

# UPON THE ROCK

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## THE ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE HOME

Roger Rush

Any discussion of the origin and purpose of the home must begin with the institution of marriage. The institution of marriage takes us back to the beginning. Marriage was the first institution ordained by God. In the beginning God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him" (Genesis 2:18). It was then that God made the woman and brought her to the man. At this point, God surveyed His creation, and it was very good (Genesis 1:31).

There are not many decisions in life more important than those connected with marriage. Very few would disagree with that statement. Yet, it is easier in most states to get a marriage license than a driver's license. Do we really understand the significance of marriage?

Marriage was designed for the happiness and well being of the race. It was created to provide for companionship, procreation, and stability in society. Not everyone chooses to marry, nor should they. It is, however, the choice of most. Marriage was intended by God to be a lifetime commitment. Only death was to sever the relationship (Romans 7:2). Jesus warned, "What God has joined together, let man not separate" (Matthew 19:6). The only exception He offered was in the case of fornication, and then, only the innocent party was free to marry again (Matthew 19:9). It should also be pointed out that death ends the marital relationship. There will be no marriages in heaven (Matthew 22:29,30).

Marriage is a partnership. Each partner complements the other. God has provided specific roles for men and women in marriage. Our society seems bent on changing those roles, but God's word is unchanging. Husbands are to lead the home as head (Ephesians 5:23). Wives are to be in subjection to their husbands (Ephesians 5:21). This does not mean that the wife becomes a slave to her husband. She is not his slave, but his helper. Nor, does it mean that the husband becomes his wife's master. He is her protector, not her oppressor. This may not be politically and socially correct but it is what the Bible teaches.

Marriage demands a commitment. Marriage vows need to be taken much more seriously than they often are. Few things in life bring more heartache and misery than a troubled marriage. Divorce is seldom the solution. A commitment must be made and then every effort must be made to honor it. Love is the cement that keeps a marriage together. The scriptures provide an excellent description of the love necessary to maintain the bond (I Corinthians 13:1-8).

There are few families that have remained untouched by the heartache and disappointment of a broken home. It is not necessary to repeat the divorce statistics. But divorce is seldom the solution to marital problems. It may seem an easy way out of a difficult dilemma, but it is not. Studies in the past have indicated that after a year the majority of those divorced admit they acted too hastily and should have tried harder to work things out. What can we do to build better marriages?

First, it is essential that marriage be seen as a lifetime commitment (Matthew 19:6; Romans 7:2). Again, the only exception being in the case of fornication, and then only the innocent party is free to remarry (Matthew 19:9). Any marriage not based on this type of commitment is destined to collapse.

Second, it must be understood that even the very best marriages have their difficult moments. Some parents never want their children to see this side of marriage, but it is a mistake. Children need to know that two people can disagree, sometimes strongly, but still love one another enough to overcome their differences and work out their

problems. Those who enter marriage believing that the honeymoon never ends are in for a rude awakening.

Third, it is important that marriage partners be affectionate and supportive of one another. In some marriages husbands and wives seem to find their greatest pleasure in putting one another down. Just the opposite should be true. In marriage the flame may not always burn with the same intensity, but it should always stay lit!

Fourth, spend time together as a family. One of the ironies of marriage is that before the vows are exchanged a couple cannot spend enough time together, but when the wedding is over the need to be together diminishes. The fire will go out of any marriage when a couple fails to spend enough time together. The greatest gift we can give another is to give ourselves.

Fifth, share a common faith. Build a spiritual life together. Religion is not just for women and children. We all need God! God should be the third partner in a marriage. The Bible is the only real foundation on which to build a life together. "Fear God, and keep His commandments" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

The institution of marriage and the establishment of the home are inseparably linked. The home is the heart of society. If our homes are in turmoil, our whole society suffers. A study released last year claimed that children of working mothers entrusted to day care were just as well adjusted, had the same self-esteem, and fared just as well as the children of stay at home moms. There is no point in debating the validity of that study or the conclusions that were drawn. Most mothers would tell us that if they could, they would prefer to be at home with their young children. And, common sense would indicate that it is not always possible for mother to be at home with their children, but we know it is the preferred method of child rearing. Having said that, the following practical suggestions are offered for fulfilling the home's purpose.

The home should provide an atmosphere of love and harmony for children. Husbands and wives are commanded to love one another in

the Scriptures (Ephesians 5:25; Titus 2:4). The home is a place of unconditional love and security, a safe haven from a cruel world.

God should always be at the center of the home. Children need a foundation of faith to build on, and it needs to be instilled in the home (Deuteronomy 6:7-9). Families should worship together, pray at meals, and sing and read the Bible as a family. Parents are solemnly charged to bring up their children in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

The home should provide a place where children are taught by word and example. Whether we like it or not, we are an example to our children. We must choose to be good examples. Too often parents are guilty of the sin of hypocrisy. Like the Pharisees, we “say, and do not” (Matthew 23:3). Children whose parents smoke, drink, and swear are not going to be inclined to listen when mom and dad tell them they should not do such things. Children generally become what they see!

The home is to be the seat of discipline and learning. Children need discipline and instruction (Proverbs 13:24). It is here that self-control, good manners, patriotism, ethics, morality, and respect for authority are instilled.

The home cannot fulfill its purpose with a few minutes of “quality time” each week. Children really do need a quantity of quality time. There is no gift parents give more valuable than the gift of themselves. Time spent with children is never wasted.

It does not take a village to raise a child. God entrusted that work to parents. Our nation and the world would be much better off if men and women had a better understanding of the home and a greater desire to fulfill its purpose. May God help us to work toward that end.

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## THE HOME AS GOD WOULD HAVE IT

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Origin and Purpose of the Home—Page 1

The Role of the Father in the Home—Page 5

The Role of the Mother in the Home—Page 8

The Role of Children in the Home—Page 12

What a Good Home Means to the Church—Page 16

What the Church Means to the Home—Page 19

Upon The Rock  
2411 E, Riggin Road  
Muncie, IN. 47303

**Sunday, April 23:**

9:30-10:30 am —“Can Science ‘Explain’ the Miracles of the Bible?”

Larry Gibson

10:30-11:30 am— “Miracles and the Providence of God” John West

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**THIRTY-FIFTH ANNUAL  
MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING  
LECTURESHIP  
MARCH 25-29, 2001**

**THEME:****THE BOOK OF GENESIS:****FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH****AND THE****UNFOLDING OF GODS PLAN OF REDEMPTION****SUNDAY, MARCH 25, 2001**

Lectures scheduled: 8:30—11:30 am and 6:00—7:00 pm

**MONDAY-THURSDAY, March 26-March 29, 2001**

Lectures scheduled:

9:30 am—3:00 pm daily.

3:10 pm—4:00 pm open forum with Garland Elkins, daily.

7:00 pm—7:30 pm congregational singing.

7:30 pm—8:30 pm evening lecture, nightly.

NOTE: There will be classes and activities for pre-school children daily, and also for the evening classes.

Water/Electrical Hookups provided by reservation.

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**THE ROLE OF THE FATHER IN THE HOME**

Phil Gear

Fatherhood has fallen on hard times. Radical feminist groups relegate the male place in the home to the act of begetting a child, and perhaps financial responsibility. But anything more is unnecessary. Gay rights groups want us to believe that two lesbians are perfectly capable of giving a child all of the love and training that is needed. Television portrays fathers as bumbling fools who usually make a mess of things. Unfortunately, the selfish attitude of many fathers only fuels these wrong attitudes.

God places great importance on the father's role. Single parent homes, although necessary at times, were never intended to be the norm. At the very beginning of the family he said through Adam, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). God assumed there would be a father in the home for the young man to leave. Absentee fathers and single mothers were never God's plan for the normal family, He even sent his own son into a family that included a father. Jesus was the only child ever conceived without an earthly father, and yet God wanted him raised in a family where the father was present. Jesus recognized the authority of his "father", Joseph. "And he...was subject unto them" (Luke 2:51). Recent research strongly proves what God has been telling us all along, — the father plays a strong role in rearing children. Good and godly fathers teach lessons no one else can. God's plan always included loving and caring fathers. What is the role of the father in the home?

**THE FATHER PROVIDES AN EXAMPLE OF GOODNESS**

The child who learns from his father what it means to follow God enjoys an invaluable blessing. The influence of a good father will last a lifetime. Fathers have the responsibility to set for their children an example of honesty, integrity, decency and fairness. It is sad when children witness their father being dishonest in business, cheating on his income taxes, or "stretching the truth" to make a few dollars. He is teaching them to use people for personal gain, when he should be teaching them to "provide things honest in the sight of all men"

(Romans 12:17). Lectures on honesty and telling the truth fail when the principles are not exemplified.

Fathers should demonstrate decency in their language. Children have enough influences toward vulgarity and profanity without learning it from their fathers. Dad should show that it is possible to express himself without offensive and sinful language. “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers” (Ephesians 4:29).

Fathers must be an object lesson on how to treat members of the opposite sex. If dad treats mom with honor and respect, his son learns to treat women this way. A boy learns most about true “manhood” by watching his father. Real men don’t mistreat and use women. If dad treats mom right his daughter learns that all men are not “pigs”, and she should hold out until she finds a good one. Above all, fathers must set an example of worship and godliness. He does not “send” his children to worship, he takes them. He demonstrates the joy found in worship. He allows nothing to keep him from putting Christ first. His children learn from his priorities.

#### THE FATHER PROVIDES LEADERSHIP

Sadly many fathers fuel the radical feminist movement by abdicating their God-given responsibilities. Their wives have no choice but to take over leadership of the family. Somebody has to do it, and a man who is always at work or on the golf course cannot possibly provide the leadership his family deserves. The father cannot lead those he is never with. The “work-a-holic” father may bring home lots of money, but he is not leading his family.

Leading the family is not being the “boss.” Being “head” of the family does involve a certain amount of authority, and God makes him the head. But that does not make his children slaves. He is to lovingly guide, discipline and train his children, not bully and intimidate them. “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4).

On February 24, 2001 Upon the Rock held its second annual lectureship at the West Side Church of Christ in Yorktown, Indiana. It was indeed splendid, and uplifting! The editors wish to thank everyone who attended the lectureship, and each speaker who prepared his sermon, and proclaimed the Gospel of Christ in such a fine way! Sound lectureship programs are not as easy to find as they used to be. We appreciate the West Side congregation for all their work, and their strong stand for the Truth (John 8:32). We will be announcing the date for next year’s program shortly.

Mark Reynolds

Fifth Annual  
MADISONVILLE CHURCH OF CHRIST  
BIBLE LECTURESHIP

April 20-22, 2001  
Theme: SIGNS, WONDERS, AND MIRACLES

#### SCHEDULED LECTURES:

**Friday, April 20:**

6:30-7:30 pm—Congregational singing led by Rob Whitacre  
7:00-8:00 pm— “Biblical Miracles Vs. Modern Claims of Miraculous Ability” Russell Kline.  
8:00-9:00 pm— ‘Faith Healing Or Fake Healing?’ Paul Vaughn

**Saturday, April 21:**

9:00-10:00 am— “What About Snake Handling and Drinking Poison?” Kevin Beard  
10:00-11:00 am— “What About Speaking in Tongues?” B.J. Clarke  
11:00-12:00 am— “Modern Prophets: True Or False?” Keith Mosher  
12:00-1:30 pm — LUNCH BREAK  
1:30-2:30 pm —Open Forum (panel of speakers)  
2:30-3:30 pm — “Does God Still Communicate With Man in Dreams and Visions?” Kevin Thomason  
3:30-4:30 pm — “The Design and Ultimate End of Miracles” Jeff Archey

from spiritual death! How could they have received better news than that?

Lastly, it should also be true that the church can be the place where one can be surrounded with true friends in times of hardship and pain so far as the home is concerned. It has been the observation of more than one of us that at times when families are in crisis they tend to withdraw themselves from the other members of the body of Christ, and that the other members of the body tend to remain at a distance from them. But we need to remember that the church is God's spiritual family, and that is not the way families react in times of pain. When the physical family is in trouble, regardless of the reason, it is time for the spiritual family to draw them with bands of love into their protection for their encouragement and healing. May it never be true of us that we, knowingly, leave a family in crisis out there for the world to trample under foot. The world cares nothing for them, and their only advice will be, "get on with your life." (Have you ever wondered what that means?) But the family of God should be willing to shield, protect, love, and support those who are in deep trouble until they can "get on with their lives." Getting on with one's life when a child has been sent to prison, or when a mother, or father has become unfaithful to the family, or when a divorce has ripped a family asunder is not as easy as one may imagine. It is at such times that the members of the body of Christ ought to be there with a Bible to read and a prayer upon their lips for the one, or ones, who are so deeply wounded by sin and by Satan. Why should we "get involved?" Because, if we are Christians, we are to "let brotherly love continue," and that is what love does. We need to point out that this is not just the privilege of the elders and the preacher, but it is the privilege of all who see the need. Whatever our hands find to do, we should do it with all our might? This is Christ-like service.

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Leading the family means being first in sacrifice for the family. He serves the family, not vice versa. One father who had just seen the birth of his sixth child said, "Now I am eighth in the family," He meant his wife and six children all came before him. If someone had to do without it would be him. His needs and wants would take a backseat to everyone else. He showed a proper understanding of what it means to be the head of the family.

Leading the family means being willing to make difficult decisions. It is frightening to be responsible for the welfare of others, but it has to be done. Decisions must be made as to the allocation of the family's limited funds. Choices have to be made about the family's priorities. Will the children be allowed to participate in certain activities, play certain video games, watch certain movies, associate with certain friends, wear certain fashions, etc.? Ultimately the responsibility for those decisions falls on the father. And he must have the courage to make them and stand behind them, even when they are not popular. Anything less is not leading.

Most importantly, he must take the lead in his children's spiritual training. Far too many men have succumbed to the temptation to delegate this responsibility to their wives. Certainly godly mothers have a vital part to play in the spiritual training of their children, but God gave the primary responsibility for this to the father. "And, ye fathers...bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Dad must lead in service to God. He must be the one who calls the family to prayer. He should see that the kids have their lesson ready for Bible class. He looks for opportunities to instruct his children in the principles of God. "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" (Deuteronomy 6:6,7). Every possible moment of every possible day is to be used in teaching our children about God, and the father must not be derelict in this duty. Truly blessed is the child whose father has taught him/ her to love God.

### THE FATHER PROVIDES LOVE FOR HIS CHILDREN

There is no substitute for a father's love. God wanted His own Son to experience this, and so He gave Him Joseph. A father's love makes the love of God a beautiful concept to us. A Vacation Bible School teacher told her class a story about God being our father. She was truly upset when a little girl responded by saying, "I hate God." The girl's father obviously was not what he should be. Her concept of "father" was unpleasant, and so her concept of God was unpleasant. All children deserve a father who is willing to put their needs ahead of his own. One cannot be selfish and be the loving father he should be. Blessed is the child who grows up and remembers a loving man who took time to be a father, in all that implies.

Some may downplay the father's role, but God places great importance on it. Except for his own relationship with God, a man has no greater responsibility than raising his children. If he takes time to do it right he will know the joy of growing old with loving children who honor him. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord... Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them" (Psalm 127:3-5).

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### THE ROLE OF THE MOTHER IN THE HOME

James B. Farley

She had just won a prize in a random drawing on one of TV's talk shows. She stood up in the audience and the host congratulated her and asked, "What do you do?" She replied, "Oh, I'm just a wife and a mother." I thought "JUST a wife and a mother!!! ????" Probably two of the most important jobs and roles given by the great God of heaven, and she said, "I'm JUST a wife and a mother" as if she was somehow inferior to those women who are in the secular work force, or something!

I'll tell you one thing. I'm certainly glad that I had a wonderful God-fearing, Christian mother, and I'm glad that my mother had the same!

couples out of a hundred. And while that figure is one for which we can be thankful, when compared with the statistics for the nation, it is still much higher than God would have it to be. Is there anything that the church can do to lower that figure?

We believe that this question can be answered in the affirmative, and part of the answer we have already noted in the paragraph above. But there is yet more that can be done. We can teach what the Bible says about the matter of marriage and divorce rather than allowing men to circulate among us giving seminars on all the reasons why they think divorce may be a commonly accepted thing among us. We need to take God at His word rather than in a lawyer-like manner, seeking all the loopholes we can find in order to find a way to disobey God, and not have to pay the price; or at least deceiving ourselves into thinking that we do not have to pay the price. It would be good for the church to teach classes to our young people, perhaps even before they are teenagers, about what the Bible says are God's views on marriage and divorce. Since we have become a "throw away" society, we buy something and if we do not like it after a few days, weeks, or months, we throw it away and find something we think will please us more. That kind of mentality has come to rest upon marriage, and it is influencing the people of God. If we have a husband or wife that we are no longer "in love" with, never mind that the precious souls of children may be involved, throw that husband or wife away and get one who fits our romantic views of what it means to be in love. It is time for the church to teach husbands to love their wives, and wives to love their husbands. It is time that we teach that divorce does not solve problems, it only multiplies them, and that it is something that should be considered **only after** all other remedies have been honestly tried, and then only in the case of the terrible sin of fornication. However, those of us who have taught this down through the years have been accused of preaching a bad gospel. One fellow told your author that gospel is defined as "good news," and the proposal to teach that there is only one reason for the dissolution of a family by divorce is not good news to those who want to do so. One really wonders if the message, "you have taken and with wicked hands have crucified the Lord of glory whom God raised up was good news to the Jews on Pentecost, in the sense in which this fellow was using "good news," but it caused them to repent and save their souls

not the primary interest of this body since her primary interest is in the saving of the precious souls of men, but it may well be a byproduct of her great work.

The body of which we speak, is, of course, the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and there are many things that the church can do to strengthen, aid, and encourage those who make up the home. Firstly, the church, by preaching the glorious Gospel of Christ can aid the home by teaching people what is expected of husbands, wives, and children who make up the home. The church can speak, in classes, in sermons, and by means of print of what the Bible teaches that a husband and father is. She can teach the man of the necessity of their taking up the leadership of the home, and being proper spiritual leaders of the wife and the children which make up a home. She can press the biblical teaching of the sanctity of marriage, and the commitment that is required on the part of the husband to the wife, the wife to the husband, of both to the children and of the commitment that children have to their own parents in the Lord. The Christian family can teach by word and example what it means to put Christ first in their lives, and to show the true happiness that results from spiritual development before all else in life. It is only by the teaching and the practicing of the truth of the Holy Scriptures that any kind of happiness can be expected in this life, or in the one which is to come. The church must put emphasis upon eternal verities, and not leave the impression that the teachings of God are merely for a period of happiness upon this earth. One of the reasons why the families which often make up the church are as weak as they are is because they have been taught a gospel of health and wealth rather than being taught that it is the will of God that all be saved from sin and for eternity, and that how we conduct ourselves in our families may well be the area in which we are saved or lost.

Divorce is a frightening problem in our nation. Some statisticians are telling us that it has now reached 50%, which is a rather frightening figure. Back in the middle 1950's we were told that in the churches of Christ the divorce rate among couples both of whom were Christians was 1%. But in the late 1990's the statisticians revised that figure, and they are now telling us that the rate has reached 10% for couples both of whom are attempting to be practicing Christians. Fifty years ago the figure was one couple out of one hundred, and now it is ten

My mother, Clista Spaulding Farley, is now 84 years old. She was married to my father, William Howard Farley, Sr., for 57 years until Dad died in 1991. They are the parents of eleven children. Mom has, as of this date, 30 grand-children, and 22 great-grandchildren. She is a wonderful example of a Christian wife, mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother.

Brother Fred Dennis has a lesson in his little book of sermons, FIFTY SHORT SERMONS, Vol. I, entitled, "Mother, Home, and Heaven." His first paragraph reads, "Someone has said that the three sweetest words in the English tongue are 'mother,' 'home,' and 'heaven.' Of course others would make a different list, but all agree that these are indeed sweet. Our very lives are associated with these words." He was right!

It is true that behind every successful man, with but few exceptions, there is a wonderful mother. Abraham Lincoln said, "All that I am, or ever hope to be, I owe to my angel mother." What a compliment!!! Those of us who have had good, godly mothers can certainly concur with what Mr. Lincoln said, can't we?

A woman should never ever say apologetically that she is JUST a wife and mother. Her place as wife and mother are God-ordained, and the aged women in the church are commanded to "...teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:3-5). This is not a suggestion, but a commandment. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit helps us to see that these things are to be taught. In fact, the word there is stronger. It is literally "train."

A mother in the home provides a wonderful and wholesome place where children can be nurtured and admonished to live according to God's right ways (Ephesians 6:4). This will oft-times involve discipline, and both parents are to administer this as needed, with the child's best interest at heart (Colossians 3:21; Proverbs 13:24; 22:15; 23:13-14; 29:15, 17). Children are indeed to be taught to "...obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord" (Colossians 3:20; Compare Ephesians 6:1-3 also). We need to add

here, I think, that we are not talking about blatantly striking or hitting children out of anger or because you are “just fed up with their foolishness.” We are talking about properly and lovingly correcting children, not provoking them to wrath. Children should feel safe in the home. They should know that they are loved and wanted, and that because their mother and father are walking in God’s light, according to His right ways (1 John 1:5 - 2:6), there will be real peace and harmony in the home. They should see kindness and tenderness on the part of both their mothers and fathers in the home. “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:31-32).

Mothers, and indeed grandmothers, can be a source of teaching and encouragement for youngsters as they grow up. Certainly we remember how the young man Timothy was taught by Lois and Eunice, his grandmother and his mother (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15). How many of us who are now Christians can say that it was our mother, and / or our grandmother who influenced us the most along those lines. I remember vividly my wonderful grandmother, Isabel Spaulding. She obeyed the gospel in 1933 at Crum, WV. My grandfather, Tommy Spaulding, had been a deacon in the Silver Creek Baptist Church there. Both of them obeyed the gospel when they heard it in its fullness and simplicity and left the Baptist religion. Grandma then set out to teach others about the meek and lowly Jesus, particularly those of her own family. In the Summer of 1965, when I was just 13 years old, I was sitting with Grandma on her back porch. She said, “Eddie honey, are you in the church?” I told her that I was not yet. She then proceeded to teach me how very important it was to obey the gospel, for we are not promised a tomorrow (James 4:14). In September of 1965 Grandma passed from this life and on to her reward. I can’t tell you how important that little talk with Grandma was in my life. My mother was (and is) also an admonisher and showed me what it means to be a Christian.

There were many things that could have caused Mom just to give up, but she was steady, walking in the light daily before us all, and showing us the way by the kind of life she lived, and lives!!! She

desperately needed. We need more parents willing to teach their children to obey them (Ephesians 6:1). We need more parents devoted to God and high moral standards. If we can have these, surely the church will be stronger and more pleasing to God. Without them, it is highly unlikely that the church will be strong in the days to come.

Since the home is so crucial to the welfare of the church, great emphasis must be put upon teaching people to be the kind of parents who will train children in the nurture and discipline of the Lord. We must teach parents how vital it is that they worship regularly. We must urge parents to be daily Bible readers and diligent students of the sacred writings. We must urge parents to be spiritual. But perhaps the most crucial thing is for the parents to accept the fact that they, not the government, the school, the neighborhood, or the church, are ultimately responsible for the spiritual welfare of their children.

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## WHAT THE CHURCH MEANS TO THE HOME

D. Gene West

The family is the foundation unit of all society. Out of the family grows the extended family, from the extended family grows the clan, from the clan the tribe, and from the tribe the nation. Sociologically speaking the home is the most important unit of all society because it is the cornerstone upon which all the rest of the structure of society is built. Physically, psychologically, and sociologically speaking there is no more important entity than the home, or the family. The moral strength of nations is directly proportional to the moral strength of the family. If the family has begun to disintegrate, then it follows quite naturally that the nation also will begin to decay, and ultimately fall into the dust of history. It has been noticed by historians that once a nation has begun its downward descent that it rarely, if ever, recovers itself. However, in our time there is another living, vital, organism, or body that has the ability to help with the healing of families in crises, and may as a result of that healing extend the life of nations. This is

## MORAL AND SPIRITUAL CLIMATE

Moral values are born at home and learned by a child from the ordinary rituals of his family (see Deuteronomy 6:1-15). From the normal conversations of the day, the child absorbs the parents' attitude toward each other, the church, school, government, and other institutions. From mealtime prayer the child learns gratitude (or from its absence, ingratitude. His parents' expression of affection (or lack thereof) teaches the child, and their use of their time instructs regarding life's priorities. Child-abusers are often found to have been abused as children, and wife-beaters often come from homes where violence was a part of the daily routine.

Spiritual values are born at home and learned by a child from his parents: faith (II Timothy 1:5); modesty (I Timothy 2:9); sobriety (Titus 2:4); holiness (Titus 2:3); goodness (Titus 2:5). Parents, will your children be faithful Christians? You are the major determining factor. Studies have shown that where both parents are faithful to the Lord, 93% of the children remain faithful. If only one of the parents is faithful, 73% of the children remain faithful. When the parent's religion is limited to attending services, only 53% of the young people remain faithful. In cases in which both parents attend church infrequently, only 6% remain faithful.

Though the local congregation and the Christian schools and universities play a considerable part in the cultivation and development of church leadership, in the final analysis it is the home which will provide the future leaders of the church. The study of what has made for great leaders of the church reveals time and time again that the home is the fundamental factor. The finest qualities which have always characterized God's greatest and most effective servants were learned at the knee of a godly mother or father. The local congregation and the Christian school or university have, in many a case, honored and sharpened the individual, but the blade was forged in the home fires.

Indeed, the home means much to the church. Instead of asking, "Why isn't the church doing more to save my children?" we need to ask, "Why is my home not doing more to train them?" Three things are

continues to be a good example for her family and all others who know her.

This brings me to a point that I think I need to make just here. We need missionaries to go to foreign lands to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15-16). I am glad for them and it thrills my soul when they come and tell us of the kinds of work they are doing in Ukraine, India, Tanzania, Brazil, etc. But you know, I think we overlook some of the hardest working missionaries we have among us. I refer to godly fathers, mothers and grandfathers, and grandmothers who rear up children to be elders, preachers, deacons, elders' wives, preachers' wives, deacon's wives, Bible school teachers, and yes, even missionaries to foreign lands. I've mentioned that we have eleven children in our family, 8 boys and 3 girls. Four of us "boys" are preaching now, and my sister is married to a preacher! Seems that my parents did something right, and a lot of the credit goes to Grandma Spaulding and to Mom for being the kinds of women that God intended for them to be. Now, there's a mission field that we do not talk about nor write about nearly enough!!!

The proper home, as God has ordained it in His Word, with the husband as head, lovingly and tenderly caring for his wife and children, and the wife and mother loving her husband and submitting to him as the head of the home, with both rearing up children in God's love and law, is the most stabilizing and enriching association known to humankind (Read I Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22-6:4). Our nation, and indeed the world are suffering terribly because we are without godly parents. Years ago I read a very good article by Joe Malone entitled, "Homes Comprise Nation's Gauge." In the article he stated, "If this republic is to survive, it is most urgent that we stabilize the American home. The Lord God has given us the pattern for the proper home." This caused me to remember a quote I have from Napoleon. He said, "The great need of France today is more good mothers." Beloved, that is the need of all the world!

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## THE ROLE OF CHILDREN IN THE HOME

Mark F. Reynolds

February 3, 1995. This day may not mean much to many others, but it is a day that I will remember forever, and a day that changed my life in so many ways! It was on this day at 6:33 pm that a daughter was born to my wife, Mindy, and me. I can still remember the feeling of holding Cassidy for the first time, and some of the thoughts that raced through my head. We had been married three years, and we felt we were ready to have children. I felt I was ready to be a father all through the pregnancy, and was confident that I was ready to answer any question that could be asked about fatherhood. Then it happened...it was time to have the baby. I was shaken, but still ready, and feeling confident. I was with my wife every step of the way, and being the best coach I could be. I was motivating, comforting, loving...I had it all covered. The head of the baby appeared, then the little

6:4-9). If the church is to attain maximum strength in years to come, a major factor will be the extent to which Christian parents have brought their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. With this in mind, let us consider the influence of the home upon the church.

### CONCEPT OF GOD

The home will greatly influence the concept of God held by people in the church. The Bible often refers to God as Father (i.e. II Corinthians 6:17,18). What do you think when you hear the term "father"? Your father? Luther's father was so stern, harsh, and unloving that he had difficulty praying, "Our Father who art in heaven..." The concept of God as Father is greatly enhanced by one's positive experience of a good father in the home. Good and effective fathers form the basis for many instructive teachings about the Christian life. Good fathers are examples of the rationale for God's discipline of His children (Hebrews 12:5-10). If a father disciplines well, the child is trained to accept the discipline of the Lord. Good fathers illustrate God's benevolence toward His children (Luke 11:11-13). A good father is a model of God's love, mercy, and forgiveness (Luke 15). Good fathers are very important to the formation of a meaningful concept of God.

### AUTHORITY

Respect for authority is enjoined in the Bible. The scriptures demand respect for Christ as head over the church (Colossians 1:18,19). They call for respect for the utterance of God (Hebrews 12:25). They charge the members of the local congregation to submit to the authority of their elders (Hebrews 13:7,17). They command recognition of the civil authority as ordained of God (Romans 13:1ff; I Peter 2:13ff). The authority of husband over wife and parents over children must be recognized according to the sacred oracles (Ephesians 5:22,23; 6:1). It is in the home that respect or lack of respect for Christ, the word, elders, civil authority, husbands is modeled and learned.

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Worship 10:00 am and 6:00 pm  
Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 pm

## **WHAT A GOOD HOME MEANS TO THE CHURCH**

Tom McLemore

The influence which the home has exerted upon the church through the years cannot be calculated. The future of the church depends upon the strength of the home. The question is often asked, “Is the church losing its young people?” If the answer is “yes,” the responsibility lies principally with the home.

While the church can and should do many things to encourage and strengthen its members and especially its young people, the Christian home is the institution God ordained for primary instruction of children in the way of the Lord. “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (Ephesians 6:4). “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the door posts of your house and on your gates” (Deuteronomy

shoulders, the chest, the tummy, then the feet, she was here. I was still doing great! They laid Cassidy on her mommy, then put a blanket around her, and I was still doing great. But then, I heard the nurse ask the question that I shall never forget “Daddy, it is your turn, are you ready?” When the nurse handed me my baby girl my knees began to shake, some type of moisture began to appear in my eyes (I WAS NOT CRYING), I tried to speak, but could not. The nurse suggested I sit down, and I gladly did. I sat in the chair looking at the most beautiful sight I had ever seen, and I fell in love. It was not a love I had ever felt before. Then I realized something that I had not realized before...I WAS NOT READY!!!! It finally began to sink in what was happening: A child was born to my wife and me, and it was up to us to care for, love, nurture, and rear her in a way that would be best for her, and in a way that would please God! I have since had this sensation a second time on June 24, 1998 when our second daughter, Abby, was born. And, God willing, I will experience it again in May of this year when our third child is due to be born. But this article is not about my role as a father, or my wife’s role as a mother, but the child’s role as a child. Many people fail to realize that children have a very important role to fill in the home, not only when they are young and living at home, but also when they grow older and leave the home. Let us notice the role of children in the home.

### **CHILDREN ARE TO BRING JOY TO THE HOME**

The Psalmist, in a splendid way, described the joy that children bring to their mother and father: “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 (Psalm 127:3-5). What joy children bring to their mother and father when they are born! It is the role of the child, however, to ensure that the joy continues. The Proverbs writer said, ‘A wise son maketh a glad father’ (Proverbs 10:1). It is the role of the parents to teach the children how to be good; lead the home in such a way that encourages children to be good; create a home that is a sanctuary from the world. Then, it is the role of the children to be good, follow the lead, and allow the home to be their sanctuary. This will bring joy to the whole family. What joy it is to watch a child grow physically, but it is even more joyful to watch

one's child develop into a faithful child of God. The following roles that children play ensure that the joy of parenthood continues.

### CHILDREN ARE TO OBEY THEIR PARENTS

A good son or daughter learns early that God expects them to obey his/her parents. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lamentations 3:27). A person's obedience to the Lord begins with his obedience to his parents: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this right" (Ephesians 6:1). When children deliberately disobey their parents, they disobey God. It is in the home where children learn what obedience is, what it includes, and the blessings that come from it. When a child is told to look both ways when crossing the street, he learns as he gets older that there is a reason for doing so. As he learns to obey his mother and father, and that they demand obedience out of concern for his safety, the child learns that God demands obedience for the same reasons. When God commands us to hear (Romans 10:17), believe (Mark 16:16), repent (Acts 2:38), confess (Romans 10:10), and be baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27), the faithful, obedient person will know that it is for my own spiritual safety that I obey my heavenly Father. Where do we develop the understanding of the necessity of obedience? In the home as we fill our role as children.

### CHILDREN ARE TO RESPECT THE FAMILY NAME

As children learn that their parents love them more than the parents love themselves, and that the commands of their parents come from the deep love they have for their children, they are to learn to respect the role of their parents. A faithful son/daughter will be faithful to the family name, because of what it represents, and because of all the work that has been done to build a good reputation for the name. A faithful child will fill his role to embellish the family name with deeds of honesty, tender benevolence, and courage in contending for things that are right, never wanting to bring shame to that name. Although the family name may be rather common in the community it becomes a synonym for virtue, goodness, and godliness. This is a name that can be trusted, respected, and which enriches the communities of the world. An unfaithful child can tear down what several generations

worked so hard to build, but a faithful child will only make the name stronger for generations to come!

In latter years the respect that the children developed for their parents and their name will cause the faithful children to return some of the blessings that parents gave while their children were small. My parents made many sacrifices for my sister, my brother and me while we were growing up; so many that this whole publication could not contain them all. I understand that and it causes my respect for them to grow even more. It is the duty of my sister, my brother and me to make those same sacrifices for them when they need help. It is a beautiful thing to watch "children" who are getting older themselves take care of their parents in their old age. Whether that is making sure they are being well taken care of in a healthcare facility, or taking them into their own home. It is the duty of the children to make sure that their parents are comfortable and happy! After all, that is exactly what faithful parents do for their children.

### CONCLUSION

If children wish to be happy on this earth, they will learn their role as children and work to fill it. The ramifications of learning to do this, however, do not end when this life ends. If one will notice the role that children must fill to be faithful to their earthly parents, one will also notice that a child of God must fill these same roles to be faithful to his heavenly Father. We are to bring joy to our heavenly Father by the way that we live. We are to learn to obey our heavenly Father so that we can be safe and saved. We are to learn to respect the name of our Father, and be proud to be called "Christians". We should work never to bring shame to the great name we wear as one of His very own! Think of what was done so that the name of Christ would be lifted up... God gave His Son so that you could wear His name. Where do I learn the importance of the family name? In the home, when I learn to fulfill my role as a child.

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