Premarital Counseling Guide*. For further information contact Christian Marriage Today, Nehemiah Family Ministries LLC, mike-and-wanda@christian-marriagetoday.com.]

Triangular Marriage

What is meant by the term *Holy Matrimony*? God is the Holy part, and the husband and wife are the Matrimony. In a triangular marriage, the husband, the wife, and God make the triangle of one marriage. A triangular marriage is simply a Christ-centered marriage. A Christ-centered marriage will look like this:

- The husband and wife need to pray together. The old adage is true: The family that prays together stays together.
- The Word of God and the Holy Spirit govern a God-centered marriage.
- Couples in God-centered marriages focus on becoming what their spouses need rather than focusing on what they need.

- Couples in God-centered marriages seek daily to be transformed into the image of God rather than seeking to change their spouses.
- When making decisions, couples that have made Christ the center of their marriage always seek direction from God.
- Watch this Youtube video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KQE5PNRLZ40> about two sets of Jones
- Having a triangular marriage will not take away the rain and the storms. It will, however, give the marriage the ability to *withstand and overcome* the storms.

God's Bottom Line for a Successful Marriage and Family

Colossians 3:18-21

¹⁸ *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.* ¹⁹ *Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.* ²⁰ *Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.* ²¹ *Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*

The Importance of Good Communication in Marriage

Illustration: There is a story about a man and wife who were celebrating their golden wedding anniversary — 50 years of married life. Having spent most of the day with relatives and friends at a big party given in their honor, they were back home again. They decided, before retiring, to have a little snack of tea with bread and butter. They went into the kitchen, where the husband opened up a new loaf of bread and handed the end piece (the heel) to his wife, whereupon she exploded! She said, “For 50 years you have been dumping the heel of the bread on me. I will not take it anymore—this lack of concern for me and what I like.” On and on she went in the bitterest of terms, for offering her the heel of the bread. The husband was absolutely astonished at her tirade. When she had finished he said to her quietly, “But it’s my favorite piece. [Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), p. 332]

Illustration: One husband commented, “I haven’t spoken to my wife for 18 months; I don’t like to interrupt her!”

Women do tend to communicate better than men.

Five Levels of Communication

At what level of communication are you and your spouse?

Cliche Level — A conversation at this level goes something like this: “Hi, how are you?” “The weather is nice today.”

Factual Level — Conversing on this level of communication is like quoting the 5:00 news. “I went to work today. I came home and fed the dog. I bought a gallon of milk.” A great deal of conversation transpires on this level, particularly among men. Men tend to think in terms of headlines, while women think more in terms of fine print. They want to know details.

Personal Judgment Level — “I think we ought to send our kids to Christian School.” You’re expressing your own judgment about something. If a person feels rejected at this level of communication, they will often go back to the second, or even the first, level.

Emotional Feeling Level — On this level, you begin to express your feelings and emotions. For example, “You were insensitive when you said that to me.”

Total Openness and Transparency Level — The goal in marriage and family relationships is to move into this level of communication where you can share completely and freely about anything and everything. At this level, there is nothing you will hide or cover up, no areas where you are limited or where you feel there’s a touchy subject you can’t talk about.

If your marriage is not at this fifth level of communication, you are being hindered from God’s goal of marriage, which is two becoming one. Oneness will take total openness and transparency in communication. Being one together in communication does not mean that you’ll always agree, but rather that you can discuss your disagreements without the fear of rejection.

Reasons Why So Many Spouses Don’t Open Up to the Total Openness and Transparency Level

- One spouse is not able to listen but is constantly speaking or interrupting the other.
- One spouse is quiet, never responding to the other with any words or emotions.
- One spouse is not empathic in his or her listening.
- One spouse is not totally engaged in the conversation. Turn off the TV, put the book down, and look your spouse in the eye when you communicate.
- Disrespect for different schedules, e.g., he rises early, she sleeps in late.
- Never concluding a subject, but constantly rehashing the same points.
- Threatening environment, e.g., “I don’t know why I tell you how I feel; you always get angry.”

In order to bring our marriages into total oneness, we need to strengthen our communication.

Illustration: A happy couple had always raised cucumbers and made sweet pickles together. The husband just loved to watch things grow. Thus he spent his winters studying the seed catalogues to get the best possible cucumbers. The whole family enjoyed preparing the soil and planting and caring for the plants. He would often go out and just enjoy the way they grew. His wife loved to make sweet pickles. She studied the best recipes and the best methods of preparing and preserving them. They were such a happy family, and all their visitors went home with a jar of their famous pickles. The church always had a good supply of their pickles as well. People marveled at this family that had found a project to do together.

Finally, the man died. The next spring all the children returned home. They said to their mother, “We know how much you love making pickles, so we are going to prepare the garden and plant them for you.” The mother smiled and said, “Thanks a lot, children, but you don’t have to do any planting, for I really don’t enjoy pickle making. I only did that because your father loved to grow the cucumbers so much.” The children were all amazed, but the youngest son was upset, because the father had pulled him aside not too long before and shared with him that he really didn’t like growing cucumbers, but only did it to please the mother!

Is this a happy or a sad story? I'm not sure. In many ways it is happy. They were happy doing for each other. People enjoyed being with them. But why is it also sad? Primarily because they were not able to share their changing needs and joys with each other. Instead of growing, they stagnated in the performance of what they thought were their duties to each other.

[James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1988), p. 331.]

Gary Chapman's Advice:

Quality conversation is very important in a healthy relationship. It involves sharing experiences, thoughts, feelings, and desires in a friendly, uninterrupted context. A good mate will not only listen but offer advice and respond to assure their mate they are truly listening. Many mates don't expect you to solve their problems. They need a sympathetic listener.

Tips for Marital Communication (from author Billy Joe Daugherty)

- Communication should attack the problem, not the person.

Proverbs 21:23 *Whoever guards his mouth and tongue keeps his soul from troubles.*

Proverbs 10:19 *In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise.*

- Don't communicate in anger.

Proverbs 15:1 *A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*

Proverbs 25:15 *By long forbearance a ruler is persuaded, and a gentle tongue breaks a bone.*

James 1:19-20

¹⁹ *So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;* ²⁰ ***for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.***

- Don't bring up the past. Once the past is dealt with, close that chapter, and do not reopen it.

Philippians 3:13 *Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, **forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward** to those things which are ahead,*

Genesis 19:17, 26

¹⁷ *So it came to pass, when they had brought them outside, that he said, "**Escape for your life! Do not look behind** you nor stay anywhere in the plain. Escape to the mountains, lest you be destroyed."*

My Communication Tips

- Find an agreeable time for *pillow talk* and consistently use this time for conversation. Oneness demands total openness and transparency in conversation.
- Ask your spouse, "What are you hearing me say right now?" If their answer is not what you are trying to say, say the same thing in a different way. Keep trying to communicate your true feelings.

WEEK 4: LOVE AND MARRIAGE

Three Stages of Love

- **Romantic Love or Attraction:** In this stage, there are tingles for one another and there is an overwhelming desire to be together. Romantic love usually lasts for about two years, or until sometime after the honeymoon. Romantic love is fueled by an attraction for one another.
- **Obsessive Love:** “You’re the most wonderful person ever; you’re totally perfect for me — almost flawless.” At this stage, you can stare each other in the eyes and see hearts flowing from them.
- **Attachment Love:** Your lives feel totally intertwined with one another. You are well aware of the many differences between the two of you, but these differences are accepted and permitted. You no longer mind a little time apart, but though apart, you know your hearts are knit together in love. By this stage of love, the strength of your relationship has been tested by trials and has endured them all. Romantic Love, Stage 1, is fueled by a physical attraction for one another. Attachment Love, Stage 3, is fueled by emotional and spiritual oneness. During the attachment phase of love, the thought of living without your spouse causes you to not want to not live all. During this phase, love is not about what you can do for me, but rather what I can do for you.

Colossians 2:2 *that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love*

Many couples fail to make the transition from Level 1 to Level 3. Instead, they get the “tingles” for someone else.

1 Corinthians 13 *is the Love Chapter. The Biblical definition of Love must be the goal of every marriage.*

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 Love: (1) suffers long, (2) is kind, (3) does not envy, (4) does not parade itself, (5) is not puffed up, (6) does not behave rudely, (7) does not seek its own, (8) is not provoked, (9) thinks no evil, (10) does not rejoice in iniquity, (11) rejoices in truth, (12) bears all things, (13) believes all things, (14) hopes all things, (15) endures all things, (16) never fails.

1 John 4:7 *Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.*

John 13:35 *“By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

1 Corinthians 16:14 *Let all that you do be done with love.*

Ephesians 4:2 *with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love.*

Pray that you may learn to love your spouse with the God-kind of love.

Love is not merely a feeling, but an action toward another.

Ephesians 5:2a *And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us*

Galatians 5:13b Do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.

1 John 3:17-18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth

The Five Love Languages by Gary Chapman (abridged)

Each person has what Gary Chapman calls a “love tank.” If an individual’s love tank is not filled, it will affect the way that individual lives their life. Often, anger, depression, and adultery are signs that one has an empty love tank. One spouse may be saying “I love you” in a way that the other spouse is not hearing because they are speaking different love languages. If you are saying I love you in the wrong language, your spouse may have the perception they are *not* loved, while you are thinking you *are* showing them love.

Words of Affirmation: Mark Twain once said “I can live for two months on a good compliment.” Verbal appreciation speaks powerfully to persons whose primary Love Language is **Words of Affirmation**. Simple statements, such as: “You look great in that suit,” or “You must be the best baker in the world! I love your oatmeal cookies,” are sometimes all a person needs to hear to feel loved.

Aside from verbal compliments, another way to communicate through **Words of Affirmation** is to offer *encouragement*. Here are some examples: reinforcing a difficult decision; calling attention to progress made on a current project; acknowledging a person’s unique perspective on an important topic. If a loved one listens for **Words of Affirmation**, offering encouragement will help him or her overcome insecurities and develop greater confidence.

Quality Time: Quality time is more than mere *proximity*. It’s about focusing all your energy on your mate. A husband watching sports while talking to his wife is NOT giving her **Quality Time**. Unless all of your attention is focused on your mate, even an intimate dinner for two can come and go without a minute of quality time being shared.

Quality *activities* are a very important part of **Quality Time**. Many mates feel most loved when they spend physical time together doing activities that they love to do. Spending time together will bring a couple closer, and, in the years to come, will fill up a memory bank that you can reminisce about in the future.

Whether it’s sitting on the couch and having a brief conversation or playing together in a tennis league, **Quality Time** is a love language that is shared by many. Setting aside focused time with your mate will ensure a happy marriage.

Receiving Gifts: Some mates respond well to visual symbols of love. If you speak this love language, you are more likely to treasure any gift as an expression of love and devotion. People who speak this love language often feel that a lack of gifts represents a lack of love from their mate. Luckily, this love language is one of the easiest to learn.

If you want to become an effective gift giver, you may have to learn to change your attitude about money. If you are naturally a spender, you will have no trouble buying gifts for your mate. However, a person who is used to investing and saving money may have a tough time adjusting to the concept of spending money as an expression of love. If you are one of these people, you

must understand that you are investing the money not in gifts, but in deepening your relationship with your mate.

Gifts need not to come every day, or even every week. They don't even need to cost a lot of money. Free, frequent, expensive, or rare, if your mate relates to the language of receiving gifts, any visible sign of your love will leave them feeling happy and secure in your relationship.

Acts of Service: Sometimes doing simple chores around the house can be an undeniable expression of love. Even simple things like laundry and taking out the trash require some form of planning, time, effort, and energy. Just as Jesus demonstrated when he washed the feet of his disciples, doing humble chores can be a very powerful expression of love and devotion to your mate.

Very often, both pairs in a couple will speak to the *Acts of Service* Love Language. However, it is very important to understand *what* acts of service your mate most appreciates. Even though couples are helping each other around the house, couples will still fight because they are unknowingly communicating with each other in two different dialects. For example, a wife may spend her day washing the cars and walking the dog, but if her husband feels that laundry and dishes are a superior necessity, he may feel unloved, despite the fact that his wife did many other chores throughout the day. It is important to learn your mate's dialect and work hard to understand what acts of service will communicate your love.

It is important to do these acts of service out of *love* and not *obligation*. A mate who does chores and helps out around the house out of guilt or fear will inevitably not be speaking a language of love, but a language of resentment. It's important to perform these acts out of the kindness of your heart.

Demonstrating acts of service can mean stepping out of stereotypes. Acts of service require both mates to humble themselves into doing some chores and services that aren't usually expected from their gender. However, these little sacrifices will mean the world to your mate and will ensure a happy relationship.

Physical Touch: Many mates feel the most loved when they receive physical contact from their spouse. For a mate who speaks this love language loudly, physical touch can make or break the relationship. Sexual intercourse makes many mates feel secure and loved in a marriage. However, it is only *one dialect* of physical touch. Many parts of the body are extremely sensitive to stimulation. It is important to discover how your partner not only responds physically, but also responds psychologically, to these touches.

It is important to learn how your mate speaks the physical touch language. Some touches are irritating and uncomfortable for your mate. Take the time to learn the touches your mate likes. They can be big acts, such as back massages or lovemaking, or little acts such as touches on the cheek or a hand on the shoulder. It's important to learn how your mate responds to touch. That is how you will make the most of this love language.

All marriages will experience crisis. In these cases, physical touch is very important. In a crisis situation, a hug can communicate an immense amount of love for that person. A person whose primary love language is physical touch would much rather have you hold them and be silent than offer any advice. It is important to remember that this love language is different for everyone. What type of touch makes you feel secure is not necessarily what will make your

partner happy. It is important to learn each other's dialects. That way you can make the most of your hugging, kissing, and other physical contact.

Take the following tests to determine your love language

<http://www.5lovelanguages.com/assessments/30-second-quizzes/love/>

<http://www.5lovelanguages.com/assessments/love/>

His Needs verses Her Needs

Are you willing to meet one another's needs? True Love is the willingness to meet each other's needs.

Dr. Willard Harley in his book *His Needs, Her Needs* points out the priorities of the sexes in the order of importance:

A man desires:

1. Sexual fulfillment
2. Recreational companionship
3. An attractive spouse
4. Domestic support (well-maintained home)
5. Admiration of his wife

A woman desires:

1. Affection
2. Conversation
3. Honesty and openness
4. Family commitment
5. Financial support

WEEK 5: GREAT TIPS FOR MARITAL BLISS

Illustration: A BIG-GAME hunter went on a safari with his wife and mother-in-law. One night the couple woke to find the mother gone. In a clearing not far from the camp they came upon a chilling sight, the mother-in-law was backed up against a tree with a snarling lion facing her. The wife said: “What are we going to do?”

“Nothing,” said the husband. “The lion got himself into this mess; he can get himself out of it.”

Are you that afraid of your in-laws?

In-Laws and Their Proper Place in the Marriage

The in-laws have no place in the marriage. The marriage is between the husband, the wife, and God. Though they are not part of the *marriage*, they are, and always will be, part of the *family*. Her parents should be respected as his parents, and his parents should be respected as her parents. In marriage, two families become one. This is the significance of the mothers’ lighting the unity candles. However, though the two families become one, the marriage is still between the husband and the wife — not the in-laws. Although the in-laws should be respected, their proper place is in the first line of extended family, not in the marriage. If one spouse, who is often the man, does not “cut the apron strings,” the marriage will be negatively affected.

Genesis 2:24 *Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

Although the in-laws are not part of the marriage, they need be respected as parents.

Exodus 20:12 *“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.”*

Advice for Married Couples

- Don’t ask to borrow money. If you do, you’d better be willing to be held accountable for all of your financial decisions.
Proverbs 22:7 *The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender.*
- Don’t share any information with your parents that you have not first shared with your spouse. After sharing with your spouse, then seek your spouse’s permission to share with the in-laws.
- If you don’t want the in-laws to influence every decision within the marriage, then only inform them about the details that are relevant to them. But keep in mind that they have already been through this phase of life. They may have some very good advice that could help you. Don’t be too closed-minded to listen to them and learn from their experiences and their mistakes.
- Be sure not to leave the perception that you value your parent’s advice more than the advice of your spouse.

- Keep in mind that family ties are normal and necessary and that rejecting your in-laws will hurt your spouse, causing greater marital stress. It's very important that you learn to love and value your spouse's parents.

Treat your in-laws with the same respect you would your friends. If you are given advice that you don't agree with, listen kindly, thank them, then do what you and your spouse see as right. There is no need to get angry with the in-laws for caring about you both.

Illustration: A man, his wife and his mother-in-law went on vacation to the Holy Land. While they were there, the mother-in-law passed away. The undertaker told them, "You can have her shipped home for \$5,000, or you can bury her here in the Holy Land for \$1,500." The man thought about it and told him he would have her shipped home. The undertaker asked, "Why would you spend \$5,000 to ship your mother-in-law home, when it would be wonderful to have her buried here and spend only \$1,500?" The man replied, "Well, 2,000 years ago a man died here, was buried here, and three days later he rose from the dead. I just can't take that chance."

Advice for the In-Laws

This advice is not for dealing with abuse, but normal marital behavior.

- Learn to mind your own business. Don't give your opinion unless you are asked.
- When necessary, ask your married children if they would like to hear your advice before you give it.
- Give your married children enough space to learn their own lessons and make their own decisions.
- Don't allow your child to share with you that which they have not yet shared with their spouse.
- Don't get in the middle of their marriage arguments. When necessary, listen to them, tell them you love them, and then send them home to work it out with their spouse.

Illustration: A young woman who was recently married called her father saying, "My husband is rude and he doesn't understand me, and I want to come home." Hanging up the phone, the father compassionately said, "That's not possible' you *are* calling from your home. Good night, Sweetie."

What to Do if There Is an In-Law Problem

- Talk to your spouse about it. Be open and honest, yet understanding that this is their parents you're speaking of. Always remember that the person you choose to love was molded and shaped by your in-laws.
- Talk to your in-laws with respect, explaining the situation from your perspective. Acknowledge their good intentions and thank your in-laws for their concern. The truth is that they give the advice they do because they believe it is right. The intention is to help you, not hurt you.

Emphasize that you want to grow or learn with your spouse. Point out that you are enjoying meeting the challenges of life with your new spouse and that you have confidence that the two of you will figure it out together, even if that means making a few mistakes.

(www.Christian--marriage--today.com)

- Place boundaries for the in-laws to respect.
If needed, visit on agreed times.
In totally extreme cases, you can move further away.
- Always stand firm as a couple. Don't allow yourselves to become divided.

Marital Intimacy (In-to-me-see)

For Married People Only

Sexual Intimacy Is Good, and God Created It for Marriage

Genesis 1:28a *Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth..."*

Song of Solomon 1:2 *Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth — for your love is better than wine.*

Song of Solomon 1:13-16

¹³ *A bundle of myrrh is **my beloved to me, that lies all night between my breasts.*** ¹⁴ *My beloved is to me a cluster of henna blooms in the vineyards of En Gedi.*

¹⁵ *Behold, you are fair, my love! Behold, you are fair! You have dove's eyes.*

¹⁶ *Behold, you are handsome, my beloved! Yes, pleasant! Also our bed is green.*

Song of Solomon 2:5-6

⁵ *Sustain me with cakes of raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am lovesick.* ⁶ **His left hand is under my head, and his right hand embraces me.**

Song of Solomon 4:9-16

⁹ **You have ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse;** you have ravished my heart with one look of your eyes, with one link of your necklace. ¹⁰ *How fair is your love, my sister, my spouse! How much better than wine is your love, and the scent of your perfumes than all spices!* ¹¹ *Your lips, O my spouse, drip as the honeycomb; honey and milk are under your tongue; and the fragrance of your garments is like the fragrance of Lebanon.*

¹² *A garden enclosed is my sister, my spouse, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.* ¹³ *Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates with pleasant fruits, fragrant henna with spikenard,* ¹⁴ *spikenard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices—* ¹⁵ *a fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon.*

¹⁶ *Awake, O north wind, and come, O south! Blow upon my garden, that its spices may flow out. Let my beloved come to his garden and eat its pleasant fruits.*

Humans Are the Only One of God's Creations that Can Conceive Face to Face

Illustration: Soon after our last child left home for college, my husband was resting next to me on the couch with his head in my lap. I carefully removed his glasses. "You know, honey," I said sweetly, "without your glasses you look like the same handsome young man I married." "Honey," he replied with a grin, "without my glasses, you still look pretty good too!"

Three Levels of Intimacy

Emotional Intimacy

An emotionally intimate couple will share facts, feelings, opinions, dreams, fears and frustrations. They experience happiness and sadness together as if they were actually one person. They live their lives openly, without secrets or fear of condemnation from their spouse. Conversations are frequent and expected because sharing is vital to building and maintaining this part of intimacy. This portion of their lives is intentional, as they have built trust in each other that enables them to speak this way. If emotional intimacy is not achieved in a marriage, you can expect that you or your spouse will seek, and usually find, it with someone outside of the marriage. Emotional intimacy with someone other than your spouse is dangerous because it often leads to physical intimacy. Emotional intimacy is critical to the success of your marriage. Without true emotional intimacy, physical intimacy will not totally satisfy the whole person. The *flesh* may be aroused, climaxed, and even satisfied, but the *whole person* will not.

Spiritual Intimacy

Spiritual intimacy can take place only between two people who share Jesus Christ as their Savior. All true Christians have the potential to share a part of this intimacy with one another. When a husband and wife share their spiritual lives, they pray and study God's Word together, talk about spiritual issues, and encourage and challenge each other in their faith. When they do this, they grow together in their relationship with God and walk together in His Light. For each of us, this simply means that we must share our spiritual journey together as husband and wife. Pray and study the Word of God together. Encourage and challenge each other in spirituality.

Physical Intimacy

Physical intimacy is important; actually, some would say it is more than important — it's critical and necessary among healthy couples. Husbands and wives who think that spiritual and emotional intimacies are enough only fool themselves. If you think this way, you are fooling no one but yourself, and I would like to suggest to you that your marriage could be in trouble. God has placed powerful sex drives in us and He intended for a husband and wife to fulfill each other.

The husband/wife relationship involves a mutual indebtedness to each other **which is both emotional and physical**. Under our mutual obligations, we understand that God has given us natural sexual desires and that God's way of satisfying these natural desires is through the sacrament of Christian marriage. Married couples have the God-given responsibility to care for each other. They must not deny one another the sexual relations of married life, lest they fall into the temptation of sexual immorality.

Spiritually, our bodies belong to God when we become Christians because Jesus Christ bought us by paying the price to release us from sin. Physically, our bodies belong to our spouses because God designed marriage so that, through the union of husband and wife, the two become one. Paul stressed complete equality in sexual relationships. Neither husband nor wife should seek dominance. Although one spouse might become convinced that sexual fulfillment is unnecessary, that doesn't make it so. Sexual intimacy in marriage must be cultivated and protected.

Three Levels of Intimacy

While we can share some sense of emotional intimacy with others, our deepest intimacies should be — and must be — reserved only for our spouses. That means that I share my emotions, my spirit, and my body with my spouse. If I withhold any part of myself, I am preventing us from living as one flesh. Yield yourself to your spouse. Let the walls down in every area of who you are to experience the kind of intimacy that God intended.

The Scriptures and Intimacy

1 Corinthians 7:1-5

¹ Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. ² Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. ³ Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. ⁴ The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. ⁵ **Do not deprive one another except with consent** for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

v.3 Husbands: let the husband render to his wife the affection due her (Affection = kindness and duty)

v.4 Wives: The wife does not have authority over her own body.

v.5 Do not deprive one another except:

With consent, for a mutually-agreed time, for prayer and fasting.

Why: Satan tempts us because of our lack of self-control.

Hebrews 13:4 Marriage is honorable among all, and **the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.**

Undefiled = Pure

It is not *lust* if a man desires his wife; it *is* lust when he desires one other than his wife.

Proverbs 5:15-20

¹⁵ **Drink water from your own cistern, and running water from your own well.** ¹⁶ Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? ¹⁷ Let them be only your own, and not for strangers with you. ¹⁸ Let your fountain be blessed, and **rejoice**

with the wife of your youth. ¹⁹ *As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love.* ²⁰ *For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, and be embraced in the arms of a seductress?*

It is not wrong to desire your spouse; it is a Godly principle of marriage.

Illustration: Ann Landers once published a letter from a man who feared that the woman he loved was deprived because a physical condition prevented him from completing the sex act. In response, Landers received the following comment from an Oregon woman: “Men are totally ignorant of the workings of the female mind and heart. If you were to ask 100 women how they feel about sexual intercourse, I’ll bet 98 would say ‘Just hold me close and be tender. Forget the rest.’ If you don’t believe it, why not take a poll? People tell you things they would never tell anyone else.”

“You’re on,” Ann Landers wrote back, then asked her women readers to reply to the question, “Would you be content to be held close and treated tenderly and forgot about ‘the act?’ Answer YES or NO and please add one line: ‘I am over (or under) 40 years of age.’” Within four days the mailroom was working double shifts and weekends to handle the replies. She had obviously struck a nerve. Over 100,000 replies poured in. The results: 72% of the respondents said yes, they would be content just to be held close and treated tenderly and forget about the sex act. Of those 72%, 40% were under 40 years age. Obviously the sexual revolution has not provided much help to the average person who says, “I want to be valued. I want to feel cared about.” Tender words and loving embraces are more rewarding **than an orgasm produced by a silent, mechanical, self-involved partner.**

This truth does not take away from the importance of a healthy sexual relationship in marriage. However, it does help us understand that women see sexuality as much more than a physical climax.

Guidelines for Marital intimacy

- True Love is to provide a sense of intimate enjoyment that pleases your spouse. Lust seeks to please self, but love seeks to please your spouse. When the attitude between husband and wife is to please each other, both are blessed.
- My premarital counselor told me that if I put my wife’s climax ahead of mine, then she would be far more excited about intimate unions.
- Men are like microwaves and women are like slow cookers. If the man will slow down and take the time for foreplay, it will certainly encourage the wife to be more passionate in intimacy. Men, be patient; her body doesn’t respond as quickly as yours.
- Wives, try to be adventurous and allow variety; it causes great stimulation for the male mind and body.
- The question is often asked, “Is oral sex, or other forms of sex, sinful? The only sin in the marriage bed is to demand one partner to engage in an activity that is convicting to their conscience. Sometimes a spouse may be leaving a comfort zone in experimental activity; this alone is not sin. However, to force one to go against their personal convictions *is* sin.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

³ For this is the will of God, **your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;** ⁴ that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, ⁵ not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

What is *lust* for a married person? *Lust* is the desire for anything that fulfills your sexual desires outside of your spouse. If your sexual fulfillment is coming from anything other than your spouse, it is lustful.

- The question is asked, “Can we watch X-rated movies to stimulate us?” No. Christian couples do not need to be looking at other people naked bodies. Though this may stimulate the flesh, it also causes one to lust for someone other than their spouse. As a Christian, I would not support this behavior.

Matthew 5:28-29

²⁸ **But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.** ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Job 31:1 “I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?”

- Communicate to your spouse what turns you on and what turns you off. Don’t fake any climaxes. This deception will totally mislead your spouse. Doing so is basically telling a lie. You have to talk about what’s working and what’s not. Without discussion, there will be frustration.

The Four Seasons of Marriage Gary D. Chapman, Ph.D.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

⁹ Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor. ¹⁰ For if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up.

Spring

A season of new beginnings where most marriages begin

Emotions: Excitement, joy, hope

Attitudes: Anticipation, optimism, gratitude, love, trust

Actions: Nurturing, planning, communicating, seeking help when needed

Climate of Relationship: Vital, tender, open, caring. Streams of communication are flowing. Sense of excitement about life together. Couples are making plans. Great hopes for the future.

The DOWNSIDE of Spring: Unexpected and unannounced “irritations” ruin a perfect vacation or turn a fine dinner into an emotional fiasco. These irritations do not change the season, but they

make springtime less enjoyable. Share your irritations with your spouse, and be open to change. Nurture positive changes, and you will enjoy the fun of summer.

Summer

Season when the gardener reaps the benefits of what was planted and nurtured in the spring

Emotions: Happiness, satisfaction, accomplishment, connection, peace, fun

Attitudes: Trust, commitment to grow, relaxed. Positive attitude!!

Actions: Communicating constructively, accepting differences, praying together. Both are growing spiritually.

Climate of Relationship: Comfortable, attached, supportive, understanding. In the summer season, dreams of spring have come true. There will be high satisfaction from the sense of accomplishments. They will resolve conflicts in a positive manner and seek to turn differences into assets for their relationship. Husbands and wives will have a growing sense of togetherness.

The DOWNSIDE of Summer: Unresolved issues will surface. These unresolved issues can show up unexpectedly. We then find ourselves arguing in the middle of summer. Issues must be dealt with to continue living in the summer season of marriage. (Fast moving thunderstorms, but the *microburst* can do some temporary damage.)

Fall

The most colorful season of the year, a prelude to winter. Soon the chilling winds will rip off the leaves, leaving the tree bare.

Emotions: Fear, sadness, confusion, frustration, dejection, apprehension, discouragement, resentment, feeling unappreciated, emotional depletion.

Attitudes: Great concern, uncertainty, blaming, disengagement.

Actions: Neglect of each other, failure to seek resolution of issues. NO ACTION at all.

Climate of Relationship: Drifting apart, disengaging emotionally. Couples sense that something is happening but they're not sure what. There are a sense of detachment and feelings of neglect. Couples realize there are issues they are not facing squarely. Each blames the other for the issues. If they have lived in the fall season for a while, their family and friends may be recognizing the changes.

Winter

Season of marriage created not by the difficulties of life, but by the manner in which a couple responds to those difficulties.

Emotions: Hurt, anger, disappointment, loneliness, and feeling rejected

Attitudes: Negativity, discouragement, frustration, hopelessness

Actions: Destructive, speaking harshly or not at all, withdrawal, violent acts

Climate of Relationship: Detached, cold, harsh, bitter. In the winter season of marriage, couples are unwilling to negotiate differences. Conversations turn into arguments, or spouses withdraw in

silence. There is no sense of togetherness. The marriage is like two people living in separate igloos.

The POSITIVE side of Winter: The marriage may appear to be beyond hope, BUT don't give up. Often, couples who are desperate enough to seek help for healing can see the situation turned around.

Seven Strategies to Enhance the Seasons of Your Marriage

Strategy 1: Deal With Past Failure

We have to deal with the past before we can put it behind us. Otherwise, it keeps popping back up.

Strategy 2: Choose a Winning Attitude

If we rationalize our negative attitudes as legitimate, they will NEVER change. If we think negatively, we will behave in destructive ways. We must break the *Cycle of Negativity*.

Strategy 3: Learn to Speak Your Spouse's Love Language

Strategy 4: Develop the Awesome Power of Empathetic Listening

Empathy means to enter into another person's world, seek to walk in his or her shoes, and see the world from his or her perspective.

Strategy 5: Discover the Joy of Helping Your Spouse Succeed

A truly successful person is one who helps others succeed. The ultimate purpose in marriage is that a husband and wife will help each other accomplish the purpose for which God created them.

Strategy 6: Maximize Your Differences

In the fall season of marriage, our differences begin to be magnified. In the winter season, our differences stand as icy walls that divide us. In God's plan, differences were never intended to divide us. When God instituted marriage between two unique individuals, He knew He was creating unity. Together under God's direction, differences are assets, not liabilities. Dr. Chapman (p136) is convinced there are no irreconcilable differences, ONLY People who refuse to reconcile.

Strategy 7: Implement the Power of Positive Influence

True, you cannot change your spouse. We are individuals and have free will. No one can force us to change our thoughts and behaviors.

The power of influence has profound implications for the seasons of marriage. This "Power of Positive Influence" takes us right back to *unconditional love*.

WEEK 6 PARENTING AND CORRECTING OF CHILDREN

Illustration: My sister, Ann, a third-grade teacher, invited her class to her wedding. The wedding was at 3:30 p.m. on a weekday, so the substitute brought Ann's class to the church. The music started, the attendants took their places, and the bride came down the aisle on the arm of her father. At this point one alarmed student exclaimed, "She's not going to marry that old man, is she?"

Children are a Blessing from the Lord

Your *mistake* was His *plan*. If we can't see our children as a blessing, we will never be able to achieve the biblical mandate for parents. Our biggest blessing is also our biggest challenge. Children are precious rewards from the Lord. Abortion has devalued our children.

Genesis 4:1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, **and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the Lord."** (First Birth)

Genesis 33:5 And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who are these with you?" So he said, "**The children whom God has graciously given your servant.**" (Jacob said to Esau)

Psalm 127:3-5

³ **Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward.** ⁴ Like arrows in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth. ⁵ Happy is the man who has his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed, but shall speak with their enemies in the gate.

Proverbs 23:24 The father of the righteous will greatly rejoice, and he who begets a wise child will delight in him.

Isaiah 8:18 Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells in Mount Zion.

Illustration: My husband was performing his first wedding. Our children knew the bride well, and so for several weeks they heard comments about Daddy marrying Amie. As the wedding approached, our 5-year-old daughter became depressed. One day I took her on my lap and asked why she wasn't happy. In a burst of tears she said, "I love Daddy, and I don't want him to marry Amie!"

*God is very much concerned with how you raise your children. Often times it's not what we **do**, but rather what we **don't** do that effects our children the most. What we don't do will affect many generations.*

A Biblical Example of How Not to Parent

1 Samuel 2:12-17 Eli, who was the priest of God, had rebellious children who were *stealing God's sacrifice*

¹² Now the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the LORD. ¹³ And the priests' custom with the people was that when any man offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fleshhook in his hand while the meat was boiling. ¹⁴ Then he would thrust it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; and the priest would take for himself all that the fleshhook brought up. So they did in Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. ¹⁵ Also, before they burned the fat, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who sacrificed, "Give meat for roasting to the priest, for he will not take boiled meat from you, but raw."

¹⁶ And if the man said to him, "They should really burn the fat first; then you may take as much as your heart desires," he would then answer him, "No, but you must give it now; and if not, I will take it by force."

¹⁷ Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

1 Samuel 2:22-36 God pronounces judgment on Eli and his descendants.

²² Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel,^[a] and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. ²³ So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. ²⁴ No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the LORD's people transgress. ²⁵ If one man sins against another, God will judge him. But if a man sins against the LORD, who will intercede for him?" Nevertheless they did not heed the voice of their father, because the LORD desired to kill them.

²⁶ And the child Samuel grew in stature, and in favor both with the LORD and men.

²⁷ Then a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "Thus says the LORD: 'Did I not clearly reveal Myself to the house of your father when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house? ²⁸ Did I not choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be My priest, to offer upon My altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod before Me? And did I not give to the house of your father all the offerings of the children of Israel made by fire? ²⁹ Why do you kick at My sacrifice and My offering which I have commanded in My dwelling place, and honor your sons more than Me, to make yourselves fat with the best of all the offerings of Israel My people?' ³⁰ Therefore the LORD God of Israel says: 'I said indeed that your house and the house of your father would walk before Me forever.' But now the LORD says: 'Far be it from Me; for those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. ³¹ Behold, the days are coming that I will cut off your arm and the arm of your father's house, so that there will not be an old man in your house. ³² And you will see an enemy in My dwelling place, despite all the good which God does for Israel. And there shall not be an old man in your house forever. ³³ But any of your men whom I do not cut

off from My altar shall consume your eyes and grieve your heart. And all the descendants of your house shall die in the flower of their age. ³⁴ *Now this shall be a sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die, both of them.* ³⁵ *Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever.* ³⁶ *And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left in your house will come and bow down to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread, and say, "Please, put me in one of the priestly positions, that I may eat a piece of bread.""*

1 Kings 2:27 *So Solomon removed Abiathar from being priest to the Lord, that he might fulfill the word of the Lord which He spoke concerning the house of Eli at Shiloh.*

One of the saddest stories in the Bible is of a permissive parent. Eli the priest loved his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, and rebuked them only mildly for their indiscretions. He was well aware that they stole people's offerings to the Lord to fill their own stomachs and seduced the young women who came to worship in Shiloh. Still, he only told them to stop; he never actually enforced any kind of discipline on them.

If you've read the first few chapters of 1 Samuel, you know the result. God swore to cut off Eli's family forever. On one horrible day, the Israelites were defeated in battle, the Philistines captured the Ark of God, and Hophni and Phinehas were killed. When Eli heard the news, he fell off his chair, broke his neck, and died. It was one of Israel's most devastating moments, all because an old priest wouldn't discipline his sons.

I've always found this story extremely sobering. As much as I want my kids to like me, and as much as I hate conflict in our home, this story rattles me and gives me the backbone to do what's right rather than what's convenient. I'm sure Eli loved his sons; that wasn't the issue. The problem was that his love never translated into discipline and his sons never learned obedience — first, not to their father, and, therefore, not to God. The consequences were tragic. Eli's permissiveness not only destroyed a family, it wounded a nation. (*Source: Focus on the Family*)

Parenting is Generational

Psalm 78:4-8

⁴ *We will not hide them from their children, **telling to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done.***

⁵ *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;* ⁶ *that the generation to come might know them, the children who would be born, that they may arise and declare them to their children,* ⁷ *that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments;* ⁸ *and may not be like their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation that did not set its heart aright, and whose spirit was not faithful to God.*

Genesis 18:19 *For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him."*

Deuteronomy 6:7 *You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.*

Deuteronomy 4:9 *Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. **And teach them to your children and your grandchildren,***

Deuteronomy 11:19 *You shall teach them to your children, speaking of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.*

All Children are born as selfish little sinners who are depraved by birth, they need to be taught and instructed into the way of righteousness.

Total Depravity

Man was originally created without sin in the perfect likeness of God. However, in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve committed high treason. They disobeyed God, therefore escorting sin into the human race. Now, because of Adam's sin, all men are born into total depravity. The depravity of man is the Biblical doctrine that man is totally wicked and corrupted without God.

Have you noticed that a toddler doesn't need to be taught to be selfish, to throw a temper tantrum or to rebel against authority? He will, however need to be taught to share and think of others first and to obey authority. After Adam's fall, man became completely and totally depraved without God.

The ultimate responsibility of Christian parents is to guide their children out of depravity and into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, thereby receiving the nature of Christ

2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

2 Peter 1:4 *by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

Romans 5:14-15

¹⁴ **Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned** according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come. ¹⁵ **But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.**

Romans 3:9 *What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. **For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.***

Psalms 51:5 *Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me.*

Illustration: The Minnesota Crime Commission acknowledged this when it issued this report appointed by the Governor back in 1926: "Every baby starts life as a little savage. He is completely selfish and self-centered. He wants what he wants when he wants it: his bottle, his mother's attention, his playmate's toys, his uncle's watch, or whatever. Deny him these and he

seethes with rage and aggressiveness which would be murderous were he not so helpless. He's dirty, he has no morals, no knowledge, no developed skills. This means that all children, not just certain children but all children, are born delinquent. If permitted to continue in their self-centered world of infancy, giving free rein to their impulsive actions to satisfy each want, every child would grow up a criminal, a thief, a killer, a rapist."

Illustration: I heard about a missionary who was trying to stir up interest to get people to go to a foreign country to preach the Gospel. At the end of the service a woman, dragging a little boy behind her, told the missionary, "I just feel like God is calling me to be a missionary." "He is, indeed," he said, pointing to the little boy, "and there's the little heathen he wants you to preach to."

Illustration: One day, a little girl is sitting and watching her mother do the dishes at the kitchen sink. She suddenly notices that her mother has several strands of white hair sticking out in contrast on her brunette head. "Why are some of your hairs white, Mom?" she asks. Her mother replies, "Well, every time you do something wrong and make me cry or unhappy, one of my hairs turns white." The little girl thinks about this awhile, then asks, "Is that why all of Grandma's hairs are white?"

Four Areas Where Children Must Grow with the Deliberate Guidance of Their Parents

Luke 2:41-52

⁴¹ His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem according to the custom of the feast. ⁴³ When they had finished the days, as they returned, the Boy Jesus lingered behind in Jerusalem. And Joseph and His mother did not know it; ⁴⁴ but supposing Him to have been in the company, they went a day's journey, and sought Him among their relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵ So when they did not find Him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking Him. ⁴⁶ Now so it was that after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. ⁴⁸ So when they saw Him, they were amazed; and His mother said to Him, "Son, why have You done this to us? Look, Your father and I have sought You anxiously."

⁴⁹ And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them.

⁵¹ Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart. ⁵² **And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.**

Wisdom: Mentally

- Patrick, age 10, said, "Never trust a dog to watch your food."

- Michael, age 14, “When your dad is mad and asks you, “Do I look stupid?” don’t answer him.” Michael, wise man that he was, also said, “Never tell your mom her diet’s not working.”
- A boy, Age 9, said, “Never hold a dust buster and a cat at the same time.”

Proverbs 8:11 *For wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her.*

Proverbs 16:16 *How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.*

How much better to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen

Stature: Physically

Bodily, puberty, and so on

Favor with God: Spiritually

We must deal with the matter *at* heart, which is a matter *of* the heart. The most important mandate of parenting is to teach our children the spiritual principles of God’s Word. We must teach them about sin, repentance, and salvation. They need to have the fear of God instilled in their hearts at an early age.

Proverbs 4:23 *Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.*

Matthew 15:18-20

¹⁸ *But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man.* ¹⁹ **For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.** ²⁰ *These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”*

Jeremiah 17:9-10

⁹ **“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? ¹⁰ I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.**

Favor with Men: Socially

Children are naturally selfish; we must teach them differently.

Parents Mandated to Discipline

Proverbs 3:12 *For whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.*

Proverbs 13:24 *He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly.*

Proverbs 19:18 *Chasten your son while there is hope, and do not set your heart on his destruction.*

Proverbs 23:13-14

¹³ **Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die.** ¹⁴ *You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell.*

Proverbs 29:15, 17

¹⁵ **The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.** ¹⁷ *Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul.*

The New Testament Command

Ephesians 6:4 *And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.*

Admonition = earnest reproof

The Greek word *Pater* translated *father* is also translated as *parents* in **Hebrews 11:23**

Hebrews 11:23 *By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's command.*

Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

“Discipline” implies training, which involves rules and regulations enforced by rewards and punishment. You set the standard, follow it, then hold your children accountable to it. If they meet it, you reward them. If they violate it, you punish them. That way you’re helping them see the consequences of their actions. (John MacArthur)

Do Not Provoke Your Children

Colossians 3:21 *Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*

How do parents provoke their children? Here are some of the ways:

(This section quoted from John MacArthur’s book *Cultivating a Godly Child*).

Overprotection. If you want to really frustrate your children, fence them in, don’t trust them, and don’t give them enough opportunity to develop any independence. When you prevent your children from taking any risks, you’ll create in them an angry mood, especially when they consider what their friends are allowed to do. Don’t forget that your children are people who need to learn to face life on their own. Give them some slack and they’ll learn the best way kids learn: by hitting the wall now and then. But if you overprotect them, you’ll exasperate them.

Favoritism. Don’t compare your children with each other. Each is unique. Each is a gift from God. When you compare, the less-talented or less-popular child will be devastated. He or she will tend to become discouraged, resentful, withdrawn, and bitter.

Overemphasizing achievement. If you continually push them to excel, your children won't have a sense of having accomplished anything. Nothing ever seems good enough: if they get C's, you demand B's. If they get B's, you demand A's. And when they get A's, you still aren't satisfied. Such parents always find something to complain about.

Overindulgence. Give them everything they want. But the one time you don't, they'll have a fit. That attitude will carry on into adulthood; only then, they'll be on the job. What will happen when they don't get the promotion or perk they think they deserve?

Discouragement. Tell them all the time that they'll never amount to anything, that they're useless and always in the way. Don't give them any rewards, any approval, or any honor. Eventually you'll either destroy their initiative or drive them to seek approval elsewhere.

Failure to make personal sacrifices. Leave them alone all the time. Make them fend for themselves. Make them fix their own meals, buy their own food and clothing, provide their own transportation. Don't take them places because you can't be bothered. Turn them into slaves around the house to do all your work. When you don't make any sacrifices for them, they'll resent you.

Failure to allow for childish limitations. Have you ever been at a table where a child spilled some milk and you thought the parents had just seen the Holocaust? Or the child makes a fanciful suggestion, and the parent tells him his idea is stupid? Let your children share some of their ridiculous ideas without criticizing them. Don't expect perfection, just progress.

Neglect. A youth pastor overheard his little boy in the backyard talking to a friend next door. The friend said, "I gotta go now — I'm going to the park with my dad." The little boy replied, "Oh, my dad doesn't have time to go to the park with me — he's too busy with other people's children." That comment shattered the pastor's heart, but it changed his focus. Don't neglect your children; be involved in their lives.

Physical and verbal abuse. Verbal abuse may not be as obvious a problem as physical abuse, but realize this: Your tongue is much sharper than a child's. With your superior vocabulary you're capable of using ridicule and sarcasm to slice up the poor child, just like you can beat him up because of your superior strength. The result of either will provoke your child to anger and resentment.

Illustration:

- If a child lives with *criticism*, he learns to *condemn*.
- If a child lives with *hostility*, he learns to *fight*.
- If a child lives with *ridicule*, he learns to be *shy*.
- If a child lives with *shame*, he learns to feel *guilty*.
- If a child lives with *tolerance*, he learns to be *patient*.
- If a child lives with *encouragement*, he learns *confidence*.
- If a child lives with *praise*, he learns to *appreciate*.
- If a child lives with *fairness*, he learns *justice*.
- If a child lives with *security*, he learns to have *faith*.
- If a child lives with *approval*, he learns to *like himself*.

- If a child lives with *acceptance and friendship*, he learns to *find love in the world*.

Conclusion

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

WEEK 7: PROPER DISCIPLINE

Illustration: Children are not the only ones growing in this parenting process. So far in seven months my son has taught me more than I have taught him. He has taught me patience, self-control, putting others first, how to rely on the wisdom of God, and how to function on four hours of divided sleep!

Illustration: My sister-in-law decided to go on a diet after a recent trip to the store with her grandson. They had stopped in front of a pantyhose display, and as she chose a package, he read out loud: “QUEEN SIZE. Grandma!” he exclaimed, “You wear the same size as our waterbed!”

Four Kinds of Parenting (www.focusonthefamily.org)

Sociologist Reuben Hill conducted a study of thousands of teens and parents in Minnesota. Hill found that different parenting styles produced different responses among children.

The Permissive Parent

The study revealed that permissive parents tend to produce children with very low self-esteem and with feelings of inferiority. Though the parents express a lot of love, the lack of boundaries leaves their children with a high level of insecurity. The kids feel loved, but they are never sure of their limits. Their parents are generally fearful, afraid of messing up and damaging their children’s psyche, so they never set firm boundaries. The kids feel very loved but very unsure of themselves.

The Neglectful Parent

This kind of parent doesn’t express much love and also doesn’t really care enough to discipline. Their children tend to grow up with little or no lasting relationship with Mom or Dad. They’re estranged because they feel forsaken. The parents’ neglect may not necessarily be intentional — they may simply be in the midst of their own traumas and chaos, like an addiction or an abusive situation. They don’t purposely desire to neglect their kids, but they don’t know how to deal with their own issues adequately and don’t have the tools to be healthy parents. These children grow up with unbelievably deep emotional scars, and their only hope is to find Christ, be surrounded by godly role models, and get some good Christian counseling.

The Authoritarian Fighting Parent

This kind of parent doesn’t express love and affection well but is very high on discipline. They raise children who are provoked to rebellion. The bar is always high and the “musts” are always abundant, so there’s a strong sense of safety. But this kind of parent isn’t content just to win the war; they have to win every battle too. Communication between parent and child takes the form of arguing and fighting, especially when the child is old enough to fight back. Authoritarian parents squeeze their kids until the kids can’t wait to leave home, and as soon as they do, they rebel. When Paul told the Ephesians not to overcorrect their children and exasperate them, he was warning authoritarians not to raise children who would reject the faith altogether. (Drill Sergeant Parents)

The Authoritative Fellowship Parent

This kind of parent is authoritative — not an overbearing authoritarian, but a compassionate, yet firm, authority. They have clear boundaries but are also very loving. Everyone knows who the boss is, but there's also a connection between parents and child, a consideration that respects and honors who the child is while not compromising his or her disciplinary needs. The result is a child high in self-esteem and equipped with good coping skills. This secular sociological study found that the parent who balances love and discipline, without compromising either, produces well-adjusted kids who maintain a positive relationship with Mom and Dad. This research, the best available today, affirms parents who express love well and maintain a high degree of control in their home.

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Understanding Proper Discipline

(www.focusonthefamily.org, edited for personal use)

Hebrews 12:5-11

⁵ *And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; ⁶ for whom the LORD loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives."*

⁷ *If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? ⁸ But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰ For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. ¹¹ Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, **but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness** to those who have been trained by it.*

The Necessity of Discipline: To Deter Destruction

Discipline is about watching your child to see the direction in which he's going. Many parents are afraid of making their children mad. I remember the first time one of mine stuck out his lip and said, "I don't love you anymore." My first thought was, "Boy, I don't ever want to be that hard on him again." That's a lot of power to give a five-year-old, isn't it? A better response is to grit your teeth and bear the anger of your child, because it's better to make him frown than let him rush toward destruction. That frown won't last forever. Destruction, however, just might. However painful discipline is, it is actually an expression of *love*. It always seeks the child's best interests. A mature parent can withstand the anger of their child and say, "That's okay, you don't need to love me right now. You'll love me for it in a few years." It hurts temporarily, but to compromise your child's welfare from fear of losing his love will hurt a lot worse later on.

The Means of Discipline: Actions and Words

As parents, that's exactly how we are to discipline. We bring both words and actions — warnings and consequences — into our children's situations in order to keep them on track. We must teach our children *cause* and *effect*. Your decision caused this to happen, and now this is the effect of your decision.

The Motive in Discipline: To Express Love

When juvenile delinquents, as part of a research study, were asked how they knew their parents' feelings toward them, almost all of them said that lack of discipline in their home was a sign that their parents didn't love them. We often think that we're expressing love when we repeatedly say, "I'll give you another chance." What we're really doing, though, is neglecting to set boundaries that let our children know they're in a safety zone where they can feel secure. One of the most powerful ways to love your child is to be consistent in your discipline. And that's really hard. We're inclined to do whatever we can to maintain a friendship with our kids, when discipline is actually much more important.

One parent said: "I tend to do discipline well for a few weeks, and then find it more convenient to make compromises." Kids pick up on that in an instant. Try listening to them sometime when they aren't aware that a parent can hear them. Their conversation often sounds something like this:

"I got grounded last night." "Oh no. How long?" "They said two weeks, but it'll probably just be three or four days."

Where did they get that idea? Children are diligent students of parental behavior. They usually know when they can get away with things. Over time, they learn your breaking points and where you are prone to compromise. They aren't consciously taking notes, of course. They've been taught very well by experience.

The Goal of Discipline: To Teach Obedience

When you teach your children godly submission, you're teaching them to do the right thing for the right reason. You want them to get beyond the point where they say "I've got to" and get them to the point of obeying out of love and trust.

The Result of Discipline: Short-Term Pain and Long-Term Gain

The reason we don't like to discipline our kids is because it involves short-term pain. We're sympathetic to their feelings, and we never enjoy hurting them. But there's a process involved; those who have been trained by it yield the fruit of righteousness. Someone advised me long ago not to ask myself whether my child liked the discipline I was imposing but to ask whether he would love me when he looked back on the situation years later. That helped me tremendously, especially when one of them would say, "What do you mean I'm grounded? I really can't go? I hate you. You're the worst parent in the world." I even overheard one of my kids, only mildly joking, telling his friends, "It's like my dad chains me to the bedpost. I never get to go anywhere." I would have to remind myself that he was reaping the consequences we had decided on and spelled out up front, and his disobedience produced the expected results. I didn't give in, and my kids came back to me later and said, "Thanks, Dad."

Parenting Myth: Your kids will feel most secure if they know you're their buddy.

Parenting Reality: Your kids will feel most secure if they know you have set appropriate boundaries for them that you aren't afraid to enforce.

You have higher ambitions for your children, you want them to grow up bearing the fruit of righteousness, which always leads to lasting joy. That's why it's absolutely imperative to learn how to say no. Be willing to let your children get mad at you from time to time. Keep your eyes on their ultimate welfare instead of on their momentary comfort. Effective parenting always requires effective discipline.

Discipline vs. Punishment

As Parents, we must remember to discipline our children, not punish them.

To punish is to inflict a penalty for an offense, placing the focus on misdeeds. Usually punishment will come across with an attitude of hostility and frustration on the part of the parents. The end result is that punishment leaves the child feeling fear and guilt.

To discipline is to train for correction and maturity, with the focus of future behavior. Usually discipline will come across with an attitude of love and concern on the part of the parent resulting in a child having a strong sense of security.

Parenting Myth: Discipline requires parents to penalize their child as payback for an offense.

Parenting Reality: Discipline means applying appropriate consequences to encourage a child to make better choices in the future.

Before executing discipline, we as parents must discern the difference between childhood immaturity and defiance. Immaturity will be overcome by growth over time, but defiance must be overcome by immediate discipline.

Five Tips on Disciplining your Children

Building Stronger Marriages, Pages 70-72

- Be consistent with discipline (define the boundaries).
- Discipline immediately.
- Discipline for instant obedience.
Hebrews 12:6 *For whom the Lord loves He chastens, and scourges every son whom He receives.*
Don't discipline in anger.
- Don't allow the child to cause a breakdown of authority between you and your mate.
- Both parents should take the role of disciplinarian; don't leave it up to just one.

What about Spanking?

Proverbs 23:13-14

¹³ **Do not withhold correction from a child, for if you beat him with a rod, he will not die.** ¹⁴ *You shall beat him with a rod, and deliver his soul from hell.*

Proverbs 29:15, 17

¹⁵ **The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.** ¹⁷ *Correct your son, and he will give you rest; yes, he will give delight to your soul.*

Never use your hand for a paddle. Also never slap or hit your children; this is abuse. The hand represents love and affection. The paddle represents correction. Spanking is profitable from a toddler to a preteen, then others forms of discipline are better, such as grounding or losing privileges.

Seven Steps to Proper Spanking

Clear warning. Your first interaction with your child about a situation should be verbal. A child should never be blindsided by the discipline you hand down to her. It should always be preceded by a clear warning, both for their sake and for yours. You want to know whether your child deliberately crossed a line or made an honest mistake. A clear warning will help them steer clear of danger and will help you know you're correcting intentional disobedience. That's why it would be appropriate to issue a warning to Johnny the first time you see him walking out of the neighbor boy's house. The enforcement of discipline comes only after words have not done the job. *Physical means of correction are only appropriate in cases of clear disobedience*, and then only at certain ages.

Establish responsibility. It's important for your child to own up to his misbehavior.

"Johnny, *what* did you do wrong?"

"Nothing. Everyone was going over to that house, and I just went in for a minute."

"Try again. *What* did you do wrong?"

"I only went in to ..."

"I'm going to give you one more chance. *What* did we talk about?"

"I'm not supposed to go over there for any reason."

"So *what* did you do wrong?" "I disobeyed you."

Do you see how, with that kind of conversation, you're calm, controlled, and not trying to punish? You're trying to help him learn. Remember that your child can't learn without being able to own up to his responsibility. Remember to always keep your focus on the child's behavior, not his identity. If Johnny says, "I'm a bad person" or "You don't like me anymore," affirm how much he is loved and how special he is, but turn his attention immediately back to his actions. You want him to understand that the act was wrong and that he is fully capable of doing the right thing.

Avoid embarrassment. Never embarrass your children in front of their friends, siblings, or even strangers. Don't yank them out of a booth at a restaurant, don't yell where everyone around can hear you, or do anything else that will make your children feel as if all eyes are on them. All that accomplishes is shame. Instead, go to a private place. At home, that can be the bedroom. In public, it can be a trip to the restroom for a young child or a firm statement that "we need to talk later" to an older child. However you do it, don't damage your kids' esteem among their peers or even among strangers. Embarrassment can do a lot of damage that you'll have a hard time undoing later on.

Communicate grief. I want my children to know that more than being angry, I'm disappointed and heartbroken when they disobey. Early on in their lives, I let them know I trusted them. And when that trust has been violated, they need to know that the relationship is wounded. Many times I've had tears roll down my face when their actions hurt me and betrayed our relationship. When kids see the grief of their parents, they'll better understand how their sin affects God. They'll understand that God isn't shaking His fist at us every time we make a mistake, but He grieves just as a loving parent does when witnessing the destructive nature of disobedience.

Flick your wrist. This is an extremely practical method that will save you a lot of second-guessing. Remember the point of a spanking: It's to sting, to provide a painful deterrent to misbehavior, not to injure.

When you spank, use a wooden spoon or some other appropriately sized paddle and flick your wrist. That's all the force you need. It ought to hurt — an especially difficult goal for mothers to accept — and it's okay if it produces a few tears and sniffles. If it doesn't hurt, it isn't really discipline, and ultimately it isn't very loving because it will not be effective in modifying the child's behavior.

Have the child lean over his bed and make sure you apply the discipline with a quick flick of the wrist to the fatty tissue of the buttocks, where a sting can occur without doing any damage to the body. You want to be *calm, in control, and focused* as you firmly spank your child, being very careful to respect their body.

As your children get older and begin to think more abstractly, spanking becomes less effective and less necessary. A preteen is probably getting past the spanking stage and more into the lost-privilege approach. But if you've done your job earlier in their lives, spanking will have become less necessary at that point anyway. A firm, grace-controlled hand of discipline in early years, combined with a loving attitude, will usually prevent or soften the rebellion of later years.

Sincere repentance. When my kids were small, I'd let them sit in my lap after a spanking and cry for a while. That was a great time to model for them the love behind the discipline. Then after a few minutes, I'd ask, "Are you ready to talk about this with Daddy and with God?" When I received a nod and could tell repentance and genuine sorrow had occurred, I revisited the issue and asked them, "What did you do wrong?" I wanted to help them clearly relate the discipline to the behavior, not to them as a person.

Then I would ask, "With whom do you need to make things right?" Often they would realize they needed to make things right not just with me and with God, but also to apologize to a brother or sister. Then I'd take the opportunity to coach them in how to approach God, what to say, how to confess their sin, and how to receive forgiveness. When they said something like, "I'm sorry, God, for _____. Please forgive me," I would tell them how special they were,

both to me and to God, and that they'd been disciplined to correct misbehavior, not because they were a bad person.

Those dialogues trained them for a life of relating to God humbly and honestly as no other experience could. And in later years my children told me that some of the times they'd felt closest to me were during those periods of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Unconditional love. For my part, some of the most intimate, touching moments I ever had with my kids were right after exercising discipline. So after disciplining your child, let me encourage you to take him in your arms and pray, "Thank you, Lord, for my precious boy, for the wonderful way You've made him, for the amazing guy he is, and for all the gifts You've given him. Please help him remember what's right and give him the strength to do it. Thank You that he has taken responsibility for what he did. We know You've taken a big eraser and wiped it off the board. You've forgiven him and made him absolutely clean, and I forgive him too." Then give him a big hug and go do something fun. He'll know he's still accepted and that there's absolutely no barrier between the two of you.

The picture and the process I've just described don't fit the portrayal of spanking that our culture tries to give us, do they? A parent who disciplines his child this way is not an angry, insensitive person with a big club and a vicious agenda. Instead, this is a picture of using the rod God's way to bring about actions that will keep a child from destruction. That's about as loving and compassionate as a parent can get.