

A House Built By God

“By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; and by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.”
Proverbs 24:3-4

On the fifth day of God’s creation, He filled the oceans with sea life, making it swarm with fruitful life, but it was not good enough. The next day He made man and all the dry land creatures that breathe oxygen and exhale CO₂. There was but one problem: He made only one man. He said, *“It is not good that the man should be alone.”* He made the woman so that he and she could form a family and fill the earth with the creature that He loved the most, mankind. The ultimate expression of that love is found in His ideal of the godly home. One of the most beautiful sounds on this earth is the laughter of children. The sound of children playing in the yard or in the street is the sound of a neighborhood that is still alive. We take much for granted. Happy families are no accident. From beginning to end, God has a plan. He is our Creator and Judge. He knows what is best for the men and women that He created.

Lately, I have been reflecting on the fundamental role that the home plays in our society, the church, and the nation. I grieve that many homes are crumbling before our eyes. Our godless culture is breaking down the most fundamental unit of society, the home. Strong, godly, and healthy homes are the only hope for the survival of our people. The home is the labo-

ratory and the incubation chamber for the next generations of our nation. The identity of our culture is found in the character of our homes.

One of the most damaging factors in the break-down of our homes is fornication, sexual intimacy outside of divinely authorized marriage. Our godless culture accepts the widespread practice of couples living together, even raising children, without the holy bonds and commitment of marriage. These couples give many excuses for not getting married. The truth is they do not want the lifetime commitment! They boast about their love for each other, but they insist on defiling that love by fornication, mocking the public marriage contract that would render their union holy before both God and man. Our culture not only accepts this arrangement but celebrates it. It is outrageous! So, if they genuinely love each other and want to spend the rest of their lives together, like they claim, why don't they get married? When one raises such a question, they stutter or keep silent. But the truth is they are not truly committed to each other and their vows. They know they can get out of the relationship without the legal complications of a marriage license. Such relationships do not usually last. They do not last because they willfully ignore and disrespect God's laws on sexual morality and His principles of righteousness. I must stress that living together or being engaged as husband and wife outside of marriage is fornication or sexual immorality in God's Law, His Word. It is condemned in the Bible and brings the wrath of God (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-5; Col. 3:5-6; Rev. 21:8). Those who practice living in such sinful relationships will not be in heaven. They will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. They bluntly insult such a standard or principle of morality, saying that Bible morality is outdated and old-fashioned. *But guess what?* God's laws, His Word, never change. It is just as relevant today as when it was first written!

When children are born out of wedlock, they are handicapped both socially and morally. When they grow up without the godly example of a faithful dad married to their mom, they are ill-equipped to establish a stable family in which to raise their own children. They form another dysfunctional home. The parents pass their sinful behavior onto their children, who likewise live in fornication. The cycle continues generation after generation. These sins of immorality bear many terrible consequences. *So, what happens then to a society or nation where there is no fear of God, their young engage in sexual immorality out of wedlock, and reject God's marital vows?* Nothing but chaos and collapse, ungodly, and unhealthy homes to support the ongoing integrity of our culture. When the home breaks down, it weakens its ability to strengthen the culture. So as our culture goes, so goes our nation and the church. It is alarming to watch the progressive break down of the home in our nation. The breaking down of the home has now reached the church that Jesus purchased with His own blood.

The Lord's church is impacted deeply by the breakdown of the home. Strong and godly homes have a tremendous power to raise strong and faithful children who, in the long run, can become strong, faithful Christians when they become adults. As faithful adults, they build strong and godly Christian homes whose Builder is Jesus, He whose kingdom is righteousness. A home that is built by God's wisdom can produce godly, strong, and faithful Christians. Such godly souls are a blessing to the Lord's church! They strengthen the church. These are the type of homes that produce leaders who will serve in many vital roles in the church.

1. Today, the Lord's church needs such men who are earnestly devoted to learning and applying God's Word in their daily lives, that they might be faithful to His teachings.

2. The Lord needs godly role models who can be the salt of the earth in His church, the home, and the world (Matt. 5:13; Phil. 2:15-16).
3. The church needs men and women who can be strong and sound Bible teachers (2 Tim. 2:2).
4. The church needs strong and godly adults who will teach the young the fear of God, and a compelling desire to serve and love Him faithfully.
5. The church needs elders, deacons, and preachers who are strong in the faith and thus provide righteous leadership to the flock (1 Tim. 3:1-3; 1 Pet. 5:1-3; 2 Timothy 4:1-5).
6. The church needs members who can love one another the way Christ has loved us (John 13:34-35).
7. The church needs members who can exhort, encourage, and strengthen one another continually (Heb. 3:13; 10:24).
8. Finally, the church needs members who can love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength (Matt. 22:37) and can be devoted and committed to Him and His church.

You see, broken, dysfunctional homes do not often raise up such amazing Christians. The saddest thing is that the Lord's church is suffering immensely because of the breakdown of the home. Instead of overcoming the world by our saltiness and devotion to Christ and His kingdom (being godly examples), we are overcome by the world and its lawlessness, and darkness. We must take responsibility at once, for things are turning our homes upside down!

Another major factor in the breakdown of the home is that men are not living up to their God-given responsibility of being the head of the home (Eph. 5:22-24). It is not a question of equality or who is inferior to whom. Rather, God has given men and women different roles in the home. (More on this later).

Divorce is another huge factor that is contributing to the breakdown of the home. There is one divorce expected for every two marriages performed in our nation. Unfortunately, it has been this way for many decades. I cannot understand why people do something that God hates so much! The answer is that so few people know God or care about the Bible. Faith is developed by hearing and heeding the teachings of God's Word (Romans 10:17). Those who care little about seeking the Lord and His Word will indeed have very little knowledge of His laws or teachings and will carelessly violate His laws. Hence their faith will be weak. That is why we must stress the need for spending time studying God's Word diligently and teaching it to others that they might be equipped to do good and righteous works (2 Tim. 2:15). Some married couples decide to seek the Lord only to find out that their present partner is still married to someone else, making them adulterers, according to Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:8-9). They were ignorant and did not know God's will for marriage and the home. Often this becomes a stumbling block for their faith, so they find themselves in trouble and being accountable to God. Paul stressed to the Athenians that ignorance of God's Will is not an acceptable or a justified excuse, for God will hold us accountable in the end (Acts 17:30-31). Sexual immorality is the only exception to God's law regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage. And whether our society agrees and respects God's laws on marriage, in God's eyes, the marriage commitment is for life until death except for sexual immorality (Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Cor. 7:39). It is God's intention from the beginning (Matt. 19:8; Mk. 10:4-9). His design for marriage is simple, one man and one woman together for life.

Today, marriage vows have no value anymore and are commonly ignored by couples who seem to care little about marital commitment and God's divine design for the home. Such a design must be based on love. Unfortunately, our upside-down culture has developed a careless and flippant or

irreverent attitude toward marriage and divorce. Instead of couples working out their differences and problems, they often give up on their marriage. The consequences are devastating for the home.

1. Children must be raised in a single-parent home, a dysfunctional and broken home.
2. Children are raised without godly role models in a strong and stable home.
3. Young boys grow up without fathers who can teach them by example all about manliness and godliness.
4. Young girls grow up without learning virtue, chastity, and what to expect in a husband.

As a result of the breakdown of the home, our society is weakened, and our culture disintegrates. They do not realize that God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16; Matt. 19:9; Matt. 5:32). The only grounds for divorce is adultery. Outside of adultery, there are no other Scriptural grounds for divorce. Like I said before, God's divine design for marriage is one man and one woman married for life. Sadly, our society and culture have ignored and keeps ignoring God's laws on marriage and divorce. As it is stated in Hosea 8:7, we have sown the wind and are reaping the whirlwind. We must turn back to God and His divine design for the home.

Consider some good and wise counsel about the marital relationship and rules of thumb for a godly marriage and home.

I. WALKING WORTHY IN THE HOME:

Wives Yielding in the Home: (Ephesians 5:22-24; 1 Peter 3:1-7)

“Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be

won without a word by the conduct of their wives, when they see your respectful and pure conduct. Do not let your adorning be external—the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewelry, or the clothing you wear—but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious. For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves, by submitting to their own husbands, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord. And you are her children if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening. Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered” (1 Peter 3:1-7).

Peter begins with the phrase, “Likewise, wives.” What do you suppose Peter is implying here? He is stressing the need to live our lives in such a way as to glorify God with our good and righteous deeds before the world (2:12). The central point is to live in such a godly way to encourage others to obey God (2:15). Thus, Peter is commanding wives to yield as well. In doing so, they are subject to their husbands yielding to them.

Our culture has often challenged and made it almost difficult for wives to obey the command to submit to their husbands. Our society places “headship” as “dictatorship.” The only truth is that the wife must voluntarily yield to her husband, seeking out his best interests. Her yielding is what God demands of her. A godly wife wants her husband to lead her and the family without her attempting to do it. Our society has failed us in reversing the roles. We see passive husbands and domineering wives. Men do not want to lead, provide for their family, and are content being lazy. Thus, they lay the responsibility of leading their household on their wives. Many even send their wives to work and are content by not providing for

the needs of their families. Husbands, God has made you responsible for your family, not your wife. As the heads, the buck stops with you! *How can you ask your wife to yield and refuse to the lead?* Step up and be the leader! Wives, you are commanded by God to encourage your husband's leadership or headship. Don't try to seize your husband's leadership just because you think he is not leading. You still must continue to have a yielding spirit and encourage your husband's leadership.

In Ephesians 5:22-23, the apostle Paul is urging wives to *"submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior."* That is walking worthy of their calling in the marriage by voluntarily submitting to their husbands. In our twisted society, the word "submission" has become an unpleasant and ugly word. It presents a picture of being dominated and oppressed. They have completely corrupted the meaning of the word and the concept of what the Bible teaches. Jesus has never asked us to do anything that He did not do Himself. Jesus submitted to the will of His Father and yielded to His Father's interests. He wants wives to voluntarily submit to the leadership of their husband. Husbands, remember that the Lord does not want you to abuse your leadership by forcing her to submit, using punishments or other consequences. If the wives refuse to yield, I believe there is nothing that you can do but be accountable to God and expect Him to judge the wives if they refuse to repent. She must voluntarily submit to the husband's leadership without the husband, forcing them to do it. Wives who fear the Lord will submit to the headship of their husbands without enforcement. Their primary desire must be that of submitting to God's will and that of their husbands.

Ladies, if you do not desire to submit and follow a man's leadership, then you must not marry, but you cannot escape your obligation to submit to male authority by remaining sin-

gle. To please God, you still must learn to submit your will to the divine will. Period! Remember, submission does not mean you are inferior. *Do you suppose Christ was inferior when He submitted to the will of His Father?* I don't think so! *Why?* Because submission or yielding shows strength and godly meekness. Submission must be praised, not belittled, and defamed. Remember that when you submit to your husband, you are showing reverence and service to the Lord. That is, you are serving Christ by yielding to your husband's will and not yours. The husband is the head of the wife. There is only one head in the marital relationship. God created both husband and wife as one flesh to function together under one head. They are not to be autonomous but live together. God has made the marriage relationship to be as beautiful as Christ is to the church. Wives, submission is not doing what you always want to do or get your way. Submission is choosing to submit or yield your will and desires to the will of your husband. This is walking in godliness and love. It is devotion to the Lord! Submission honors and affirms the husband's leadership and encourages him to carry it on. Submission is not begrudging and does not undermine the leadership of the husband (1 Peter 3:1-2). Wives, you are obeying Christ and submitting to His will when you submit to your husband's leadership or headship. Remember, you will be rewarded for your yielding and loving service to your husband and the Lord.

We must stress the importance of wives behaving in a holy way outside and inside the home. In 1 Peter 3:1-2, he illustrates a wife whose husband is not obedient to God's Word. She is commanded to win her husband by her godly and holy conduct. Wives, your godly, righteous lives speak more than words. But if you behave like the world, you are not obeying God and submitting to His rule. Period! You must behave in a godly way regardless of how he acts toward you. If he does not act like a godly man, the way he must, it gives no permis-

sion or right whatever for you to refuse to submit to him. Period!

Holy women in the past placed their hope or trust in God and adorned themselves inwardly and outwardly. They clothed themselves with a yielding or submissive heart toward God. Sarah is the best godly and yielding example for all Christian wives, and we must learn from her example. You see, Sarah showed a yielding, submissive spirit in the way she treated her husband, even her conversations with Abraham. By following her godly and holy example, we are children of Sarah. We cannot be heirs of the promise when we behave in an ungodly and unfaithful way. A yielding wife trusts her husband and acts in his best interest. She yields or submits to her husband because she fears God and wants to submit to Him, doing what is right. She is godly and has a quiet and gentle spirit, for she obeys Christ.

Sisters and friends, remember that we must not focus on the externals only. Our beauty must not be how we look externally, but it must be a spiritual beauty as well. Our beauty must reveal a gentle and quiet spirit. Our hearts are precious to God, and so it is a character that is gentle and quiet. In Matthew 5:5, all Christians are commanded to be meek, i.e., gentle, just like Moses, who is praised for his gentleness or meekness of heart toward all (Num. 12:3). Wives and sisters remember that our most excellent beauty comes from our godliness.

Husbands Walking Worthy of Their Calling:

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their

wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'" (Ephesians 5:25-31).

Husbands, walking worthy of your calling means to love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her. Loving your wives means giving up your interests and desires for those of your wife. Loving your wives is to do everything for the benefit of your wives. This is the love of Christ for His church. He did not do what He thought was best for Him but for us. Husbands, you must love your wives in all circumstances and not when it is convenient for you. You are to love your wife as your own body. The husband is commanded to be the headship of his household. He is accountable to God for his family. He is responsible for the welfare of his family in all aspects, mainly spiritually. When husbands love and submit to the headship of Christ and his rule, then they will lead them properly. We must stress the importance of leading them with love in a godly way. Paul emphasized the kind of love husbands must have toward their wives in Ephesians 5:28-29. They are to love their wives as their own bodies. That is, they must love and cherish them, for she is his body, and the two are one flesh. Thus, if he indeed fears the LORD, he will not lead her in a nasty, spiteful, and bitter way. Instead, he will cherish her since they are one. Therefore, the husband must see his marriage relationship in a godly way, treating his wife with care and love. There is no other way to be pleasing to God.

In 1 Peter 3:7, husbands are to treat their wives with understanding in a considerate way, showing honor to her as the weaker vessel. The husband must treat his wife as a delicate and fragile vessel. Treat her with respect, for she is not inferior and because she is a partner of the grace of life with you. It

means that he must treat her as equal since she is an heir with him and not a slave under him. Husbands, when you mistreat your wife and fail to show honor, you are not showing understanding and compassion. Thus, you are running the risk of hindering your prayers. God will not listen to you, and you will not have a relationship with Him. This is extremely serious! You cannot treat your wife as a slave, mistreating her, and still expect to commune with God. When you behave in such an ungodly way, you are separated from God, for you are in sin. Therefore, you must show her honor and kindness. Show respect, understanding, and compassion in your actions and words toward her. Treat her as an equal heir in your walk with Christ so that your prayers are not blocked or hindered. Take heed!

Unconditional Love in Marriage:

What is love? For most people, love is subjective and is based on personal feelings and experiences. It is impossible to define such love objectively. Indeed, it is much easier to describe love than to define it. But the most inclusive definition is found in the Word of God: *“Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love”* (1 John 4:8).

Although most people would agree that love is the fundamental basis for marriage, emotion is usually what drives a couple to get married. The problem is that when love is only emotional, it will diminish or lessen within a noticeably short period of time. As a result, their marriage is in jeopardy. I do not deny that emotion is vital between a husband and a wife who love each other. Still, the only love that will sustain the marriage relationship must be based on more than mere emotion. Unconditional love, commitment is vital for a marriage to endure the wiles of Satan. The type of love in Paul’s treatise of love in 1 Cor. 13:1-3 is “agape love.” It is often described as the most excellent form of love in the New Testament Greek language. You see, “agape love” is not based on emotions or

physical attraction. It is a devoted, willful, and committed love that one person extends to another person he chooses to love. He extends that love even when he is not loved in return. He is determined to love even when that other person is not worthy of his love. He loves that person even when that person is unlovable. He is practicing agape love. In an upside-down culture, this kind of love sounds rather strange. Everyone wants to get something in return for their investment (money, time, emotion, etc.). Often, I hear that marriage is a 50-50 proposition, and each spouse is required to meet the other one-half way. With this kind of mindset, there are a lot of problems in the marriage relationship. Marriage is not a 50-50 relationship! For a marriage to work the way God has designed it (to be rich and fulfilling and rewarded by God), there must be a 100% commitment from both husband and wife to the marriage relationship. There will be times when the marriage relationship is put under extra strain. Here is where “agape love” must come into play.

1. Agape love will sustain the marriage relationship in the face of trial.
2. Agape love kicks in when the other spouse is unlovable.
3. Agape love refuses to give up on marriage when the world shouts, “Walk away, get a divorce!”
4. Agape love continues to love unconditionally!
5. Agape love prevails.
6. Agape love, unconditional love, overcomes evil with good (Rom. 12:21).

Fathers, Bring Up Your Children in The Discipline and Instruction of the Lord:

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

The word “discipline” implies the activity of education. Some translations use the word “training.” The word “instruction” is the verbal part of the education. Thus, fathers must verbally train and instruct their children by their actions and words. Both are necessary. The most important teaching a father can do for his children is based on God’s instructions. When he follows God’s instructions, he will teach them to love God above everything, obey Him, fear Him, and worship Him joyfully. But words and actions are necessary to be successful.

Christian parents play a foundational role in teaching their children daily the fear of God. Unfortunately, many Christian parents do not serve God faithfully and end up raising children who, as adults, don’t serve God either. Their children grow up and are lost. Other reasons could be cultural influences combined with a lack of proper Bible teaching. The power of cultural influences is stronger than ever with the rise of media and the many technological devices (TV, movies, video games, music, social media, internet, texting, etc.). Most of these influences are ungodly. Even those children who were brought up in a Christian and godly home spend most of their time with other children who are not being raised to fear and love God and His Word. All Christian parents must fight tooth and claw all negative cultural influences. They must instill principles of righteousness and God’s Word in the lives of their children. It is not enough taking our children to church weekly. It is not enough to feed and clothe them well without teaching them the fear of God and obedience to His Word. Attendance alone (when we gather to worship God) is not enough and the central pillar of life without proper Biblical teaching or instruction. It is how we live our lives, our actions that will teach our children to do what is right as genuine children of God. Our children can indeed see where our priorities are. Fathers are not to provoke their children, for they will become discouraged. Fathers, you are giving the ultimate responsibility for the training of your children without wrath and discouragement. You must train your children to save

them spiritually. Under no circumstances, abuse your authority. You must not be oppressive but rather exercise wisdom and discernment.

Saving Our Children:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to 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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy 6:5-9).

God has put us, parents, in charge of our home, and we must lead appropriately according to the will of God. Our lives must be ordered and determined by God’s kingdom and God’s righteousness if we indeed are faithful followers of Christ. In doing this, you may rest assured you will be equipped to teach your children the fear of God and defeat all negative cultural influences that exist. We must be earnest about the souls of our children and learn from the wisdom of God written a long time ago (Deut. 10:12-13). We, as Christian and godly parents, must walk worthy of the Gospel if we want our children to obey God. It is a foundational truth in saving our children. We cannot expect our children to be faithful to God if we are partially committed to Christ. When both parents fear God, are devoted, dedicated, and zealous to the Lord and His work, their children most likely will follow their parents’ lead successfully. The church cannot save our children. Parents are the only ones who can save them with the Lord’s help. No Bible classes and sermons at a church building weekly will influence our children’s lives and save them. Parents must walk the path of righteousness and practice what they teach their children that they may see the way to heaven. The

power of godly example from both parents is vital for them to be saved and go to heaven (Deuteronomy 6:5-9).

Indeed, Deuteronomy 6:5-9 is full of practical wisdom about the godly home that does not forget God. When one loves God, he will also love His Word. When it comes to child-rearing, parents must practice what they preach. There must be a personal example and spiritual teaching and training. Bible study with their children is a priceless opportunity.

1. Parents must teach their children to love, respect, and obey God supremely.
2. They must teach them a love for their neighbor.
3. How to respect and submit to all authority.
4. They must teach them to humble themselves, exercise self-discipline, and do hard work.
5. How to be gracious and merciful to all.
6. They must be reminded that God is watching and that they will reap what they sow.
7. And that they must keep learning and growing in the fear of God.

These are fundamental and priceless truths that will save our children. Remember that our primary goal is to teach our children how to walk with God as we are endeavoring to do it also. Leading by example is not enough sometimes since we must also invest time to properly teach them (Eph. 6:4). Without Bible knowledge, the wisdom of God, and the path of righteousness in their lives, our children are most likely to be lost in this world of darkness (the culture around them). May we never allow this world's constant distractions to squander these precious opportunities to teach them what really matters, the fear of God, love for His Word, and obedience to all His commands (Deut. 6:8-9). *Parents, do your children know well the Word of God? For example, do they know where to find the Sermon on the Mount? Love? Faith? Salvation? Heaven? Hell? Judgment Day?* Remember, our time with our children is limit-

ed! Therefore, we must train them well in the way of the Lord. Please, do not abandon your God-given duty! Please, teach your children God's riches found in His Word that they might hear and understand it to bear abundant fruit for the Lord (Matt. 13:22-23).

Let us purpose in our hearts to train and raise godly children. Let us train these precious souls to become faithful and zealous disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ because God has entrusted their soul to our care. Remember, our job as parents is first to bring up godly children even while we prepare them to make a living. *Why not start using our time God has given us to manifest our faith in our children so that they might also be firmly established in their faith? Why not teach them loyalty to Christ and His church, the one He purchased with His own blood?* Since God cares about our relationships, we must walk in a manner worthy of our calling, Eph. 4:1 in our homes and Christian life.

Children, Obey Your Parents:

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’ (this is the first commandment with a promise).” (Ephesians 6:1-2)

Children are commanded by God to listen and obey their parents in everything, for this is the will of God. Children, especially teenagers, you are walking worthy of God when you obey your parents, showing honor and respect toward them. Obedience to your parents is your service, submission, and worship to Christ and His rule. You must obey your parents in the Lord, for in doing this, you are serving the Lord through your obedience. It is pleasing to the Lord. When you rebel against your parents, you are rebelling against your God. You are commanded to honor your father and mother (Ephesians 6:2-3). When you honor your parents, you are reflecting your relationship with God. And whether you like it or not, your parents are wiser than you. Your life will be better when you

submit to their counsel and instructions. Remember, they are giving you rules and instructions for your own good and keep you from many headaches in life and destroying your soul.

In Matthew 15:3-6, Jesus condemned the Pharisees for breaking the commandment of honoring their parents. They failed to take care of their parents financially, saying that their money was given to God. They failed to show respect and honor for a lifetime, forgetting that it never ends. And though your parents might not be worthy of honor, because they have behaved dishonorably toward you, you still must show respect and honor toward them. It is God's will that we honor, care, and respect them and keep from behaving sinfully toward them. God will judge us in the end. Take heed!

So Why Should You Get Married?

“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous” (Hebrews 13:4).

Why should a man and a woman get married?

A man and a woman should get married because marriage is honorable, righteous, and ordained by God. Also, God will judge those who live in fornication or adultery (Heb. 13:4). God designed and instituted marriage. It did not happen by accident. God created the woman, Eve, from a bone out of the man's body. He then brought her to the man, Adam (Gen. 2:21-24). A man and a woman should get married because they honor, respect, and love each other. People should get married because they want children. Marriage is the relationship in which God designed children to be born in this world (Gen. 1:28, Ps. 127:3-5). Children must never be viewed as a nuisance or inconvenience. Unfortunately, that is exactly the modern view of our society. Children are a blessing from God (Ps. 128:3-4). Don't ever forget that! Men and women should be

married because God blesses the marriage relationship emotionally, physically, and spiritually. As husband and wife strive together, they help each other get to heaven, but only when both are Christians, and faithful to God. A wife should love her husband enough to be in subjection and submissive to him and respect him as her head and husband (Eph. 5:22-24, 33). A husband must love his wife as Christ loved the church, enough to die for her! He must love her as his own body, nourish and cherish her (Eph. 5:25, 28-29). Therefore, those who are entering marriage must be careful in thought and prayer to do God's will in their marriage relationship.

Preparation for marriage begins with Mom and Dad walking together and modeling a godly example in their marriage relationship daily. God-fearing parents must teach their children God's principles of righteousness in the marriage relationship. They must instill such principles of righteousness to guide them to be godly husbands and wives the way God designed them to be. Parents must raise and train their children to fear God and be faithful to Him because when they fear God and are faithful to Him, the marriage relationship will be blessed as each one works diligently to make it to heaven (Phil. 3:11-14). Parents must teach their children by example that marriage is a twenty-four hour a day, seven days a week commitment. Such a commitment must be filled with joy rather than bitterness and grudges.

CONCLUSION:

Marriage is one of the greatest blessings that God bestowed upon mankind. God created man and woman to be together and to complete one another. It is fascinating to me how God fashioned the woman from one of Adam's bones (Gen. 2:21-23). It is amazing how God personally brought the woman to the man and how He recognized such a union as marriage from the beginning (Gen. 2:24). Marriage is not a byproduct of some supposed social evolutionary process. It

was God's purposeful design! Unfortunately, mankind has messed up big time such a wonderful blessing. God designed marriage to be a blessing in which husband and wife can fulfill or complete each other in all aspects of life. Today our godless culture disregards God's will for them to remain pure and innocent virgins until marriage. Today, we are supposed to believe that it is unusual for couples to remain virgins until marriage. The saddest part is that this ungodly behavior is polluting the Lord's church. More and more Christians lose their virginity before marriage. God has repeatedly warned us through His Word concerning sexual immorality which includes fornication, sexual relations, before and outside of marriage (Matt. 5:31-32; 19:8-9; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-4; Col. 3:5-9; Rev. 21:8).

Living together or cohabiting as if husband and wife, yet without being married, is sin. Even raising children without being married is very common today. Adultery is justified and explained away and even sanctioned as a means of finding fulfillment and happiness. Marriage has become a commodity that one can throw away when it is no longer wanted. As a result, the family structure is catastrophically degraded. The home is the lifeline for developing and maintaining the character and strength of a society. There is no other viable substitute! The morality, strength, and stability of our culture and society are bending downward because of the careless, godless, and irresponsible way our culture looks at marriage and the home. When the home is at the heart of a strong and God-fearing culture, marriage will indeed be at the heart of a strong and godly home.

Ephesians 5:32-33 shows us a beautiful picture of the relationship between Christ and the church. A godly marriage and home will reflect such a relationship. When we walk worthy of our calling in our marriages, wives, husbands, and children will behave properly according to the will of God. Husbands will love their wives with love, honor, and respect. He will

lead his family, reflecting his best interests for the well-being of his home, because he wants to please and honor Christ. Wives will respect and honor their husbands also even when he is not worthy. She does it because she loves Christ and wants to submit to Him, and His will just as He did so when He submitted to His Father in heaven. The wife will honor the headship that God has given to her husband by helping him. She will be his helper and companion for life without wavering, just as God is faithful to His faithful children. She will help him in that role. Neither the husband nor the wife will hurt the other with words or actions, for they want to be pleasing to Christ. The wife will show respect toward her husband in public and in private, yielding to his best interests above her own just as Christ did for us.

Only when wives, husbands, and children submit to Christ and His headship, will the marriage or home be a joyful blessing. But when the marriage or the home is self-centered, focused each on his own way, God's beautiful picture of the home will be destroyed, and sin will rule the home. That is why divorce happens. Remember, divorce is a sin and is not worthy of the calling that God has called us to. When we love Christ, His kingdom, or rule, we can live for Him and joyfully do His will to love and yield or submit one to the other.

A house whose foundation is built on wisdom through God's knowledge and understanding is a haven filled with boundless treasures. These treasures by no means are earthly, nor will they rot or rust. Instead, they are eternal treasures such as godliness, character, peace, wisdom, and love. A stable home must be built on virtue and learning to stand firm.

“Unless the LORD builds the house, they labor in vain who build it; unless the LORD guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain” (Psalm 127:1-2).

Those who truly belong to Christ and whose lives are hidden in Him have put to death anything that hinders them from their love for Christ and His kingdom of righteousness. They have put on the new self as God's chosen ones. A life that is hidden in Christ will behave in a godly way in all relationships. It means that as God's chosen people, our relationships must show Christ in us as to how we deal with one another. The problem is that many ignore God's design for relationships, especially in the home, and end up with catastrophic relationship problems. Our Lord and Savior must be all and in all, even in our relationships. Difference of role does not mean inequality of worth or value. We must keep our eyes on Christ and apply His principles of righteousness in all our relationships.

God cares very much about our relationships with one another and what happens in our lives, even behind closed doors. He cares about our submission to Christ and to one another, husbands, wives, parents, and children. When we submit to one another the way God intends, we are showing the beauty of submission. Only when we submit to Christ and His rule in the fear of God, can we be pleasing to God as children and parents, walking worthy in the family. Walking worthy of our calling in the home means honoring our parents and teaching our children the fear of the Lord. God cares a lot about life in the home. Parents must train their children in that which is the most critical education: God's education in the home.

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine... to a wise man, who BUILT his house upon the rock. And the rain descended... and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock... a foolish man who built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house, and it fell, and great was its fall" (Matthew 7:24-27).

A home that is built on material and earthly possessions holds no value. A home must be built on seeking God, His instruction, His love, and His principles of righteousness. This will eventually be seen in the family. Unfortunately, today many homes are built on money and materialism. Our homes have become more like showpieces rather than what God demands. Sadly, many homes look like showpieces because no one is ever there!

Therefore, we must not make this earth the focal point of our homes. We must not let ourselves become enslaved to material things, given to the newest electronic gadgets and devices. What isolation! Let us spend more time together reading our Bibles, meditating on it, loving, and encouraging one another. No wonder our churches and our culture are so messed up! It is regrettable that all these treasures have been replaced by gadgets, devices, and yes, social media. We spend too much time on social media and on the internet. Let us redeem the time! Let us be wise and not replace the blessings of our homes with worldly things, lest we forget to cherish what God has entrusted us with, our family circle, the fruitful bonds that He has designed especially for us. Lest we forget, He WILL judge us for what we do with such blessings. We have the responsibility to make our homes a lasting impact on this world of darkness. Although our children may grow or leave, the memories and lessons taught and learned are going to build them up inside for life. Our children can spread all these blessings into the world. You could call it EVANGELISM.

At times, I wonder if we have forgotten the true definition of a home. A home is supposed to be our “haven.” It is here, at home, where our haven is made. It is where our dinner conversations are full of joy, questions, and answers. Oh, how much I treasure this! It is where life is put in order, birthdays are celebrated, and the Word of God is studied with its big questions and answers. It is where love is built and cherished. It is a most sacred place. It is where we show “hospitality” to

others, which in the Bible means love of strangers (Hebrews 13:2). Sadly, so many cannot wait to be somewhere that is not home. It seems they are avoiding spending any time at home. To build a home on God's wisdom demands daily work and time. We must set an atmosphere of peace, learning, love, and godliness. We cannot make the mistake of providing an atmosphere of worldliness, humanism, and ungodliness. Instead, we must provide an atmosphere whose fragrance is Christ (2 Corinthians 2:15-17). God must be the center of our homes. He needs to dwell there. Of course, this requires a lot of investing in those we love and care about. It takes being fully present, making the effort of connection. Let us slow down and make memories by speaking God's words of wisdom, love, kindness, and life into the lives of our children. The world needs to see the Light shining amid so much darkness and what better place than our homes!

"The curse, of the LORD, is on the house of the wicked, but He blesses the dwelling of the righteous" (Proverbs 3:33).

A godly marriage and home does not happen by accident. It is developed and sustained through careful focus and diligent commitment from both husband and wife because they know that it is a blessing from God. Consider some rules of thumb that may help as a guideline in the marriage relationship.

1. Always put God at the head of your life, home, and marriage (Matt. 22:37-38).
2. Do not allow Satan to hinder your marriage (Jas. 4:7-8).
3. Love your spouse deeply enough to cheerfully accept and fulfill him/her without resenting your God-given role as husband and wife (Eph. 5:22-25).
4. Be committed to faithfully lead your family in the fear of God (Eph. 6:4).

5. Always be honest and loyal to each other (Prov. 12:22).
6. Don't surrender yourself to anger, bitterness, or evil speaking in your marriage relationship (Eph. 4:31).
7. Be kind and tenderhearted toward one another (Eph. 4:32).
8. Forgive, forget, and move forward in your marriage relationship (Mark 11:25-26).
9. Be supportive and bear one another burdens (Acts 20:35; 1 Cor. 13:7; Gal. 6:2).
10. Take your marriage life and everything to God in prayer together as husband and wife (1 Thess. 5:17).
11. Never stop counting your blessings together and be grateful for what God has done for both of you (1 Thess. 5:18).
12. Above all, love each other deeply and unconditionally ("agape love," 1 Cor. 13:8, 13).

There is a song that describes God's ultimate expression of love found in His ideal of the godly home.

GOD GIVE US CHRISTIAN HOMES

By B.B. McKinney

God give us Christian homes!
Homes where the Bible is loved and taught,
Homes where the Master's will is sought,
Homes crowned with beauty Your love has wrought;
God give us Christian homes;

God give us Christian homes!
Homes where the father is true and strong,
Homes that are free from the blight of wrong,
Homes that are joyous with love and song;
God give us Christian homes;

God give us Christian homes!
Homes where the mother, in caring quest,
Strives to show others Your Way is best,
Homes where the Lord is an honored guest;
God give us Christian homes;

God give us Christian homes!
Homes where the children are led to know
Christ in His beauty who loves them so,
Homes where the altar fires burn and glow;
God give us Christian homes;
God give us Christian homes!

May our LORD give us wisdom as we build our homes on Him and His Truth. May we rule our little corners of God's kingdom honorably and well. May we seek His wisdom and faithfully persevere in our God-given role as godly parents. May we enthrone our LORD in our hearts as godly parents that all might see His glory shining in us. May all wives love their husbands and submit to them like Christ. May we make our homes a joyful blessing given to us by our Father in heaven. May we show the world God's beautiful picture of the home rather than destroying it because of the sinfulness that rules our marriages. May we walk worthy of the calling of our Father in heaven, living only for Christ by loving and submitting to each other. May we show respect to each other in the home by our actions and words. May wives show their beauty inwardly and not just outwardly. May we reflect a gentle and quiet spirit by our pure and godly conduct. May all husbands show compassion and understanding toward their wives, showing honor to them as their most precious and valuable possessions. May the world see Christ in us by the way we behave as wives, husbands, parents, and children. May we apply God's principles of righteousness to all our relationships, especially in the home.

This is a sample of the material contained in
A House Built by God: A Collection of Essays
Discussing the Biblical Teaching about the Home
by Luci Partain

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