

God's Order for the Family

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Date: 19 July 2009

[0 : 00] I want to talk about God's order for the family.

And Paul gives a lot of instructions in these verses here.! Ephesians 5 through to 6 verse 4. From verse 22 of Ephesians 5, it says there, 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 everything.

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.

[1 : 23] 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 too 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.

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. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for your precious word, for every soul here today that hears this.

Lord, that our hearts might be encouraged and challenged today by your word, that it might work within us and in our families, in our lives, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[2 : 31] Our world has three great social institutions, it's been said. The family, the state and the church. And the home is the basic building block of society.

It's the basic unit of society of our world. And it's the foundation on which civilisation is built. And we're seeing in our day, the moral fabric of society is breaking down.

Marriages are breaking up. Families are falling apart. And so many just live together without a marriage commitment too. And there's a saying, as goes the family, so goes the nation.

Homes which are ordered strong and healthy, help our community and our church to function as God wants them to. God wants families to be united and welded together.

God puts a high priority on the family. And we know sadly, sometimes it's out of our control when families do break up. We know the sad times that as much as the godly member of the family might seek to hold it together and do the biblical things, sometimes it is sadly the way that the world can sadly break up families and people go their own way and do something wrong or immoral and sinful.

[3 : 48] And sadly, Christian families do suffer in our world today. And that's no fault of the parties necessarily. But it's the world that we're living in.

We know that. And sadly, the reality that we're living in. But in God's ideal, wouldn't it be great if the family was in that orderly fashion as God's order is laid out here in these verses?

Because if God's people can see that in reality, wouldn't it be a wonderful thing to see families strong and united in that wonderful way as God's ideal plan is for the family?

God planned the world and the whole universe that it would run in an orderly way. And God has intended a divine order. And we see that in the universe, in the world around us, in nature, in God's

creation.

And in the home too. God's ideal is that it be a place of harmony and comfort, not a place of tension and strife. That it be a home that's happy and strong and able to survive the storms of life.

[4 : 52] And God gives us the blueprint, if you like. If you see a picture, a plan, a house being built, they call it a blueprint, a plan that lays out what that structure should be like.

And God's laid out the blueprint, the structure, the plan for his ideal for the family. The divine order that he wants it to be in that beautiful harmony and that wonderful design.

That wonderful structure. That wonderful atmosphere for the home. And in these verses we see how God's laid it out. God's ideal. His ideal plan.

And how by his help we can ask him to strengthen the condition of our home. And to try to build it according to God's plan. We know in Psalms 127 verse 1 it says, Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it.

And so we must build our homes according to God's plan too. There was a little girl one day sitting in a hotel lobby and she was sitting on a pile of luggage.

[5 : 57] And her parents were at the desk registering for their room. And a sympathetic lady asked the little girl if they were visiting relatives in the city. Oh no, the girl replied. We're going to live at this hotel until we find a house.

My daddy has a new job and we had to sell our house and move. The lady said, Oh, it's too bad you don't have a home. To which she replied, the little girl said, Oh, we have a home.

It's just that we don't have a house to put it in. You know, it's not so much the place is it? It's that family unit. It's not, the most important thing isn't the bricks and mortar of a house to live in.

Or the appearance of our house. But the home is the people in it. It's the family, the family unit. And like any organised unit, there's need for an order to be in the home.

Where a home lacks order, it has disorder. We see that sadly. It's rife in society today. Where there's a disorder. Where there's an abandonment of biblical principles and of God's ideal plans to strengthen our homes.

[7 : 06] And so they need a right foundation. So like any organised unit, there's need for order in the home. And where a home lacks order, it has disorder. God's got principles for how a family should be built.

For a strong family, a healthy family. And here's a quote. The most single important factor in the success of the family is not, first of all, the compatibility of the man and the woman.

The most important single factor in your marriage is not the figure of your wife. But the most important single factor in a marriage, and therefore in a family, is the relationship of the husband and the wife to God.

It's been said that there's a trifold nature to a godly home where the wife and the husband are devoted to God.

It's a three-part. It's a tripartite union. And the devil wants to destroy homes. He wants to break down the order that God wants to bring to a home. And so it's important for a family to restore the order.

[8 : 09] Think of these three principles here as we look at these Bible verses here. Three principles to apply to bring order to our home. Number one is submit.

In chapter 5.22 it says, 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 everything. So the first order for the home is wives submit.

Wives submit. Now the lessons to be noted here are that wives need to submit to their husband as unto the Lord. The husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church.

And wives need to submit to their husbands in everything. Now of course we know the reality is at times a wife might be married to a violent husband.

[9 : 12] Is committing domestic violence or abuse to the wife and the child. Or there's other wrong things that the husband is doing.

Now of course a wife, a godly woman, a godly wife would not submit to ungodly directions from their husband. Or ungodly leadership. And ungodly leading.

And so this is not meaning that a wife has to submit to such a direction which would be counter to the Bible. So just to expand on what does submit mean here.

It means to be subordinate, under the power, under the authority. And it's a military term. It speaks of order. And of course if the wife doesn't submit the husband can't lead.

It means it just makes that whole structure, that whole plan hard to achieve. And Titus 2.4 it says, speaking of women, that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, so pure, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

[10:28] Now young ladies here tonight, you might need to think about this one that I might be having an attraction to and that I might want to end up marrying.

Am I going to want to submit to him? Am I going to see him as a godly leader of my new family unit when I leave my mother and father and go and get married to this man?

You know, it makes you want to be very careful about the choices you make. And that you marry a godly man and you choose a godly choice, a godly future for your family.

Because it's sad to see many are choosing to partner, a Christian woman partner with a man who is not a Christian. The Bible says not to do that. And so don't even think about it.

If you're thinking young lady, thinking of courting, of dating, an ungodly, an unchristian boy, then God says not to do it. If you're a Christian, the Bible says not to be unequally yoked, to not be joined together with someone who is not a Christian, if you are a Christian.

[11:34] And so God's word tells the wives here, think well of their husbands. The wives should speak lovingly and respectfully of their husband. The wife should care for the family according to the husband's will and encourage him in what is good and bear with him at other times and help and assist in caring and providing for the family.

The wife is to obey except, as I say, except in circumstances where God forbids something.

Obviously, you might get a man at the house, say, to go and do something immoral like stealing or committing something that's obviously not a Christian thing to do.

In that case, it's certainly needful that a Christian woman would not obey her husband in that regard. But back to the key question, is the authority in the home?

Where it's a godly man in charge of the home, then the home will ideally be directed in a godly fashion. Sin started when Satan challenged God's authority right back in the Garden of Eden.

And home can break up when the order breaks down. The modern version of the marriage vows are not till death do us part, but till something better comes along.

[12:54] That's sometimes how some people view it. The marriage vows is, you know, not till death do us part, for better or worse, but till something better comes along, but then they just go to the next one that they're attracted to.

Of course, in God's ideal is that we are to devote ourselves to that one, that we've made vows for a lifetime to be committed to.

But yet we know at times, out of a Christian man or woman's control, homes can break up. And I'm wanting to understand that in what I'm saying.

So let the wife take up her role as a help me. Young ladies, if you're going to marry, you should marry with the eye to being a helper and a keeper at home, as the Bible says.

And often today we see a lack of leadership in the home, because husbands are not leading and wives are not obeying. Secondly, we see not only wives submit, but the second feature of this text here we've read is love.

[14:01] A home, a family, a godly home needs to have that wonderful character of love. We see that there, as we read from verse 25, of how it says, Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church.

How did Christ love the church? It was just such an abundant love, wasn't it? Undeserved, certainly unconditional. It was just so absolute. It was so sacrificial.

That's the kind of love that Christ loved his church with and still does. And it says here, the second order of this text is husbands. Love. This is pure love.

It's constant love. Marriage is meant to be a lifelong bond. And true godly headship is not a perch or a soft place of just being served.

Now some husbands can become little Hitlers, as it were, in their homes, demanding and dominating and overbearing, inconsiderate.

[15:10] Of course it's not meaning that. As men of God here today, we know that we must, as godly leaders of our home, have a headship that is really authority plus responsibility.

That's what headship means. It means authority plus responsibility. So we're taking care of our home. We're exercising our authority in the family in both of those ways.

So there's a couple of aspects here. A husband may threaten physical or mental abuse.

For example, shouting, anger, pouting, temper tantrums. That's not what's meant by this verse about a husband having authority. It's got the sense of that the husband can encourage a reverence towards him by his loving care for his family's needs, for their physical, mental and spiritual needs.

A man's headship over his wife is not meant to be a tyranny, a cruelty or being a boss. But by being sacrificial, it's Calvary love. It's self-denying, self-abandoning love.

[16:21] The kind of love that took Jesus to the cross. Young ladies today, you want to be loved by that one that you'll end up marrying. Let it be a love that is selfless love.

Sacrificial love. Not a love that is tied to receiving something in return. Not a love that is conditional on what you do, but a love that is devoted.

The love like Calvary love, like Christ's love on the cross. And this love, it includes a nourishing and a cherishing. It includes a caring and a protection. The husband is to be responsible for his wife, for her protection, for her care and for her well-being.

And so, we see, so far, wives, submit to your husbands. Husbands, love your wives. As Christ loved the church.

And thirdly, we see an instruction in this text here for the children to obey. The third feature of the structure of the godly home is chapter 6, verse 1.

[17:21] So, the third order is children obey.

And we know, even us older ones, we still might have living parents. We're to obey and to regard and esteem and honour them and revere them.

And of course, there may be occasions where we may have a mother or father or a carer that we may at times disagree with.

But we need to respect who they are, their authority. And lovingly seek to respect and revere them and honour them. As the Bible says, to obey them.

And it's been said of parents. It's a vital role. We know, we fathers, it goes on to say how a father should not antagonise and frustrate their children.

[18:28] Parents have a vital role. A vital role. Fathers have a vital role. And mothers too. Abraham Lincoln said, no man is poor who has a godly mother. If you've got a godly mother, it's a wonderful blessing.

And the most valuable gift, someone said, that you can give your family is to be a good example.

Now one day, some of you younger people too, you may become parents. It's a massive responsibility.

I know some young dads, some younger mums. I was quite a young dad. When I first had that responsibility, it's a huge responsibility to raise a child.

And we know that they look to you. It's such an awesome responsibility. And how we as parents, or we as children, need to get that structure right, that order right in the home.

And sometimes a parent has to discipline. It's been said, someone said this quite amusing quote. It said, the best way to straighten out some youngsters is by bending them over your knee.

[19:35] You know, sometimes there may be a sense where we might have to be disciplined. Now of course that's loving correction in the Bible sense of it, where it's a correction for our good. It's a disciplining for our well-being so that we'll learn and grow.

And young people, young ladies, young men tonight, you might wonder when my dad, my mum has a go at me and tries to put me straight or gives me some chore to do that I don't really want to do.

So the Bible says that there's a blessing for you if you'll obey and show respect, show that honour that is so important. So it says to obey, to be obedient.

It means to listen to them, listen to what they say. Be obedient to them, follow their command. Now of course there may be occasion, as it says here, to obey them in the Lord.

Again, like I talked earlier, maybe that a parent might instruct a child to go down the shop and steal something or, you know, some command that as a Christian we would know that is not the right thing to do.

[20:39] And so where it's something that's forbidden by the Lord, of course a Christian young person will respectfully decline to obey something that is strictly against God's will.

But our duty to Christ is above all. So if a parent requires us to disobey him, we must still be loyal to the Lord Jesus. That's our duty. And of course it's harder when young people, you might have a Christian, you may not have a Christian mum or dad.

You know, it may be that perhaps you don't have that in your home. And so that becomes even harder. Yet the Bible still instructs us to show that loving obedience and respect.

Sometimes young people prefer to disobey. It's in all of us. It's in me. It's in everyone. That innate nature to disobey. To want to have things our own way.

To break the rules. To question the rules. Yet God instructs us, younger people, all of us who have parents still alive, to show that respect. That godly order in the home.

[21 : 43] It's been said that a teenager waits impatiently to grow up and become his own boss. And then he gets married. So things change anyway. You end up having to still have someone to listen to and relate to and help them and obey.

And sometimes young people will prefer to be lazy and careless too. It's in all of us. And there was a teenager lounging on the floor one day watching TV when the phone rang.

Hello son, said the voice. Where is your mother? She's out working in the garden. What? Barked the father. Your mother is not as young and as strong as she used to be. Why are you not helping her?

I can't, was the reply. Grandma is using the other hoe. That's a bit like it today, isn't it? Where the young people let their parents or their grandparents do all the work.

Think of your parents, of your grandparents. Show love and respect. Lend a hand where you can. Try to do your fair share. Do what is right by your parents. Children, obey. And it goes on to say there's honour there.

[22 : 49] There's a value there. There's a respecting there. Honour does not mean just some kind of lip service to the parent. It means a way of living that shows respect to them. It means being considerate and thoughtful.

And one word that would describe our world today is irreverent. Irreverent or disrespectful. We know we're living in a culture in Australia where largely there's a lot of irreverence towards police, towards authority, towards teachers, towards the law, towards bosses, towards our parents, towards any kind of authority in the land.

And yet the Bible says there's order in the home. There's order in society. There's order in the nation. And that's how God wants the world to be, where there's the godly order of wives submitting to godly leadership, of husbands loving, with godly love, of children obeying, with godly respect for God's order in the home.

And wouldn't it be wonderful to see that in our home? We know that, as I say, sadly sometimes there are sad things happening in homes. There's homes broken and yet we can try to chart the course for ourselves.

Younger people, you're not yet married. Think about your future. Think about, as the Bible says, young Christians here tonight, marry a young Christian. Seek to marry someone who loves the Saviour like you do to join in godly marriage.

[24 : 21] Wait till marriage before you get acquainted intimately, that you might set that scene for yourself for the future.

Keep yourself pure, that you might have a pure heart and a pure life. You won't have any skeletons in the cupboard. You won't have any unhappy memories of broken relationships that failed.

Save yourself for that one and save yourself for marriage to that one. And God will bless you for that. And he'll help you to make that godly commitment. He'll help you to be the husband, the wife that God wants you to be.

And he'll help you to be the parent. As you learn to be a respectful child yourself, a respectful young person to your parents, that will flow down to your home.

And God will bring an order to your home. For these young men, these young women here tonight, we pray that you would guide them to make godly choices, that they might save themselves from marriage to that one that will be their lifetime partner, Lord, that you would help them in these important choices.

[25 : 26] And help us, Lord, to find that wonderful help that you give. As you give us grace in every home, in every life, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. Amen.