

MARRIAGE & THE HOME

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The Home and Marriage According to God's Design

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. The home is one of three divinely-authorized institutions.

1. Civil government is one of the three:
 - a. Romans 13:1-7: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."
 - b. 1 Peter 2:13-17: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all *men*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."
 2. The church of Christ is youngest of the three, although it was in God's plans from eternity (Eph. 3:1-11).
 - a. Isaiah 2:2-3: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."
 - b. 1 Timothy 3:15: "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."
 - c. Matthew 16:16-19: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - d. Acts 2:47: "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
 - e. Ephesians 1:20-23: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - f. Ephesians 5:23-25: "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
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- wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."
- g. Ephesians 3:10-11: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."
3. Marriage is the oldest of the three.
- a. Genesis 2:18-24: "And the LORD God said, *It is* not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought *them* unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that *was* the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."
- b. Matthew 19:3-9: "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."
- c. Romans 7:1-2: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband."
- d. Ephesians 5:22-33: "Wives, 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. 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, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 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. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."
- e. 1 Corinthians 7:1-40: "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud

ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches. Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God. Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men. Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God. Now concerning virgins I have no commandment of the Lord: yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful. I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God.

- B. It is important that we know as much as we can about what God's says about marriage and the home.
1. Marriage and the home are of great importance to everyone for all of us have made, are presently

- making, or will make vital decisions regarding them.
2. Marriage is of vital importance to society as a whole, because the home is the foundation of society. No society or nation can be any better or stronger than its homes. To improve our society, the home must be improved.
 3. The sanctity of marriage and the importance of the home are being disparaged and undermined, and God's plans for both are being ignored or blatantly repudiated.
 - a. Thousands of couples are living together without the benefit of marriage. It does not mediate the sin to claim that they are just seeing if they are compatible. Fornication is sin, and is punishable by the severest possible penalty.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
 - 2) Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 6:18: "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."
 - 4) Galatians 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
 - 5) Hebrews 13:4: "Marriage *is* honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."
 - 6) Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - 7) Mark 9:48: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."
 - b. Divorces are granted on any pretext, in many cases simply because the individuals no longer want to live up to their commitments.
 - c. The home, which was intended in part to be a haven from the coldness and pain of the world, is often the scene of the greatest of cruelty and neglect, and where love and compassion and guidance and comfort are scarcely to be found.
 - 1) It is common to hear of children being neglected, or mistreated, or ignored, or killed; the problem of battered wives has become so prominent that special organizations have been set up to offer safety from an oppressive husband; and many husbands are hated and abused (verbally, legally, or otherwise).
 - 2) Many marriages and homes are not situations of happiness and love, but filled with bitterness, enmity, jealousy, and bickering.
 4. God designed us and he knows what is best for us: "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man" (John 2:23-25). Although he does not require marriage, yet it is the only relationship in which he permits sexual activity, and the home is the best situation for rearing children.

II. MARRIAGE AS GOD DESIGNED IT.

A. Scriptures:

1. Matthew 5:31-32: "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."
 2. Matthew 19:3-9: "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."
- B. All mankind (believers and unbelievers) is amenable to God's moral laws.
1. Revelation 19:16: "And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."
 - a. To have authority over kings and lords is to have the right to command what these great ones must do or refrain from doing.
 - b. Since Christ (who received his authority from God) has authority over earthly rulers, he obviously has authority over all lesser men. "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him" (John 17:2).
 2. Christ has commanded that the gospel be preached to every person on earth; this commandment is based on his right to demand that all obey his will.
 - a. Mark 16:15,16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b. Matthew 28:18,19: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
 3. If unbelievers are not accountable to God's moral laws, they could not commit moral sins.
 - a. 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - b. 1 John 5:17: "All unrighteousness is sin..."
 - c. 1 John 5:19: "*And* we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."
 - d. Romans 4:15: "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression." Romans 5:13: "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law."
 - e. 1 Corinthians 6:9,11: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind....And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."
 - f. Romans 6:17,18: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
 - g. Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
 - h. Romans 3:19: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God."
 4. Those who do not believe and obey God's law will be punished.
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- a. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - b. John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."
 - c. Acts 17:30,31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
5. God offers salvation to all men, hence all accountable individuals are lost.
- a. Hebrews 1:1-2: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Compare:
 - 1) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - 2) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 3) Hebrews 2:9-10: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."
 - b. Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - c. Romans 8:1-2: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."
 - d. Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
 - e. 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
6. God's law of marriage is intended for all men, whether they are believers or unbelievers.
- a. Genesis 2:24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."
 - b. Hebrews 13:4: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."
 - c. Matthew 19:4-6: "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."
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- d. God recognized marriages between unbelievers, and repudiated other marriages which violated his law of marriage.
 - 1) Matthew 14:3: "For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her."
 - 2) Acts 24:24: "And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife [Drusilla], which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ."
 - 3) Genesis 39:9: "There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

C. Marriage is a divine institution.

1. Matthew 19:4-5: "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?"
2. It was designed by the Lord at the beginning of time; it is not a gradual natural development. Different societies and cultures have developed their own unique customs regarding how marriage is contracted, the ceremony involved, and a host of other details, but the basic concept was designed and instituted by the Creator.
3. At the beginning, God made a man and a woman. They were made in his image (Gen. 1:26-27). Our physical image is not patterned after God's image, for he has no material body (John 4:24; Luke 24:39).
 - a. Genesis 1:26-27: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."
 - b. John 4:24: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
 - c. Luke 24:39: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."
4. Rather, we are made in his spiritual image (Zech. 12:1); we are made in his rational image (Prov. 23:7; 1 Cor. 2:9-16); we are made in his emotional image (Deut. 7:7-8; Mark 12:29-31).
 - a. Zechariah 12:1: "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him."
 - b. Proverbs 23:7: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 2:9-16: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."
 - d. Deuteronomy 7:7-8: "The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD

- loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”
- e. Mark 12:29-31: “And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.”
 - f. A beast has only a physical being; mankind is different from the beasts, for we have both a physical and a spiritual being: “For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Cor. 4:16).
5. God made man and woman, but there are notable physical and emotional differences between the two. The woman is the *weaker sex* only in a physical sense. Compare: “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). Generally, men have stronger bodies than women; neither is inferior to the other in any other sense.
 6. God made man and woman for each other (Matt. 19:5). He intended there to be a close companionship between them (Gen. 2:18). His plan for them was that they should propagate and subdue the earth (Gen. 1:28; 9:1,2,7, 19; 1 Tim. 5:14).
 - a. Matthew 19:5: “And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?”
 - b. Genesis 2:18: “And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”
 - c. Genesis 1:28: “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”
 - d. Genesis 9:1-2, 7, 19: “And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.....And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein....These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread.”
 - e. 1 Timothy 5:14: “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”
 7. Marriage is a divine institution; God designed and ordained it. It follows, therefore, that if marriage is to be all it can be, we must abide by the plan God appointed and accept the restrictions he placed upon both partners. In reality, marriage involves more than the husband and the wife: for it to be what it ought to be, God must also be involved in this holy institution.
- D. Marriage is the supreme earthly relationship.
1. Matthew 19:5: “And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?”
 2. The fellowship between Christians is not, strictly speaking, an earthly relationship; it begins and exists on earth, but its ultimate fulfillment is in heaven (Matt. 8:11). Marriage is designed only for our time on earth; in heaven, there will be no marriages (Matt. 22:30).
 - a. Matthew 8:11: “And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.”
 - b. Matthew 22:30: “For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.”
 3. The relationship between a man and his wife takes precedence over all other human relationships.
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- a. There is a close comradeship between members of a sports team, a military unit, a business partnership, and school mates. But those associations are temporary and part time. Marriage is intended for life.
 - b. The relationship between mother and child is special, intimate, precious, and holy (Eph. 6:2), but the time comes when the child grows up and leaves his mother in order to establish his own home or make his own way in life. Marriage is designed to last until death (Gen. 2:24).
 - 1) Ephesians 6:2: "Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise)."
 - 2) Genesis 2:24: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."
 - c. The companionship between fleshly brothers or sisters is often very close and warm, but the marital union is far more permanent and dear.
4. Our natural love for those who brought us into the world must not displace our love for our marriage partner.
 - a. If a husband or wife loves father and mother more than the marriage companion, it would be better for them not to marry at all.
 - b. Marriage does not break the ties with parents, or with the childhood home, and it does not mean we are to love our parents any less than before our marriage. In fact, with the passing of years, we should grow to appreciate our father and mother more and more.
 5. If there comes a day when a choice must be made between those old relationships and the new one (our marriage), assuming that sin is not a consideration, our decision must be in favor of the husband or wife. Marriage is the supreme human relationship.
- E. Marriage unites husband and wife.
1. Matthew 19:5-6: "And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."
 2. Christ refers back to the first couple, and the origin of the race, and makes his appeal to God's will expressed in the very beginning: "And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female" (Matt. 19:4).
 - a. In this union, they belong to each other; neither belongs to himself any longer; and neither belongs to someone else. "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 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. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:28-32).
 - b. They, by virtue of their marriage, constitute one conjugal body.
 3. The husband and wife must be one in other ways.
 - a. They must be united in what they give. What they have must be shared by both; and if one is willing to ask for everything, he/she must be willing to give everything.
 - b. They must be united in their material possessions. What they have of this world's goods are no longer his or hers, but theirs. There may be special considerations in a marriage in which joint ownership may not be the wise procedure.
 - c. In spiritual interests, both should be devoted to the same God.
 - 1) There have been happy marriages where one was a Christian and the other was not. This is not the rule, however, but the exception. Spiritual unity virtually guarantees the highest degree of marital happiness. If both sincerely and zealously follow Christ, their marriage will be successful.
 - 2) When a young man and young woman are truly married to each other, and both are devoutly
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married to Christ, there is no reason why their marriage should fail. There is every reason to believe the marriage will remain strong through all of the difficulties that commonly arise in life.

F. Marriage is for life.

1. Matthew 19:6-7: "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?"
2. Unfortunately, a mentality has developed in our country concerning marriage which says in effect, "I will get married, but if there is any trouble, I can always get a divorce, and find someone else."
 - a. But God ordained and designed marriage to endure unto the death of one. God does the binding in marriage, and no man has the right to untie what God has bound.
 - b. Marriage ought not to be entered into lightly, and no one should think lightly of breaking that holy bond.
3. Marriage was designed to be permanent. "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" (Rom. 7:2-3).
 - a. Malachi 3:14-16: "Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the LORD of hosts? And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered. Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name." God hates *putting away*. "Putting away" means "divorce."
 - b. But he does not require an innocent mate to continue to live with an adulterous spouse: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:9).
4. God has permitted only one exception to the rule that marriage is for life; that exception is fornication on the part of one spouse in the marriage.
 - a. Matthew 19:9: "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."
 - b. Matthew 5:31-32: "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."
5. God never intended for there to be a cause for divorce; he never intended for anyone to be guilty of fornication. Compare: "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. 20:14). Adultery is one form of fornication; homosexual conduct is another form.
 - a. Under the Law of Moses, God made provision that the fornicator be stoned. "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death" (Lev. 20:10).
 - 1) If a man was guilty of fornication, and was executed for his error, this left his innocent wife to remarry; widows and widowers had the right to remarry, even as they do under the New Testament law.
 - 2) But under the Law of Christ, no requirement or authority is given to execute such offenders, but God does retain the right to punish every fornicator: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. 13:4). Since

adulterers are not to be executed under Christianity, God gave the exception clause permitting the innocent party to obtain a divorce and to remarry.

3) Even in this case, only the innocent individual is free to remarry.

6. In the case of the death of one, the surviving spouse is free to marry again.

III. SOME REASONS FOR THE FAILURE OF MARRIAGES.

A. A failure to understand the commitment involved in marriage causes many marriages to fail.

1. As shown above, marriage is intended *till death do us part*. "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man" (Rom. 7:1-3).
2. Marriage is similar to entering into an agreement with a contractor to construct a new house.
 - a. By signing the written contract, both parties commit themselves to uphold their end of the arrangement. The builder affirms that he will obtain the supplies and construct the house; the buyer agrees that he will make the financial arrangements to pay the builder according to the terms of the contract.
 - b. If the builder fails to do his part, the house is not built; if the buyer fails to provide the funds at the designated intervals, the builder cannot fulfill his obligations. Obviously, both parties must fulfill their commitments if the project is to be successful.
3. The same simple truth applies to a marriage *contract*.
 - a. This agreement calls for a lifetime of devoted service, with each party in this arrangement committing his and her full being to meeting the obligations involved.
 - b. A lifetime of adjusting is necessary for the parties to become accustomed to each other's peculiarities and ways.
4. One of the biggest adjustments is leaving the childhood home: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).
 - a. If one is not old enough to leave home, it is doubtful if that person is old enough to get married.
 - b. Unless special requirements exist, the couple ought to establish their own home, separate from the parents.
5. Another big adjustment is for the husband to cease to spend his free time with his former cronies. While the husband may have the need (and a right) to spend a certain amount of time with his friends, he must understand that his *running-around* days are in the past; his great obligation is now to his wife.
6. Similarly, the wife must not spend her time with her head buried in romance books or watching soap operas, but in living up to her obligations to the husband and family.

B. Immaturity is another cause of failed marriages.

1. People pass through several stages in life.
 - a. As a child, we are in a period of dependence on others. Since we cannot provide for our own care, provisions, and protection, we must rely on the devotion and skill of others.
 - b. As an adolescent, we seek to be independent, but we have only a limited ability to provide for ourselves. We tend to resent authority (that of parents, civil government, and schools).
 - c. When we reach maturity, we are no longer fighting for independence. We have others who depend on us, so we seek to fulfill our obligations to them.
2. Some people never develop maturity.
 - a. Some will spend their lives in adolescence. When things do not go to suit them, they "take their ball and go home." The cause of such an attitude is selfishness: they have kept themselves at the center of the picture. Selfishness lies at the heart of most of the problems of society and marriages.
 - b. Immaturity is also caused by an unwillingness to accept responsibility. If one is unable or

unwilling to accept responsibility to do a certain job, he is unqualified for that job. If one is unable or unwilling to accept the burdens of a husband, he ought not to get married until he matures more. The same is true of the woman.

3. Immaturity on the part of one or both in a marriage is a prime cause of marital failure.
 - a. A man who continues to buy guns, vehicles, or other toys (which he doesn't need), while his wife and children are in need of clothes, etc., is immature (due to selfishness).
 - b. A woman who buys new clothes, expensive jewelry, or unnecessary cosmetics, while the husband wears patched clothes, is immature (due to selfishness).
 - c. One who has not yet learned the Biblical precept, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," is not yet mature. Often, this principle can only be learned through experiencing difficulties. Often, neither the husband nor the wife has learned this basic truth when they marry; a period of heartaches is bound to follow until they learn it.

C. Marriages fail when one or both partners are torn asunder by inner conflicts.

1. Matthew 12:25: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand."
 - a. What is true of nations, cities, etc., is also true of individuals.
 - b. One who faces insurmountable inner conflicts may be headed toward a nervous breakdown.
2. One who has such inner troubles as these here contemplated, instead of bringing happiness and stability to the marriage, places a great strain on it.
 - a. The lives of a married couple are so intertwined that when one is happy, the other is happy; and when one is unhappy, the other tends to be of the same disposition.
 - b. Matthew 5:1-13 gives a divine formula for happiness: "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men."

D. Marriages fail sometimes because the husband and wife are not united in Christ.

1. God did not want his Old Testament people to intermarry with the heathen. "When the LORD thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it, and hath cast out many nations before thee, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than thou; And when the LORD thy God shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them: Neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son" (Deut. 7:1-3).
 - a. Those were dark times, and God had special purposes for Israel. In order for Israel to fulfill their mission, it was essential that they remain uncontaminated by the pagan practices of idolatry. To intermarry with those people would be a sure way to cause their heathenistic beliefs, ways, and dispositions to be brought into Israel.
 - b. When Solomon took wives and concubines from among the pagans, he set himself up for many difficulties. "But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of

Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the LORD said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the LORD his God, as was the heart of David his father. For Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. And Solomon did evil in the sight of the LORD and went not fully after the LORD, as did David his father. Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that is before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon. And likewise did he for all his strange wives, which burnt incense and sacrificed unto their gods. And the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the LORD God of Israel, which had appeared unto him twice, And had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods: but he kept not that which the LORD commanded" (1 Kings 11:1-10).

2. Some marriages between believers and non-believers work out admirably, but often this is not the case. Some of these marriages endure for life, but many times the believer is hindered in making spiritual progress.
 - a. The wife may be a devoted Christian and the husband a worldly-minded person (or vice-versa); he may want to spend his free time with worldly friends, drinking, attending sporting events, or pursuing pleasure. Such is sure to make it very difficult, if not impossible, for the wife to live a committed Christian life.
 - b. If she gives in to the husband's worldly demands, she cannot serve Christ faithfully; if she serves the Lord loyally, she and her husband are apt to grow apart, and strain the marriage beyond limits. However, she is obligated to put the Lord first.
 3. Any children born into such a marriage are bound to be torn between the parents.
 - a. If one is a member of the Lord's church and the other belongs to a human denomination, to which will the children go?
 - b. If one is worldly-minded and the other a faithful Christian, which parent is apt to exert the greater influence on the children?
 - c. Nehemiah 13:23-24: "In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people."
- E. Some marriages fail because the husband does not love the wife as Christ loves the church.
1. Ephesians 5:22-33: "Wives, 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. 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, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. 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. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband."
 2. Christ's love for the church is perfect; humans may not be capable of this degree of love without any lapse. But as Christ loved the church to the extent that he was willing to give his life in order for it

to come into being, so the husband can love his wife to the extent that he will sacrifice himself for her.

3. Christ loves the church despite the obvious failings and imperfections on the part of many of its members. The husband is to maintain his love for his wife despite imperfections on her part.
 - a. No person is apt to be able to do everything in a perfect manner; some are better cooks than others; some are better housekeepers; some are prettier than others; some are more intelligent.
 - b. But the husband is to retain his love for his wife, despite the absence of perfection in such things.
 4. Christ loves the church to the extent that he is willing to do all within his power and consistent with his will for the benefit of the church.
 - a. The husband is to love his wife enough to be a willing worker at his secular profession in order to provide for his wife and family.
 - b. If he loves his wife as he ought, he will take care of the things around the house which are within his realm of ability and obligation.
 - c. There are many occasions in which he can help the wife in her obligations: watching the children; discipling the children; helping with some household chores, etc.
 - d. He ought to be willing to express his concern for his wife, perhaps providing her with special gifts or other such expressions of love.
 - e. If he loves his wife as he ought, he will be mindful of her feelings. To disappear for hours at a time, without letting the wife know where he is, is not showing much concern. He will be careful with his words, to avoid saying things to her or about her that would be embarrassing or hurtful.
- F. Some marriages fail because the wife will not submit herself to the leadership of the husband.
1. God has given a certain "chain of command."
 - a. 1 Corinthians 11:1-3: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you. 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."
 - b. There is an old military axiom which says, "If everyone is in charge, then no one is in charge." In the family, God has ordained that the husband be in charge.
 2. No one has the right to require or demand that another person do wrong. The husband has no right to demand that his wife engage in any practice that violates God's word.
 - a. The authority of the husband is limited to those things that are right.
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
 - 2) Matthew 4:4: "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."
 - 3) Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."
 - b. The husband has the final word in matters that pertain to the family, but if he is wise, he will duly consider the advice and desires of the wife and children.
 3. The husband cannot physically force his wife to submit to his leadership. He cannot lead if she will not follow. It is in the best interest of the wife and family for the father to do the leading, and for them to follow.
 - a. God demands that the father/husband be the leader in the family; if he will not lead or if the wife or family will not follow, God's will is being violated.
 - b. God never requires anything that is against our best interests, when all is considered. When he put the husband in charge of the wife and family, he knew what he was doing.
- G. Some marriages fail because of problems involving the marital relationship.
1. Both men and women are created with the sexual desire. The only situation in which this desire can

- be fulfilled is in a scriptural marriage.
- a. Ephesians 5:5: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." One who violates God's ordinance in this matter will not be able to go to heaven as long as he is guilty of the sin.
 - b. Hebrews 13:4: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Those who violate God's order regarding sexual conduct will be condemned by God.
 - c. Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
 - d. 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - e. Revelation 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."
 - f. Mark 9:43-48: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."
2. Consider this passage: "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency" (1 Cor. 7:1-5).
- a. The woman is not merchandise to be used to satisfy a selfish craving, but a person to be honored and respected in the joys and privileges of a holy marriage.
 - b. God has given each person a certain amount of dignity because they are his offspring. To regard another person as a mere *thing* takes away from that God-given dignity.
 - c. The wife does not have the right to withhold herself from her husband, except by mutual consent as Paul stated in the above passage. She does herself a disservice, she deprives her husband of his rights, and she insults the will of God.
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Wives and Mothers in the Home

I. **WOMEN HAVE NOT ALWAYS BEEN TREATED AS WELL THEY ARE NOW.**

A. The following quotes are from the historian, Will Durant:

1. "...The theory popular in classic Greece that the generative power belongs only to man, the woman being merely the carrier and the nurse of the child. The old age of the man contributes to the subordination of the wife; he is twice her years when he marries her, and can in some degree mold her mind to his own philosophy. Doubtless the male knows too well the license allowed to his sex in Athens to risk his wife or daughter at large; he chooses to be free at the cost of her seclusion. She may, if properly veiled and attended, visit her relatives or intimates, and may take part in the religious celebrations, including attendance at the plays; but for the rest she is expected to stay at home, and not allow herself to be seen at a window. Most of her life is spent in the women's quarters at the rear of the house; no male visitor is ever admitted there, nor does she appear when men visit her husband....Through it all the real influence of women over man continues, making her subjection largely unreal.... 'Sir,' says Samuel Johnson, 'nature has given woman so much power that the law cannot afford to give her more....The average Athenian loves his wife, and will not always try to conceal it; the funeral stelae reveal surprisingly the tenderness of mate for mate, and of parents for children, in the intimacy of the home.... 'In this stone,' says one epitaph, 'Marathonis laid Nicopolis, and bedewed the marble chest with tears. But it was of no avail. What profit hath a man whose wife is gone, and who is left solitary on earth?'" (Will Durant, *The Life of Greece*, Simon and Schuster, 1939, pp.306f).
2. Durant gives the following description of life in ancient Sparta: "To train men to an ideal so unwelcome to the flesh it was necessary to take them at birth and form them by the most rigorous discipline. The first step was a ruthless eugenics: not only must every child face the father's right to infanticide, but it must also be brought before a state council of inspectors; and any child that appeared defective was thrown from a cliff of Mt. Taygetus, to die on the jagged rocks below. A further elimination probably resulted from the Spartan habit of inuring their infants to discomfort and exposure. Men and women were warned to consider the health and character of those whom they thought of marrying; even a king, Archidamus, was fined for marrying a diminutive wife....At the age of seven the Spartan boy was taken from his family and brought up by the state; he was enrolled in what was at once a military regiment and a scholastic class....The girl, though left to be brought up at home, was also subject to regulation by the state" (ibid., pp.82-83).

B. Mothers have an immeasurable amount of influence in the family.

1. "The hand that rocks the cradle, rules the world."
 - a. As goes the mother, so goes the home; as goes the home, so goes the nation, as goes the nation, so goes the world. Hence, mothers exert a degree of influence that is beyond any measurement that humanity in general is able to apply!
 - b. A child is under almost the exclusive control of the mother during the first most formative years. That is, this was the way it was before so many mothers in our land had to go to work to help support the family. Under our modern system, a day-care center or baby-sitter may exert more influence on the child than the mother.
 2. The pattern of the child's attitude and behavior is generally set by the time he reaches 6-8 years of age. Mothers, in the main, have the greatest amount of influence on the child. This influence can be either good or bad.
 - a. 2 Kings 8:26-27: "Two and twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign; and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Athaliah, the daughter of Omri king of Israel. And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the LORD, as did the house of Ahab: for he was the son in law of the house of Ahab."
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- 1) The reason that Ahaziah did evil was due to the influence of his mother; she wrought an evil influence on him because her mother and father were evil; her father was evil primarily because of the evil influence of his wife Jezebel. Hence, Ahaziah is said to have done evil because of his connection to the house of Ahab.
 - 2) Ahaziah's reign lasted but one brief year. He was slain by Jehu at Jezreel (2 Kings 9: 27). Athaliah, the mother of Ahaziah, was the daughter of Ahab (verse 18), but here she is called the daughter of Omri. The word for "daughter" served double duty, also meaning granddaughter.
 - 3) Ahaziah followed the pattern of life that characterized his wicked in-laws, Ahab and Jezebel. He should have learned from the horrible end of Ahab and the predicted end of Jezebel, but somehow the young often ignore such lessons.
 - 4) Ahab went to war against the Syrians at Ramothgilead, and lost his life; Ahaziah accompanied the king of Israel (Joram) to fight against the Syrians at Ramothgilead. Joram was wounded. Neither of these men learned from their predecessors.
- b. 2 Timothy 1:5: "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grand-mother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."
 - c. 2 Timothy 3:14-15: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Lois and Eunice wrought a wonderful influence on Timothy from his earliest years.
- C. A good mother will be faithful to her husband [the best mother will also be faithful to God].
1. A godly mother will not be an unfaithful wife; an unfaithful wife cannot be a good mother.
 - a. Genesis 2:18: "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." Man is to be the breadwinner; the wife is to be the help-meet (a suitable helper) to the husband.
 - b. She is to help the husband meet the demands and problems of life. She was taken from his side, not from his head or his feet; that might have implied that either she was to be his superior or she was to be his inferior; neither is implied by the fact that she was taken from the *side* of man. At his side is her proper place.
 - c. Proverbs 18:22: "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD."
 - d. Proverbs 19:14: "House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD."
 2. Wives are to be in subjection to their own husbands. "Wives, 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" (Eph. 5:22-24).
 3. Older godly women are to teach the younger women their responsibilities and privileges.
 - a. 1 Timothy 5:14: "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."
 - b. Titus 2:4-5: "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."
 4. Christian women who live godly lives have greater influence over their unbelieving husbands than anyone else. "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted

in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement" (1 Pet. 3:1-6).

- a. A wife cannot influence her husband to become a Christian if she is not a faithful Christian. [See the article below written by Hugo McCord about wives who remained faithful even under hard circumstances].
 - b. Mothers who are unfaithful to the Lord should not be amazed if their children grow up to be unbelievers. If she is not faithful in attendance, in word, in disposition, and in behavior, she has no reason to expect anything better out of her children or husband.
 - c. An unfaithful wife or mother cannot expect her children to train up their children any better than she trained up her children.
 - d. A faithless wife and mother should not expect her children to be holy in word and life; she should not be surprised if they get into moral difficulties, since she did not take the time or show the real interest to train them up to know and love the Bible.
5. What memories will your children have of you when they grow older? Will they want to be like you? Will they want to be in your presence?
- a. What will they remember when they look at your lifeless face in the casket? Will they remember your words and tone as harsh or kind? Will they remember you as a selfish or selfless mother?
 - b. Proverbs 31:28: "Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."
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CHRISTIAN WIVES AND NON-CHRISTIAN HUSBANDS

Hugo McCord

The King James Version, my mother's Bible, has these words:

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives (1 Peter 3:1).

If non-Christian husbands "obey not the word" of God to "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), they "may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives" (1 Peter 3:1).

Some non-Christian husbands can be won by listening to verses from "the word" of God, while others resent their wives reading "the word" to them. When husbands show irritation, wise wives "without the word" make another approach, a silent one, displaying "a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (1 Peter 3:1, 4). They have found that conversations with such husbands about obeying Jesus Christ get no where.

But why does the King James Version say that non-Christian husbands "may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives" (1 Peter 3:1)? Those words are a contradiction: win a husband without the word, that is, without talking, and win a husband by conversation! "Conversation" is "a talking together; informal or familiar talk" (Webster).

However, the word "conversation" at the time the King James Version was written, back in 1611, did not mean "talk," but "general behavior, deportment," a definition that Webster says is now "Archaic." Therefore, since the word "conversation" now means only "talk," it is not an accurate translation of Peter's inspired word *anastrophe*, "manner of life, conduct." The New King James Version of 1980 has eliminated the word "conversation" (twice in 1 Peter 3:1-2) and replaced it with "conduct."

Thus we see that Peter was advising Christian wives, who have not won their husbands to Christ by talk, to stop talking and exhibit good conduct. Their best approach to husbands is not conversation, but a "pure manner of life" with "a gentle and quiet spirit, which before God is of surpassing value" (1 Peter 3:2-4).

The power of a wife, for good or for bad, someone has expressed in these words: "For every woman who has made a fool out of a man there is a woman who has made a man out of a fool." Thank God, there are many examples of Christian wives who have won their husbands to Christ by following Peter's inspired advice.

DAYMIE PEARLE GIBBS

Daymie Pearle Gibbs obeyed the gospel in Centralia, Illinois, but, writes her daughter,

My dad never went to church. He loved his hunting and fishing too much to give up his time. My mother wanted to attend [services every Sunday], and she did. [On Sunday night], it would be dark when she was to come home, so she told my dad, "I guess I won't go tonight. I'm afraid to walk home by myself."

Dad said, "Get ready. I'll take you." So he went with her [for two Sunday nights. As they started on the third Sunday night] he told my mother, "I never slept a wink. I realize I am the worst of sinners. No better than a thief or murderer in God's sight. I want to go back tonight and be baptized." They went, and he was baptized. He gave up fishing and hunting on Sunday, and they never missed a service after that. I too can thank my mother for her influence on me. I became a Christian because of her teaching (Mary Juanita Boyd, 11919 NE Knott St.,

Portland, OR 97220).

WILLIE FAYETTE

A Christian young lady married a non-Christian, and in much grief she paid for it. He hated the church and church people. His language was of cursing and bitterness, even in the presence of their son and daughter, and when visitors were present. Wisely, Willie stopped asking Al to go to church, though she and the children never missed. At home she went out of her way to be a kind and thoughtful wife.

With no spiritual leadership from Al, Willie decided meals would not be eaten unless thanksgiving had been expressed, and she led the prayers. She subscribed for that worthwhile magazine of daily devotionals, POWER FOR TODAY, and at the breakfast table she read a selection each morning. This Al tolerated with a frown and tried to ignore it.

One day their son, seeing a baptism at services, went home and asked his father if he had been baptized. Al's reply was coldly negative. But apparently the lad's question was not forgotten. Soon Al volunteered to go to church on Sunday mornings only, but he told Willie, "Don't ask me to go at any other time." Wisely, she agreed.

At a Sunday morning service, while they were standing up for the invitation song, Willie was weeping, which Al noticed. At home he asked her why she cried. She said, "Sit down, Al, I want to talk to you." When they had sat, she continued:

Al, you have taken out a large insurance policy on your life to take care of me and the children if you die. You have assigned your eyes to the eye bank that others might see when you are dead. You have assigned your body to the Tulane Medical School for research to help others when you are gone. You have taken care of everything but your soul, and you ask me why I am crying!

That was enough. Shortly Al was baptized. He went through quite a struggle to quit using habitual curse words. He became a daily Bible reader and never missed a service at church. Such amazing growth he made in a knowledge of the word (reading it morning and night on long bus rides to and from work), the elders at Gretna, Louisiana, asked him to supervise the Bible school. Now, in retirement, he works diligently with correspondence work and in a jail ministry in Natchez, Mississippi.

DORIS DARLING

George Darling was attracted to Doris, a fine Christian girl. He dated her often, and soon went to church with her at every service. She thought he would soon be baptized, and made the mistake of marrying him unbaptized. On the first Sunday after their wedding, he asked her to stay home with him. She refused, and went to services alone. He was stubborn (he told me later) and stopped going to church with her completely.

She remembered Peter's words that if husbands "obey not the word" they may "without the word be won by the conduct of the wives" (1 Peter 3:1), not "the conversation of the wives." So, with a "meek and quiet spirit" she lived with George, with no nagging, being a good wife in every way.

When their first child was born, she stayed home from services one Sunday, but the next Sunday she arose early, bathed herself and the baby, prepared breakfast, and soon was ready to go to church. George, unknown to her, had gone out to their car in the garage, raised the hood, disconnected some wires, lowered the hood, and returned to the living room.

Doris wrapped the baby, put on a raincoat, and went to the car. It would not start. She got out, and started walking

with the baby toward the church building, about a mile away. George looked out the door, opened it, and called to her, "Come back. I'll fix the car, and take you."

To himself he said, "What a heel I am, treating this precious woman this way." He told her what he had done, apologized, and drove her to the church service, and stayed. That night he drove her to services again, and stayed. In three weeks he was baptized.

He became a gospel preacher, and lived long enough to baptize some 3000 people. When I was with him in a gospel meeting in Jacksonville, Florida, he told me what had happened. Doris loved George, but she loved her Lord even more. Three thousand souls may never have been baptized had it not been for Doris.

MARY JANE ROYSE

"My grandparents" (writes Nyal D. Royse), "A. J. and Mary Jane Royse resided three miles west of Covington, Indiana, on the old Danville and Covington road. They had a large family. Grandmother was a Christian but grandfather wished to have nothing to do with church. Each Sunday morning she would get the horses up, put on the harness, hitch them to the wagon, and drive into Covington for worship.

"One bitter cold day Grandpap said to her, 'Maw, you're not going to take these children out in this cold weather, are you?' She replied, 'Pap, we are going.' She got the horses harnessed and hitched up and then went to the house to get the children ready. When she went out to go he had unharnessed the horses and turned them back out in the pasture. She sent the children to the house and went back out and got the horses and hitched them up and drove to worship. Granddad never pulled that trick again.

"Another real cold day he asked her again not to go. He got the same answer. He told her that he was going to drive them in, not because he wanted to, but he was ashamed for the neighbors to see her driving to town in the cold and know that he was home, comfortable by the fire. He drove them to Covington but said he would stay in the wagon. Before the service was over he almost froze and had to come in to get warm.

"After that he drove them quite often and then all the time, but he would always sit alone on the back seat. One day he came walking down the aisle and was baptized. Grandmother died in 1922 and he died in 1933. For the eleven years he lived alone he was faithful to the end, thanks to a wife who took over the spiritual leadership of the family while he served Satan."

Mary Jane Royse was God's vessel of honor, for she is the cause of five generations of Christians.

CALLIE ALLISON

Callie Allison, an Indianapolis mother of seven sons and two daughters, had a backsliding husband. For years he stayed home while Callie got the children ready and took them to all church services. She saw all of them baptized. One son has become an elder, and two are song leaders.

At Callie's passing, her husband came to the funeral service, one Friday afternoon. On Sunday morning, for the first time in 30 years, he was at church. When the invitation song was sung, he walked down the aisle, and told the preacher, "Ask the church people to pray for me. I want to be restored. When I die I want to go where Callie is."

II. WIVES AND MOTHERS IN THE BIBLE.

A. Evil wives and mothers in the Bible.

1. Wives and mothers like Jezebel certainly are not needed.
 - a. She encouraged her husband Ahab to worship idols.
 - 1) 1 Kings 21:25-26: "But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the LORD, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel."
 - 2) 1 Kings 16:30-33: "And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, and went and served Baal, and worshipped him. And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria. And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him."
 - b. She connived to have Naboth put to death so her husband could take over Naboth's vineyard: 1 Kings 21.
 - c. She trained her daughter to be as wicked as herself.
2. Mothers and wives like Athaliah are never needed.
 - a. She introduced Baal worship in Judah when she married the king of Judah. "Jehoram was thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD" (2 Chron. 21:5-6).
 - b. She had the descendants of the royal family of Judah slain, and took over the kingdom herself.
 - 1) 2 Kings 11:1: "And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she arose and destroyed all the seed royal."
 - 2) 2 Chronicles 22:12: "And he was with them hid in the house of God six years: and Athaliah reigned over the land."
 - c. She was a wicked woman whose sons *broke up* the house of the Lord. "For the sons of Athaliah, that wicked woman, had broken up the house of God; and also all the dedicated things of the house of the LORD did they bestow upon Baalim" (2 Chron. 24:7).
3. Mothers and wives like Herodias are not needed. "At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus, And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him. For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod. Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger. And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded it to be given her. And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison. And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought it to her mother" (Matt. 14:1-11).

B. Good wives and mothers in the Bible.

1. Jochebed.
 - a. Exodus 2:1-9: "And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took to wife a daughter of Levi. And the woman conceived, and bare a son: and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months. And when she could not longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the
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flags by the river's brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river's side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child: and, behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him, and said, This is one of the Hebrews' children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee? And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses: and she said, Because I drew him out of the water."

- b. The influence of Jochebed was exerted on Moses. "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:23-25).
- c. Moses knew his background; he learned of God; he was committed to both his God and his people (Exodus 2:11ff).

2. Hannah.

- a. 1 Samuel 1:9-11: "So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drunk. Now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the LORD. And she was in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head."
- b. 1 Samuel 1:26-28: "And she said, Oh my lord, as thy soul liveth, my lord, I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there."

3. Mary and Elizabeth, and Lois and Eunice.

- a. Luke 1-2.
- b. 2 Timothy 1:5: "When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."
- c. 2 Timothy 3:14-15: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

4. Naomi and Ruth.

- a. Ruth 1:16-17: "And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."
- b. These two women were in the lineage of Christ.

C. A healthy, happy home depends on several things.

1. A wholesome marriage, unspoiled and untainted by fornication, one that is blessed, not condemned, by the Lord's plan.
 - a. This home will be a union in which love is demonstrated.
 - b. It will be a union where mutual respect is shown.
 - c. It will be a union where the rights, privileges and responsibilities are correctly divided.

2. A healthy, happy home is one in which God's will is obeyed.
 - a. This kind of home will be one in which the father discharges his responsibilities of providing for:
 - 1) The physical needs of the family.
 - 2) Setting the proper example.
 - 3) Exercising proper discipline.
 - 4) Teaching responsibility.
 - 5) Instructing his children in the way that is right.
 - b. This kind of home will be one in which the mother:
 - 1) Is submissive to the husband.
 - 2) Teaches and trains, and disciplines her children.
 - 3) Exerts the proper influence.
 - 4) Implants proper attitudes.
 - c. Colossians 3:18-21: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."
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Husbands and Fathers in the Home

I. WHAT KIND OF HUSBANDS AND FATHERS DOES GOD WANT?

A. The husband and father must fill his role if the home is to what God wants it to be.

1. Ephesians 5:22-23: "Wives, 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."
 - a. The absence of a good husband/father is hurtful.
 - b. The husband/father must be the head of the house. He bears responsibility in the home; God gave it to him and he cannot shirk it without having to answer for his deficiency.
2. Serious problems result if he does not properly serve as the head of the family; this is true in any situation in which God's law is disregarded.

B. Quote from Durant about fathers in ancient Rome:

1. Our generation has many ailments, but we are presently in a better situation than the ancient Romans. "Birth itself was an adventure in Rome. If the child was deformed or female, the father was permitted by custom to expose it to death....The child found itself absorbed into the most basic and characteristic of Roman institutions—the patriarchal family. The power of the father was nearly absolute, as if the family had been organized as a unit of an army always at war. He alone of the family had any rights before the law in the early Republic; he alone could buy, hold, or sell property, or make contracts; even his wife's dowry, in this period, belonged to him. If his wife was accused of a crime she was com-mitted to him for judgment and punishment; he could condemn her to death for infidelity or for stealing the keys to his wine. Over his children he had the power of life, death, and sale into slavery. All that he son acquired became legally his father's property; nor could he marry without his father's consent. A married daughter remained under her father's power, unless he allowed her to marry *cum manu*—gave her into the hand or power of her husband. Over his slaves he had unlimited authority. These, and his wife and children, were *mancipia* to him—literally, 'taken in hand'; and no matter what their age or status, they remained in his power until he chose to emancipate them—to let them 'out of hand.' These rights of the *paterfamilias* were checked to some degree by custom, public opinion, the clan council, and praetorian law; otherwise they lasted to his death, and could not be ended by his insanity or even by his own choice. Their effect was to cement the unity of the family as the basis of Roman morals and government and to establish a discipline that hardened the Roman character into stoic strength. They were harsher in the letter than in practice; the most extreme of them were seldom used, the rest seldom abused. They did not bar a deep and natural *pietas*, or reverential affection, between parents and children. The tomb stelae of Rome are as tender as those of Greece or our own" (Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ*, Simon and Schuster, NY, 1944, pp.56f).
2. The Bible speaks of some parents in ancient days as being "without natural affection" (Rom. 1:31). Even among his people in the Old Testament age, some parents sacrificed their children to Molech, a pagan idol.
 - a. 1 Kings 11:7: "Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, in the hill that *is* before Jerusalem, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon."
 - b. 2 Kings 23:10: "And he defiled Topheth, which *is* in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech."
 - c. Jeremiah 32:35: "And they built the high places of Baal, which *are* in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through *the fire* unto Molech; which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin."

II. THE KIND OF HUSBAND AND FATHER GOD WANTS IS ILLUSTRATED IN THE BIBLE.

A. Under the Patriarchal System.

1. God used the husband in the family as the means of expressing his will for the family. The Patriarchal System was based on (and named for) this concept. The patriarch was the head of the family.
 - a. God instructed the father and expected him to deal properly with his family, by teaching them God's will and insuring that they followed it.
 - b. In the New Testament, the father is the leader of the family unit, and is to bring up his children in the way they should go.
2. Noah's case: Genesis 6-9.
 - a. The world was more wicked than it has ever been; only eight people were righteous, and they were all members of the same family. That his family was faithful is a tribute to the greatness of Noah.
 - b. God gave Noah the duty of building an ark to be used in preserving mankind and the world.
3. Abraham's case.
 - a. Genesis 18:19: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." No greater compliment could be given to a father than this!
 - b. Sometimes parents ask whether they ought to make their children attend Bible Classes and worship if they do not want to attend. If they do not want to attend school classes, should they let them stay home? If they do not want to go to math class, should they be allowed to skip it? God answers such questions by what he said to Abraham (Gen. 18:19). Fathers have the authority and the responsibility to require the things that are needed by his children.

B. Under the Mosaic System.

1. The case of Eli.
 - a. 1 Samuel 2:12: "Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD."
 - b. 1 Samuel 2:22-24: "Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And he said unto them, Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil dealings by all this people. Nay, my sons; for it is no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress."
 - c. 1 Samuel 3:13: "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."
 - d. Eli was a great man, serving God adequately as priest and judge; he was reverent and pious. But he was not the kind of father he should have been.
 - e. His sons were wicked, and Eli knew of their wickedness (1 Sam. 3:13). He could have acted to correct them, but did not. God held him responsible for his fatherly neglect.
 2. The case of Samuel.
 - a. Samuel was one of the greatest Old Testament men. He had served God from his earliest years. His mother was one of the greatest Old Testament women.
 - b. But Samuel was busy in the Lord's work, and neglected his sons. "And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment. Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Sam. 8:3-5).
 3. The case of Joseph, the husband of Mary.
 - a. Matthew 1:18-25: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary
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thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS."

- b. Luke 2:41-42: "Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast."
- c. Luke 2:51-52: "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."
- d. We have very little information about Joseph, but everything we know about him is commendable, as a person, as a husband, and as a father. He must have been an excellent example of manhood.

C. In the New Testament case of Cornelius.

1. Acts 10:2: "A devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway."
2. Acts 10:22: "And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee."
3. Cornelius feared God with all his house. He had reverence for God, and taught his family to have this same kind of disposition toward the Almighty.
4. At the time he did this, he was not even a Christian!
 - a. Acts 11:13-14: "And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."
 - b. Acts 10:47-48: "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."
5. His conduct and demeanor exceeds those of many modern Christians.

III. **FATHERS BEAR THE BURDEN OF EDUCATING THEIR CHILDREN.**

A. Statements of the New Testament:

1. 1 Timothy 3:4: "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity." This statement is made about men who desire to be an elder, but the truth stated ought to be true with every other father. His children are subject to him because they love and respect him for the sacred principles he follows and teaches.
2. Ephesians 6:4: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Colossians 3:21: "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."
 - a. Fathers are not to provoke their children to wrath. If fathers deal with their children unfairly, harshly, or inconsistently, the children are apt to develop resentment and anger toward the father. Parents need to see things through the eyes of their children; if they were the child, what would they think they needed; how would they react to a given situation; what fears does the child have.
 - b. God wants fathers to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. God has a standard for children to meet; he here gives fathers the responsibility of bringing their children up so that they adhere to God's standard.
 - c. The word *nurtureo* embraces the complete education of the child, including the education of his mind, his morals, and his body.

3. The word *admonition* refers to the encouragement and discipline the child needs. The father:
 - 1) Provides the oral instructions the child needs.
 - 2) Sets the proper example for the child to imitate.
 - 3) Exercises discipline (including spanking) as the situation requires.
 - B. Some practical suggestions which will help the father to discharge his responsibility as father.
 1. The family needs to understand that spiritual matters must come first.
 2. There ought to be daily family devotionals in which God's word is read and discussed.
 3. The father must spend time with the children.
 4. The children ought to be encouraged to attend Bible classes, and make timely preparations.
 5. The father can teach the children to show proper respect for God, for the church, for school officials, for civil authorities, and for the Bible.
 6. Fathers can show a genuine interest in the things that concern the children.
 - C. Our children are precious treasures.
 1. Psalm 127:3-5: "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate."
 2. They are entrusted to us for a time, and that time rapidly passes by.
 3. They should leave our home as spiritually pure as possible, and as prepared to meet the world as we can make them to be.
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What Will We Leave Our Children and Grandchildren?

I. WE MUST PROVIDE FOR OUR CHILDREN IN LIFE.

A. Scriptures:

1. Psalm 127:3: "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD..."
2. Proverbs 13:22: "A good man leaveth an inheritance to his children's children..."
3. Someday parents, unless you outlive your children, you will leave your children.

B. What will you as a parent leave your offspring?

1. Money, property, business, real estate?
 - a. A parent has not done nearly enough if he [she] leaves his offspring only material things.
 - b. We must leave them that which helps them in life, prepares them to die, and prepares them to meet God.
2. Matthew 6:19-21: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
3. 1 Timothy 5:8: "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."
4. Children have needs other than the material and financial.

II. SOME THINGS WE NEED TO LEAVE OUR CHILDREN AND GRANDCHILDREN.

A. We need to instill in them a Love for God's word.

1. Psalm 119:97: "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."
2. Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
3. Ephesians 6:4: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."
4. Biblical illiteracy is rampant, even in Christian homes.

B. We need to guide them into obtaining a living faith.

1. Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
2. John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
3. There is only one faith, which is the gospel system: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:5).
 - a. Romans 10:17: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - b. Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
4. To neglect providing the faith of Christ to the child is a sin against the child. Compare: "And Reuben answered them, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required" (Gen. 42:22).

C. We owe our children the benefits of a godly example.

1. 1 Corinthians 11:1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."
2. Christ is our ultimate example: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21).
3. Parents must demonstrate truth, morality, honesty, industry, how to worship, and love.
4. A bad parental example leads children into confusion, frustration, and disappointment.
5. Parents are not perfect, but they can set a good example.
6. Parents cannot lead where they are unwilling to go.

D. We must teach our children virtues and values.

1. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
2. Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
3. Matthew 16:26: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
4. Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."
5. 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
6. There is far more to living successfully than having a plentiful supply of this world's goods. We must obtain, cultivate, and practice the graces of the Christian life. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:19-23).

E. We owe our children and grandchildren a good name.

1. Proverbs 22:1: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold."
2. Parents ought to so-live that they do not taint the family name they pass on to their offspring and descendants.
3. What about our reputation? What about our character?
 - a. Reputation is what others think we are; our character is what we really are.
 - b. Others can besmirch our reputation by spreading falsehood against us; we can taint our reputation by sinful conduct.
 - c. But only the individual can mar his own character.
4. There are family names in local communities which have been ruined by ungodly and shameful conduct. If the father in a family is known to be a thief or a liar, his children will be tainted by that blot. If a mother in a family is known to be an adulteress, her daughters are not likely to be respected.
5. We owe our children and grandchildren a name that is untainted by sin or scandal.

F. We ought to leave our children with fond memories of their childhood home.

1. The home should an environment of kindness, comfort, encouragement, and peace.
2. The home should manifest love, security, fidelity, discipline.
3. Some homes are battlegrounds.
 - a. Some homes are characterized by abuse, loud and hostile words, ridicule, distrust, and anger.
 - b. "I'm sorry" needs to be expressed in the home!
4. Our children ought to be able to say about their childhood home, "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."
5. Guidance, advice, counsel, even rebuke are all vital elements of a good home.

G. Children need the benefit of having Christian parents and grandparents.

1. Parent, are you a faithful Christian?
 2. Every child needs Christian parents.
 - a. Many children do not have the advantage of Christian parents (one or both).
 - b. Children need to have the knowledge that their parents love God and his word.
 3. Parent, do you belong to Christ?
 - a. By having been born into God's family?
 - 1) John 3:5: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
 - 2) 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
 - b. By being faithful in worship, etc.?
 - 1) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
 - 2) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 4. Are you ready for death?
 - a. There will come a time when the physical body will be viewed for the last time.
 - b. How comforting in such an hour to know that our loved ones were faithful!
 5. God has provided for His children.
 - a. John 14:1-3: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."
 - b. 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
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Children in the Home

I. TRAIN UP A CHILD IN THE WAY HE SHOULD GO.

A. One generation successively follows another generation into eternity.

1. Ecclesiastes 1:4: "*One* generation passeth away, and *another* generation cometh: but the earth abideth for ever."
2. Judges 2:10: "And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel."
3. The final history of a generation depends on how it is trained in youth. Today's young people will fill positions of responsibility tomorrow. The quality of tomorrow's leaders depends on the training we are giving today. Both the parents and the church bear responsibility in this matter.
4. We must have a deep interest in the welfare of children; in a real sense, we are stewards of the future. Their lives and souls are entrusted to parents and the church.
 - a. Ephesians 6:1-4: "Children, 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. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."
 - b. Psalms 127:3-5: "Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD: *and* the fruit of the womb *is his* reward. As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man; so *are* children of the youth. Happy *is* the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate."
5. Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." This passage has four important statements, which we are to examine.

B. There is a right way to go, from which we should not depart.

1. Christianity is not a mere theory, but is a practical way of life. It is called a way (a road to travel as we make a journey through life). The Christian way is to be traveled to be profitable; the Christian life must be lived if we are to be benefitted by it.
2. The way in which a child is to go is marked out by the word of God.
 - a. Psalms 119:105: "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
 - b. Isaiah 35:8: "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*."
 - c. Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
3. The attitudes we should have are shown in:
 - a. Judges 13:12: "And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and *how* shall we do unto him?"
 - b. 1 Samuel 3:10: "And the LORD came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel answered, Speak; for thy servant heareth."

C. In this way children must be carefully trained.

1. It is plain that many parents (in and out of the church) have failed in this responsibility.
 - a. The rampant crime statistics, the widespread use of illegal drugs, the moral bankruptcy in society in general, and the rebellion against the constitution even by prominent political figures.
 - b. Many young people turn their back on the Lord's church when they leave their parents' home.
 2. Solomon states that children are to be **trained**.
 - a. The verb he used is the Hebrew *chanak*, which literally means to put something in the mouth [cf. feeding an infant]. But what is put into children is training.
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- b. Abraham has 318 *trained* servants (Gen. 14:14). Their training was a long process of preparation. Years are necessary to train doctors, engineers, air traffic controllers, and gospel preachers; years are required to train up a child in the way he should go.
 3. Training is done by instruction.
 - a. Parents teach the Bible to their young people at home. Questions are asked and answers are given; discussions are held regarding certain events of the day or seen on television; sound information is imparted as the family reads the Bible together.
 - b. The Bible classes conducted by the church, gospel meetings, vacation Bible schools, information printed in the bulletin, and worship services are some of the ways the church imparts training.
 - c. The Israelites were specifically given certain requirements for the training of their youth. "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" (Deut. 6:6-7). We cannot afford to do less than they were required to do.
 4. Training is done by example.
 - a. Notice how difficult it would be to *tell* someone how to write the letter "G" on the blackboard. But one can demonstrated quickly, easily, and clearly by writing the letter, letting the student see just how it is properly formed. One can study the theory of how to operate a computer for many weeks and still not know how to operate it; but if the student sits down at the computer, and is shown just how the various functions are performed, he learns the process rapidly.
 - b. Before one can be a good example, he must first be trained himself. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Gen. 18:19). Abraham would not require of his offspring what he was unwilling to learn and practice himself.
 - c. Instruction points the way, and an example demonstrates what is to be done. A prominent poem asserts that the most effective sermon is the one that is practiced, not merely spoken.
 - d. The power of an example is equally effective in evil matters. Edgar Allen Poe, one of America's greatest poets, died a drunkard's death; he was still a young man, with many more years ahead of him for perhaps even greater literary productions. He learned to practice of drinking at his father's table. We can teach our children our evil practices and dispositions just as effectively as we can teach them good practices and dispositions—by our example.
 - e. If the young people were to imitate your (or my) example, where would they be led? Would they lost or saved? Would they be strong or weak? Would they be serving, or demanding to be served?
 5. Training is done by proper discipline.
 - a. Proverbs 13:24: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."
 - b. Ephesians 6:4: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."
 - c. Colossians 3:21: "Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged."
 - d. "In this day of electricity, everything is controlled by a switch but youth." We are to chasten them, not out of anger, but because it is right.
 - D. Youth is the favorable season for this training.
 1. We are to train up a **child**. The child's early training is to be in the right direction.
 2. There are advantages in training them while they are young. Their hearts are tender, their minds are very pliable, and they have not yet developed the practices and attitudes that must be overcome.
 - a. The growth of a tree can be guided if it is started while the tree is still young and flexible. If you wait too long, the trunk is too hard and inflexible for any shaping to be done.
 - b. This same truth applies to young people.
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- c. From their earliest years, Christian parents ought to train their children to attend every service; and it ought to be ingrained in them to always tell the truth, and always to be obedient.
 - 3. Young minds are open and receptive.
 - a. The Bible verses we learned when we were young are still fresh in our memory, but those verses we learned last week may have already escaped.
 - b. If the minds of young people are not filled with proper instructions, they will be filled with improper information. There are many sources of wrong training: songs, television, movies, in books and magazines, and from friends.
 - c. If we neglect the minds of our children, the enemy is bound to sow his tares therein:
 - 1) Matthew 13:24-30: "Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."
 - 2) Matthew 13:36-43: "Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."
 - d. If we neglect to teach them of the Savior and the Bible, they might be indifferent later in life.
 - E. The result of this training.
 - 1. When he is old, he will not depart from the right way.
 - a. This is the general rule; exceptions are possible.
 - b. It is appointed unto man once to die (Heb. 9:27), but Enoch and Elijah were exceptions.
 - c. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23), but Jesus never sinned; he is the only accountable person who is the exception to the rule.
 - 2. If he departs after being grounded in the right way, there is still hope [cf. The Prodigal Son—Luke 15].
 - 3. If he departs after being trained by the parents, they are free from his blood. Compare: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek. 18:20).
 - a. If the parents did their part, there will be no recriminations at the Judgment.
 - b. But what if we neglect our parental responsibility? We have sinned! Sin is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4); God's law demands that we bring our children up in Lord's nurture and admonition (Eph. 6:4); if we fail to do so, we have disobeyed.
 - 4. There are many temptations and struggles in this life, even with the best of preparations given in our youth. How much more so if we received improper training when we were young!
 - 5. Catholics have boasted that if they are given a child until the age of seven, he will always be a
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Catholic.

a. If error can be instilled in young minds, so can the truth.

6. It is a grave error to allow young minds to be exposed to sectarian error.

F. Suppose God should place in our hands a priceless diamond.

1. Suppose he asked you to inscribe on it a brief sentence to be read in the Judgment. What caution we would use in forming and writing that sentence.

2. This is what God has done with parents: "Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD: *and* the fruit of the womb *is* his reward. As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man; so *are* children of the youth. Happy *is* the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate" (Ps. 127:3-5).

3. Every word, deed, and omission of our lives are the instruments by which we make impressions on the minds of our children—the impression can be for evil or good!

II. **THERE ARE GREAT DECISIONS TO BE MADE BY YOUTH.**

A. One's life-story is often the unfolding of youthful decisions.

1. An arrow's ultimate destination is determined by the aim taken by the archer; the aim is decided by considering the wind, elevation, azimuth, and range.

2. Choices we make during our youthful years can determine the kind of life we will have now, as well as our eternal destiny.

3. The decisions we make in our youth are very important.

a. Ecclesiastes 12:1,13: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them....Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man."

b. To decide on a life of "living it up," "sowing wild oats," and "living for today," is to follow the devil's counsel. Such a life will quickly leave unchangeable scars that may be long in healing. There will be the lingering memories of the time wasted and evil that has been done.

4. There are six decisions that young and old people ought to make with care.

B. We must decide the kind of friends we are to have.

1. We cannot help but be gradually molded by their manners, talk, practices, and attitudes.

2. Whose values should I desire to acquire?

a. Faithful Christians who attend worship and Bible study ought to be our first choice for friends.

b. Those who respect the authority of parents, teachers, and civil rulers ought to be high on the list.

c. Those whose moral conduct is not questioned should be high in priority.

d. We should not seek the companionship of those who curse, drink, smoke, tell filthy stories, or show contempt for authority, especially for the authority of the Bible.

3. 1 Corinthians 15:33:

a. "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (KJV).

b. "Do not be deceived: Evil company corrupts good habits" (NKJ).

c. "Be not deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals" (ASV).

C. We must decide the kind of son or daughter we want to be to our parents.

1. If we willfully choose to hurt and defy our parents, we will later come to sorely regret our decision. "... A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son *is* the heaviness of his mother" (Prov. 10:1).

2. To be obedient and respectful for our parents is always God's will.

a. Proverbs 6:20: "My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother."

b. Colossians 3:20: "Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."

3. Mark Twain observed that when he was seventeen, he thought his father was mighty ignorant, but by the time he was twenty-one, he was amazed how much his father had learned!

4. There are things which cannot be learned in books. The voice of experience is one of the best sources

of training. The University of Hard Knocks is a harsh, but effective, teacher.

5. Do I want to become the kind of son or daughter that my parents would be proud of? Am I the kind of son or daughter my parents would be proud of if they were to see me now, as I truly am? What kind of son or daughter will I become if I continue on the road I'm now traveling?

D. We must decide the type of character we shall develop.

1. Many people allow their character to be developed by chance, by drifting with the events of life, by not taking charge of what they are becoming.
2. There are many evil or dangerous character traits available and easy to acquire.
 - a. We can easily become selfish and animal-like: do what we want, without concern for others.
 - b. We can easily become deceitful and dishonest: hiding the truth from parents and others.
 - c. We can easily become malicious: having a "get-even" or hateful disposition.
 - d. We can easily become prejudiced: showing partiality to some and shunning others.
3. Good traits of character ought to be obvious to us all, but they are more difficult to obtain. It is not always easy to be honest, truthful, kind, concerned, obedient, under self-control, and godly.
4. Philippians 2:15: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world."
5. 1 Timothy 4:12: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

E. Young people must decide what their life's work will be.

1. It is very difficult for many. Without given conscious and diligent thought to the decision, we will likely drift aimlessly through life, be unsettled as to our occupation, and maybe undependable.
2. The very least we can do is to the best we can, with what we have, wherever we are.
3. Some types of work are to be utterly shunned:
 - a. The liquor business.
 - b. Gambling.
 - c. Criminal.
 - d. Work that is questionable.
 - e. Work that requires dishonesty.
4. But our life's work (our avocation) is subordinate to the Christian vocation.
 - a. Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - b. Luke 9:23: "And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."
 - c. 2 Peter 1:3-11: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

F. Another demanding decision is in choosing a marriage partner.

1. Our choice might be not to make a choice—to remain single. That is our prerogative, and our decision will be respected by faithful Christians.
2. Marriage is wonderful union, it is a beautiful, happy, and fulfilling life, if both partners enter into the

- relationship with the full intention of living up to their obligations.
- a. But the awful divorce statistics proclaim that many marriages are unhappy.
 - b. Marital bliss is not automatic; it does not come without effort and sacrifice; much determined effort is necessary.
3. How can one decide on a mate?
- a. The choice is not to be made merely on outward looks, or by financial considerations.
 - b. The choice is to be made with good character traits as the prime criteria
 - c. The choice considers a willingness to cooperate, sincerity, and unselfishness on the part of the prospective mate.
 - d. The choice should be one which enables one to have respect for the mate, having a genuine admiration for what the mate is or can be.
 - e. The choice should consider the ability of the prospective mate to bring out the best in you, not the worst.
 - f. The choice ought to be one who is a genuine Christian. This option oftentimes is not available today, for we are living in a time when righteousness is on the wane, and when the church is not prospering as it once did. These are perilous times in many respects.
4. The choice is very important for it involves a lifetime commitment. "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband" (Rom. 7:2).
- G. We must make a decision regarding what we shall do with Jesus.
1. Choosing salvation from sin is the most urgent decision a sinful person must make: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36-37).
 2. This is not a decision that can be safely delayed.
 - a. One does not have to be old to die.
 - b. With the passing of time, there is the danger that we will become hardened against the truth. "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13).
 3. The Savior's requirements are simple:
 - a. To believe in God and the Son:
 - 1) John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."
 - 2) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
 - b. Repentance from past sins:
 - 1) Luke 13:3: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
 - 2) Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
 - c. Confession of our faith in Christ:
 - 1) Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - 2) Romans 10:10: "For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
 - d. Baptism into Christ:
 - 1) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 2) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as
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Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

e. A life of faithfulness:

- 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
- 2) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

4. It is foolish to delay making this great decision regarding your soul.

H. Life is filled with decisions that have to be made.

1. These six decisions [discussed above] are critical and solemn.
 - a. Our decisions on these matters will set the course of our whole life.
 - b. These are decision which ought not to be taken lightly or made without due consideration.
2. May our choice be on that will allow the Lord to rule in our life.
 - a. It is in our best interest, in this life and in eternity, to follow the guidance of the Lord.
 - b. Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

III. THE EVIL FRUIT OF WILD OATS.

A. No age group has a monopoly on sin.

1. When we think of sowing wild oats, we automatically think of young people, perhaps our own youthful years. But regardless of age, anyone can commit sin.
2. We sometimes hear someone say, "Give him time; he needs experience in the world." Chances are that you and I had that kind of experience; it was bitter experience, and we wish we could wipe the memory of it from our minds. It is disturbing advice, for it condones and encourages sinful conduct. We do not need sinful experience!
 - a. Romans 16:19: "For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." The word *simple* refers to their condition if they had had no personal knowledge of sin.
 - b. God would have us to be utterly simple—without ever having experienced the evil of sin. Christ was **separated from sinners** (Heb. 7:26), and we are seeking to be like him (1 Cor. 11:1; Ph. 2:5).
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 11:1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ."
 - 2) Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."
3. Sowing wild oats has many evil fruits. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8).

B. We may never obey the gospel or be restored if we get involved in sowing wild oats.

1. The gospel might not have its proper effect on us later. Pharaoh's heart grew hard so that he refused to heed God's demands.
2. We ought to serve God while we are young and our minds are sensitive to God's truth. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Eccl. 12:1).
3. Sin is able to harden our hearts, and blind us to truth.
 - a. Ephesians 4:18: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."
 - b. Hebrews 3:12-13: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
4. Making a conscious decision to do wrong or to accept a false tenet will corrupt our thinking process. To reject the existence of God flies in the face of clear evidence; to accept the theory of evolution can

be done only if one ignores plain proof to the contrary. When we accept a position that is contrary to truth, we become unreasonable—we think irrationally. This is what the ancient Gentiles did.

- a. Romans 1:18-26: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature.”
- b. Psalms 14:1: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.”

C. We will be faced with the memory of the wild oats we have sown.

1. This was most painful to David: "For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me" (Ps. 51:3). He is referring to his dalliance with Bathsheba, her pregnancy, and his scheming to have her husband slain (2 Sam. 11-12). There are those today who drink to forget their memory of evil they have done.
2. This was most painful to Solomon: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil" (Eccl. 12:13-14).
 - a. Ecclesiastes 1:14: “I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.”
 - b. Ecclesiastes 2:1: “I said in mine heart, Go to now, I will prove thee with mirth, therefore enjoy pleasure: and, behold, this also is vanity.”
 - c. Ecclesiastes 2:11: “Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.”
 - d. Ecclesiastes 2:15: “Then said I in my heart, As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me; and why was I then more wise? Then I said in my heart, that this also is vanity.”
 - e. Ecclesiastes 2:17: “Therefore I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit.”
 - f. Ecclesiastes 2:26: “For God giveth to a man that is good in his sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy: but to the sinner he giveth travail, to gather and to heap up, that he may give to him that is good before God. This also is vanity and vexation of spirit.”
 - g. Ecclesiastes 4:4: “Again, I considered all travail, and every right work, that for this a man is envied of his neighbour. This is also vanity and vexation of spirit.”
 - h. Ecclesiastes 4:8: “There is one alone, and there is not a second; yea, he hath neither child nor brother: yet is there no end of all his labour; neither is his eye satisfied with riches; neither saith he, For whom do I labour, and bereave my soul of good? This is also vanity, yea, it is a sore travail.”
 - i. Ecclesiastes 4:16: “There is no end of all the people, even of all that have been before them: they also that come after shall not rejoice in him. Surely this also is vanity and vexation of spirit.”
 - j. Ecclesiastes 5:10: “He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity.”

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- k. Ecclesiastes 6:4: "For he cometh in with vanity, and departeth in darkness, and his name shall be covered with darkness."
 - l. Ecclesiastes 7:6: "For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity."
 - m. Ecclesiastes 8:10: "And so I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done: this is also vanity."
 - n. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil."
3. This was most painful to Paul:
- a. Acts 26:9-11: "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities."
 - b. Ephesians 3:8: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."
 - c. 1 Timothy 1:13-15: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."
4. We cannot completely forget the awful sins of the past, and in many cases, sin leaves bitter consequences on us. Our health might be destroyed, our bodies might be scarred, others may have been caused to suffer terrible on account of our sins, and we may suffer loss of our family, our jobs, or our financial standing.
5. Since memory can be terribly bitter, it is far better never to have entered into a sinful lifestyle, but to have ever been near the Lord.
- D. Our influence is involved while we are sowing wild oats.
- 1. Peer pressure is extremely high among the young. We can be the cause of others losing their lives and souls. Each of us has a strong influence on others; it might be a younger brother or sister; it might be a dear friend; it might be someone who watches us without our knowledge. "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea" (Matt. 18:6).
 - 2. We ought to use our influence in a positive manner.
 - a. Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 - b. Philippians 2:14-16: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
 - 3. It is most difficult for young people to stand up against the evils of this time. But the influence of one courageous and faithful young person can have a powerful effect for righteousness.
- E. We deprive God of precious years of faithful service.
- 1. This is a tragic result! Years are thrown away in Satan's service.
 - 2. Every moment of our lives is precious. Time is the stuff life is made of. We ought to use our time as wisely as possible. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15-16).
 - a. Life is short even though you might live several score years.
 - b. This passage counsels us to buy up opportunities and use our time wisely in the Lord's service.
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Those who are foolish, waste their lives on unimportant pursuits; but faithful Christians walk circumspectly (carefully, wisely).

3. Consider the case of Jesus.
 - a. Luke 2:49: "And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"
 - b. John 4:34-35: "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and *then* cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest."
 - c. John 9:4: "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work."
 - d. John 17:4: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."
 4. It is far better to have used those years in serving Christ: souls could be lead to salvation, encouragement could be offered to the weak, and greater glory could be offered to the Almighty.
- F. While sowing wild oats, we miss the blessings of Christianity.
1. While living in sin, we cannot have the joy of the abundant life (John 10:10); we will be deprived of the peace that passes human comprehension (Phil. 4:6-7).
 - a. John 10:10: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."
 - b. Philippians 4:6-8: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."
 2. Living the Christian life is not burdensome, and it does not take the fun out of life.
 - a. John 10:10: "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly."
 - b. 1 John 5:2-3: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
 3. All spiritual blessings are located in Christ; none of them are away from Christ.
 - a. Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
 - b. Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always: *and* again I say, Rejoice."
 4. The worst thing (the guilt of sin; separation from God) ever to happen to us on earth are behind us if we are in Christ, and remain faithful.
 - a. Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 1:3: "Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort."
 - c. Philippians 4:6-7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
 - d. 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
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G. Death may come before we finish sowing wild oats.

1. No one has any assurance that he will live even one more day.
 - a. Proverbs 27:1: "Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."
 - b. James 4:13-15: "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that."
2. Preparations to meet God must be made in this life. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. 22:11). The spiritual condition we have when we die, will be the same condition we will take into the Judgment.
3. Consider these Judgment scene possibilities.
 - a. "Because of you, I am entering heaven; thank you for your help."
 - b. "Because of you, I am condemned, and will spend eternity in hell; why did you not help me!"
 - c. One of these cases can describe you: which it will be is to be determined by your conduct.
4. It is far better to sow the seed of the kingdom, to sow to the Spirit and not to the flesh. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7-8).

IV. **SOME THINGS YOUNG PEOPLE NEED.**

A. There are certain things we all need.

1. Our physical needs are obvious.
 - a. Without a regular supply of food we could not live; without clothing and shelter we could not long survive; we have been given the means to rest, to sleep, and to recuperate from our toils, fatigue, injuries and ailments; and without transportation we would have a most difficult time in the modern world.
 - b. God provided us with an ample supply of the ingredients that make live possible and bearable. He formed coal, metals, and petroleum in the earth; he provided all kinds of trees, vegetables, and grain; he furnished us with air, light, warmth, and seeds.
 - c. Without God's provisions, life would be impossible, and disaster and death would be the rule.
2. We have spiritual needs.
 - a. Salvation, hope, and purpose are essential for us to live and be happy on the earth.
 - b. God provides all the spiritual essentials in Christ, and they are revealed to us in the Bible.
 - c. If these blessings were not provided, disaster and eternal death would be the rule.
3. We had special needs when we first entered into the world.
 - a. Our parents gave us the tender care we required, protecting and guiding us as we matured.
 - b. God provided for these through our parents and caregivers.
 - c. If these were not available, our lives would soon be ruined, and lost souls would be inevitable.
 - d. Parents need to know precisely what children need.

B. Children need and deserve to be wanted and loved.

1. God says that children are valuable!
 - a. Psalms 127:3-5: "Lo, children *are* an heritage of the LORD: *and* the fruit of the womb *is his* reward. As arrows *are* in the hand of a mighty man; so *are* children of the youth. Happy *is* the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate."
 - b. Proverbs 17:6: "Children's children *are* the crown of old men; and the glory of children *are* their fathers."
2. There are many who become parents who do not want to have children.
 - a. Illegitimate babies are usually not wanted. Every baby deserves an honorable birth, otherwise

- there is apt to be a stigma tainting their lives.
- b. Aborted babies are unwanted and hated. What else could drive so many women to have their babies slaughtered!
 - c. Some married couples do not want their children; they would rather the children were not there. This sentiment cannot help but be conveyed to the children.
3. The proper example of children who were wanted is found in the cases of the parents of Isaac, Samuel, and John (the Baptizer). Genesis 17; 1 Samuel 1; Luke 1.
 4. Children need and deserve to be wanted, loved, and respected.
 - a. Ephesians 6:4: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."
 - b. Colossians 3:21: "Fathers, provoke not your children *to anger*, lest they be discouraged."
 - c. 2 Timothy 3:3: "Without natural affection...."
 - d. Titus 2:4: "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children."
- C. Children need training and instruction.
1. This is what God has always required of parents.
 - a. Proverbs 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
 - b. Ephesians 6:4: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."
 - c. Deuteronomy 6:6-12: "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. And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, And houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage."
 2. Children need instruction in the fundamental truths of the Bible.
 - a. From their earliest years, they need to hear of God, Christ, the soul, sin, heaven, hell, godliness, and obedience.
 - b. They need to be taught the plan of salvation, about the Lord's church, about worship, and how to live right, with clear lessons concerning what is right and wrong.
 - c. Public Bible classes and sermons are not enough. There must be careful teaching in the home, and the proper examples are to be set by the parents.
 3. Children need to be taught how to get along with others, otherwise they will tend toward hatred, selfishness, strife, and cruelty.
 - a. Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - b. Romans 12:10-11: "*Be* kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord."
 - c. Romans 12:14-21: Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. *Be* of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give
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place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

- d. Philippians 2:3: "*Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*"
4. Children need to be taught to be honest, truthful, and fair.
5. Children need to be taught the evils of bad habits.
6. Children need to be taught to be obedient to the laws of the land:
 - a. Romans 13:1-7: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."
 - b. 1 Peter 2:13-17: "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."
7. Children need to be taught to be pure in speech and conduct, and to be modest in dress.
8. Children need to be taught about repentance, and to be willing to admit wrong when they are guilty.
9. Teaching is essential to counteract the evil influences that constantly barrage their tender minds.
 - a. Television has earned the reputation of corrupting the minds of young and old.
 - b. The evil theories of evolution and situation ethics are powerful enemies of young minds.
 - c. Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
- D. Children need to be disciplined.
 1. There are two aspects of discipline.
 - a. Preventative: this is the teaching that is intended to prevent them from evil or dangerous practices, attitudes, and words.
 - b. Corrective: this is some degree of punishment when they err.
 2. Discipline is needed!
 - a. Proverbs 13:24: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes."
 - b. Proverbs 19:18: "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying."
 - c. Proverbs 22:15: "Foolishness *is* bound in the heart of a child; *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him."
 - d. 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."
 - e. Proverbs 29:15: "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left *to himself* bringeth his mother to shame."
 - f. Proverbs 29:17: "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy

soul."

3. There are many bad examples in life, and some are reported in the Bible.
 - a. 1 Samuel 2:12,17: "Now the sons of Eli *were* sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD.... Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD."
 - b. 1 Samuel 2:22,24-25: "Now Eli was very old, and heard all that his sons did unto all Israel; and how they lay with the women that assembled *at* the door of the tabernacle of the congregation... Nay, my sons; for *it is* no good report that I hear: ye make the Lord's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the LORD, who shall entreat for him? Notwithstanding they hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because the LORD would slay them."
 - c. 1 Samuel 3:13: "For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."
 - d. 1 Samuel 8:3,5: "And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment....And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations."

E. Children need a good example from their parents.

1. There are bad examples of parents, even in the Bible.
 - a. 1 Kings 16:25: "But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the LORD, and did worse than all that *were* before him."
 - b. 1 Kings 16:30,33: "And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the LORD above all that *were* before him....And Ahab made a grove; and Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him."
 - c. Jezebel was evil, and her daughter followed her example. 2 Chronicles 21:5-6: "Jehoram *was* thirty and two years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, like as did the house of Ahab: for he had the daughter of Ahab to wife: and he wrought *that which was* evil in the eyes of the LORD."
2. But there are also good examples.
 - a. Abraham: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Gen. 18:19).
 - b. Joshua: "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that *were* on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (Josh. 24:15).
 - c. Cornelius: "*A devout man*, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway" (Acts 10:2).
3. Our children usually follow our steps, and often give added emphasis to the things they see in our lives.
 - a. Our pattern of attendance, working for Lord, and interest in spiritual affairs are reproduced in their lives. If our example is good, our children will imitate us; if our example is mediocre or bad, they will often go even farther. King Omri was evil, but his son Ahab was even worse.
 - b. Our pattern in moral conduct and attitude will usually show up in our children.
 - c. If our example is evil, we can expect only the same in our children; if our example is good, they have a good chance of being like us, provided the evil influences around them do not counteract our good.
4. Every child needs and deserves the best possible example of Christian living from the parents.

F. The case history of two families:

1. Descendants [1394 in 1900] of Jonathan Edwards (a preacher) included:

- a. 295 college graduates.
 - b. 65 college professors.
 - c. 13 college presidents.
 - d. 186 preachers.
 - e. 60 prominent physicians.
 - f. 80 public officians.
 - g. 1 Vice President of the United States.
 - h. 75 army and navy officers.
 - i. 101 lawyers.
 - j. 60 prominent authors.
 - k. 1 Attorney-General of the United States.
 - l. 16 railroad and steamship company presidents.
 - m. Not a one of his descendants was ever convicted of a crime.
2. Descendants [1200 counted, 709 traced] of Max Jukes (a criminal).
 - a. 1 of his sons married a girl who was called "Mother of Criminals."
 - b. 301 were professional paupers.
 - c. 280 lived on public support.
 - d. 440 died of diseases caused by their own wickedness.
 - e. 140 were convicted of crime; 7 were murderers; 60 were thieves.
 - f. 140 years were spent in prison by these criminals.
 - g. The cost to the state of New York for the prosecution of the descendants of this one man was \$1,308,000.
 3. The difference between the descendants of the two men named above was the home in which they were reared.
 4. The Prodigal Son remembered his father and home when he came to realize the awful state into which his sin and rebellion had plunged him. His memories of father and home were pleasant; he wanted to return.
 - a. "And he said, A certain man had two sons: And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry" (Luke 15:11-24).
 - b. What will our children remember about our homes? Will their memories be pleasant?
 - c. Will they have been trained in the right way? Will our example be good or bad?
 5. Let us resolve in our hearts to make our home the nearest thing to heaven itself we can make it!
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Christ in the Home

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. It is plain that many homes in America are having major troubles.
1. Far too many of them are destroyed by divorce.
 2. Far too many do not have the peace, happiness, and unity as in the past.
 3. Materialism, pleasure, and infidelity are destroying many homes.
 4. Multiple marriages; mixed children; unscriptural divorces—these contribute to these woes.
 5. These things are so common that we hardly notice them, which further contributes to the ills of the American home.
- B. The God who made Eden has provided the remedy for all the ills of the home.
1. He initiated the first marriage and gave all the essentials for happiness, peace, and unity, the perfect situation into which children are to be brought into the world.
 2. If Christ is enthroned in the heart of the husband and wife, father and mother, and son and daughter, then the home will be what God means for it to be.

II. DISCUSSION.

- A. Peace, happiness and unity will prevail if the principles of the gospel are followed.
1. If God is given his proper place in the heart of each.
 - a. Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - b. Mark 12:29-30: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment."
 2. If each member will love the others as they esteem themselves.
 - a. Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - b. Mark 12:31: "And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 3. If the husband will love his wife as Christ loves the church: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it....So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself" (Eph. 5:25, 28).
 4. If the wife will love her own husband and children.
 - a. Ephesians 5:22-23: "Wives, 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."
 - b. Titus 2:3-5: "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."
 5. If children will love, honor and obey their parents: "Children, 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. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:1-4).
 6. When these principles are obeyed, the home will please God and benefit us.
- B. The following four experiences of Christ illustrate some needs of the home.
1. Mark 1:29-31: "And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her. And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately

the fever left her, and she ministered unto them." The compassionate Christ brought healing to this home.

2. Mark 5:22-23, 35-42: "And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet, And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray thee*, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.... While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment." The Lord had compassion and raised Jairus' daughter to life.
 3. Luke 10:38-42: "Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." Christ brought wonderful words of life to this family. Mary was enraptured by his instructions; Martha was sorely troubled.
 4. Luke 19:1-10: "And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." The thoughtful Lord blessed the little man in the tree by going home with him and bringing salvation to his house.
 5. There are common threads which connect these episodes.
 - a. Jesus was the divine guest in the homes represented.
 - b. He was needed and welcomed into each home.
 - c. He brought blessings to these people: he received little or nothing from them, but showered them with blessings which were beyond their means to provide.
 - d. He brought healing to Peter's mother-in-law; life to Jairus' daughter; instruction to Lazarus, Mary and Martha; and salvation to Zacchaeus.
 6. The needs of these people are things which we need today.
 - a. Two of these blessings were provided miraculously; we do not expect this today. But in sickness and death, Christ is needed, and is able to comfort and help.
 - b. We all need instruction and salvation; our Lord certainly can provide these.
- C. We need healing and help when we face sickness and death.
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1. While some think seriously of God only when they have troubles, we need him just as much when we are happy and when life is good.
2. Those homes where Jesus is honored and obeyed are much better prepared to face sickness and death than are those which do not follow him.
 - a. Non-Christians have no hope beyond this life; they have not honored Christ in life and can expect no blessings from him in eternity.
 - 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - 2) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
 - 3) Hebrews 10:23-31: "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
 - b. Those who do not follow him in good times do not know how to pray and do not have the right to pray because they are not in covenant relationship with Christ; the Lord does not "know" them.
 - 1) 1 John 2:4-5: "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him."
 - 2) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 3) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
 - 4) John 9:31: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."
 - 5) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - 6) Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."
 - 7) Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."
 - c. Christians know that death is the threshold to eternal life; it is not the final episode of our life for the resurrection and reunion with all the redeemed follow the sorrows of death.
 - d. Robert Taylor told the story of the death of the 50-year old son of a faithful Christian. The

grieving mother said he "only leaned toward the church of Christ." No comforting hope could be given his grieving mother for no hope existed for him.

3. How much better it is to obey the Lord in life and have his comfort and help in sickness and death!
 - a. Hebrews 13:5-6: "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*"
 - b. Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - c. Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
- D. We need the words of life which only the Lord provides.
 1. Scriptures:
 - a. John 6:68-69: "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - b. Hebrews 1:1-2: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."
 2. The gospel is the word of life because it reveals spiritual and eternal life. It is wrong to think that the Lord can come into our hearts and lives separate and apart from his word. It is impossible to have Jesus without having his word first put into our minds and hearts by teaching.
 - a. Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b. Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."
 - c. Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - d. James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 3. The gospel of Christ reveals the church of Christ which is the body of Christ. We cannot imagine Lazarus, Mary, and Martha welcoming Jesus at the door, but telling him to leave his doctrine (his word) outside! Or for him to say nothing to them about the church. It is impossible to have Jesus without having his church (his kingdom).
 - a. Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - b. Acts 2:47: "...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
 - c. Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - d. Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
 - e. Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - f. Ephesians 5:23,25: "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....Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved

the church, and gave himself for it."

- g. Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."

E. We need the salvation which is only provided through Christ.

1. Zacchaeus received salvation by the visit of Jesus because he was already a child of God under the Law of Moses. "And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham" (Luke 19:9).
 - a. During his personal ministry, Jesus could dispense God's blessing with or without conditions. Compare: "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins..." (Mark 2:10).
 - b. This man was greatly changed by his encounter with the Lord: "And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold" (Luke 19:8).
2. We all need salvation.
 - a. Ecclesiastes 7:20: "For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."
 - b. Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
 - c. 1 John 1:8: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (This was addressed to members of the church).
3. Salvation can only be obtained through Christ.
 - a. John 6:68: "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life."
 - b. Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
4. Aliens can obtain salvation only if they believe, repent, confess Christ, and are baptized for the remission of sins.
 - a. John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
 - b. Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
 - c. Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - d. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
5. Fallen Christians can obtain salvation only if they repent, confess their sins to the Lord, and pray for forgiveness.
 - a. Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 - b. James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - c. 1 John 1:9: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

F. We and our homes need the love and companionship which come to those who obey God.

1. This kind of love is real and the companionship will be lasting.
 - a. This is the kind of love and companionship that Christ brings to us and our homes.
 - b. God made Eden and provided Adam and Eve with a marriage truly made in heaven; he blessed their home with real love and close companionship.
 - c. What they had, he intends for us to have today.
 - 1) Genesis 2:18-24: "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will

make him an help meet for him. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

2) Matthew 19:1-9: “And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan; And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there. The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”

2. Compare this ideal arrangement with many marriages today.
 - a. There is a lack of love between many husbands and wives; and between many parents and their children. If all these were faithful Christians, this would not be so.
 - b. There are many homes divided and destroyed by divorce and remarriage. If the Lord's will were followed by all, this would not be so.
 - c. Many husbands and wives are unfaithful and deal treacherously with their marital partners. Again, if God's will were followed, this would not be so.
3. If our marriages follow biblical directives, there will be real love and lasting companionship; these will prevent the breakup of homes by removing the causes of breakup:
 - a. All adultery and infidelity.
 - b. Animosity and hatred.
 - c. Loss of respect and lack of concern for the other.
 - d. Bickering and quarreling.
 - e. Crime.
 - f. The use of alcohol and drugs.
 - g. Ignorance of God's will.

III. CONCLUSION.

- A. The only way to insure our homes will last is to make them after God's pattern.
 1. No marriage breaks up because the husband and wife follow Christ faithfully.
 2. No Christian goes into marital infidelity until he takes one or more steps away from Christ.
- B. Everything God says to us in his word is for our benefit.
 1. God never requires something out of caprice or to torment us.
 2. When we have to give up something, endure some hardship, or follow a difficult path, it is for our good and for the benefit of others.
- C. Let us resolve:
 1. To make our homes truly Christian if they are not so now.

2. To insure that they remain truly as God would have them to be.
3. To become a Christian if we are not now a child of God.
4. To be restored to faithfulness if we have wandered astray.
5. That we will be the very best example of Christianity we can be, so as to influence other members of our family to become Christians, also.

[The foregoing outline is based on information given in chapter one of Robert R. Taylor's book, *Christ in the Home*. Brother Taylor is one of the finest and soundest Bible scholars among us today].

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. The greatest question ever to be asked by a sinner is the title of this study.

1. It is not: "How to cure cancer?"
2. It is not: "How to eliminate war completely?"
3. It is not: "How can I live to be 150?"
4. The greatest question is: "What must I do to be saved?"

B. This query is a Bible question.

1. Acts 16:30: "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"
2. Acts 2:37: "Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?"
3. Acts 9:6: "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

C. The question is of little importance to the modern mind.

1. It is an important, but usually unasked, question for our skeptical generation.
2. Members of the Lord's church need to be reminded of its importance.
 - a. A full understanding of the question will help us to better serve the Lord as soul-winners.
 - b. It will help us to appreciate more fully our own salvation.
3. A clear, honest answer to the question from the Bible will clarify the understanding of those who have been deceived into thinking they are saved, when they are not saved.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. The question implies the need for deliverance from impending danger.

1. If there is no danger, there is no need for salvation (deliverance).
 - a. Salvation implies danger; the term "salvation" is defined as "deliverance from destruction, danger, or great calamity."
 - b. One who is in no danger of drowning cannot be saved from drowning.
 - c. One who is standing with his feet firmly planted on the earth cannot be saved from the danger of falling since he is in no danger of falling.
2. The impending danger of any sinner is the "second death."
 - a. We cannot be spared from physical death; this is the unconditional penalty of sin imposed on us by the past.
 - 1) Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."
 - 2) Hebrews 9:27: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."
 - b. We can avoid the penalty of the second death.
 - 1) Revelation 20:14: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."
 - 2) Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - 4) Revelation 2:11: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."
 - 5) Revelation 20:6 "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the

second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

3. The place of the second death is Gehenna, the place prepared for the devil and his angels.
 - a. Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - b. Matthew 5:22: "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."
 - c. Revelation 19:20: "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."
 - d. Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
 - e. Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 4. Deliverance from this place of eternal punishment is the most important and necessary salvation!
 - a. Mark 9:48: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."
 - b. Matthew 25:30: "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
- B. The sinner is lost, headed inexorably for this lake of fire.
1. He will most assuredly enter this awful place of punishment if he does not take proper action.
 - a. Ecclesiastes 7:20,29: "For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.... Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."
 - b. Romans 3:10-23: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
 - c. Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - d. 1 John 5:19: "*And* we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."
 2. The sinner is lost because of his own personal sins, not the sins of his ancestors.
 - a. Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."
 - b. Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear."
 - c. 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of
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- the law."
- d. Exodus 32:30-33: "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."
3. Sin is personal and prominent; it is seen on every hand.
 - a. The daily crime reports are reports of sin.
 - b. The annual statistics of abortion are listings of sin.
 - c. The staggering divorce statistics are reports of sin.
 - d. The lists of the dead and maimed from terrorists and warmongers are listings of sin.
 - e. The arrest list of police departments of drunks, of wife-beaters, of child-abusers, are reports of sin.
 - f. The ugly, unholy language that fills the air where the ungodly gather is the language of sin.
 - g. The torn bodies of the wounded and dead in war and violence are evidence of sin.
 - h. The false doctrines of men are examples of sin.
 4. Without the presence of God's law, there would be no sin.
 - a. Romans 4:15: "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression."
 - b. Romans 5:13: "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law."
 - c. 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 5. If God had no law, there would be no sin and no penalty for sin.
 - a. If there is no penalty for sin, there would be no motivation for men to live better.
 - b. If the state decreed that factories must not dump their refuse into the rivers and streams, but attached no penalty, what good would the law be?
 - c. If there is no penalty for sin, God's law would be only an empty decree.
 6. Hell is the penalty for sin.
 - a. Sin is the transgressing of God's law, hence eternity in hell (Gehenna) is the penalty for violating God's word. Yet the common attitude of mankind is that the Bible is old-fashioned, and deserves to be ignored or rejected.
 - b. Consignment to Gehenna is the penalty for ignoring or shunning God's mercy.
 - c. This awful penalty is the punishment earned by those who have developed wicked hearts.
 - d. If there is no penalty for sin, there is no law; if no law, there is no sin; if there no sin, there is no responsibility—and a man is no different from an animal, and a society of men and women is no different from a herd of cattle.
- C. To answer the question of our study, we must rightly divide the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).
1. The answer is not found in the Old Testament, for that law was given to the Jews only, and has been superseded by the gospel of Christ.
 - a. Matthew 5:17: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."
 - b. Ephesians 2:14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace."
 - c. Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
 - d. Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things,
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- from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
- e. Romans 7:1-7: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? 2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. 3 So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. 4 Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. 5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. 6 But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter. 7 What shall we say then? *is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."
 - f. Hebrews 10:9: "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."
2. The full answer is not found in the gospel accounts, prior to the Lord's death on the cross. Before a man's will takes effect, he can dispense his property and money as he wishes, but after his death, his will takes effect, and his estate can be dispensed only as he has dictated in his will.
 - a. Galatians 3:15: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto."
 - b. Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
 - c. We are not to look to the case of palsied man to learn how to be saved (Mark 2:1-12). This man was forgiven prior to the Lord's death, thus before his will took effect.
 - d. We are not to look to the penitent thief on the cross as an example of how to be saved (Luke 23:43). That man was saved prior to the death of Christ, and thus before his will took effect.
 3. The book of Acts records the question of our study, and supplies the answer.
 - a. Acts 16:30-34: "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."
 - b. Acts 2:37-38: "Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - c. Acts 9:6: "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 4. The different answers are not contradictory; as we shall see, they harmonize perfectly.
 - a. Suppose you were to travel from Miami, Florida to Nashville, Tennessee. Were you to ask someone in Miami how far it was to Nashville, the answer might be 910 miles; if you were to ask someone in Atlanta, Georgia how far to Nashville, he might tell you 260 miles. If you were to ask
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someone in Chattanooga, he might tell you 120 miles. These answers are not contradictory, but indicate that the traveler is at different stages in his journey toward Nashville.

- b. Suppose you were to be looking for a particular house on a particular street in Nashville; Mr. Jones lives in the house. Let's suppose you find the street, but cannot find the house. You ask someone where Mr. Jones lives; he replies that he lives seven houses down the street, on the left side. You walk a little closer and ask someone else, and are told that Mr. Jones' house is three houses further. As you get closer, you ask someone else, and are told that the house you seek is the next house. Again, the answers are not contradictory, but indicated that you are at different stages in your journey to your destination.
5. Why were the different audiences in our texts told different things?
- a. Why was the jailer told to believe? This was the beginning point for him; he knew virtually nothing about the gospel Paul and Silas preached. He needed to learn and believe that Christ is the Savior. It would have been useless to tell this Gentile jailer to be baptized if he knew nothing of the gospel or of the purpose of baptism.
 - b. Why were the Pentecostians told to repent and be baptized? This was their present need; they were believers for they had already been taught about Christ being the Savior; they believed he was the Savior, which moved them to ask what to do to be saved. Peter told them what they needed to do.
 - c. Why was Saul told only to be baptized? It is clear from the facts of the case that he was a believer in Christ and that he had repented from his sins. He had asked the Lord what he should do; the Lord told him to enter Damascus and he would be told what he must do. During the three days before the preacher came to him, he fasted and prayed. His faith in Christ and his repentance are clearly evident. Therefore, he was told to arise and be baptized (Acts 22:16).
- D. An analysis of the question is very revealing.
1. **What.**
 - a. Since this is a spiritual question, what is to be done is not to sing, whistle, run, jump, clap hands, climb a mountain, dance, laugh, or eat a meal.
 - b. Since it is a logical question, it follows that we are not to do everything that is possible to be done in this world.
 - c. The question calls for a logical, spiritual, and therefore a scriptural response.
 2. **Must.**
 - a. The question calls for a definite and required response. The response is not a mere good thing to do; it is not a recommendation, but a requirement.
 - b. Saul was told to enter Damascus, where he would be told what he *must* do.
 3. **I.**
 - a. The action that is to be done must be done by the individual; it is an individual, personal obligation. Saul was to be told what *he* must do, not what his mother or father or friend must do.
 - b. The nature of the salvation of the soul is such that no one else can be saved in our stead. It is *he* that believeth and is baptized who shall be saved (Mark 16:16).
 - c. God took action to send his Son into the world; the Son came and died on the cross; the Holy Spirit came to reveal and confirm the gospel; now it is the individual sinner's turn to take action.
 4. **Do.**
 - a. An action is required. The question does not ask what we should feel, or imagine, or dream; it asks what must be *done*.
 - b. What is to be done is the will of God, not the decree of some man or council of men.
 - c. Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."
 - d. Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
 - e. Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the
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tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."

5. **To Be Saved.**

- a. The question does not ask how to live 150 years, or how to obtain wealth, or how to have good physical health; it points to the greatest need of every sinner—the salvation of his soul.
- b. Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
- c. 1 Timothy 1:13-15: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."
- d. Acts 26:28-29: "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."
- e. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."

E. An examination of the prominent conversion accounts in Acts reveals the following:

Cases of Conversion

CASE	GOSPEL	ACTION	ACTION	ACTION	RESULT
Acts 2	Spoke	Heard	Pricked	Baptized	Added, Saved
Acts 8:1-13	Preached	Heard	Believed	Baptized	Great Joy
Acts 8:26-40	Preached	Heard	Believed	Baptized	Rejoiced
Acts 10 & 11	Spoke	[Heard]	Believed	Baptized	[Saved]
Acts 16:12-15	Spoke	Heart Opened	Attended	Baptized	[Saved]
Acts 16:19-34	Spoke	[Heard]	[Believed]	Baptized	Washed Stripes
Acts 18:1-8	Reasoned	Heard	Believed	Baptized	[Saved]
Acts 9, 22, 26	Spoke	Heard	Believed	Baptized	Sins Washed

Cases of Non-conversion

CASE	GOSPEL	ACTION	ACTION	RESULT
Acts 5:29-33	Spoke	Heard	Cut to the Heart	Wanted to Kill Them
Acts 7	Spoke	Heard	Cut to the Heart	Resisted, Stoned
Acts 13:14-46	Spoke	Heard	Contradicted & Blasphemed	Rejected
Acts 17:16-33	Spoke	Heard	Mocked	Rejected
Acts 24:24-25	Reasoned	[Heard]	Trembled	Put Off
Acts 26	Spoke	[Heard]	Believed	Rejected
Acts 28:23-29	Expounded & Testified	[Heard]	Did Not Believe	Disputed

III. CONCLUSION.

A. The New Testament gives us a picture of the awfulness of Gehenna.

1. It is a place of outer darkness: "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 25:30).
2. It is a place of fire.
 - a. Mark 9:42-48: "And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."
 - b. Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
3. It is a place of wailing: "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Matt. 25:30).
4. Those consigned to this place are separated from God: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal." (Matt. 25:31-46).
5. The condition of those in Gehenna is described as being destroyed (2 Thess. 1:7-9). The word *destroyed* means "loss of well-being, not loss of being".
 - a. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-9: "Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - b. Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
 - c. Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which

- after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
6. To enter this dreadful place is to be separated from all who are holy and all that is holy: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27).
 7. It is far worse than physical death. "... Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him" (Luke 12:4-5).
- B. We are very familiar with the usual events surrounding the death and burial of a loved one.
1. The individual dies, unexpectedly or expectantly.
 - a. The body is prepared for burial.
 - b. The funeral service is conducted, during which the proper words are spoken.
 - c. The hearse leaves the funeral home, leading the procession of cars to the cemetery.
 - d. The internment ceremony is conducted.
 - e. Flowers and tears are evident.
 2. The loved one is no longer with us; even the body is hidden from our view. We will not see this person again under the sun, on this side of eternity.
 3. But the Resurrection Day will come!
 - a. 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
 - b. John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."
 - d. Matthew 25:31-32, 46. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats....And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
- C. God, Christ, your redeemed loved ones living and dead, all want you to be with them in eternity.
1. But without obeying the gospel and living a faithful Christian life you cannot enjoy their company there.
 2. There will never be a better, more convenient time to obey the gospel than at this hour!
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Those in Christ Have These Blessings

BLESSING	REFERENCE
In the Kingdom	Colossians 1:13
Redeemed by Blood of Christ	Colossians 1:14
Forgiven for Offenses	Ephesians 1:7; Acts 2:38; 22:16
Spiritually Alive	Ephesians 2:1-5; Rom. 6:3f; 2 Cor. 5:17
Near to God	Ephesians 2:13
Reconciled to God	Ephesians 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
Sanctified	1 Corinthians 1:2
New Creature (Creation)	2 Corinthians 5:17
Liberty	Galatians 2:4
Have Hope	1 Peter 1:3-5
Saved	2 Timothy 2:10

The Condition of Those Who Are Out of Christ

CONDITION	REFERENCE
Spiritually Dead	Ephesians 2:1-5
Children of Disobedience	Ephesians 2:2
Children of Wrath	Ephesians 2:3
Aliens & Strangers	Ephesians 2:12; Matthew 7:23
Have No Hope	Ephesians 2:12
Without God	Ephesians 2:12
In the World	Ephesians 2:12
Far Off From God	Ephesians 2:13,17
In Spiritual Darkness	Ephesians 4:18

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4).

"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26-27).