

“We live in a day when we must look back in order to move forward.”



KEEPING the CONNECTION

6 STEPS to keeping the family connected



“God created us and knows how we work. When we move from His order for the family, the family becomes disconnected.”

Steven Magill

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KEEPING THE CONNECTION
6 STEPS to Keeping the Family Connected
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All Scripture quotations taken from the King James Version of the Bible
Dedicated to my wife, who joins me in my life adventure.

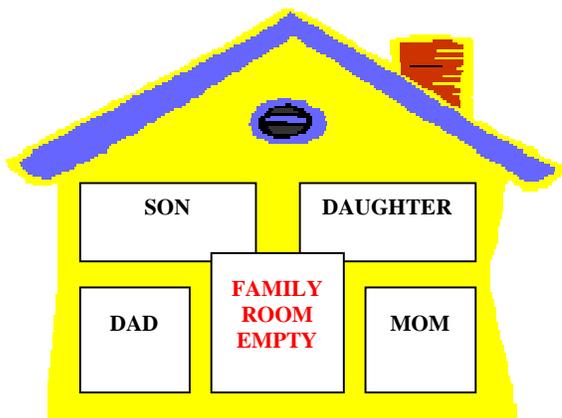
Chapter One

The Disconnected Family

Drastic Change

Karen came in from school, grabbed a sandwich, some milk and plopped down in front of the computer to instant message her friends and update her blog. Her brother, Tom, ran through the house excited over the new *Ransacked* CD he just purchased and entered his room, shut the door, and chilled out with his headphones on and volume blaring. Mom walks through the door after working seven hours on the job, says hi to everyone, grabs a bite to eat, gets ready for her craft night out with the girls and out the door she goes. Dad is working late and will be lucky to see anyone when he comes home later in the evening.

~



The family has shifted from togetherness in the family room to living as borders under one roof.

The above scenario is sadly real and is the direction that families have moved. Since the 1960's, family members moved toward total disconnect. Today family members too often live in separate worlds, living as borders under one roof, as illustrated to the left.

The family in the twenty-first century is a mere shadow of what it once was: both parents working, children away at school, and involvement in a number of extra curricular activities has caused family members to live

disconnected from each other though living in the same household.

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How did we find ourselves in this mess? There are several root changes that have impacted today's family.

ROOTS OF CHANGE

Roots of Change - 1

Movement From an Agricultural to Machine Age

The cultural changes that flowered in the 60's had their roots in the late 1800's when the machine age began to flourish. Prior to this time, America was an agricultural society and the family worked side-by-side, shoulder-to-shoulder taking care of the fields and running the household. There were little distractions in the way of entertainment and activities outside the home. All of life evolved around maintaining life. Each family member was aware of the role he/she played in keeping the home together. Whether they liked it or not, they fulfilled what they recognized as a necessity.

Roots of Change - 2

More Leisure Time & Mobility

As the machine age flourished, families found themselves with more leisure time and greater mobility. Dad and mom began to do more activities outside the home with people their own age. Children began to do the same. Out of this shift from family to friends and into more leisure and mobility developed the generation gap, dating, and the youth culture. Though throughout the first half of the twentieth century families were still doing many things together, they were becoming more and more disconnected and finally broke down in the early sixties. Today, the twenty-first century family is doing their own thing and going their own way, each with their own set of values and activities.

Roots of Change - 3

Other Changes Impacting Families

Other changes impacting families were urbanization, the ability to travel and live away from parents and siblings, the prosperity of our present age, and the

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ability to entertain ourselves with purchased items in the isolation of our home; as these increased family members became more disconnected.

Most of us are well aware of these problems within the family. The question is, “What can we do to solve them?” That is what this book is about. Beginning in the next chapter we will look at six steps to keeping the family connected.

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Chapter Two

The First Step

Reconnecting With Christianity

Judge McDaniels was of questionable moral character, loved strong drink and could and would curse up a storm with the best of them. He was aware of his shortcomings, made light of them, and never tried to change. Even so, you would not find him taking advantage of anyone, even to satisfy his own passions nor would he ever curse in front of a lady or where it was socially unacceptable. On the bench, he did not lean to his own understanding, but acknowledged a higher power as he opened the Bible in front of him and ordered the thief to repay the woman ten fold or face six months in jail.

~

In the days prior to the 1960's, not everyone was Christian, but Americans lived under the umbrella of Christianity where Christianity was the common law abided by all. This would change and culminate in the disintegration of Christianity in our culture. Today we face the daunting task of realigning our families to Christian values in the midst of a pagan America. It amazes me how we must relearn morals, values, and common courtesies that were once the norm of everyday living.

Here are six steps to help families reconnect with one another.

THE FIRST STEP: RECONNECTING WITH CHRISTIANITY

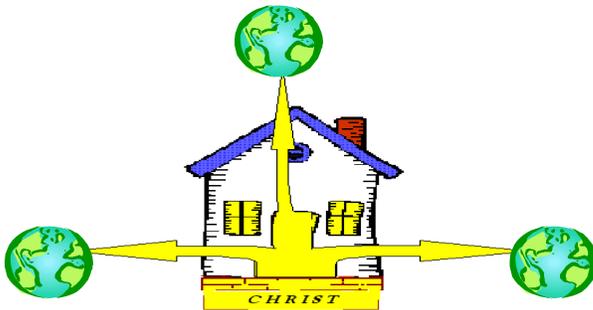
We live in a day when we must look back in order to move forward. This is not a new concept as Jeremiah the prophet encouraged the people of his day to do the same:

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“Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.” (Jeremiah 6:16)

We hear much talk about the new Christianity: its new music, its new preachers, its new doctrines, its new evangelism, that you think it's going through a major revolution...and it is...and it's not for the good. We must hold fast to the old values.

How far back must we look for the old values? Let's consider it in this way. The 60's bore the fruit of the practices of the 50's which was the fruit of the practices of the early 1900's which was the fruit of the practices of the 1800's and it keeps going all the way back to the first century. That is why when we read the writings of Christians in the 1900's, 1800's, 1700's, 1600's, etc., they all speak of sin overcoming their generation and their need for repentance and for returning to the old paths. Each generation witnesses, not the advancement of civilization, but the movement toward greater corruption and sin.



When a family is connected with Christianity, Christ goes out from the home into the larger culture.

When we ask, “How far back must we go?” we recognize that we must go back to the foundation that Christ, the apostles, and the prophets laid in the first century. We need the return of that old time religion, but not the sin laced Christianity of our grandmother or great, great grandparents, but we must go all the way back to the beginning of Christianity.

To return to the “old paths” requires that we reconnect with our Christian values and let Christ's teachings, not the latest theological fad or commentaries, lay the foundation for our home. When Christ is the foundation, his values will flow through each member and out from the family into all of life. (See the above illustration.)

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There is no other foundation that can truly reconnect the family, as indicated in 1 Corinthians 3:11: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Since Christ is where truth and life originates, we would be wise to go to the source and obey his teachings rather than listening to secondary sources. Matthew 7:24 encourages us in this way:

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock..."

The Apostle Paul encouraged Timothy concerning the importance of Scripture in this way:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

It is the teachings of Jesus, the Apostles, and the Prophets that must be the rule for families.

THE WORLD'S INFLUENCE



When a family is not connected with Christianity, the prevailing culture enters the home and distorts Christianity.

Because of the mass movement away from Christ's teachings, culture is moving into the Christian home through each family member and is distorting how Christianity is practiced. A watered down, carnal Christianity is the result. The values and teachings of Christ become darkened and unclear. (See illustration to the left)

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Our goal is not to be influenced by this world, but to transform our worldly ways. The world's influence keeps the family disconnected. Romans 12:2 encourages us in this way: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

The Apostle Matthew indicates that we are foolish to live in any other way:

"And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand..."
(Matthew 7:26)

IS CHRIST THE FOUNDATION?

Is Christ and the Bible the common denominator in your home? How are you developing common Christian values in your family? Here are some things you might consider:

1. Go to the Bible for answers.
2. Attend the same church as a family.
3. Have regular family worship.
4. Have meals together and pray at meals.
5. Pray as a family before going to bed.
6. Do evangelism together.
7. Serve others together.

Chapter Three

The Second Step

Reconnecting With Life

MULTITUDE OF DISTRACTIONS

Charles and his older sons wake up before the sun to begin the daily work. Charles' wife, daughters, and other children may get up at the same time or a little later to take care of the work to be done around the house. All of life centered on the work to be done in order to continue one's existence. What leisure time was left was spent in the evening and then the family retired for the night to do it all over again the following day. If the work was not done, there would not be food on the table, heat in the house, clothes for the kids.

~

Before disconnected families became a phenomenon, work was the order of the day instead of our present pursuit of pleasure, leisure, and convenience. When families stopped rising with the sun and going to bed with the night, so did families begin an unstoppable downward spiral. When the machine age ushered in fewer hours to work and more hours for pleasure, our focus turned from family toward self-gratification. Focus on self does not give room for family togetherness.

Today, each family member is pulled by commitments out of the home so that they have little, if any, time together. The father's heart is at his job, mom is either working or involved with out of home activities, the children's hearts are with their classmates, friends, and activities. Add to this the mind-numbing and soul-destroying distractions of music, television, the internet, texting, iPods, cell phones, and movies. It is no wonder that families have become so disconnected in our twenty-first century.

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ROBBING GOD THROUGH BUSYNESS

Family members are around each other, seldom meeting in the middle. We are so "busy" that we lose sight of our responsibilities before God. Often we are so busy for God that we don't have time to do His will. Even church activities rob God's plan for the family. We really need to reread Revelation two and three. Here we have six churches extremely busy for God, but headed for hell. The lesson? what we do in the name of Christ is not necessarily pleasing to God or in God's will. Busyness in Christ's name may just be distractions from hell.

GET RID OF "FAMILY TIME"

The "family time" concept is an indictment against our culture. We have become so disconnected that we find it necessary to find a way to connect with our families... and family time was created.

The goal is not to set aside a specific day and hour to "do something" together as a family, but to reorder our family so that all of life is lived and experienced in a "life context" versus an "activity context." Family time might be a good start for some families, but in the long run the family remains disconnected.

CONSIDER IF ACTIVITIES ARE KEEPING YOUR FAMILY DISCONNECTED?

Are the activities in your household pulling your family together or are they maintaining the disconnectedness of family life? How are you developing family life together? Here are some things you might consider to limit distractions and to *Keeping the Connection*.

1. Limit computer time.
2. Limit activities not with family.
3. Do meals together (the fixing, the setting, the cleanup)
4. Get rid of the dishwasher: make it a "family project."
5. Sit around and just talk with each other or read a book together.
6. Limit time alone in own room.
7. Are your modern conveniences keeping your family disconnected?

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You get the idea. Now look at your own family and ask yourself what you can do to *Keep the Connection*.

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Chapter Four

The Third Step

Reconnecting With God's Design

Imagine this scene. A young lady, after working at KFC for a number of years, begins to work at McDonalds. At KFC she was trained to place the chicken in a basket and deep fry it in hot grease. Without thinking, she took a box full of hamburger patties at her new job at McDonald's and placed them in a french fry basket and proceeded to deep fry them. The burgers burned to a crisp. She quickly realized that the structure she worked in at KFC does not work in the structure established by McDonalds.

~

Every business has a structure in which they operate to ensure that their business runs effectively to produce the desired product or service. It is the same with God. God also has an order/structure for all His creation: the sun, moon, stars, etc. and has also designed a specific order for families. Working within God's order reduces and eliminates conflicts, frustrations, and outright bickering and fighting. When operating outside of this structure, things do not run smoothly.

God's structure and order for a family is found in the following versus:

Ephesians 5:22, 25; 6:1: 22"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands....25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it....6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right."

1 Corinthians 11:3: " But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

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GOD'S ORDER FOR THE FAMILY

The below illustration shows the order God designed. This is the structure



God created to raise up godly seed for Him (Malachi 2:15).

God created us and knows how we work. When we move from His order for the family, the family becomes disconnected. The “Christian” family actually becomes non-Christian—heathen in their reaction to other family members.

When one or more family members live outside of God’s structure, tension, conflicts, bickering, fighting, and isolation rule the home.

THE STRUCTURE THAT GOD HAS ESTABLISHED

God – Creates Standards

The head of the structure is God, who created the standards. Like the owner of a business, God established the vision and direction for His people to live within.

God created all things and established how all things should operate. God designed us, created us, and established the standards for each of us to work under. As long as we are obedient to the laws God established there is peace in the home. When we do not live in obedience to God, peace disappears from

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the home. Each member's submission to God's structure releases freedom and peace in the home.

This concept is not one where God is ready to zap us when we do not live within His standards; it is one that recognizes that we are governed by laws. When those laws are broken, there are consequences. In the physical world there is a law that if you touch fire you will get burned. You get burned because you broke the physical law, not because the fire is patiently waiting to burn you. God has also established laws for the family to work within. These laws are for a families benefit. When a family member lives separate from these laws, conflicts, tensions, fusing, and fighting's take place: a family gets burned.

Christ – Reveals the Standards

Next in line in God's chain-of-command is Christ, who reveals God's standards. Like the president of a business, Christ reveals, enacts, and enforces the standards and directives of the owner.

It is Christ who reveals what God created. He made God's creation and standards known. John 1:1-4 makes this clear:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men."

Husbands – Embraces Standards

The husband is God's representative on earth who puts into action and enforces God's vision, direction, and standards in his family as the one directly accountable to God.

Husbands are like the vice president of a business. It is their responsibility to embrace the standards and pass them on to those under him. This is stated in 1 Corinthians 11:3:

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

It is the husband's responsibility to embrace God's revealed word/standards and to establish the vision and convictions for living out God's standards in the family. It is the husband's vision and convictions that lead the family.

This headship position is not a position that a man decides he will take upon himself—it is his whether he wants it or not. The color of a man's hair or the date of his birth is not in the power of a man to choose—neither is the position of headship that God has given to the man. A man might let his wife lead, but his lack of leadership will dominate the family. A man may be absent from the family, but his absence will dominate the family. There is a spiritual law that makes the man the head and he will dominate the family for either good or bad. It is a law that cannot change. Submitting to this law of headship is to submit to God and the health of the family.

Wives – Implements Standards

In the same way that Christ puts into action God's vision and plan, so does the wife put into action her husband's vision and plan for the family.

Wives submit to their husbands much as a manager submits to the vice president. It is her responsibility to put hands and feet to the wishes of the owner (God) as given to her by her husband.

Ephesians 5:22-24 encourages wives to: "...submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing."

The wife is also encouraged to: "...revere her husband" (Ephesians 5:33).

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The wives position is to support her husband's vision and to respect him without being critical, demeaning or demanding of him. To submit is not letting the husband step on the neck of, but recognizing the position that the husband has been given and submitting to his leadership. The wife is accountable to her husband even as her husband is accountable to Christ and Christ is accountable to God.

This position of submission for wives is the same as the position of headship for the husband—it cannot be changed. A woman will not find fulfillment through being the head. On the contrary, a sense of not achieving, not finding satisfaction will rule her and she will blame her husband when it is her own rebellion to God's law of submission that is at fault. There will be more peace in a heathen home where the wife submits to her husband than in a Christian home where the wife does not submit. This law of submission for the wife is an established law and cannot be changed. It is her position given by God because of Eve's disobedience. (Genesis 3:16)

Children – Obeys Standards

Children are like the mass of employees working for the business. Their duty is to obey the voice of their manager, not as slaves, but as one being trained to learn obedience and the way of God.

Ephesians 6:1-3 encourages children to: "...obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

It is the children's responsibility to learn obedience and honor through living under their parent's authority. This prepares them to obey and honor God and to live in the way He has established.

Here's a scary thought: Parent's are the visible representation of God to their children, ordained to train their children to obey. If children are to learn to submit to, respect, and obey God, they must first learn to submit to, respect and obey you. Your job is to train them to do that. Children are accountable to

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their parents and their obedience to God is dependent on their obedience to their parents.

THE PURPOSE FOR GOD’S ORDER

Purpose One: Produce Fruit for God’s Kingdom

God’s structure is established to accomplish His purpose. In the same way that a business is structured to produce the end product or service, God established His structure to produce sons and daughters for His eternal kingdom.

When each family member submits, without complaint, to God’s order freedom, contentment, and the ability to work through issues become a reality.

Purpose Two: Advance the Gospel

The family is central to God's plan to advance the gospel and to draw others to God's plan of salvation. When the heart of family members submit to God’s order, God works to spread His gospel and His kingdom through the generations. God's order makes it clear that the number one means for advancing the gospel is through the family.

Richard Baxter expresses this when he wrote in *The Practical Works of Richard Baxter* (p427):

“Family reformation is the easiest and the most likely way to a common reformation; at least to send many souls to heaven, and train up multitudes for God, if it reaches not to national reformation.”

Through the family we are to teach and train our children to fear God so that they will grow to be godly adults who will also train their children to fear God. God's number one method of evangelism and creating a Godly people is through the family.

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RECONNECTING WITH GOD'S ROLE FOR FAMILY MEMBERS

A connected family is one where each member submits to the role given to them, recognizing this as submitting to and obeying God as indicated by Ephesians 5:21:

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God."

Submission is recognizing the position given to a person and submitting to their leadership.

There should not be any reason for moving from God's order. What you seek to accomplish outside this structure will only cause more problems, more conflict, and more worry. Consider such a movement from God's order as the devil's deception; especially in our times today...times in which I am convinced are the last of the last days.

A FEW REMINDERS

1. The husband *is* the head, not becoming or taking the position of head.
2. The wife *is* submissive to her husband, not becoming or taking the position of submission.
3. Even if you are able to "do it better," things will not go better if you fulfill a role that is not yours: you are headed for disaster.
4. Even if your husband, wife, or parents are total idiots or sinners, your duty is to obey, honor, and not usurp the leadership from the one to whom God has given it.
5. Submission does not mean submission to sin. The dividing line is when the one we submit to encourages us to sin. A difference in opinion and practice usually does not encourage toward sin.

God created us. He designed the order and roles for each of us. Does He know best or doesn't He?

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Chapter Five

The Fourth Step

Reconnecting with God's Design for Men: *Created to be Her Head*

In his book, *Family Man...Family Leader (p18)*, Philip Lancaster wrote concerning the retreat of men from their leadership roles:

“Recent generations of men have retreated from their calling to be patriarchs [Family Leaders], to provide the spiritual direction for home and society. The male leadership role has been relegated merely to the spheres of politics and business. Men have abandoned the truly formative institutions of civilization. They have left the home, the education of children, and most of the work of the church to women, and they have also failed to give any effective moral direction to the political and commercial spheres which they continue to lead.”

Philip expresses a concern that dominates families today—men do not lead the families and families are paying the price.

MEN CAN RECONNECT BY RECOGNIZING THAT THEY ARE DIFFERENT THAN WOMEN.

To reconnect with their families, men must step outside of the cultures idea that men and women are equal in every dimension and recognize that God has created men and women vastly different. As men recognize their differences, they understand they are designed for specific tasks which, if relinquished, will only hinder the family.

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I AM MAN

A man was created and ordained for his position as a man. It is not a position he can put on or put off; he is the man and his influence will be known whether he is a poor man or an ideal man; whether he is absent or present. (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23) A truly fulfilled man is one who is comfortable being as God designed him: created to be the head of the family.

A man is accountable directly to God. Because of man's position before God, men have an inborn restlessness that causes them to search for God. They have a yearning to know God and will never find satisfaction with life until they find God. A man's full satisfaction and desire can only be fulfilled through his relationship with Jesus Christ.

A man wants to please his wife. Genesis 2:24 speaks of man leaving his father and mother and cleaving to his wife, indicating also a desire to please his wife. This is also indicated in 1 Corinthians 7:33:

“But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please *his* wife.”

Because of this desire, men can be easily swayed by their wives and removed from what they know should be done. Examples of this swaying are found with Adam who was swayed by Eve, ate the fruit and brought sin into the world (Genesis 3:17). Abraham was swayed by Sarah, had children by Hagar, and we live with the conflict between Isaac and Ishmael today (Genesis 16:2-3). Moses was told by God to circumcise his son, but his wife opposed this; Moses said he wouldn't do it and God almost killed him (Exodus 4:24-25). Samson was tempted and swayed by women (Judges 16). Solomon was also tempted and swayed as he built temples to heathen God's to please his wives (1 Kings 11:1-4). Men must lead by holding firm to God's voice to them. This desire to please his wife also creates the need to be respected by her. Lack of respect will cause a man to become a stone-wall and/or withdraw love from his wife and spend his time at work or in the workshop.

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A man is able to isolate emotions from intellect. A man may appear to be emotionless and uncaring toward his wife when she is reaching out for understanding. Wives often accuse their husbands of being unloving when they are actually detached from the emotional, but no less loving.

A man is aggressive and goal oriented. It is easy for a man to focus on a goal and appear too firm and unconcerned about others.

These differences equip men for their role as provider, protector, and leader of the family. In order to lead, men must have the ability to step outside a situation.

RECONNECTING WITH GOD'S DESIGN FOR MEN

Philip Lancaster wrote that

“Patriarchs [Family Leaders] are men who walk with God and fear Him only, who accept responsibility for leadership, and who follow the example of Jesus who led through service. God's chosen nation Israel was founded by the patriarchs. America was set on its blessed course by Christian patriarchs. By God's grace we, too, can become godly patriarchs so that succeeding generations may live under a blessing instead of a curse.” (*Family Man...Family Leader* (p19))

Since men are under the authority of Christ, they are to lead their families by embracing God's standards revealed through Jesus and lead following Christ's example.

FOLLOWING CHRIST'S EXAMPLE

In accepting their responsibility for leadership men are to accept the leadership of Christ and follow his example of leadership.

Men are to...

1. Live Under the Authority of God.

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"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." (John 5:30)

Temptation: to live independent of anyone and anything.

2. Be the Spiritual Leader

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word..." (Ephesians 5:25-26)

It is a man's responsibility to "sanctify" our wives in the same way that Christ sanctified the church. To Sanctify is to *set apart*. We are to set apart and esteem our wives above anything else.

Men are also responsible for keeping our wives clean. We do this by obeying the word in our life and applying the word to our wives who will pass down the word through the family. This setting apart and sharing of God's word is motivated by love for her.

Temptation: to let the wife be the spiritual head.

3. Be a Friend and Companion

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John 15:14)

"Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant." (Malachi 2:14)

"His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." (Song of Solomon 5:16)

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Temptation: To seek out friends and activities outside the home. A husband who is a companion to his wife seeks out his wife spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, socially, and sexually.

4. Communicate.

"Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." (John 15:15)

Temptation: to stone wall, clam up, not talk.

5. Serve.

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)

Temptation: Hang out in the garage all day doing our own thing.

6. Be Understanding.

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Hebrews 4:15)

"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." (1 Peter 3:7)

Temptation: Become irritated, impatient, angry, or harsh.

Part of our not loving our wives is because we do not understand the differences between us and them.

7. Honor.

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"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." (1 Peter 3:7)

Temptation: To withdraw our affection and love.

8. Refuse to Use Force

"I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them." (Hosea 11:4)

Temptation: Exerting force and being harsh.

RECONNECTING WITH MAN'S TWO GREATEST TEMPTATIONS

As a husband it is important to be alert to the two great temptations of marriage.

The First Great Temptation: Not to Love His Wife

The first great temptation of a man is to not love his wife. Ephesians 5:25 encourages the husband to "...love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it...."

Since God commands the man to "love his wife," the Devil will do everything he can to cause the man to not love his wife as he should.

The command is given because it is a natural tendency for a man not to give the love his wife needs. Wives have been designed to nurture and to love and have the need to know that they are loved: not just with words, but words backed up with action. Not just when it is convenient, but unconditionally.

To love is an act of the will. It is to choose to love your wife.

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The Second Great Temptation: Being Too Harsh With Children

The second great temptation of a man is to provoke his children to anger. Ephesians 6:4 encourages fathers to, "...provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

Colossians 3:21 also echoes this command: "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."

Men are by nature firm and aggressive. When it comes to dealing with the children, men need to be aware of this tendency and learn to restrain this side of their nature.

Men, you have a tremendous responsibility and opportunity to set the pace, to be an example in your home, your church, your community, and your world.

MEN, YOU ARE ACCOUNTABLE

Even though Eve was the first to sin, Adam was held accountable for her sin. After their sin, Adam is the one that God comes to and demands an accounting of his actions (Genesis 3:9, 11). The head is the one who must answer for all those he is responsible for. How would your involvement with your family be different if God had an appointment for you on June 1st at 10:00 a.m. to come and talk with Him about what is happening in your family and what you are doing to lead it? The bottom line is that you do have an appointment with God in His office face-to-face.

ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS FOR LEADING THE FAMILY

1. Are you aware of the temptations your wife and children are facing?
2. Are you taking the initiative to make things happen in your family or are you waiting for things to happen? Are you setting the agenda, asking the questions, requiring accountability?

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3. Are you afraid you might be wrong? Afraid of what your wife and children might think? Afraid that the family might not follow your leadership? Philip Lancaster addresses these fears when he wrote:

"One sure mark of a leader is his willingness to take actions that bring him under attack from those who don't have this understanding of what it means to please God. The family leader is a man of courage because he fears God." (*Family Man, Family Leader* p75)
4. Are you able to look beyond immediate concerns to the future implications of today's decisions? Concerning your decisions about family worship, your prayer life, choice of vocation, where you live, your church, how you educate, friends, entertainment, driving privileges, do you consider the long term implications and how they will shape your children and their children for generations to come?
5. Are you aware that you are responsible before God for your family? You are responsible for everything that happens in your home: For everything that your wife and children will do or not do.

Chapter Six

The Fifth Step

Reconnecting with God's Design for Women:
Created to be His Help Meet

WOMEN CAN RECONNECT BY RECOGNIZING THAT THEY ARE DIFFERENT THAN MEN.

To reconnect with their families, women must step outside of the cultures idea that men and women are equal in every dimension and recognize that God has created men and women vastly different. As women recognize their differences, they understand they are designed for specific tasks which, if relinquished, will only hinder the family.

As women recognize their differences, they understand they are designed for specific tasks which, if embraced, will keep the family connected.

I AM WOMAN

A woman was created and ordained for her position as a woman. She is created to be the husband's help meet to help him achieve his visions and goals. She sets aside her visions for his; her gods for his gods (Genesis 2:18). It is hard for today's feminized world to accept the idea that a woman is created as a help-meet to the man.

A woman is accountable to and under the authority of her husband. Before Eve sinned, she was equal to Adam; after Eve sinned she was placed under Adam as the weaker vessel, to be ruled by him (Genesis 3:16). Because of this position, a wife is accountable to her husband. She is to be submissive to her husband (1 Peter 3:1-2; Ephesians 5:22-24; Colossians 3:18) and obedient to him (1 Peter 3:6).

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A woman's desire is toward her husband. A husband has the need to cleave and attach himself to his wife physically; the wife has the need to desire and have the emotional assurance that she is loved. She wants to feel loved by him, be needed, and hear words of appreciation by him.

A woman is emotional and has been created to be the nurturer and care taker of the home. She sees that the family has their needs taken care of. If she is not careful, a wife's emotional nature can cause her to think her unemotional husband is unloving and will be critical, selfish, and demeaning toward him.

A woman needs to be loved. A wife can become critical, nagging, and withdraw her love from her husband when she feels unloved.

These differences equip women for their role as help meets, nurturers, comforters, and keepers of the home. In order to fulfill her role, women must be emotionally connected with the situation.

Because women are different from men, it is easy for wives to look upon their husbands as being filled with pride, stubborn, and unloving. On the flip side, it is easy for husbands to see their wives as being critical and selfish.

RECONNECTING WITH GOD'S DESIGN FOR WOMEN

Women are to lead their family by supporting the vision and direction of her husband. When a woman marries a man, she agrees to make his gods her gods; his life her life; his goals, her goals. Here are some ways that can be done.

Women are to be:

1. A Help Meet

“And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him” (Genesis 2:18)

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“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.” (Ecclesiastics 4:9-10)

A help meet is a woman who is able to *help* her husband *meet* his vision and goal. A help meet helps her husband achieve his dreams and visions which now become hers.

Debbie Pearl wrote in *Created to be His Help Meet* (p21) of the woman’s role:

“You are equipped in every way to be your man’s helper. You are inferior to none as long as you function within your created nature, for no man can do your job, and no man is complete without his wife. You were created to make him complete, not to seek personal fulfillment parallel to him. A woman trying to function like a man is as ridiculous as a man trying to be like a woman. A unisex society is a senseless society—a society dangerously out of order.”

Debbie also wrote:

“God made you to be a help meet to your husband so you can bolster him, making him more productive and efficient at whatever he chooses to do. You are not on the board of directors with an equal vote. You have no authority to set the agenda. But if he can trust you, he will make you his closest advisor, his confidant, his press secretary, his head of state, his vice-president, his ambassador, his public relations expert, maybe even his speech writer—all at his discretion.” (Created To Be His Help Meet p23)

Temptation: not to be the help meet, instead expecting her husband to help her with her vision and goals for life.

2. Virtuous.

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“Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.” (Proverbs 31:10, 11)

A virtuous wife is one who possesses strength and substance. The image is of the strength of an army. The rest of Proverbs thirty-one explains the characteristics that make a wife a woman of strength and substance, revealing her to be confident, hardworking, creative, and resourceful. Take time to read Proverbs 31.

Temptation: to fall into the role of a frail and sickly woman. Some women think wrongly that frailty is a positive womanly trait.

3. Prudent.

“House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD.” (Proverbs 19:14)

A prudent wife is one filled with wisdom and understanding, skillful, able to instruct, teach, and guide deliberately and consciously.

Temptation: to guide her family with emotion, guilt, and impulse instead of prudence.

4. Submissive.

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:22)

A submissive wife recognizes her husband’s role and her own role in the family, supports her husband and is diligent in accomplishing her tasks. She gives her heart to her husband’s vision and direction. Submission is nothing more than giving your heart to your husband’s vision and leadership recognizing that is the position God has given him.

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Temptation: to lead, to set the vision, and to set the direction for the family.

5. A Companion & Friend.

“Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant.” (Malachi 2:14)

“His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.” (Song of Solomon 5:16)

A wife, who is a companion to her husband, seeks out her husband spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, socially, and sexually.

Temptation: to seek companionship in other relationships and activities instead of with the husband. Your husband is to be first priority even before the children. You are joined as one with your husband. Your children will be with you only until the day they are released from the family. Your husband is your life partner.

6. A Titus Two wife.

These verses in Titus two explain what a woman of God is to be:

“The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” (Titus 2:3-5)

Temptation: to depart from God’s structure and to live life according to what she thinks is best, independent of, even contrary to her husband. In this regard Debbie Pearl wrote:

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“For a mother to leave her command post, even though the need at another post seems greater, the Word of God will be blasphemed.”
(*Created To Be His Help Meet* p26)

RECONNECTING WITH A WOMAN’S TWO GREATEST TEMPTATIONS

As a wife, it is important to be alert to the two great temptations of marriage:

The First Great Temptation: To Not Reverence Her Husband

The first great temptation is to dishonor your husband. This is usually revealed through being critical, nagging, disrespectful, and putting down your husband. Ephesians 5:33 encourages the wife to: "... see that she reverence her husband."

The command is for the wife to reverence her husband. A wife’s natural tendency is not to give the respect her husband needs. Husbands are designed to provide for and protect their spouse. They have the need to know that they are respected: not just with words, but also with action. *Not just when it is convenient, but unconditionally.*

To reverence is an act of the will. It is to choose to trust your husband with a high degree of regard and awe.

The Second Great Temptation: To Lead the Family

The second great temptation of a wife is to rule over her husband and to take over the leadership of the family. This can take place by always giving suggestions, making the plans, and showing disapproval. Children can be subtly persuaded that the head of the house is really not the head and more of a hindrance as mom meets the eyes of the children and silently communicates her disapproval or disagreement.

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Genesis 3:16 informs us: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."

God designed the husband to lead the family through setting the vision and direction. However, the devil seeks to destroy God's order and tempts the wife to take the leadership. Often women will justify their taking the leadership by saying something like: "Men won't take the leadership so the women have to." Often what is really meant is that the husband doesn't want to do it her way, so she has to step in.

Chapter Seven

The Sixth Step

Reconnecting With God's Design for Parenting

GOAL OF PARENTING: TO RAISE UP GODLY SEED

What a privilege we have to raise up children for God. Parents! Those children you have under your care are not yours—you have been entrusted with them to raise to love and obey God...now that sends shivers up and down my spine. What an awesome responsibility we have as parents



Malachi 2:15 speaks of this in this way:

"And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."

Our job is to nourish the godly seed entrusted to us so that a godly plant might bloom in God's kingdom.

PRE-REQUISITES TO PARENTING

The First Pre-Requisite: Understand That the Bible Is Sufficient

Before you can put your hand to the plow of child rearing, you must first understand that the Bible is sufficient for all your training. In it you have all you need to teach about God, this life, and the eternal life to come.

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Moses spoke in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 of our responsibility to teach God's word:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

In Ephesians 6:4 Paul spoke of our responsibility to raise our children immersed in God's care and warnings and rebuke:

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

In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 Paul makes it clear that God's word is all we need to teach, to correct, to discipline, and to instruct in the way of God:

“All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

In Proverbs 9:10 the writer spoke of how understanding comes through the knowledge of God:

“The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”

Training Should Start with the Fear of God

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The following verses tell us that wisdom and knowledge originates and is obtained from the *fear of the Lord*:

Psalm 111:10: “The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments*: his praise endureth for ever.” (See also Proverbs 9:10)

Proverbs 1:7: “The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.”

Since wisdom and knowledge is received from the fear of God, the raising of our children should begin by laying the foundation of the fear of God using God’s word as our text book. Without the strong foundation of the fear of God, knowledge will only produce arrogance and selfishness or “good” people who never see their need of salvation.

Not only is the fear of the Lord the beginning of knowledge and wisdom, it also:

- Is pure and the only thing that will last forever: “The fear of the LORD *is* clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD *are* true *and* righteous altogether.” (Psalm 19:9)
- Brings good understanding: “The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments*: his praise endureth for ever.” (Psalm 111:10)
- Brings life and life in its fullness: “The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.” (Proverbs 14:27)
- Gives stability and strength for life: “And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, *and* strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD *is* his treasure.” (Isaiah 33:6)
- Is the key to the treasures of salvation and wisdom: “ And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, *and* strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD *is* his treasure.”

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The bottom line is, we do not need all the latest books and methods of teaching our children, we only need to teach God's word, not as allegory or moral teaching, but as it is written. Lay the foundation of the fear of God and a child will not lack in wisdom, understanding, moral uprightness, and an overall enjoyment of life. Without this fear, arrogance, laziness, and selfishness will be the fruit.

The eternal question is: Do we believe the Bible is God's word and do we believe that it alone can truly educate God's children entrusted to us? Since we are raising children for God, we must make the things of God first priority.

The Second Pre-Requisite: The Parent Is To Be Obedient To God

Psalm 103:17-18 is clear that when the parent is obedient, God's mercy will be passed down to their children and grandchildren:

“But the mercy of the LORD *is* from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children; To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.”

We cannot expect our children to live our teaching if we do not live it. To teach one thing and then live in a manner opposite will corrupt the teaching so that God's way is not embraced. To truly teach our children God's way, we must have His words engrafted in our heart. God's engrafted word is what transforms our attitudes, words and behavior. Our heart teaches our children much more than our teaching, training, and discipline.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 speaks of this in these words:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the

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way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.”

GROWING A CHILD

To raise up a healthy, godly child is not much different than growing a healthy garden: you need to plant the seed, then nurture, weed, nurture, weed, nurture, weed, nurture, weed...I think you get the point. To raise up godly children, we need to teach (plant), train (nurture), and discipline (weed) and then continue the process for as long as it takes.

Teach Our Children

Teaching is to plant the seeds of instruction into the soil of the child. Teaching alone does not train a child any more than planting a tomato seed and leaving it alone to grow on its own. I've heard parents say so many times: “I've told him a hundred times and he still doesn't do it right.” To be effective, our teaching must be coupled with training and discipline. (We will look at these in the next section.) Too many times we expect a young, undisciplined, sinful child by nature to follow through on our verbal teaching when he is not yet ready to fly solo. We would think it foolish to verbally teach someone about the mechanics of flying an airplane and then expect him to fly it. We must remember that our children are just starting out in life and everything is new and fresh. To teach them to do simple tasks is as big to them as flying a plane is to us.

What are we to teach our children? God's word is first priority and the main component of educating children God's way. Here is how Deuteronomy 6:5-9 puts it:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them

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when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. (See also Deuteronomy 4:9 and Psalm 78:1-8)

It is God's word that tells us who God is and what He has done for us; it tells us where we came from, where we are going, and how to live life; it teaches us science, history, mathematics, language arts, and all that is necessary for wisdom and understanding and for living this life and entering the life to come. We can actually teach our children from the Bible alone and our children will not be hindered or left behind in any way.

Who is responsible for making sure the children are being taught God's word? It is the father. As the head of the family, the father will be held accountable though his wife may do the actual teaching (Ephesians 5:23). In Ephesians 6:4 the father is encouraged to:

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

Also, Isaiah 38:19 reveals:

“The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I *do* this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth.”

Train Our Children

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

Training is the second part of raising up children for God. Once a child is taught, he then needs to see how it is experienced in everyday living. This is done through the everyday living of life as parent and child walk together through life: relaxing in the home, walking side-by-side, when going to bed, when working, and through whatever the day may bring. Children left to

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interpret teaching on their own will have an open window to error and wrong behavior. A child left to teach himself will be trouble (Proverbs 29:15) and a window left open will give the devil opportunity to kill, steal, and destroy any seed you have planted (John 10:10).

Training is the most important part of raising children. Teaching does not illustrate through life experience what a parent has taught and the child is left without understanding; discipline without training leaves a child feeling unfairly or harshly punished. Patiently training as you live life together from morning to night is the key to raising Godly seed for God. Children are an apprentice to parents as they live life together.

What it Means to Train Up

In Webster's Dictionary of 1828, the definition of "train" is to "draw along." The sense of "drawing" in child training is to pull along and to be actively involved in making sure that a child is moving in the right direction. This has the same sense as Deuteronomy 6:6-7 which encourages parents to teach God's commands when they: "...talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

In today's culture, to "train" has a passive sense where we instruct and then expect a child to follow through on our instructions. The Biblical sense is to train, not by instruction alone, but by living life along side our child in the day to day routine of life.

Debbie Pearl, in her book *Created to Be His Help Meet* (p183), writes:

"Training up a child means showing them how to: make corn tortillas, pedal a tricycle, make up a bed, put toys away, cook for forty people in one hour, read, demonstrate respect for others, and a thousand other wonderful things."

Debbie also makes this important point:

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"Parent's train up their children by dedicating themselves, their time, and their children to that which God desires for them to become as an adult." --*Created to Be His Help Meet p-182*

Both statements stress that to train is to be actively involved in the life of your child.

Three Aspects of Training

Webster's 1828 Dictionary gives the following three uses of the word "train" which helps us to understand how to train up our children:

One: The Railroad Train



The word train is used for the long line of railroad cars pulled along by a locomotive. The image is that of being pulled along behind. As parents we want to pull our children along through life until they have the skills to move through life on their own.

We pull our children by having them with us in our day-to-day life: "As we get up, walk along the way, go to bed..." Where we go and what we do, so goes our children. Someone once said that what a parent does in moderation, the child will do in excess. Who says school has to be setting behind a desk all day or has to be a teacher/pupil environment? Let your child learn by living life with you. Let them be an apprentice to you.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. What happens if the engine becomes disconnected from its cars?
2. What happens if the engine is sluggish? Fast? Does not run?
3. What happens if the engine jumps off the tracks?

Two: The Gardening Train



In gardening, the word train means to form to a proper shape by growth, looping, or pruning, such as is done with young trees. As parents, we are to shape our children by growth

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(training, formal training, responsibility), looping (shaping with restraints behavior, attitudes, etc. that are not growing straight), and pruning (removing out of our child's life anything that hinders, harms, or distorts their growth).

We shape our children through the external stimulus we expose them to. What are they watching, listening, and hearing? Who are their friends and what activities are they involved with? Are you stretching your children in their school, or are you letting them do what comes easy and natural for them.

Ask yourself these questions:

1. What happens if a new tree does not receive the proper nutrients?
2. What happens if a young crooked tree is not straightened?
3. What happens if a tree is not pruned?

Three: The Mining Train



In mining the word train means to trace a lode or any mineral that has appeared to its head. The mineral that appears is only a sample of what is behind it. Our children will exhibit gifts, abilities, and interests in small ways. It is our task to dig out any storehouse of treasure that may not be seen. It is our task to trace these interests to a possible deposit of treasure. A child cannot come to this on his or her own—you and I must dig this out of them through our training. Don't let your child's wants and desires dictate what you think is best for their development. I repeat. Don't let your child's wants and desires dictate what you think is best for their growth.

We dig out our children's wealth through putting our hands to a shovel, a pick and getting our hands dirty as we draw out the great treasures of our child's personality. If we don't take the time, remember: peer pressure will with results not in line with God's objectives.

When our girls showed ability in piano and singing, we hired a piano and vocal teacher. When one of our daughters wanted to quit piano, we had her continue and she has won many awards for her efforts.

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Ask yourself these questions:

1. What happens if a miner does not dig?
2. What happens if a miner gives up too soon?
3. What happens if a miner is satisfied with only what he sees?

The Purpose of Training

The purpose of our pulling along, pruning, and digging is to teach and train our children in the way of God in preparation for their leaving home. We are to teach them God's written word and train them to live their lives according to God's direction. When son's are ready to join with their wives, and daughters are ready to be given to their husbands, they will then be prepared to raise up children for God's kingdom.



CAUTION!

*Training requires patience, time, and gentleness.
To neglect these is to create miserable circumstances
for you and your child.*

DISCIPLINE OUR CHILDREN

Discipline is that part of training that does not appeal to a child. It is used to let the child know that certain behavior leads to painful consequences. If they do not understand this concept, they might grow up without the fear of God and enter the hell to come. Keep in mind that discipline does not always change behavior, but it does teach that consequences follow unacceptable behavior. It is better to learn this now than on the day when the child meets God face to face.

Too many times parents act as if discipline and reprimand are the most important part of training. Discipline alone will not shape positive character. Too much discipline can provoke a child to be angry and more of a problem. No amount of discipline can make up for lack of patient instruction. When a child does not respond to discipline, there are other issues going on that a parent needs to look at. Too many times the cause is with the parent and not the child. Too many times the parent is impatient, irritated, or angry though

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he/she is doing everything else correctly. The result: a child that is responding opposite of what is desired.

Three Elements of Discipline

First Element: Discipline with Firmness.

Firmness is not harshness. Harshness comes from a bad spirit in the parent and is revealed toward the child with lashing out at the child, impatience, and unkindness, even yelling and screaming. Firmness is not an impatient, harsh, or unkind spirit, but is when a parent lets their yes be yes and their no be no. Once you say you are going to do or not do something, follow through with it and don't change your mind. You must be firm and unmovable. (Matthew 5:37)

Second Element: Discipline with Consistency.

Too many times parents will threaten a child and even yell and scream at them many times to do something—that is a waste of time and does nothing to train your child to do what you expect. To be consistent is to ask your child to do something once, after they've been trained, and then follow through with the discipline and not with more threats or yelling and screaming. Effective discipline is done with calmness and never with anger or impatience. The rod should not be used except for overt rebellion or defiance.

Third Element: Discipline with Love.

It is important for your child to know that you love them even when they do wrong. If you discipline with fire in your eyes and anger in your voice and then try to balance that by hugging them and telling them you love them, they will never know your love because your actions and tone and emotions reveal the opposite. Show your child you love them as you discipline them with patience and kindness and firmness. Harshness and love does not equal love. Patience and love = love.

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It is important to remember that a child acts out according to how they have been trained. Without firmness, consistency, and love, a child is trained to be what frustrates the parent to high heaven.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Consideration 1: The Nature of a Child

A child is in need of teaching, training and discipline from the moment he/she appears out of the womb. By nature a child is born a sinner and will know how to lie, deceive, manipulate, get angry, be impatient, and express his natural sinful self; according to Proverbs 22:15 this is called foolishness that is bound up in the heart of the child. It is the parent's responsibility to shape this sinful nature after the nature of God. To do this requires teaching, training, and discipline.

Consideration 2: Teaching, Training, and Discipline does not Replace Regeneration.

Our ultimate goal is that our children will also embrace God, fear God, and live in obedience to Him. Discipline and the consequence of wrong doing may keep a child acting in acceptable ways, but can do nothing to save a child from God's wrath and punishment to hell. Keep this goal always before you; without salvation, nothing else matters.

Consideration 3: The Rod is not Teaching or Training.

Too many times parents will use the rod as a means of teaching and training. The rod is not to be used for this purpose. It is the means for executing punishment upon a rebellious or defiant spirit. A child who is constantly spanked will eventually not respond to the spanking and often continues in the wrong behavior even more than before.

Here are a few verses concerning the use of the rod:

Proverbs 13:24: He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

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Proverbs 19:18: Hasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

Proverbs 22:15: Foolishness *is* bound in the heart of a child; *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Proverbs 23:13-14: Withhold not correction from the child: for *if* thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell.

Consideration 4: Children are not to Lead the Family.



The great danger in parenting today is to let the children lead by letting family life evolve around the children instead of the vision of the parents. It is good for husbands and wives to remember:

1. You are raising children to leave the nest; your spouse is for life.
2. You are one with your spouse; the authority and instructor for your children.
3. Children are to learn to live life by being apprentices to their parents.
4. Children's lives are to evolve around the parent's lives; not the parent's around the children's.
5. Children are to be autonomous from the parent; husbands and wives are to be dependent on one another as the finger is dependent on the hand.
6. Your full attention is to be reserved for your spouse; it is possible to give too much attention to the children, thereby neglecting the spouse and hindering the children.

Some parents think they are sacrificing greatly for their children when their lives evolve around their children. In reality, the child is being hindered, not

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learning to truly give themselves in love and service to the one they have become one with. Since the marriage relationship represents Christ's relationship with His people, children are hindered from understanding Christ's relationship with them when a parent is child focused and not spouse focused.

Consideration 5: Preparing Children to Leave the Nest

One of our goals for parenting is to prepare our children to start godly families of their own.

We want to prepare our sons to leave home to provide for their own families and to raise up Godly seed.



Matthew speaks of this in Matthew 19:5 and Paul in Ephesians 5:31 in the following ways:

"...For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? (Matthew 19:5)

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh."
(Ephesians 5:31)

We want to prepare our daughters to be ready to be given to the authority of their husbands to support his vision and raise up Godly seed for him.

Consideration 6: Children are not Equipped for Independence.

As much as children would like to think they are ready for independence, they are not as long as the sin nature is in control and the child is ruled by wants and desires. Until the child truly lives for God, they are not ready to live independently.

Perhaps a rule of thumb is that grown children are to be fully independent; older children to be quasi-independent; and younger children are to be fully

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dependent. Children, and even older children and adults, who are ruled by their sinful nature, will sin when given independence.

6 STEPS to keeping the family connected

Chapter Eight

An Activity Chart

The activity in the house and extra curricular activity outside the home either pulls you closer as a family or pulls you apart. On the chart below, list the activity your family is involved with and ask if it is good, maybe o.k., or not o.k. in keeping your family connected.

 Activity that is not family oriented should be highly suspect.

Ask yourself: 1) Is it necessary for the development of your child? 2) Is it an activity that leads your child further from God and family?

 Activity that is family oriented but not life oriented should be questioned.

 An activity that is family oriented, life oriented, and spurs your child to develop their natural abilities, spiritual gifts, and relationship with God.

ACTIVITY	 YES	 ???	 NO

Resources

www.nogreaterjoy.org

Created to be His Help Meet by Debbie Pearl
No Greater Joy Volume 1 by Michael and Debbie Pearl
No Greater Joy Volume 2 by Michael and Debbie Pearl

www.visionforum.com

Family Man...Family Leader by Philip Lancaster.
Reforming Marriage by Douglas Wilson.

www.grandstaffministries.com

Daughter's of Sarah by Genevieve M. White.
Sons of Abraham by Walter F. White.