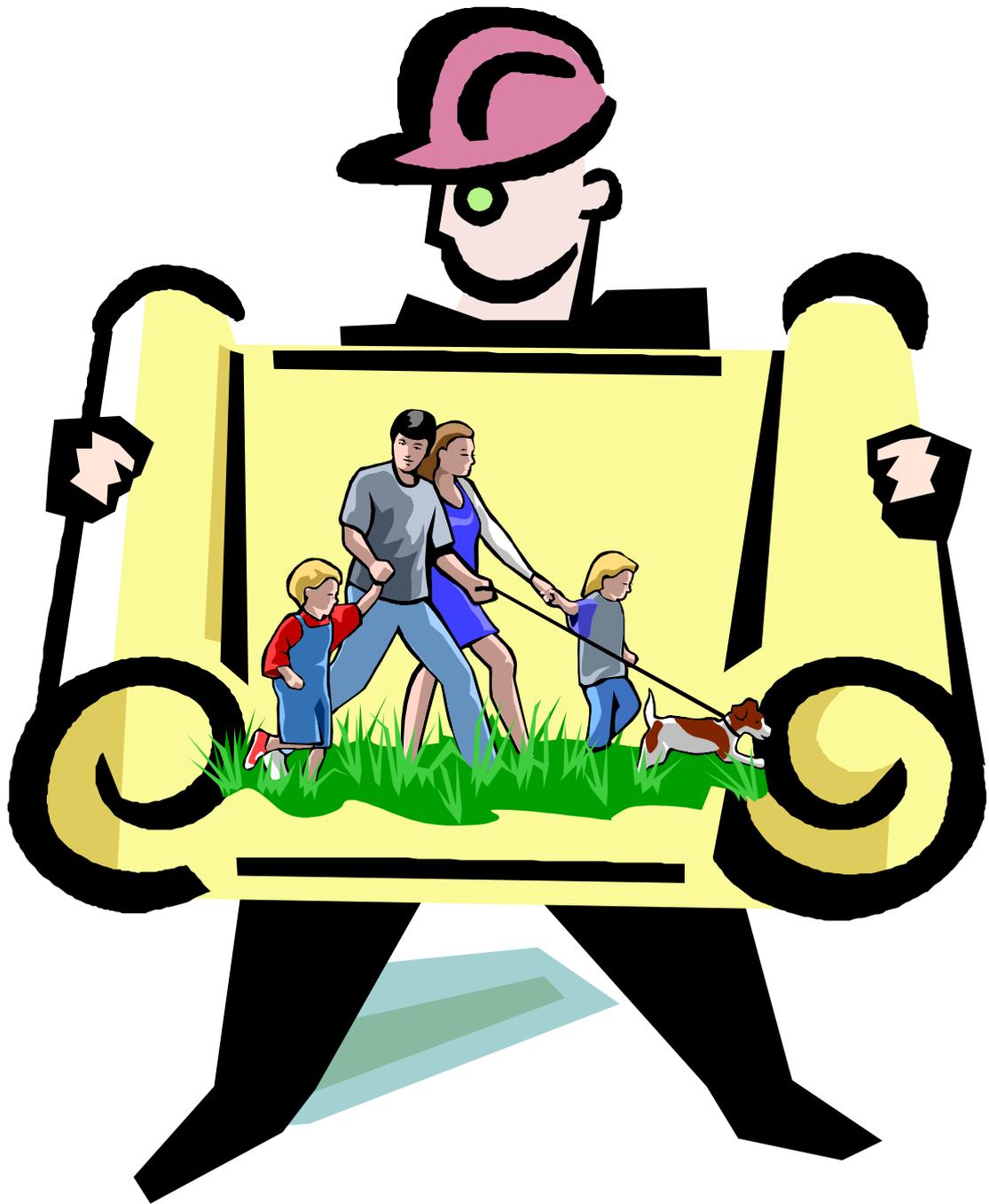


GOD'S BLUEPRINT



FOR THE FAMILY

Amanda Buys' Spiritual Covering

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GOD'S BLUEPRINT FOR THE FAMILY

A. DANGER AHEAD!

1. The South-African family is in big trouble.
2. The impact of the family's demise is staggering.
3. The Christian family has not been immune to the fall-out.
4. Experts attribute the primary cause of family disintegration is the increasing failure to hold marriage (and marriage commitments) in high esteem.

GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS FOR A "CLOSE-KNIT" FAMILY

Ephesians 5:21-6:4

*"21 **Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ** (the Messiah, the Anointed One).*

*22 **Wives, be subject** (be submissive and adapt yourselves) **to your own husbands as [a service] to the Lord.***

23 For the husband is head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the church, Himself the Savior of [His] body.

24 As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.

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

26 So that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word,

27 That He might present the church to Himself in glorious splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such things [that she might be holy and faultless].

28 Even so husbands should love their wives as [being in a sense] their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself.

*29 For no man ever hated his own flesh, but **nourishes** and **carefully protects** and **cherishes** it, as Christ does the church,*

30 Because we are members (parts) of His body (brother or sister in Christ).

31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

*32 **This mystery is very great,** but I speak concerning [the relation of] Christ and the church.*

33 However, let each man of you [without exception] love his wife as [being in a sense] his very own self;

*and let the **wife** see that she **respects** and **reverences** her husband [that she notices him, regards him, honors him, prefers him,*

venerates, and esteems him; and that she defers to him, praises him, and loves and admires him exceedingly].

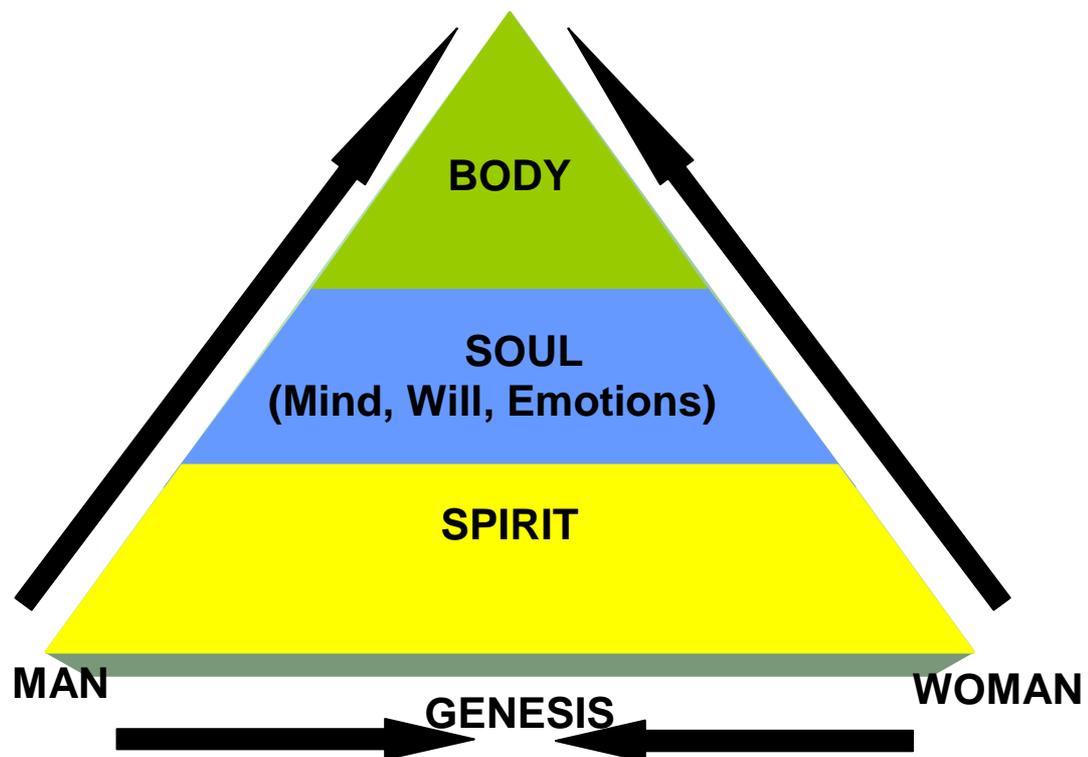
*1 **CHILDREN, OBEY** your parents in the Lord [as His representatives], for this is just and right.*

2 Honor (esteem and value as precious) your father and your mother—this is the first commandment with a promise—

3 That all may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.

4 Fathers, do not irritate and provoke your children to anger [do not exasperate them to resentment], but rear them [tenderly] in the training and discipline and the counsel and admonition of the Lord."

GOD'S DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE – "THE BLUEPRINT"



Marriage is a Holy Covenant (Malachi 2:14)

A Covenant = an agreement and guarantee one person makes with another

The Hebrew word for Covenant used in the Old Testament comes from the verb "to cut".

We see in the Bible that God made very serious agreements where He established a "covenant" which represents a serious occasion which the parties involved seal their promises in the midst of "cutting" which generally involved blood.

Characteristics of a Covenant:

1. Initiated by a vow or promise.
2. Given the conditions.
3. Ratified by blood.
4. Usually, if not always, a sign.

Examples: Noah, Abraham (Genesis 17:3-8), Moses, Jesus (Mark 14:24; Hebrews 7:22)

Covenants through the Prophets:

The Book of Hosea tells one of the great love stories in the Bible. Seven hundred years before the birth of Christ, God commanded the prophet Hosea to marry a prostitute named Gomer. (Imagine a church having that to talk about!) Following the marriage, Gomer gave birth to three children, but Hosea was painfully aware that he was not the father of any of them.

The names of the three children:

1. **Jezeel** meaning "scattering seed."
2. **Lo-ruhamah** meaning unpitied – "I will no longer accept the house of Israel or pardon them."
3. **Lo-ammi** meaning "You are not my people and I will not be Your God."

As if that wasn't humiliating enough, Gomer left Hosea and continued her lifestyle of drifting from one lover (or client) to the next. Secretly Hosea took care of her by providing her with grain, oil, wine, and money, but she wasted it all on the worthless worship of a false god, Baal (Fertility cults).

Finally hitting rock bottom, Gomer found herself stripped naked in front of a jeering crowd of foul-mouthed men, waiting to be auctioned off as a slave. As unbelievable as it sounds, somewhere in that crowd of gawkers was Hosea, who was not there to gawk or jeer but to buy and **bless**. Hosea paid the price for Gomer and bought her back-not as a slave but to be his **wife**.

Hosea could have abandoned Gomer forever, which was all she had a right to expect. But in true Covenant fashion, he obeyed God, bought her back, and chose to love her again as his wife. Incredible! Here's his explanation: The LORD said to me,

"Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes." (Hosea 3:1)

The relationship between Hosea and Gomer is a mirror of the relationship that God had with His chosen people, Israel. In the same way Hosea continued to love Gomer, God continued to love Israel, despite the number of times the nation rejected Him and violated His trust. Why? You know the answer: Covenant love and grace.

Hosea was the **first prophet** to proclaim God's Covenant by comparing it to the human covenant of marriage. Other prophets such as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah also used images of marriage and infidelity to describe God's covenant of grace and the sin of covenant breaking. In their writings, Israel's apostasy was often expressed in the language of divorce. But the final word through the prophets was always one of grace and eternal love, not abandonment. Although separation was often a part of God's punishment, it was never permanent. Time after time the prophets described God's covenant relationship with Israel in terms of an ever-loving, forgiving, faithful husband who never tires of wooing and winning back an unfaithful wife:

"The LORD will call you back as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit—a wife who married young, only to be rejected," says your God. "For a brief moment I abandoned you, but with deep compassion I will bring you back. In a surge of anger I hid my face from you for a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says the LORD your Redeemer. (Isaiah 54:6-8)

God Restoring His Covenant

The Children of Gomer:

Lo-ruhamah meaning unpitied – “I will no longer accept the house of Israel or pardon them.”

John 21: 15-17 *“15 When they had eaten, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these [others do—with reasoning, intentional, spiritual devotion, as one loves the Father]? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You [that I have deep, instinctive, personal affection for You, as for a close friend]. He said to him, **Feed My lambs.**”*

God reverses the curse and declares He has Compassion.

Lo-ammi meaning “You are not my people and I will not be Your God.”

John 21: 15-17 *“16 Again He said to him the second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me [with reasoning, intentional, spiritual devotion, as one loves the Father]? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You [that I have a deep, instinctive, personal affection for You, as for a close friend]. He said to him, **Shepherd (tend) My sheep.***

God reverses the curse and declares that He will **shepherd** His people.

Jezreel meaning “scattering seed.”

John 21: 15-17 “17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me [with a deep, instinctive, personal affection for Me, as for a close friend]? Peter was grieved (was saddened and hurt) that He should ask him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know everything; You know that I love You [that I have a deep, instinctive, personal affection for You, as for a close friend]. **Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.**”

God reverses the curse and declares that He will lead all of His sheep with **compassion** and **forgiveness**.

The Davidic Covenant

Another Covenant we read about in the Old Testament is the one God made with David, the Hebrew shepherd who defeated Goliath and went on to become Israel's greatest king. Psalm 89 describes God's promises to David:

I will maintain My love to him forever, and My covenant with him will never fail. I will establish his love forever, his throne as long as the heavens endure.... But I will not take My love from him, nor will I ever betray My faithfulness. I will not violate My Covenant or alter what My lips have uttered. (Psalm 89:28-29, 33-34)

God's Covenant with David promised a Kingdom that would never end.

"Your house and Your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever," he told David in **2 Samuel 7:16**.

And in fact, God has kept His promise. Jesus, the Messiah, came through the lineage of David; therefore, the throne of David even now continues into eternity through the Kingdom of Christ.

The Covenant with Israel

God never forgets the Covenants He makes. We have proof of this from recent history. Consider the modern state of Israel. Scattered to the four winds for two thousand years, Israel returned home to be reborn as a nation in the late 1940s. Before that time, such an occurrence seemed impossible.

How did it happen? Covenant! God blesses those people who choose to live in Covenant with Him. He will not go back on His word, and His promises never fail. God gave the nation Israel to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their descendants.

The only reason Israel is living on that land today is because God is a Covenant God. In 1948, when Israel became a nation, the world witnessed the power and majesty of God as a Covenant Keeper. Let no one think that God is finished with Israel!

The Old and New Testament

As you know, the Bible is divided into two sections called the Old Testament and the New Testament. Hundreds of years before Christ, the Old Testament foretold the coming of the New:

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put My law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33).

The Old Testament was based on a sacrificial system that required the blood of animals to atone for sin. Its rituals were shadows and types pointing to the coming of a New Testament—one through which Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, would shed His Own Blood to pay the ultimate price for the sins of mankind.

Perhaps the difference between the Old and New Testament can best be described this way: The Old Testament was about Jesus; the New Testament is Jesus. Jesus Himself gave His disciples the master key for unlocking the mysteries of the Old covenant by telling them that the Old Testament authors were writing prophetically about his crucifixion and resurrection.

"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," He said in **Mark 14:24**. The apostle Paul quotes Jesus in **1 Corinthians 11:25**: *"This cup is the new covenant in my blood."*

In **Hebrews 7:22** we read that *"Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant."* How is the new covenant better than the old? For one thing, under the old Covenant, sins were covered, and people had to continually offer sacrifices for sin. Under the New Covenant, sins are removed, and the debt of sin is paid in full by the Blood of the Lamb.

As a result of the New Covenant, we receive forgiveness, salvation, and eternal life as **free gifts**. We access these benefits and blessings solely on the basis of what God has already done for us redemptively in Christ. As believers, our faith is not in what we do but in what God has done for us.

This is the miracle of grace: that God has "cut covenant" on our behalf:

*When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, **God made you alive with Christ**. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross. **(Colossians 2:13-14)***

*He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. **(Galatians 3:14)***

*For this reason **Christ is the mediator of a new covenant**, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant. **(Hebrews 9:15)***

Ultimately the Bible-Old Testament and New-is the story of the Blood Covenant God has made with mankind through Jesus Christ. Included in this Covenant are the wonderful benefits of:

- Covenant blood that forgives and erases our sins
- Covenant grace that provides inner strength to handle our hurts and hassles
- Covenant love that is unconditional and never ending
- Covenant power that energizes us to cope and to change our lives for the good
- Covenant hope that guarantees us a future, now and forever

We enjoy these blessings because of the relationship with have with God through Covenant. God is a Relational Being. He is our Heavenly Father. And to be a father involves connection; it implies relationship.

God was connected to us by creation, separated from us by sin, and reconnected to us by our redemption through the death of Jesus on the Cross. His Covenant with us today through Christ is the ultimate relationship.

THE KEY TO LIFE

In fact, the concept of Covenant is the key to understanding all relationships—with God, our families, our friends, and **especially our mates**. God loves us by Covenant. He provides for us by Covenant. He blesses us by Covenant. He operates in our lives by Covenant. In reality, every truly valuable thing in life is ours because of Covenant.

The Bible itself is divided into two sections called the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The word "Testament" is interchangeable with the word "Covenant". So when Jesus died on the cross and shed His Blood, a New Covenant was established which was different than the Old Testament.

This is why we see in the Bible where marriage is a "covenant" - it is a very serious thing in the sight of God (**Malachi 2:14**).

Malachi 2:14

"14 Yet you ask, Why does He reject it? Because the Lord was witness [to the covenant made at your marriage] between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously and to whom you were faithless. Yet she is your companion and the wife of your covenant [made by your marriage vows]."

THUS: Marriage is an irrevocable commitment, of unconditional love (it's not about what you get back or if you're fulfilled) toward an imperfect person (just like you are), forever.

Covenant Marriage Involves 3 Distinct Aspects...

1. Leaving

(past, friends, parents, location, geography, home becomes SECONDARY. Relationship to spouse: PRIMARY.)

2. Cleaving

(coming together like a epoxy glue glued together permanently. Don't fantasize through romance novels / television, etc.)

3. Becoming One Flesh

(To be naked and unashamed points to: intimacy – spiritually, physically and emotionally – to be understood and loved)

Because Marriage is a Covenant and Not Merely a Contract...

1. Divorce is not an option. (God hates it. There are Biblical grounds, though.)

Malachi 2:14 *“14 Yet you ask, Why does He reject it? Because the Lord was witness [to the covenant made at your marriage] between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously and to whom you were faithless. Yet she is your companion and the wife of your covenant [made by your marriage vows].”*

2. Adultery is a serious Covenant breaking offence.

Proverbs 2:16-19 *“16 [Discretion shall watch over you, understanding shall keep you] to deliver you from the alien woman, from the outsider with her flattering words,
17 Who forsakes the husband and guide of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God.
18 For her house sinks down to death and her paths to the spirits [of the dead].
19 None who go to her return again, neither do they attain or regain the paths of life.”*

3. Sex before marriage is a violation of this Holy Covenant.

Hebrews 13:4 *“4 Let marriage be held in honor (esteemed worthy, precious, of great price, and especially dear) in all things. And thus let the marriage bed be undefiled (kept undishonored); for God will judge and punish the unchaste [all guilty of sexual vice] and adulterous.”*

4. Same-sex relationships are forbidden as a violation of God’s design.

1 Cor. 6:9 *“9 Do you not know that the unrighteous and the wrongdoers will not inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived (misled): neither the impure and immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who participate in homosexuality,”*

Romans 1:26-27 *“26 For this reason God gave them over and abandoned them to vile affections and degrading passions. For their women exchanged their natural function for an unnatural and abnormal one,
27 And the men also turned from natural relations with women and were set ablaze (burning out, consumed) with lust for one another—men committing shameful acts with men and suffering in their own bodies and personalities the inevitable consequences and penalty of their wrong-doing and going astray, which was [their] fitting retribution.”*

B. IS THERE A MAN IN THE HOUSE?

Introduction – “Missing In Action”

1. The Evolution of the Male

- Mid 40's-50's – there was a dream about a family, Let's make a better world: World War 2 was the war to end all wars.
- 60's – Sexual revolution: separated sex from responsibility.
- 70's – Feminist movement: no difference in the genders.
- 80's – Me-generation. To be a man, you must earn a lot of money = man
- 90's – Fall-out: anything goes. Children killing children. No-one knows what it is to be a man. The father is portrayed as a weakling (adverts / comedies).

2. The Father-Absent Family

3. The Impact of Changing Roles:

- a. Passive Men
- b. Angry Women (taking on the men's responsibilities)
- c. Confused Children

4. Two “PCs” We Must Avoid:

- a. “Politically Correct”
- b. “Pseudo (artificial) Christian”

Redefining Manhood In Our Marriages and Homes

I. It Always Begins with **Mutual Submission**

Eph. 5:21 “...be subject **to one another** in the fear of Christ.”

A command to mutually desire less than once due (not command what you are due). Consider the other person more important than you.

- The Metaphor of “The Dance” – it's not about who takes the first step – it's about the beauty, rhythm, balance and movement to the music.

Mutual submission = the dance floor.

The space within which we have freedom to move. Where we ask each other: “How can I make you successful in this dance called marriage.”

Male chauvinism and female manipulation find no place here.

God is the choreographer of the dance.

We need to figure out how to do this dance called marriage in a way that will honour and reflect His glory, His personhood and will bring joy and fulfilment to us and to one another.

FIRST STEP to being a man: Mutual submission

II. A Great Dance/Marriage Requires Clarity of Roles

Someone needs to take the first step in situations.

Eph. 5:22-30

*“22 Wives, be subject (be submissive and adapt yourselves) to your own husbands as [a service] to the Lord.
23 For the husband is head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the church, Himself the Savior of [His] body.
24 As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.
25 Husbands, love (AGAPE) your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her,
26 So that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word,
27 That He might present (place beside Himself) the church to Himself in glorious (radiant) splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such things [that she might be holy and faultless]. (So she can become all she was designed to be.)
28 Even so husbands should love (AGAPE) their wives as [being in a sense] their own bodies. (With the same kind of care, commitment and self-preservation.) He who loves his own wife loves himself.
29 For no man ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and carefully protects and cherishes (to keep warm, to commune in ways that makes sense to her, you need to become a student her) it, as Christ does the church,
30 Because we are members (parts) of His body.”*

5 QUESTIONS TO HUSBANDS TO FIND OUT WHO IS ASSUMING RESPONSIBILITY:

1. Who initiates spiritual growth in your home?
2. Who handles the money in your home? Who owns the moral weight?
3. Who disciplines the children when both are at home?
4. Who initiates talks about future plans and areas of development?
5. Who asks the most questions in your home and who gives the most statements.

When someone is constantly asking questions it is because they feel the moral weight of what's going on in family-relationships and working it out.

III. Husbands Are To “Step Up” and Give Their Lives To Lead Their Families In Righteousness

What Does This Mean?

1. Husbands Must Love Their Wives Sacrificially. (Love your wife in a way that costs you something.)
2. Husbands Must Love Their Wives With Intentionality. (Build in time. Radically sacrifice. It will take planning and time.)
3. Husbands Must Love Their Wives Sensitive. (Step up in the area of your family eating together, family discipline and family devotions.)

8 Essentials for men:

1. Treat your mate like you're in Covenant.
2. Step up in love and lead family in righteousness. Assume responsibility.
3. When there's discipline issues, I'm going to own it. Your wife wasn't made to give strong boundaries – you were.
4. Loving – Purpose to develop your wife's greatest beauty and strengths. Plan time together. How can you help her be successful?
5. Words of encouragement – little things. Live with them in an understanding way. Love them sacrificially, intentionally, sensitively.

What This Does Not Mean?

1. It doesn't mean you always do what your wife wants.
2. It doesn't mean you don't have a life of your own.
3. It doesn't mean you make her dependant on you.
4. It doesn't mean you “call all the shots.”

Is there a MAN in your home?

C. IS THERE A WOMAN IN THE HOME?

1. The Evolution of the Female

- History of injustice: women weren't allowed to vote, to sign for an apartment lease or apply for a loan, etc.
- Early 60's: sexual revolution – radical feminism arose.
- 70's: Women chose career above family. Divorce and less family time.
- 80's: Women made priority to have it all – became more stressed out and overwhelmed.
- 90's: Attitude changed: Focussed more on families and homes and less on career goals than any other times. Families come first. Motherhood is the most important job in the world.

2. The Mother-Absent Family

3. The Impact of Changing Roles

- a. Men = 2 Incomes for the Family
- b. Women = 2 Jobs
- c. Children = 2 Little Attention (society raised in day-care)

4. The Fundamental Question

- Are women's lives, marriages, and families better since the "Politically Correct" experiment or worse?

REDEFINING WOMANHOOD IN OUR MARRIAGES AND HOMES:

I. It Always Begins with Mutual Submission

Ephesians 5:21 “. . . and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”

- The Meaning of “Submission”

Phil.2,3,4 summarize the basic attitude: think more highly of others than of yourself:

Jesus submitted Himself to the Father – not because He was inferior, but to fulfil a plan for the greatest good for the greatest people; *“who for the joy set before Him endured the cross.”*

Meaning of submission:

- Submission is not a dirty word, it is a part of life.
- It is about the structure of how things work and the function – not about equality, whose more intelligent, etc. (E.g. Jesus in the Garden of Eden)
- 2 people are dancing, God is the choreographer (He plans out the dance routine) – both want to do their steps like God wants. Goal: Harmony, beauty, balance and the dance.

II. A Great Dance/Marriage Requires Clarity of Roles

There is a structure and function in the God-Head, on a team, in government and in a marriage:

Eph. 5:22-33

“...22 Wives, be subject (be submissive and adapt yourselves) to your own husbands as [a service] to the Lord.

23 For the husband is head of the wife as Christ is the Head of the church, Himself the Savior of [His] body.

24 As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands...

33 However, let each man of you [without exception] love his wife as [being in a sense] his very own self; and let the wife see that she respects and reverences her husband [that she notices him, regards him, honors him, prefers him, venerates, and esteems him; and that she defers to him, praises him, and loves and admires him exceedingly].”

What helps the wife submit is when the wife steps up and loves radically.

Related passages:

1 Pet. 3:1-6 *“1 IN LIKE manner, you married women, be submissive to your own husbands [subordinate yourselves as being secondary to and dependent on them, and adapt yourselves to them], so that even if any do not obey the Word [of God], they may be won over not by discussion but by the [godly] lives of their wives,*

2 When they observe the pure and modest way in which you conduct yourselves, together with your reverence [for your husband; you are to feel for him all that reverence includes: to respect, defer to, revere him—to honor, esteem, appreciate, prize, and, in the human sense, to adore him, that is, to admire, praise, be devoted to, deeply love, and enjoy your husband].

3 Let not yours be the [merely] external adorning with [elaborate] interweaving and knotting of the hair, the wearing of jewelry, or changes of clothes;

4 But let it be the inward adorning and beauty of the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible and unfading charm of a gentle and peaceful spirit, which [is not anxious or wrought up, but] is very precious in the sight of God.

5 For it was thus that the pious women of old who hoped in God were [accustomed] to beautify themselves and were submissive to their husbands [adapting themselves to them as themselves secondary and dependent upon them].

6 It was thus that Sarah obeyed Abraham [following his guidance and acknowledging his headship over her by] calling him lord (master, leader, authority). And you are now her true daughters if you do right and let nothing terrify you [not giving way to hysterical fears or letting anxieties unnerve you].”

Col. 3:18 *“18 Wives, be subject to your husbands [subordinate and adapt yourselves to them], as is right and fitting and your proper duty in the Lord.”*

1 Cor. 11:3 *“3 But I want you to know and realize that Christ is the Head of every man, the head of a woman is her husband, and the Head of Christ is God.”*

FOUR QUESTIONS TO SEE WHO IS SUBMITTING IN THE HOME?

1. When a major decision is to be made in your home, who would your children say holds the most influence and who defers or submits to that decision?
2. When conflict occurs in your home about what your children can or cannot do – whose opinion is usually followed when there's conflict?
3. When a major purchase is being considered – whose thoughts, opinions and influence are most often the final say concerning cost, timing, colours and affordability?
4. In general, which spouse in your home has the greatest sense of security and peace that things will be handled well, thought through and carefully planned for the welfare of your marriage and home?

III. SUBMISSION: Wives Are To “Step-In” and Support, Affirm, and Encourage Their Husbands With Strength and Respect To Lead Their Families in Righteousness.

What Does This Mean?

1. Wives must understand that marriage is not an equalitarian fifty/fifty proposition. You have so much influence, what you need is protection.

2. Wives must voluntarily support their husbands from the heart as an act of obedience to Christ.

Submission primarily is:

- an attitude that turns into a behaviour,
- done as an act of worship,
- that causes you to treat your man with affirmation, support and respect,
- that produces the kind of man you always wanted to have.

3. Wives must believe that submission (“stepping in” vs. “stepping over”) is a woman’s greatest ally; the key to bringing about positive change.

What This Does Not Mean:

1. It doesn’t mean you are to be passive or feel inferior.
2. It doesn’t mean that you submit only when you think he’s right.
3. It doesn’t mean that you violate Scripture, reason, or morality to support your husband.
4. It doesn’t mean you’re a doormat.
5. It doesn’t mean you “use submission” as a tool to get your way.

Submission is what you do before God, out of reverence for Christ to say to your husband “I love you”.

D. WHAT'S A MAN TO DO?

Applying Ephesians 5:21-33

Introduction:

Would Someone Please Show Me The “Box Top?”

- The What = “Step Up” in Love (Ephesians 5:21-33)
- The How = A Man’s Top Three Priorities:
 1. Provision
 2. Protection
 3. Nurture

1 Timothy 5:8

“8 If anyone fails to provide for his relatives, and especially for those of his own family, he has disowned the faith [by failing to accompany it with fruits] and is worse than an unbeliever [who performs his obligation in these matters].”

1 Peter 3:7

“7 In the same way you married men should live considerately with [your wives], with an intelligent recognition [of the marriage relation], honouring the woman as [physically] the weaker, but [realizing that you] are joint heirs of the grace (God’s unmerited favour) of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered and cut off. [Otherwise you cannot pray effectively.]”

How To “Step Up” In Love To Lead Your Wife And Family:

I. Husbands hold primary responsibility for the financial provision of their families.

1 Timothy 5:8 *“8 If anyone fails to provide for his relatives, and especially for those of his own family, he has disowned the faith [by failing to accompany it with fruits] and is worse than an unbeliever [who performs his obligation in these matters].”*

- The Role = The Family “CFO/Bank President”
- The Responsibility = Shelter, food, clothes, financial training
- The Practical Outworking = 5 Objectives
 1. Do Honest Work
 2. Honour God First
 3. Live Within Your Means
 4. Prepare for the Future
 5. Train Your Children

The Core Values = To Model and Teach

1. Work Ethic
2. Stewardship of Money and Time
3. Responsibility and Discipline (Teach them delayed gratification)
4. Enjoyment and Generosity (1 Tim. 6)

● The Core Values = To Model and Teach

1. Dependency Evidenced By Prayer/Fasting
2. Faith In God and His Word
3. A Service and Outreach Orientation
4. Progressive Growth In Personal Holiness (the way your children dress, music they listen to, movies, etc.)

II. Husbands hold primary responsibility for the spiritual development and protection of their families.

1 Peter 3:7 *“7 In the same way you married men should live considerately with [your wives], with an intelligent recognition [of the marriage relation], honoring the woman as [physically] the weaker, but [realizing that you] are joint heirs of the grace (God’s unmerited favor) of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered and cut off. [Otherwise you cannot pray effectively.]”*

Ephesians 6:4 *“4 Fathers, do not irritate and provoke your children to anger [do not exasperate them to resentment], but rear them [tenderly] in the training and discipline and the counsel and admonition of the Lord.”*

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 *“4 Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord [the only Lord].
5 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your [mind and] heart and with your entire being and with all your might.
6 And these words which I am commanding you this day shall be [first] in your [own] minds and hearts; [then]
7 You shall whet and sharpen them so as to make them penetrate, and teach and impress them diligently upon the [minds and] hearts of your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up.
8 And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets (forehead bands) between your eyes.
9 And you shall write them upon the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”*

● The Role = The Family “Priest”

● The Responsibility = Come before God on behalf of your family and come before your family on behalf of God.

● **The Practical Outworking = 5 Objectives**

1. Set the Pace Personally
2. Know the Spiritual Condition of Your Wife and Children.
3. Pray For Them and With Them Regularly.
4. Insure Biblical Instruction Occurs At Home and At Church.
5. Make Experiencing God and Loving Each Other (not morality) your Aim.

III. Husbands hold primary responsibility for the relational health and welfare of their families.

1 Timothy 5:5 *“5 Now [a woman] who is a real widow and is left entirely alone and desolate has fixed her hope on God and perseveres in supplications and prayers night and day,”*

Ephesians 6:4 *“4 Fathers, do not irritate and provoke your children to anger [do not exasperate them to resentment], but rear them [tenderly] in the training and discipline and the counsel and admonition of the Lord.”*

1 Peter 3:7 *“7 In the same way you married men should live considerately with [your wives], with an intelligent recognition [of the marriage relation], honoring the woman as [physically] the weaker, but [realizing that you] are joint heirs of the grace (God’s unmerited favor) of life, in order that your prayers may not be hindered and cut off. [Otherwise you cannot pray effectively.]”*

● The Role = The Family “GM/Coach” (Husband holds primary responsibility for the relational health of your family).

● The Responsibility = To manage the household in a manner that produces love, obedience, and respect toward God and one another.

● **The Practical Outworking = 5 Objectives**

1. The Marriage Covenant Is Verbalized and Celebrated.
2. Time Is Scheduled To Develop Marriage and Family Relationships.
3. Structure and Boundaries Are Provided To Insure Family Relationships Take Priority Over Outside Demands.
4. Communication Is Built Into the Fabric and Rhythm of the Family Schedule.

5. Consequences Are Exercised Fairly, Firmly, and Lovingly Among All Family Members.

● The Core Values = To Model and Teach:

1. Acceptance – Unconditionally (Positive environment – a lot of playing, joking, talking)
2. Affirmation – Specifically and Consistently
3. Accountability – Filled With Truth and Grace (It goes both directions)
4. Conflict Resolution – “Speaking the Truth In Love”

1 Timothy 3:5 *“...but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?”*

E. WHAT'S A WOMAN TO DO?

Applying Ephesians 5:21-33

Would Someone Please Show Me Which Box Top?

- The What = “Step In” and Support
- The How = A Woman’s Top 3 Priorities:
 1. Nurture
 2. Protection
 3. Provision

Proverbs 31:10-12

“10 A capable, intelligent, and virtuous woman—who is he who can find her? She is far more precious than jewels and her value is far above rubies or pearls.

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

12 She comforts, encourages, and does him only good as long as there is life within her.”

1 Timothy 5:14

“14 So I would have younger [widows] marry, bear children, guide the household, [and] not give opponents of the faith occasion for slander or reproach.”

Titus 2:3-5

3 Bid the older women similarly to be reverent and devout in their deportment as becomes those engaged in sacred service, not slanderers or slaves to drink. They are to give good counsel and be teachers of what is right and noble,

4 So that they will wisely train the young women to be sane and sober of mind (temperate, disciplined) and to love their husbands and their children,

5 To be self-controlled, chaste, homemakers, good-natured (kindhearted), adapting and subordinating themselves to their husbands, that the word of God may not be exposed to reproach (blasphemed or discredited).

How To “Step In” And Support To Lead Your Family In Righteousness

I. A wife’s first priority is to support, affirm, and empower her husband to fulfil his God-given calling both within and outside the home.

Genesis 2:18 *“18 Now the Lord God said, It is not good (sufficient, satisfactory) that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper meet (suitable, adapted, complementary) for him.”*

- The Role = “The Champion” – A team-mate and best friend.

- The Practical Outworking

1. Make Time With God Your number one Priority
2. Pray For Him Regularly
3. Plan For Him Daily
4. Prepare For Him Daily (Remember how you dressed when you started dating?)
5. Protect Your Time With Him. (My husband is the Nr. 1 human relationship on this planet for me!)

II. A wife's 2nd priority is to create an environment in the home that nurtures and develops her children to fulfill God's will for their lives.

1 Timothy 5:14 *"14 So I would have younger [widows] marry, bear children, guide the household, [and] not give opponents of the faith occasion for slander or reproach."*

- The Role = "The Mother" – A teacher, counsellor, consoler, and refuge for her children.

- The Practical Outworking

1. **Model** Dependency on Christ (Your children will not do what you tell them, they'll do what you do.)
2. Pray For Your Children Fervently
3. Create Structures and Scheduled Times That Make Family Life a Priority
4. Teach Them How to Live
5. Make Time For Them – Be Available

III. A woman's third priority is to train younger women in the art of becoming a Godly wife and mother.

Titus 2:3-5 *"3 Bid the older women similarly to be reverent and devout in their deportment as becomes those engaged in sacred service, not slanderers or slaves to drink. They are to give good counsel and be teachers of what is right and noble,
4 So that they will wisely train the young women to be sane and sober of mind (temperate, disciplined) and to love their husbands and their children,
5 To be self-controlled, chaste, homemakers, good-natured (kindhearted), adapting and subordinating themselves to their husbands, that the word of God may not be exposed to reproach (blasphemed or discredited)."*

- The Role = "The Mentor" – A spiritual guide to provide practical insight and coaching.

F. IS THERE A PARENT IN THE HOUSE?

Your Children Matter To God!

- God's View of Children – Psalm 127:3-5

*“3 Behold, **children are a heritage from the Lord**, the fruit of the womb a **reward**.
4 As arrows are in the hand of a warrior, so are the children of one's youth.
5 Happy, blessed, and fortunate is the man whose **quiver is filled** with them!
They **will not be put to shame** when they speak with their adversaries [in gatherings] at the [city's] gate.”*

- **God's Instructions to Parents – Ephesians 6:1-4**

*“1 CHILDREN, **OBEY** your parents in the Lord [as His representatives], for this is just and right.
2 **Honor** (esteem and value as precious) your father and your mother—this is the first commandment with a promise—
3 That all may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.
4 **Fathers, do not irritate and provoke your children to anger** [do not exasperate them to resentment], but rear them [tenderly] in the training and discipline and the counsel and admonition of the Lord.”*

Summary = Children are a gift from God, a sacred stewardship temporarily entrusted to parents for the purpose of raising Godly offspring to fulfill God's agenda for His world.

The Question = What does a Godly parent look like?

4 Snapshots of a Godly Parent:

Godly parenting begins with positive clear-cut objectives

There must be a picture in your mind of an ultimate outcome.

Eph. 6:4

“Fathers, do not irritate and provoke your children to anger [do not exasperate them to resentment], but rear them [tenderly] in the training and discipline and the counsel and admonition of the Lord.”

- **The Principle of Focus (What are you trying to produce?)**

● God's Dream vs. The "Hollywood Dream" For Your Child

God's Dream:

Rom. 8:29 – He works all together for good for those who love Him.

Why? That the life and character of Jesus would be developed in his / her heart.

Hollywood dream: Your children need to be successful. They need to make a lot of money, get a degree, be happy.

The Hollywood dream is about happiness, God's dream is about Holiness.

If you focus on them being happy, they will rarely be Holy.

If you focus on them being Holy, they will always end up happy.

Your child's upbringing needs to evolve around **character** instead of career, Holiness instead of happiness.

2. Godly parenting demands we practice what we preach.

1 Cor. 4:14-16

"14 I do not write this to shame you, but to warn and counsel you as my beloved children.

*15 After all, though you should have ten thousand teachers (guides to direct you) in Christ, yet **you do not have many fathers**. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the glad tidings (the Gospel).*

16 So I urge and implore you, be imitators of me."

● The Principle of Modelling – imitate me.
Are you ready to say that to your children?

● "More Is Caught Than Taught"

Your children will never be what you tell them to be, they will become what you are.

You are the teacher. Your children WILL imitate you.
You cannot impart what you do not possess.

3. Godly parents build on relationships that bind – not just rules:

1 Thessalonians 2:7-8

*"7 But we behaved gently when we were among you, like a devoted mother **nursing** and **cherishing** her own children.*

*8 So, being thus **tenderly** and **affectionately** desirous of you, we continued to share with you not only God's good news (the Gospel) but also our own lives as well, for you had become so very dear to us."*

1 Thessalonians 2:11-12

*“11 For you know how, **as a father** [dealing with] his children, we used to exhort each of you personally, stimulating and encouraging and charging you.”*

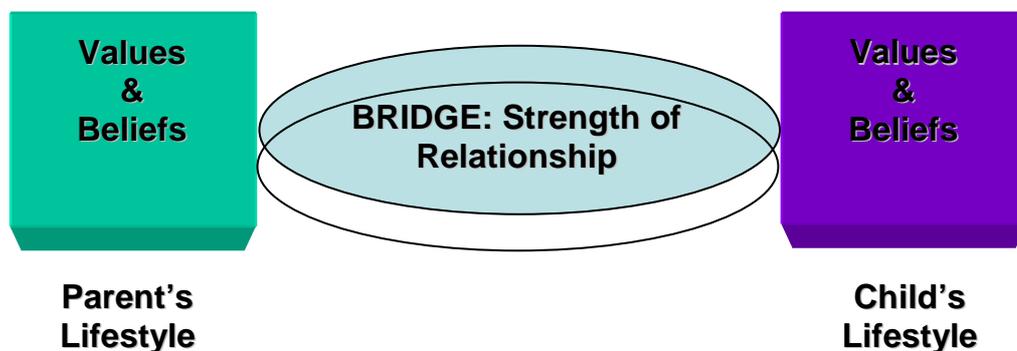
*12 To **live lives worthy of God**, Who calls you into His own kingdom and the glorious blessedness [into which true believers will enter after Christ’s return].”*

Exhort: Cheerleader: You can do it!

Encouraging / Stimulating: You can do it, You need to do it – learn responsibility.

Charging: I do understand you don’t want to do it, but if you do not do it, you’re going to face the following responsibilities.

• **The Principle of Relationship**



8 “Keys” That Build Relationships That Bond:

1. Unconditional love – tell your children “I love you”. Separate their behaviour from their personhood. “The consequences will not change, but I love you just as much.”
2. Schedule time alone with them.
3. Focussed attention – all of you is there with all of them.
4. Eye contact.
5. Meaningful touching.
6. Ongoing communication. Regular times of talking as a family. Turn off the TV, Eat a meal together two or three times a week.
7. Have some fun together!
8. Pray together.

4. Godly parenting requires constant repair and ongoing maintenance.

1 John 1:8-9

*...9 If we [freely] admit that we have sinned and **confess our sins**, He is faithful and just (true to His own nature and promises) and will forgive our sins [dismiss our lawlessness] and **[continuously] cleanse us** from all unrighteousness [everything not in conformity to His will in purpose, thought, and action].*

- **The Principle of Process**

Parenting is a journey – a process...you won't get everything right from the beginning.

LOVE COVERS A MULTITUDE OF SINS!!! That's the most important thing – they need to know you LOVE them!

- 5 Magic Words - ! !

First 2 words: I'm sorry!

Last 3 words: Please forgive me!

- It's Never Too Late!

G. WHAT'S A PARENT TO DO?

- The Question - What's it take to raise kids that love God and love you when they're grown?
- The Answer = Ephesians 6:4

Father's don't provoke your children, but bring them up in discipline and instruction...

4 Key Words:

- "don't provoke" = overcorrect, be harsh, fault finding, perfectionist
- "bring up" = nurture, rear, treat children with a fond affection, tenderly develop in the sphere of character and principles
- "discipline" = nurture, chastise, training (2 Tim. 3:16) It's what is done to the child.
- "instruction" = warn, admonish, correct, reprove, implore. It's what is said to the child.

Summary = WE ARE TO RAISE OUR CHILDREN WITH LOVE AND LIMITS

- Secular Research's Affirmation – 4 Kinds of Parents:
 1. Permissive = high love, low discipline
 2. Neglectful = low love, low discipline
 3. Authoritarian = low love, high discipline
 4. Authoritative = high love, high discipline – fellowshipping, supporting style. (Eph. 6:4)

God's Prescription for Child Development:

Heb. 12:4-11

*"4 You have not yet struggled and fought agonizingly against sin, nor have you yet resisted and withstood to the point of pouring out your [own] blood.
5 And have you [completely] forgotten the divine **word of appeal and encouragement in which you are reasoned with and addressed as sons? My son, do not think lightly or scorn to submit to the correction and discipline of the Lord, nor lose courage and give up and faint when you are reprovved or corrected by Him;**
6 For the Lord corrects and disciplines everyone whom He loves, and He punishes, even scourges, every son whom He accepts and welcomes to His heart and cherishes."
7 **You must submit to and endure [correction] for discipline;** God is dealing with you as with **sons**.
For what son is there whom his father does not [thus] train and correct and discipline?
8 Now if you are **exempt from correction** and left without discipline in which all [of God's children] share, then you are **illegitimate offspring** and not true sons [at all].*

9 Moreover, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we yielded [to them] and respected [them for training us].
 Shall we not much more cheerfully submit to the Father of spirits and so [truly] live?
 10 For [our earthly fathers] disciplined us for only a short period of time and chastised us as seemed proper and good to them; but He disciplines us for our certain good, **that we may become sharers in His own holiness.**
 11 For the time being no discipline brings joy, but seems grievous and painful; but afterwards it yields a peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it [a harvest of fruit which consists in righteousness—in conformity to God’s will in purpose, thought, and action, resulting in right living and right standing with God].”

Summary = Discipline is teaching obedience to God and His Word through consistent consequences (actions) and clear instructions (words) in an atmosphere of love.

- The necessity of discipline = To deter you from destruction - v. 4 (“in your struggle against sin”)
 God loves you so much He will set limits to keep you on the path for your benefit.
- The means of discipline = The consistent action and clear instruction for your good. – v. 5
- The motive in discipline = To express love (sometimes it is tough love and sometimes it is tender love) – v. 6-9
- The goal of discipline = To teach obedience. v. 9
- The result of discipline = Short term pain and long term gain – v. 10-11

Always ask yourself: “Will she/he hate me or thank me in ten years time?”
 They need to learn to pay the price of short term pain for long term gain.

How To Parent With Love and Limits:

Actions = Consistent consequences – **Proverbs 13:24; 22:15** - Rod of discipline

Proverbs 13:24; 22:15 “24 He who spares his rod [of discipline] hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines diligently and punishes him early.
 Proverbs 22:15 (AMP)
 15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of discipline will drive it far from him.”

There has to be under control, loving consequences.

● Small Children

They must learn to obey your voice the first time you say something (calm, under control voice).

- **Preteens**

Issue: Not that they obey your voice, it is that they need to be responsibility for their actions and attitudes.

You need to structure and enforce habits and consequences.

- **Teens**

Issue that you want to develop: Discipline regarding their choices. They need to make good choices about friends, money, time, clothes music, movies. Contracts and weekly conferences.

Write out your values as a family and let them write out what kind of person they want to be and the consequences (you won't drive the car / go to the dance / etc.)

Have open communication. Don't get in a power-play and fight with your child. Decisions they make brings consequences.

Words = Clear instructions - What do they need to learn about God and how do you do it:

Proverbs 1:8 *"8 My son, hear the instruction of your father; reject not nor forsake the teaching of your mother."*

Proverbs 2:1-2 *"1 MY SON, if you will receive my words and treasure up my commandments within you,
2 Making your ear attentive to skillful and godly Wisdom and inclining and directing your heart and mind to understanding [applying all your powers to the quest for it];"*

Proverbs 3:1 *"1 MY SON, forget not my law or teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments;"*

Proverbs 7:1-2 *"1 MY SON, keep my words; lay up within you my commandments [for use when needed] and treasure them.
2 Keep my commandments and live, and keep my law and teaching as the apple (the pupil) of your eye."*

● **Small Children**

THE WHO. Who is God, what is He like (kind, good, holy, loving, Creator). Lots about Jesus. Bed-time stories. Pray with them.

● **Pre-teens**

THE WHAT. What is right / wrong / true / false. Scripture memory, books of the Bible, basic doctrines. Supper-time is good.

● **Teens**

WHY. Teach them how to think, Biblical world view, basic apologetics, independent study.

What are you learning / reading?

Give assignments.

You need them to develop convictions, make wise decisions by making unwise decisions.

Be their friend, love them and take them back to the scriptures.

	Punishment	vs.	Discipline
Purpose:	To inflict penalty for an offence		To train for correction and maturity
Focus:	Past misdeeds		Future correct acts
Attitude:	Hostility and frustration on the part of the parent		Love and concern on the part of the parent
Resulting emotion in the child:	Fear and guilt		Security

Practical Tips For Balanced Parenting:

1. Have a few, clear responsibilities or rules.
2. Develop written contracts even when they are small.
3. Negotiate consequences with your child.
4. Be consistent! Don't let your moods determine what kind of parent you are.
5. The older they get, the fewer the rules. Feed them responsibility and freedom.
6. Train them to be on their own while they still live at home.

● **Develop A Game-plan:**

1. Identify the top two behaviour problems.
2. Honestly evaluate your parenting style.

3. Have a family conference. Identify calmly the problem. Own your part where you've blown it. Ask them to forgive you.
4. Prepare to be tested. They will try you out – you need to be consistent.

H. WHAT'S A CHILD TO DO?

Introduction – God's First Words To Children

THE COMMAND - "Honour your father and your mother,

THE PROMISE - so that you may live long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you." Exodus 20:12

I. What Does It Mean "To Honour" Your Parents?

- Definition = lit. "to be heavy, glorify, to ascribe value and worth, to respect, to hold in high regard"

- Word Usage in Old Testament = to honour meant: fear, awe, respect, give praise, speak well of, enhance the reputation, you want to please this person and obey them over and above every other relationship.

II. Why Did God Give This Command?

- a. Foundation for Human Relationships – The Family was God's idea.
- b. Foundation for Respect of Authority.

God wanted all of us children to learn to honour, respect and submit to an authority figure so that later on you will learn to respect an invisible God who loves you.

- c. Foundation of Human Development

Research shows: How you relate (love, obey, respect, respond, etc) to your parents will impact EVERY area of your life.

It is the most shaping relationship of any that you will ever experience. It will shape your values, morals, principles, who you become.

III. What Does It Look Like To Honour Our Parents in the different stages of your life?

- As a Child, I honour my parents by obeying them.

Ephesians 6:1-3

*"1 CHILDREN, **OBEY** your parents in the Lord (meaning: in the sphere of the Lord), for this is just and right.*

*2 **Honor** (esteem and value as precious) your father and your mother—this is the first commandment with a promise—*

3 That all may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth."

To the extent that you obey your parents, you are obeying God.

3 Characteristics of Biblical Obedience:

1. Immediate
2. It is complete – not partial
3. It is with a good attitude

Even when your parents are making mistakes – you must do it as unto the Lord. God wants your life to be blessed and wants you to have a long life.

God is addressing children – Why?

- Children are addressed in the Word because God is saying – “YOU MATTER TO ME! I WANT YOU TO HAVE A BLESSED, LONG LIFE.”
- You are morally responsible. God expects you to do what is right and will hold you accountable.

● **As a Young Person, I honour my parents by respecting and cooperating with them.**
Tension is normal in this stage of life, but lack of respect is not negotiable.

Prov. 23:22

22 Hearken to your father, who begot you, and despise not your mother when she is old.

Prov. 20:20

20 Whoever curses his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in complete darkness.

Rom. 1:30, 2 Tim. 3:2 says:

Beyond the normal tensions and conflicts in the home, rebellion and outright disobedience is characterized in scripture as one of the greatest evils in the Word.

Questions to children living in the home to see how much you respect them:

1. Are you respecting your parents with regard to your **speech**?
2. Are you respecting your parents with regard to your **dress**?
3. Are you respecting your parents with regard to your **attitude** (even the thoughts they don't see)?
4. Are you respecting your parents with regard to your **body language**?
5. Are you respecting your parents in the area of **grey areas** – when it comes to movies, videogames, friends or music?
6. Are you respecting your parents in your **behaviour away from home**?
7. Are you respecting your parents with regards to **responsibility at home**, your chores, your schoolwork, etc.

- **As an Adult, I honour my parents by affirmation and provision. You don't obey them, you obey God, but you must affirm and respect them.**

Affirmation:

Prov. 23:24

24 The father of the [uncompromisingly] righteous man (the upright, in right standing with God) shall greatly rejoice, and he who becomes the father of a wise child shall have joy in him.

The greatest affirmation you will ever do for your parents, is the kind of person you become – your character.

Prov 3:27

27 Withhold not good from those to whom it is due [its rightful owners], when it is in the power of your hand to do it.

3 Important ways of affirmation:

- Communication (phone them, write the letters, e-mail them);
- Thoughtfulness (include them in private or special events);
- and Respect (ask them for advice – you do not need to take it).

Financial Provision:

1 Tim. 5:4

*4 But if a widow has children or grandchildren, see to it that these are first made to understand that it is their religious duty [to defray their natural obligation to those] at home, and **make return to their parents or grandparents** [for all their care by contributing to their maintenance], for this is acceptable in the sight of God.*

1 Tim 5:8

*88 If anyone fails to **provide for his relatives**, and especially for those of his own family, he has disowned the faith [by failing to accompany it with fruits] and is worse than an unbeliever [who performs his obligation in these matters].*

Are There Times When We Can't Honour Our Parents' Wishes? Yes!

- **Mark 10:23–31** = The Priority of Salvation (If your parents are opposed to you becoming a believer and wants to disown you – choose God.)
- **Luke 9:59–62** = The Priority of Service (If God leads you to give up your career and your parents do not agree and support it – choose God.)
- **Ephesians 5:31-33** = The Priority of Marriage (If your parents use emotions, finances or communication in any way to put a wedge between you and your mate, you need to cover your family and stop their behaviour.)
- **Proverbs 9:7–9** = The Priority of Wisdom
(Abusive relationship, parents on alcohol / drug abuse, manipulation.)

You need to say, “We love and care for you but until you can react in a civilized manner, we will not be coming there for holiday, etc.”¹

¹ See “Godly Limits in Relationships” available from Kanaan Ministries

I. TALKING TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT SEX

Ten Tips for Talking to Your Children about Sex:

1. Use teachable moments to discuss sex. Weave the discussion into life experiences related to sex—situations they view on TV or in plays. Solicit their opinions. Ask them how they feel about something they've seen on TV or in movies. Peruse their understanding of pregnancy, STDs, and hurt feelings by asking questions.
2. Talk honestly about love, sex and relationships. Help your children handle powerful feelings, such as love, in a safe way. Share with them how you felt at that age. Discourage sexual relationships
3. Give young people solid information about adolescent sex and the consequences. Share with them research and studies you've heard about.
4. Let your children know there is no such thing as "safe sex." Condoms can slip off easily during sex and there is no scientific evidence that condoms prevent STDs.
5. Encourage children to remain connected with family, school and community. Discourage early, frequent and steady dating; instead encourage group activities. Also, kids connected to their family (especially parents) are less likely to have sex.
6. Emphasize with kids that sexual abuse is wrong and should be reported. Tell your kids the hard fact that sexual abuse is when sex occurs without your permission, even with someone you know. If your child does date, they should stick to dating someone close to their age.
7. Encourage young people to avoid alcohol, drugs and other risky behaviors. Being sober avoids compromising or dangerous situations that they may regret later. Remind them often that you are willing to pick them up from a party with drugs/alcohol present.
8. Reinforce that kids do not need to give in to peer pressure. They should be confident in who they are and the decisions they make. Let them know most teens are not having sex (Center for Disease Control Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 1999).

9. Help your children set goals. These might include graduating from high school, finding a job, and starting a stable, healthy family.
10. Work with your children to create a personal plan. It's never too late to make a pledge of abstinence, even if they have been sexually active. Let them know that you do not want them to have sex and support their decision to be abstinent. If you are a single parent, model this yourself.

How to Teach Your Kids About Sex – From Birth to 18

Preparation (Ages 0 to 4)

- Goal: To begin to teach your child what to think about his or her body and God's wonderful design of men and women.

- How to Foster Sexual Health and Integrity In This Stage
 1. Express enjoyment of your role as a male or female, husband or wife, provider, homemaker, etc.

 2. Teach God's design for creation, marriage, families, and general reproduction (daddies and mommies make babies by loving each other when they're married).

 3. Have the smallest number of caregivers possible. A child's capacity for bonding will only be harmed if he has several caregivers in addition to mom and dad, or if his caregivers change frequently.

 4. Teach appropriate names for body parts and their function. Do not use slang.

 5. Teach basic differences between males and females.

 6. Express appropriate joy, awe, and reverence for God's design for creation (pregnancy, babies, weddings, etc.).

 7. Protect the boundaries they need to learn eventually – good touch, bad touch, confusing touch, irritating touch. Numerous books are available which teach the different kinds of touch. Most of these books are geared towards the prevention of sexual abuse.

 8. Respect their "no" and insist that others do as well (siblings, relatives, peers, teachers, etc.). We don't want to cater to a child's whims or bad moods, but even a child has the right to say "no" if he or she becomes uncomfortable.

 9. Begin to interpret or unpack the cultural messages regarding gender, modesty, sexuality, beauty, etc. We want our children to learn the contrasts between a Biblical worldview and a worldview that does not respect God and what He has created.

 10. Answer their questions (on age-appropriate level). If they're old enough to ask they're old enough to receive a thoughtful answer. Of course, you want to be sensitive and avoid answers that are too graphic or detailed.

 11. Affirm God's love for your child, His goodness, and how we make it our aim to please Him as we take care of our bodies.

Prevention (Ages 5-8)

- Goal: Continue to help your child value his or her body. This value lies in the fact that the body becomes the temple of God when one has a faith experience with Jesus Christ.
- How to Foster Sexual Health and Integrity In This Stage
 1. Supervise your child's involvement with the media. Be prepared to make restrictions based on your child's development level. Begin watching some of their programs and videos or reviewing printed media together and discussing how they support or tear down your family's value system.
 2. Offer occasional teaching and warnings about pornography. Explain that pornography is any picture in print, videos, or the Internet that reveals the human body or any kind of writing or cartoon that refers to the human body or sexual behaviors in a bad way. Then, explain that pornography, like alcohol and cigarettes, becomes a hard habit to break.
 3. Provide close supervision of age-appropriate relationships.
 4. Discuss the slang or profane words that correspond to appropriate names for body parts and sexual behaviors. Reinforce appropriate names for these body parts.
 5. Provide lots of wholesome physical, emotional, and spiritual affection. A parent's love goes a long, long way in the promotion of healthy sexual development.

Stewardship (Ages 9-12)

- Goal: To equip your child to take care of his body, mind, and spirit as a response of gratitude to God.
- How to Foster Sexual Health and Integrity In This Stage
 1. Share Bible stories/studies on sexuality.
 2. Provide supervised social gatherings in your home.
 3. Encourage bonding with the same-gendered parent.
 4. Prepare your child for the onset of adolescence by talking with them about what to expect specific to their genders: females – menstrual cycle, breast development, pubic hair, etc., males – voice changes, facial hair, pubic hair, etc.

5. Share any of your life stories that are age appropriate. Talk about how you felt then, and propose a better alternative if you are discussing a bad choice you made in the past.
6. Educate your child about sexual abuse, but don't frighten them with excessive concern. Talk with them about how to respond during and after such an event.
7. Teach why they shouldn't wear immodest clothing.

Fulfillment (Ages 13-18)

- Goal: encourage them to embrace their life in Christ in such a way that whether single or married in the future, they have learned how to sustain their total fidelity of body, mind, and spirit to Christ. And should they marry in the future, their greater fidelity to Christ thus far will be the best wedding gift they can give to their bride or groom.

- How to Foster Sexual Health and Integrity In This Stage

1. Offer loving accountability within the context of your family's sense of loyalty and community.
2. Provide for wholesome activities which foster your child's and his peers' development as young men and women.
3. Express any concerns in a relational, respectful way.
4. Teach your children to ask not only, "Is it right or wrong?" but "Is it wise?"
5. Encourage your children to make loving God the end goal of every behavior.
6. Help develop your child's discernment in choosing friends and dating partners, and guide his relationships in appropriate directions.
7. Don't minimize your child's feelings – especially about romantic relationships.

Source: Excerpted from Rob Jackson, "Understanding Child Sexual Development" (<http://www.pureintimacy.org/cs/parents/>).

Instilling Sexual Purity in Your Children

1. Be a role model for the kinds of relationships you want your kids to develop with members of the opposite sex. Parents should make every effort to nourish and celebrate their marriage, demonstrating respect and affection for each other. This gives teens a sense of security and a strong attachment to your values. A boy who sees his father treat his mother with respect and is taught to do likewise will carry this attitude into his relationships. Girls who are affirmed and respected by their fathers aren't as likely to search for male affection that could lead to sexual involvement. Single parents must create a stable home life and practice as well as preach values concerning non-marital sex.
2. Do your best to give your teen(s) a strong, positive sense of identity. Teens who have a life rich in relationships, family traditions, activities, interests, and consistent love are less likely to search for fulfillment through sexual immorality. Those who see their future as promising are more likely to protect themselves from damage arising from sexual activity. Those who have an active faith in God are more likely to preserve the gift of sex and to respect rather than exploit others.
3. Create a special occasion to talk about abstaining from sex until marriage. Early in your child's adolescence, plan a special evening or weekend to talk to him or her about the importance of saving sex for marriage. Present a special token—a necklace, ring, or key, for example—which symbolizes commitment to abstinence. He or she can present this item to his or her spouse on their wedding night.
4. If your teen has already had sexual experiences, make it clear that it is never too late to make a commitment to reserve sex for marriage. "Secondary virginity" should be strongly encouraged among teens who have been sexually active. Some churches or parachurch organizations have formal programs organized specifically to promote the decision to remain sexually abstinent until marriage.
5. Continue sending healthy messages about sexuality throughout your son's or daughter's adolescent years. Build a solid foundation about sexuality before puberty. Send signals about your attitudes over the course of time by keeping in mind the following.
 - If you seem embarrassed or unapproachable whenever sex comes up, your teenager will look elsewhere for input.
 - Teens are reluctant to bring up sexual subjects with their parents, so your chances of having a conversation are nil unless you take the initiative. Present the facts, your perspective on the subject, and God's design for sex.

- Be careful how you talk about someone else’s sexual issues. If you give a clear signal that the non-marital sex was wrong but respond with compassion and prayer for the people involved, you make yourself approachable. Crisis pregnancy centers are full of clients with good, churchgoing parents that have said things like “Don’t you ever do something as stupid/shameful as that.”
6. Talk about healthy and unhealthy relationships, and train your teen to avoid situations that increase the likelihood of a sexual incident. Encourage supervised group activities with the opposite sex as opposed to single dating situations, especially for teens in junior high or early high school. Group activities such as a youth group outing teach them how to talk and have fun without sexual pressure.

Talk to your teen about the qualities that ultimately matter in a relationship (shared values, beliefs, mutual respect, easy conversation, having fun together—not looks or popularity). Talk to your teen about unhealthy relationship, and have the courage to speak honestly if you see one developing. Talk about how far is okay and how to handle sexual feelings.

7. Set up your expectations and ground rules about dating in advance—well before your teenager asks if he or she can go out with someone. Teens feel more secure when you set appropriate boundaries, and are appropriately involved in the dating process. For a teen’s first date, the first step will be an evening at home or joining in a family activity such as dinner, a movie, or a ball game.

This conveys that the couple is important and accountable to the family. If this goes well, group dating can be good, assuming the other people are trustworthy. Many parents give the green light to single dating at 16 if there is ongoing maturity and responsibility and if the relationship appears healthy. If so, you have the right to know specifics every time about the person, the activity and its location, etc. Agree about the expected time to arrive home (but value consistency and reliability over an absolute time limit).

8. Talk explicitly to your son(s) about respect for members of the opposite sex and about sexual responsibility. Embed these values deeply into his mind and heart: Never maneuver a woman into sexual encounters. When this behavior is depicted in media or by someone you know, let your son know that this is no way to treat any woman.

Never push a woman’s boundaries. If she says no to anything, that statement is final. Respect a woman’s body, integrity, and future, even if she is inviting intimacy. It is difficult for a teenage boy to hold his ground when a girl is giving the green light. Talk through this situation, including how he might decline the invitation and express respect for their future.

Approach any activity or relationship with the opposite sex with the intention of enhancing the other person's life and not leaving a wake of regrets. A sign of maturity is thinking in terms of protecting the other person's well-being rather than merely satisfying immediate needs or desires.

Source: (Source: The Focus on the Family Parents' Guide to Teen Health: Raising Physically and Emotionally Healthy Teens, (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 2001), 159-167)

6 Basic Truths of Sexuality for Teen Boys

1. Attraction to Girls is Natural. Attraction to the female body is a God-given desire. The temptation, however, is to fulfill these desires in a wrong way. It is just as wrong to be intimate with her outside of marriage as it is to stare lustfully at her and fantasize in your mind. Rather, think of her as a precious child of God.
2. Sex is Exhilarating. No doubt about it, sex is amazing. But once you travel down the freeway of premarital sex, you can't back up. If you want your purity back, then you'll have to exit that freeway entirely.
3. Sex is a Slippery Slope. Unless you ram a stick into the ground and declare your limitations, you'll lose footing on the slippery slope of sex. Teens often tell themselves, "It's okay because I really love her. Why wait until marriage? We're already married in our hearts. Sex isn't wrong for everyone." These rationalizations take you straight to sexual impurity.
4. God Has Standards of Sexual Behavior for His Children. God takes sexual standards seriously. Clearly, premarital intercourse is outside His standards, but he has others. Ephesians 5:3-4: Among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.
5. God's Love is not based upon Your Ability to Meet His Standards. God's love for you is unconditional. No matter what you do, He does not value you or love you less. He is chasing you desperately, aching to reach you.
6. Rules Are Part of a Vibrant Relationship with Christ. When you break His standards with sexual activity, the Lord doesn't reject you, but you can't be as close to Him. But when you obey Him, you move closer to Him. His rules aren't kill-joy regulations. They're set to allow you to live fully and to avoid dangerous traps.

Source: (Source: Stoeker, Every Young Man's Battle: Strategies for Victory in the Real World of Sexual Temptation (The Every Man Series) (Colorado Springs: Waterbrook Press, 2002), 16-21)