

# *The Family That Prays*

*Toney and Jeanie Samons*





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By

Toney & Jeanie Samons

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## PREFACE

*In our ministry, we have observed that the family is being very much neglected, even within our circle of the church. As we all strive to please God and have a personal relationship with Him, we often overlook the fact that God has established a way to assist us in doing that. He set up a system in which we could teach and learn everyday through the family unit. Each one of us is a part of that unit in some way and cannot escape it. God has laid it upon our hearts, as He continues to teach us in the ways of the home, to pass these lessons on to others. We have learned so much from our parents and those who have taken the time to teach us in the past. By reading this book, we hope that an interest will be rekindled concerning the important God-ordained structure—the home—so that precious families can be saved. We pray that we all will be enlightened to our responsibilities and that much heartache can be spared to future generations. Our encouragement to all is that you not settle for mediocre relationships with your family, but that you aspire to a loving marriage and a close knit bonding with your children. May these thoughts encourage you to move toward forgiveness and healing in relationships that have hurt or damaged your family and help bring about God's blessing upon you and those that are the closest to you.*

*Please do not think that this book is written by professionals in this field. We do not have all the answers, and in our own lives we have not accomplished perfectly all that is written here. We are on a journey with the rest of you, and that journey has been one of learning difficult lessons. We rejoice as we reflect upon God's mercy to us through the years. In spite of our ignorance and inexperience, He has been so good. This book is compiled with much love for all our brothers and sisters in Christ.*

—Bro. Toney & Sis. Jeanie Samons

## *Dedication*

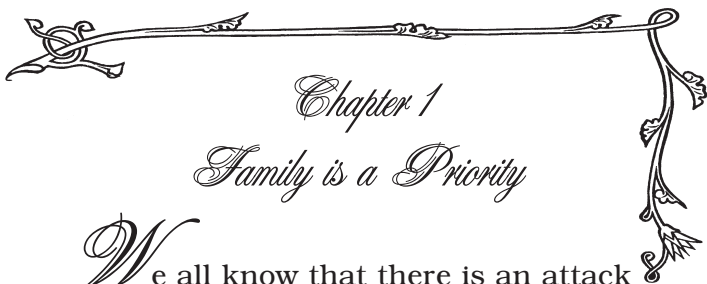
*This book is dedicated to our four children, Chad, Shana, Lenee and Andrea, who did not have a choice in this journey of life with us. They will be the first to admit that, at times, the journey has been rough, but we have weathered it together. We all testify to the goodness of God as He piloted us through those hard times, and we praise Him for the wonderful memories He has allowed us to make together.*

## CONTENTS

Chapter 1	Family is a Priority .....	7
Chapter 2	Man's Role as a Leader .....	14
Chapter 3	Biblical Submission for Women .....	21
Chapter 4	Emotional Needs of Men .....	32
Chapter 5	Emotional Needs of Women .....	37
Chapter 6	Temptation: Common to Man .....	47
Chapter 7	Who Can Find A Virtuous Woman .....	51
Chapter 8	Moderation for Men .....	56
Chapter 9	Modesty for Women .....	59
Chapter 10	Lo, Children Are an Heritage .....	65
Chapter 11	Training Our Children .....	69
Chapter 12	Control in Child Training .....	74
Chapter 13	Correction in Child Training .....	79
Chapter 14	Church Manners .....	85
Chapter 15	Adolescence .....	91
Chapter 16	"Dating" .....	97
Chapter 17	Engagement and Early Marriage .....	102
Chapter 18	To the Hurting .....	108
Conclusion	.....	111







## *Chapter 1*

### *Family is a Priority*

*W*e all know that there is an attack upon the family unit in our society today. The Christian world is very concerned that, in the near future, we may not be able to identify the family as the unit we know today. We cannot imagine what the future holds when we see the degeneration of the family unit in the last decade. Thus, we need to take seriously something that God has entrusted to us to preserve, because it is the backbone of a successful society.

God saw that it was not good for man to be alone so He gave him a wife. (Genesis 2:18.) When God created the plan, He intended it to be a good one, a plan that would work. True, Adam and Eve thwarted the plan somewhat and God chastened them, yet He still set up a plan for the family, from the beginning of time, that He could use in establishing a world that, through the family units, could be procreated and flourish. Through this loving unit of man and wife, God planned for them to bear children, "...an heritage from the Lord,..." Psalm 127:3. This heritage means a "gift" from God, something wonderful that He has given to us.

In the New Testament, after Christ came, an even better plan was presented, so that this family unit

could be enhanced with salvation, and the man and the wife be "...heirs together of the grace of life..." I Peter 3:7.

If all is done, as the Word of God instructs us to do—such as a loving and trusting relationship between man and wife and the gift of children received, cherished, nourished and “brought up in the fear and the admonition of the Lord”—the world is then blessed with a stability that results in a society and a church that is healthy and able to do the work that God intended.

So we must cherish this plan and try to perfect it as God gives insight. As we see the world abusing this plan, we must put forth greater effort to make it work, by the grace of God working through the family.

The strength of the home is the father, who is instructed in the Scripture to be the “head of the house,” which meant, when the Scripture was written, that he was someone that the family looked to as their strength, one who is sound in judgment and can be trusted to live a life that is spiritual so that the family will prosper from it. He is blessed with a wife, who is referred to in the Scripture as an “helpmeet,” meaning that the man cannot do without her. This doesn’t mean that the woman is less than her husband, but that her intuition and emotional stability round out a perfect twosome. This makes up a household that is solid, loving and focused on right things, consistently teaching in their home the things that will make them strong, not only in spirituality, but in work ethics and the

application of good in daily living. When this is done, their children carry on that plan into another family unit when they marry and procreate, and thus the world grows into what God intended it to be.

But as we consider the above, we can clearly see that the world in which we live today falls far short of it. We are in need of instruction on how to preserve the love in the home and how to put into practice the things that God intended for the family. We, as a society, have evolved into people who are living in units of selfishness, not willing to give to each other, thus creating the emotional instability of today's family, which is greatly lacking in the beauty of the original plan.

How this should motivate us, as Christian people, to apply ourselves to the perfecting of this beautiful plan that God set up to bless the world. How can we do this? First, by realizing that there is no way for any of us to avoid being a part of this plan, as each of us is either a mother, a father, a son or a daughter. Thus, we all have something to contribute to the success of the family unit. Secondly, we must realize that, because of this, it is God's will that we apply ourselves seriously to His plan for the family. When we have learned to love, support and give, we are then contributing to the world, making it a better place by producing people that are able to pass on these same attributes to each new generation. This results in preservation; it is what we need to aim for in this modern world that is quickly sliding into a degradation which cannot be restored.

Here are some general suggestions on how to keep the family together. As a unit, a family thrives on companionship. They must spend time together. It is customary today for each family member to have a different schedule. Some families can go days without even seeing each other; this is not healthy. Monetary gain is not very important, especially when viewed in the light of quickly passing precious years that cannot be relived. Parents should make every effort to bring all the family together often for a time of enjoying each other and strengthening relationships. It is not necessary to spend great amounts of money or choose wildly exciting things to do. Playing games, picnicking, camping, playing music together or simply sitting and discussing common life with each other, are just some of the ways you can bond.

There should be at least one family meal together each day, if at all possible. Mothers, teach your girls to prepare home-cooked meals. Fix family favorites and celebrate special holidays and birthdays. Even the boys and their father can have an evening in the kitchen. Make it fun and memorable.

Keep the home "homey," with pleasant odors, tasty meals, cleanliness, orderliness and positive conversation. Teach good manners during these times and do not allow negative conversation or criticism of others. This builds respect in the family.

Have regular family nights; reserve time for just your family, with no outside disturbances. Turn off the telephones, avoid scheduling appointments with others, and don't do anything to disturb this

time together. Learn to have fun and laugh together. Your children will see that they are very important to you.

Family traditions really strengthen the bonds in a family. Look for ways to begin a tradition in your home together. Holidays are perfect settings for this. Go back to favorite places to relive memories. Statistics say that camping is still the all-time favorite thing to do together as a family. Playing ball, swimming, hunting, fishing, hiking, cooking and shopping can all be times of making cherished memories, which will never be forgotten.

Teaching your children good work ethics is very important, but you can make it fun by doing work projects together. It's much more enjoyable to paint a house together; make spring cleaning a party or a game. Have races and teams and make it a grand time for everyone.

Teach hospitality by having friends over often. Invite different age groups of people. A group of just youth can be much fun, and sleepovers can be done, but only with careful parental supervision. Make sure the rules are being followed. (This is one area where a lot of wrong doing can be learned if the parents are not closely involved and observant.) Invite families into your home for more formal dinners and interaction. Teach your children to befriend and encourage the needy by welcoming older people and the handicapped into your home.

Evangelism is an important tool to use in the family, as there are always things to be done for others. Do not isolate your children from these

challenges. Take your family with you to visit convalescent homes, or places where you know they could give something of themselves to others. Teach them to sing and pray with the lonely, the hurting and the elderly. This kind of sharing will not only develop in your children a care and concern for the needy, but it will also add so much happiness to the lives of others. They will learn that as we bless others, we too receive a blessing.

If you have a home-based business, this is a perfect opportunity to include your family. Your children will learn cooperation and important business skills. They love the sense of accomplishment that goes with the involvement of the family together in something prosperous.

Be sure that your spiritual times together are genuine and occur frequently. If possible, they should be led by the father. Make your daily life a part of your sharing and comparing. For children, devotions can become the most boring time of the day, so endeavor to make your devotional time an interesting one. Remember, you are dealing with children and teenagers here, so present the lessons on their level. This is their devotional time, not yours. If you have extreme age differences, you may want to have devotions together with all the family, and then spend time separately with the older or younger ones so that comprehension is greater. Young people sometimes discuss things that perhaps younger children should not be involved in.

Be sure you attend church services regularly as a family. The children must see that this is a

very important time for both parents. It cannot be neglected. Every time that chapel door is open, be there. Your involvement in the services will be observed by your children. Carry your Bible, be an active participant in the services, and enjoy your salvation there, as well as at home. The example you set will likely determine their future involvement in services. Go to revivals, camp meetings or special gatherings. Make the trip fun; stop for family vacations, at points of interest, or camp along the way.

Provide the proper environment for your children. Keep abreast of their music, reading materials and friends at all times. Maintain positive and pure surroundings. Help them understand peer pressure and why there are limitations in your home for each of you.

Harmony in the home can only be brought about by making sure the family functions as a unit. This requires great effort and involves making priorities: putting God first, family second and others next. Sometimes, it all becomes intertwined as you work for the good of all involved. Certainly, there is little time left for selfish living on the part of any one family member.

Parents often evolve into thinking that the demands of others and jobs must take priority over their family and God's will for their lives. When this happens, God and the family are neglected, receiving just a very small portion of your time. Again, be reminded that by making your family your number one priority under God, you are acknowledging Him.

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## Chapter 2

### *Man's Role as a Leader*

*B*ut 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." I Corinthians 11:3. God is a God of order in all of His creation. The family is an institution of His and therefore it should be orderly. The above stated scripture establishes God's order for man and his family. The purpose of order is for things to run smoothly, consistently and dependably.

God is the head of all, and under Him is His Son, Jesus Christ. Man is then under Christ and the woman under the man. For a family to fulfill God's will and be blest, they must follow this pattern set out in the Word. Ephesians 5 states that wives submit to their husbands, but the husband must love his wife as the church. If this is done, with a husband loving his wife as Christ loved the church, the wife will be glad to submit to his headship, because it will be a loving and caring relationship, one that cannot be resisted. But this will only happen if both are submissive to God. If either are resistant to God, they will naturally not be ready to fill their part in the home, for only the Holy Spirit can make us love in such a manner. If a husband loves his wife as his own body, there is no way he would abuse that love.



Matthew 20:27 sets the true guidelines to be a leader. "And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." The Biblical pattern for the father is to be a servant to the family by his willingness to sacrifice, to work for, to plan for and to give all for. His headship really implies that he is carrying the greatest responsibility. The natural state of a man, by his physical characteristics and his emotional make-up, gives him the ability to fill this role. He was designed to be the provider, the strength and the buffer between the world and his family. The man will truly find his place in God by filling this role.

Probably the greatest blow that has been struck to the family is the undermining of this place in the home. There is an attack on men today to make them appear a weakling, incompetent and unable to handle responsibility. Sad to say, many men have bought into this and they fill their time pursuing frivolous hobbies, spending useless time following sports and keeping themselves entertained with costly and vain pursuits at the expense of their family. The media has belittled his place and attacked his character until society doesn't know that there is such a thing as a true man as God intended. They are hard to find.

The nature of a servant is to be humble and submissive to the one he serves. Humility is another key to leadership. Jesus stated a paradox when He said, "Let him who is greatest be the servant." Your challenge is to know how to lead humbly. Humility is not weakness; it is merely a recognition that you

do have weakness. How you deal with those weaknesses will lead your family in dealing with theirs. It will show them you are a human, capable of making mistakes, but willing to admit and correct them. This is the factor that will open the door to respect from your family.

A man's leadership role requires him to be capable of making decisions. The final decision should be the man's responsibility, but good decisions can only be reached from good information and good advice. If a man will lead his family right, he must be informed. The best source of information for making these kind of decisions is God and the Word of God. To lead the home, his first priority must be to cultivate a personal relationship with God. This requires a man to take time daily with God in his private closet. It also requires him to be a student of the Word, because the Bible is the greatest source of information about what God expects of us. Not only does the man need the guidance of God, but God also gave him a helper—a wife—and her input is very valuable to his decisions. God gave a woman an intuition that man doesn't have. If a man would make wise decisions, her sensitivities to certain areas should not be disregarded. A husband who loves his wife will value her input.

Another part of leadership is in setting the tone for your family, by leading them in moral standards, conflict resolutions, and showing respect to the family and others. This area is often neglected and the responsibility passed on to the wife. Children

will sense your weakness, and you will find your authority being undermined. When you neglect or avoid these areas, you are giving unspoken permission for your children to follow your pattern.

As a husband, you must take the lead in establishing a healthy moral climate in the home. A wife should not be made to feel that this is her burden to carry alone. Because of man's innate weakness in this area, you may feel you are not able to be as strong as you like, but you are to stand up, do your job, fight your battles and gain your victories.

In setting moral standards, as a father in particular, you need to lead your sons in maintaining purity and wholesomeness in the home. You must be willing to correct violations. This requires not only the authority of your leadership, but it is also essential to get on their level so they know you understand them. Your sons, as they approach puberty, will begin to struggle with temptation. Peer pressure can influence them in acquiring a warped view of right and wrong. A boy's progressive awakening will bring confusion to his mind and produce guilt feelings. You must take the lead to educate him about what is happening in his body. Teach him the true picture of what God has prepared for him in this area of his life. Most fathers are very uncomfortable addressing this. Nevertheless, you must not shirk this responsibility.

A father's role in establishing moral guidelines for his daughter cannot be underestimated. Your example sets a pattern for their future choice of a husband. You must be able to give her love,

tenderness, hugs and kisses, yet maintain proper conduct and wholesomeness in your relationship. Daughters must feel loved but not threatened by their fathers. Because these young girls are innocent, you, as a leader, must find the balance in supplying affection with purity.

People living with people will have conflicts. The key to a successful family is not in creating an atmosphere where there is no conflict, but in learning how to deal with conflict when it arises. As the head of your wife, you are duty-bound to take the lead when conflicts arise between the two of you. Depending upon your personality, you may react in one of two ways. If you are the type of man who avoids confrontation, you will easily retreat and avoid the situation. Conversely, a confrontational man often fails to give his partner the opportunity to share her feelings openly. Neither reaction will resolve the problem. As has been stated, humility is the key to leadership. Take the lead by allowing your spouse to share her feelings, because she has a great need to do so. Bring any angry feelings into control, share your feelings openly, and refuse to allow conflict to drive you apart. Avoid attacking one another; it only drives you farther apart. In a later chapter of this book, suggestions are given on how to make an appeal to one another.

Sibling rivalry and conflict are a normal state for a family. Your leadership should provide a fair and reasonable environment for these conflicts to be resolved. In parent/child conflict, see that your leadership authority gives your children space to

speak or even question the subject at hand without violating your rules of respect. Be especially careful to protect your wife's authority in the home, as she spends much more time with the children. Your wisdom in these areas will earn the respect and authority you need in order for you to be an effective leader.

Another source of information that will enable you to make wise decisions is your children. When they are young they will have little input. But as they begin to mature, a wise father will solicit input from his children. Sometimes their perspective will enlighten adults.

A man of God will also be open to counsel from other brethren. It is valuable to have those whom you respect and honor to give advice for you to consider. Other's experiences can benefit us greatly. The story of the Roman centurion that came to Jesus seeking help for his servant gives us insight into where true authority lies. He was able to command one hundred men, because he had been under authority himself.

A wise father will consider all these sources of information before making a decision. The Scripture says that "in the multitude of counsel there is safety." A decision should not be made solely on your ability to make one, but only after you have weighed your options and considered God's direction and the welfare of your family. Impulsiveness in leadership is a formula for shipwreck. Right timing in decision making is of ultimate importance.

What an awesome responsibility lies upon the shoulders of every man who has chosen to take on a wife and children. Because you have chosen to do so, you will stand before God for how you have handled it. May God give each of us true humility to lead as He intended.

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## Chapter 3

### *Biblical Submission for Women*

*T*

he subject of “submission” for women has not been one easily understood and certainly not something popular in the last 50 to 75 years. Somewhere along the way, society began to confuse the roles; religious historians believe this happened when women began to take their place in the work force outside the home. Much could be said about this, first however, we want to mention first some scriptures to read. One of the most well-known is in I Corinthians 11:3 which states, “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man.” Another is in 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. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.”

In the past, this principle has been taught more by example than it is today. It is difficult to find women of the present who are practicing these scriptures. Therefore, it seems to be necessary that this subject be given attention.

There seems to be a lack of respect and authority in the world today in our government, church and community. No one wants to be told what to do. According to God's pattern, women have a place, which is under the man in the home. Why is it so difficult? Consider some possible reasons.

"Submission" is a military term which simply means to "rank under." It does not imply a lack of intelligence; rather, the ability to do what you are told to do by those in authority. It doesn't mean that you do not have input; you do. Compare this to a military setting where there are different ranks. Those ranking in the officer's position make the decisions and then issue the command to the lesser ranking men, who are every bit as intelligent as the officers. If the lesser ranks refuse to follow the commands of the men over them, they will be fighting a losing battle. Someone has to be in charge; someone else has to do their bidding. God made women as a "helpmeet" to the husband. This was the first assignment given to women, and still applies today. We are to voluntarily support our husband and do everything we can to accomplish their work. Our duty as parents is to endeavor to have a home where the husband and wife are in harmony, raising children according to the pattern God set forth in the Word of God.

Many people refer to Adam and Eve and say that this is where the trouble began. Eve didn't do her part. In reality, neither did Adam. Neither of them obeyed God. As a result of their disobedience, sin entered the world, and man was introduced to many



evils. God told Eve, "I will greatly multiply thy sorrow...and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." Eve now would be able to use her God given charms and beauty to influence her husband for either good or evil.

What woman is not capable of changing her husband's mind about almost anything? They use their physical charms with their husbands in order to distract them from the real problem. They also tend to use their emotions (crying, begging, etc.) A man is at a great disadvantage as he deals with these influences of a woman, who is the weaker vessel. He feels the pressure of trying to honor her. Do not underestimate your power over your husband and the trouble it can produce. It is used very effectively by women against their husbands in the roles of leadership and submission. Women can be very selfish, influencing their husbands to do things their way by the use of manipulation or by a more direct work of "threatening." This is very, very wrong because it weakens the man's authority, and places the woman in control, which she does not need.

Consider also that everyone wants to be recognized as an individual. Women think that if they become submissive, they will feel inferior and that they will be unable to express their feelings. They do not want to be branded as spiritless nor to be taken advantage of, which are logical reasons to doubt the need for submission. It is also practically unheard of in the world today, and in many circles you will be ridiculed for even supporting this issue.

What then is the purpose of submission? Does the Bible give us some instruction on submission? Yes, it is found in I Peter 3:1, “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands...” Verse 7 reads “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge... as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”

Is this an option? It doesn't appear so, the reason being, that if you are not following the Biblical pattern, you will not have sufficient grace and your prayers will be hindered, or not answered. What an awesome challenge, when you are daily praying (and hoping that God hears you) and begging for grace for the day. If women could view submission as a very spiritual protection for themselves, they would probably respond much quicker, because all women have an inner desire for security and protection. In His Word, God has provided the solution. Practice your proper place in your home and in your life and watch the Lord bless.

Submission is definitely not an indication of inferiority. A woman is given to a man to help him. Helpers are known to be the most important part of a working arrangement. They have the most input. The boss often gets the credit, but the helper does the work. Have you ever heard a little saying like “Behind every good man is a good woman?” There are ways of being a good helper. Women have to learn to be prudent and to support their men without ruling them. Women often have a lot more wisdom in some areas than men. They tend to have that extra sense and can perceive things when men

don't. If this is not abused, the men will soon learn to listen for the little checks that come from their wives, but if you consistently put down his ideas and challenge his decisions, he will resist your input and resent your help. Do not present yourself as smarter or wiser than he is. Instead of directing him, learn to merely suggest. Some women are quick decision makers, because of their personalities, and believing that they know the answer, expect immediate action.

In those cases, the husband is generally the slower decision maker and has to think things out. Let him filter the information and come to a conclusion. For women who are slower to make decisions, there are ways to help temper your husband when he respects your cautionary spirit and doesn't resent it. God put the men on the forefront for a reason. Ultimately, women have to find ways to encourage their husbands to make wise and firm decisions without making them feel threatened. If the woman can learn to do this, it will give amazing stability to a marriage.

Determine what your husband's strengths and weaknesses are, identify yours as well, and work at trying to blend the two into a working unit. One area of the home that is often put under pressure is the finances. Learn to work together in this area as both of you fulfill your duties. Help him come to solid and worthwhile financial decisions. Men need their wives to believe in them, to have confidence that they are capable, smart and wise. Give them opportunity to make good decisions, and then

praise them and encourage them in doing so again. They will solicit your help much more often if you have been suggesting and encouraging, instead of putting pressure on them. You must step back and let them think it through without your manipulation. Sometimes, it will be a decision that doesn't seem quite right. If you have had reasonable discussion about it, and he still feels that way, let it go. If, at a future time, it proves to be a bad decision, do not use this as an opportunity to tell him that he should have listened to you. Put your arms around him, remind him that everyone fails at times and that you have confidence that he was trying. Give him your assurance that he can make a better decision next time. He needs to know that you believe in him. Your submission is not dependent upon who is right or who is wrong.

A note of caution here: when two people come together, you are often from differing backgrounds. Love will not alter the fact that you have opposite opinions about a lot of things in your life. To become one doesn't mean that you will always think alike. Your personal dreams and desires will often be different. Your upbringing and even convictions are sometimes different. And definitely, your personalities are very different. It makes both of you appear to be very wrong at times in your decision making. It can cause great rifts in marriages until you can realize that maybe neither of you are wrong. You are just approaching the matter from different viewpoints. You must communicate openly, listen to and try to understand each other's

opinions, and then work together to come to the best decision for all involved. Take the time to pray together and seek God for a good answer.

It appears that the more independent and talkative woman often has a harder time learning submission. But this is not necessarily true. The passive woman often closes up and gives no input into the relationship. That doesn't make her submissive. It can indicate selfishness or bitterness, as well, and makes the burden of the husband greater, because she has no interest in working as a team. Being passive is not submission. No woman should "shift into neutral" and let her husband do it all alone. Every woman wants to be needed and every woman wants to know she can be recognized for who she is as an individual.

Submission is not dependent upon a husband's spiritual condition, though it certainly makes it easier. The scripture, I Peter 3:1, refers to women who were married to pagan men. Submission is God's plan in a Christian union but also in a marriage that is not Christian. The scripture says that the husband can be won by the conversation of the wife. If a wife demonstrates love and submission to an unbelieving husband, often he will be affected and won over by this. If she is not submissive and has an obvious attitude, he will become bitter, and in many cases, choose not to live with the wife who is treating him so.

An unbelieving or unspiritual husband can make unreasonable demands upon a woman, which she feels causes her to violate her conscience. The

woman is first and foremost answerable to God for her soul and shouldn't do anything, in order to submit to her husband, that would morally separate her from God. She should prayerfully entreat her husband for understanding about why she cannot grant his wishes and hopefully he will fear God enough to release her. But sometimes this just doesn't happen. It is then that the woman must make decisions based on her own soul's welfare, and she may need help and counseling. She should also spend much time in prayer and fasting about her dilemma.

This doesn't mean that you have to be a doormat or live in an abusive relationship. No man has the right to abuse his wife, either emotionally or physically. If, after you have done everything you can to prove your submission, your husband is still not peaceably dwelling with you, there are times when separation is necessary. This alternative must be seriously and reverently considered with much counseling and prayer. Staying in abusive relationships can create bitterness. Some choose to do it; others cannot. But remember that the vows you made on your wedding day are binding for life and as long as your spouse lives, you are not free to enter into another relationship. Each situation is different and needs to be given individual consideration. The exact answer for any given situation cannot be dictated. Certainly, with unbelieving husbands, much attention should be given to having the right reactions and using the method of appeal, as Queen Esther did to King Ahasuerus. It takes

much wisdom to choose the circumstance and the timing in making appeals in these situations.

How does a woman make an appeal to her husband? Simply said, it is the opposite of attacking. To attack is to accuse, and accusations will immediately cause wrong reactions. For instance, your husband has overlooked taking out the trash again! You can say, "Did you not see that I need help with the trash? You never take it out!" Do you think this response will make him want to do it? No! A better response would be something like, "Honey, I know you are so busy, but the trash is full again. Do you think that you could take a minute and take care of that for me? Thanks so much." He will be much more inclined to help you after this appeal. Do not use the words "never" and "always" in your vocabulary when trying to make an appeal for help. If you solicit help in the right way, it will generally work.

Many women mistakenly feel that submission is directly related to the physical relationship in a marriage. I Corinthians 7:2-5 says, "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 another, 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.”

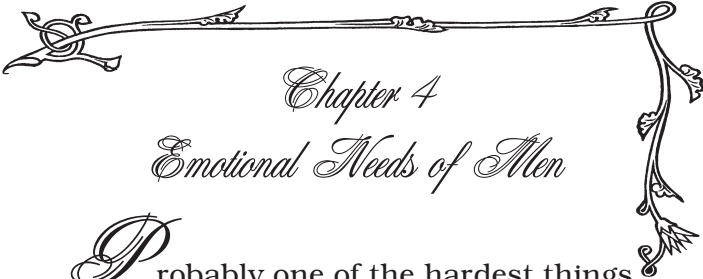
Certainly, every wife, having taken the marriage vows, has an obligation to her husband physically. But do not look at it as an obligation of submission. Instead, it is a privilege of marriage and ordained to be a wonderful experience that you share with each other. Satisfying physical relations in a marriage are a result of a healthy emotional relationship between a husband and his wife. Only in that way can it be totally fulfilling. You are there to please him, and he is there to please you, a result of a desire to make each other happy. Both are to submit and give to each other; it is not one-sided. Nowhere in the Bible are you given the right to hurt one another in this very important relationship. It will be unfulfilling if a couple doesn't practice this in a Biblical way. If you choose, as a woman, not to practice it, you will be hindering God's plan for your marriage, and you and your husband will suffer for it. Your children will suffer, also. Your husband will not feel fulfilled in other areas of his life, because of the insufficiency at home. His life's ministry in the church and the community will be jeopardized because of this lack. Only if you have a beautiful loving relationship in the home will your husband be "known in the gates." It is up to you to help him to feel fulfilled in every way.

It would be wise to insert here that there are times in a relationship when the woman must take upon her roles that she was not meant to. A dysfunctional home that is burdened with the abuse



of alcohol, drugs or by mental illness—by the father and husband—always puts undue stress upon the role of a wife. She often has to work and make decisions that would not be necessary in a normal relationship. These are exceptions to the plan of God, but unfortunately are becoming too common. If you are in one of these situations, remember that God loves you, and only by His grace and the support of those you seek counsel from, will you be able to make the right decisions in your circumstances.

Whatever your state, do not look upon submission as a burden. It is scriptural and thus it is God's will. Take a look at your circumstances. If you are bearing the burden of too much responsibility in the home and have taken upon yourself things you were never meant to bear, you need to find out how this happened. Acknowledge where you failed, and confess to your husband that you see your need. If you are passive and haven't shared your part of the load, you also can make a new start. Be honest with yourself, at all costs, to preserve your home and your marriage. There are souls at stake. Begin to unload the burdens of self-will, desire for control, mistrust, and any other burden that has been weighing you down. Start implementing God's plan in your home and watch your husband change and your children's level of security be strengthened. This is not an experiment; it really works. Try it and you will see more grace begin to surface and prayers begin to be answered.

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*Chapter 4*  
*Emotional Needs of Men*

**P**robably one of the hardest things for a man to admit is that he does have emotional needs. The first step for a man, then, is to concede that he is needy. In Genesis 2:18, we find that Adam was needy. God saw that he needed a wife. God gave Adam someone to help him. Men, you need to realize, every day of your life, that the woman God gave you is there because you need her. You are not above her, or there to dominate her; you simply need her in your life. A woman has a strong desire to feel needed, so live like she is important to you.

Because of the way God made man, as we read in Genesis, he also needs someone who will depend upon him. Since that is so, you must be dependable. A man needs someone to accept him as he is. But acceptance doesn't always merit approval. Really, a loved one will accept the other person when they see that they are living life right, leaning on God, and growing spiritually. If a woman sees you are not following that pattern, her ability to fulfill your need of acceptance is threatened. Put God first, and the woman will accept you much more readily.

A man needs a woman to support and encourage him. If you are willing to include her in your decision making by asking for opinions, etc., and she can see a pattern of stability in your decisions, she will easily support you. This doesn't mean that she knows you will never make a wrong or weak one along the way, but as a whole, she will encourage you in making decisions because she trusts you from the good pattern of the past.

A wife should fulfill the needs of the man for making the home. Titus 2 says that the men should be sober, thus being responsible, so that the wife can be a keeper of what he provides for her. A man needs a woman to come home to, one who keeps his home organized, clean and running smoothly, fulfilling the family's needs. But this is not a given. It is absolutely necessary that you praise her for this input into your life. Let her know often your appreciation for the good food, the clean home, the fresh laundry, and she'll love to do it and will keep doing it. Give her a break every now and then with the dishes, the trash, the vacuuming, and she'll pamper you even more. If you love to be given attention, give it back!

In Proverbs 31, the husband is "known in the gates." This implies that his wife is so faithful in her duties in the home that it makes him a confident man, because "the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." That kind of confidence will make a man straighten his shoulders and walk tall. Being faithful, in the evil world we live in today, is something so precious and rare that to have that

confidence should send you running home every night to your wife. You need that faithfulness to keep you at a distance from other women and to build that wall of reserve that you should always have with every other woman but your wife.

A man's physical needs, were, of course, designed to be met by his wife. With the availability of so many distractions to gratify the male today, it is so very important to have the arms of your wife be your protection. If you realize that you need her love to fill that empty place in your life, you will lavish love and attention on her so that she will be so happy to give back to you. It is important to have this openness between you, as man and wife, where each of you realize how much you need each other. In the care of a family, so often mates are distracted by the duties of a job and the home that they neglect fulfilling this need for each other. God created marriage for this purpose; to meet each other's needs. Be accountable to your wife in this area of physical need in your life. You must do it in a loving way, not a forward or demanding way, letting her know how very important it is to you, so that you can feel protected and have a proper perspective as you face the evil world around you. Even when your wife is distracted by physical problems or stress, it is your duty to remain true to her. The Bible says that you are to come together again after prayer. Do not refrain from hugging and having physical contact. When you draw apart, temptations multiply. Give no space for the alternatives of the world to

satisfy your physical needs as a man. They are all perverted and hated of God. Follow Job's example, "I made a covenant with mine eyes." Job 31:1. Purpose with Proverbs 5:15 that you will "drink water out of thine own cistern." Remember that God's plan has always been and always will be "one man, one woman." Those physical needs should only be met by the wife that God gave you.

The next question is "How can I ensure that those needs be met?"

**Here are some suggestions on how to love her and to get the reward of her love, acceptance and faithfulness.**

1. Show her sympathetic awareness of every day problems. That means having a good talk at least 10-15 minutes every day.
2. Be thoughtful in little things such as opening her door, being mannerly and making sure that she has spending money.
3. Give her verbal assurances on her appearance, cooking, personality, etc.
4. Let her know that you are not ashamed of her modest appearance in public by holding her hand or putting your arm around her in public to let others know you are pleased with her.
5. Give her physical attention outside of the bedroom, often touching or catching her eye to smile or to wink.
6. Keep every day as clear and happy between the two of you as you possibly can.
7. Tell her often that you need her and are so glad you have her.

8. Never belittle her, in public or in private conversation; if you do, you cannot expect her to respond to you later.

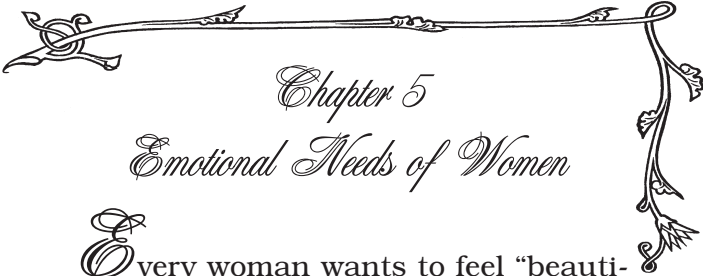
9. Do not bicker or argue. Disagree amiably, if you must disagree—and you will.

10. Realize that she has feelings (fears, insecurities) much different than yours. Try to understand them. Do not ignore them or tell her she should not have them.

11. Pray every day together with and for your wife, letting her know she is important to you spiritually.

12. Keep your personal life with the Lord up to date so that she can see plainly that you are seeking God's guidance. It gives her great security.

Your needs will come much closer to being met if you will follow the things suggested above. Do not think that, in your marriage, you are there only for your needs to be met. You must be willing to meet her needs, also. Only by giving can a relationship work.

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*Chapter 5*  
*Emotional Needs of Women*

Every woman wants to feel “beautiful” in the true sense of the word. Beautiful means “pleasing to the mind, spirit and the senses.” Isn’t this how every woman wants her husband to feel about her? Many women of the Bible were considered to be “fair” and “beautiful.” We have no choice of how we look as far as how our lips are shaped, the color of our hair, eyes, etc., but we do have a lot to say about the ways we can be beautiful in the true sense of the word. Paraphrasing an old wise saying: A woman who is truly wise perceives her good features as well as her weak traits and does the best with what she has, willing to change anything in order to better portray the picture of Christ she is trying to present.

Your physical features, as stated above, cannot always be changed, but you can make the most of them by developing a becoming, modest and acceptable presentation of yourself. Assuming that you have a husband that will help balance you in this area, choose a becoming hairstyle that you both like, and wear attractive clothes that are becoming but not seductive nor revealing (see chapter on modesty.) You can be a person to whom

people are drawn, because of your acknowledgment of God in this area. This does not mean that you spend hours making yourself into something that everyone admires. It simply means that you work with this area of your life until you are satisfied that you are meeting God's desires for you, your husband's godly expectations, and complimenting your own personality by presenting an all around good image of a Christian woman. You do not want to appear proud, neither do you want to appear slovenly or slouchy. Do not confuse modesty with sloppiness or an uncaring attitude about the way you look. There is a balance of self-worth that is important to yourself, others, and to God, in the way you appear outwardly.

Even if you feel you have the outward part of your life defined, none of that will have a good effect upon others if you have bad attitudes. Your attitudes are more important than your talents, circumstances, appearance or training and will show above all of these. Proverbs 4:23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." It would benefit you to work on your heart more than any other thing in your life.

Proverbs 23:7 says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Because God made you an emotional creature, you will tend to "feel" things much more than a man. Women easily get their feelings involved in making judgments, forming opinions, and acting upon them. Maybe now would be the time to analyze your attitudes.



**Here are some questions to ask yourself:**

1. Are you suspicious, always thinking others are talking about you? Do you feel that others are trying to hurt you and that you cannot trust anyone?
2. Are you negative? Perhaps you cannot take compliments easily or have a problem feeling at ease around people or making them feel at ease around you.
3. Are you critical? You may see only the faults of others and thus have jealousy or envy frequently exhibited by talking about others all the time.
4. Are you withdrawn, with a tendency to internalize your feelings? Are you unable to express your feelings easily or contribute to conversation, thus giving an appearance of moodiness? Are you unwilling to risk being rejected, making it difficult to make friends?
5. Do you use a mask? You can appear to be either very pious and spiritual, making sure that people see you reading your Bible, hear you talk about God and quote verses you know to fit the occasion. People will perceive you as self righteous. Maybe you hide behind a mask of joking and can never let people see the serious side of you. It frustrates people to talk to you because of this. Perhaps you talk too much and are an authority on every subject.
6. Do you use a negative tone of voice such as whining, muttering, talking loudly or nagging?

7. Are you the type of person who is always looking for greener pastures on the other side?

8. Do you escape into a fantasy world? Do you choose to read happy-ever-after books to cope? Are you into overeating, or self-improvement, never being satisfied with yourself?

9. Do you always see the negative traits of others? If you see pride in others, maybe you have envy in your own life. If you are timid or insecure, you will see others as desiring power. If you dislike the way you are, you will see others as wanting to appear glamorous. It is difficult to truly see others unless you see through God-given love. You must be satisfied with yourself, as seen through God's eyes, in order to feel confident that you can touch others by your life.

If you have identified with any of the above, and probably most everyone does, then realize that you have needs. The way you handle your life depends upon how you handle your insecurities. Only God can ultimately fulfill all of those needs, but many of our insecurities are part of our training, our gender, or our negative experiences in life. You must be honest with yourself, and then acknowledge your needs to God. In this way, you can set about working on them, instead of just accepting that you are the way you are. These built-in weaknesses make women live up to the reputation they have in general: nagging, self-seeking individuals spending lots of money shopping for clothes and trifling things.

They are known as cry-babies, pouters, conceited, grudge-holders, gossipers, etc. Take an interest in finding out why, and in what way, you might be embracing and encouraging the common view of women today.

Complimentary and Biblically descriptive words for women are: soft, gentle, discreet, modest, good, giving, caring and beautiful. This is quite a contrast to the description given in the previous paragraph. Which do you want to be? Of course, you want to portray the latter! In order to give out that aura in your life, you must first have experienced the fact that God has accepted you and He loves you. The plan of salvation causes you to feel forgiven, and because of that, you can easily forgive others. You cannot experience this through personality, only through forgiveness of the Father through His grace. This will give you the security you desire. It will cause you to live the Word outwardly, instead of just talking it. You can begin to portray honesty and sincerity in your life by cultivating rewarding relationships with others. As you gain confidence with God, it gives you strength to humble yourself before others. It makes you feel secure in the organization of your life for your individual needs. You can then tolerate and show appreciation for others as they do the same thing. You will be better prepared to get your priorities in balance. When you exhibit this confidence, people like to be around you.

Does that sound impossible? It isn't; but it doesn't happen overnight. You were born into this world as

a female with built-in weaknesses. Your education started in infancy and will last a lifetime as you learn to trust God in these areas of your life.

If you are married, as most of you are, or will be at some time in your life, you must learn to bring your emotions into control and get the strength to be able to guide a home, nurture a family and give to your husband. These are all choices that nobody forced upon you, so they are your responsibilities. You can choose to make your home a drudgery or a drama, a hassle or a haven. You can destroy or paralyze your home by your imaginations, fears and worries.

**Below is a list of several fears common to women that might help you realize that you are not alone in fighting this battle.**

1. Fear of being irreparably hurt by a friend or a loved one.
2. Fear of getting ill and not being able to take care of their family.
3. Fear of growing old foolishly.
4. Fear of not being able to deal correctly with conflicts and problems.
5. Fear of their husband or children dying or being injured.
6. Fear of making wrong decisions.
7. Fear of a failing marriage or your children straying.

The list goes on and on. Can you relate? Have you ever spent endless hours worrying about something that has never happened, yet it seemed like it was a reality to you?

Worry seems to be a common weakness of women in particular. You need to be able to identify it and understand what harm it can do in your life and in your relationships with others. Worry borrows trouble and causes you to lose hope for the future, making the present unbearable. It makes you remember things of the past that need to be forgiven and forgotten. Fear and worry brood and simmer slowly, building until they are towers of imagination that cannot easily be brought down. They are a mental burden that limits clear and logical thinking, and limits your wisdom in making decisions. They will make people want to avoid you and you will have few friends. They become a physical burden that the medical world has proven can be a literal poison to the blood, causing headaches, ulcers, high blood pressure and arthritis. Worry also becomes a habit, and you cannot quit on your own. Indirectly, it will cause you to mistrust God and everyone around you, including your husband and family. It is a useless tool in your life. When worry is built into your life, and you do not deal with it, you begin to react in ways that will affect your home in a very negative way. II Timothy 1:7 is a scripture that every woman needs to memorize: "God has not given us the spirit of fear;...but of love, and a sound mind." I John 4:18, "Perfect love casteth out all fear..." As you learn to trust and love God more, the fears that have overtaken you will begin to disappear.

For the health of your home, your marriage and your spiritual existence, you must learn to deal with your emotions. This is not to say that there are not times in your life when you are overcome emotionally and need others to support you and help you get through. There certainly will be those times, and the Lord knows that women have this weakness. These famines in your life will come. They are not planned and often come about as a result of stress or physical problems. They are times of thirsting and hungering after more of God until you are filled. Very often, it becomes a process as we learn to exercise faith and trust in God, and He teaches us to overcome our worry and fears. As you go through this process, try to realize that you still have a family and there are some things that they need to see you honestly trying to do.

**Your family needs:**

1. Your very best effort at making the home a happy place each day.
2. To see you trying to control your tears and your emotions.
3. To see you seeking God earnestly and daily for emotional strength.
4. To experience your love by telling them so and by giving them a lot of hugs.
5. To see you smiling.
6. To see you humbling yourself before them with "I'm sorry" and "Please pray for me."
7. To see you portray self-confidence in your organization of the home.

8. For you to take a daily interest in life and what happens to all of you.

**Your husband needs:**

1. To see you feel good about yourself by keeping up your outward appearance so he won't be ashamed of you.

2. To feel your love for him is strong and pure.

3. You to keep his home a haven from the pressures of the world.

4. You to give him individual time away from the the children and other problems.

5. To feel you have an interest in his daily life and what has happened.

6. To know your thought life is clear from impure influences.

7. To feel that you are available to him physically as that protection that he needs.

8. To know that you are able to talk about his weaknesses without being critical.

9. You to write him notes of love and devotion.

10. To know that you do special favors just for him alone.

11. To know you can be trusted with the finances of the home.

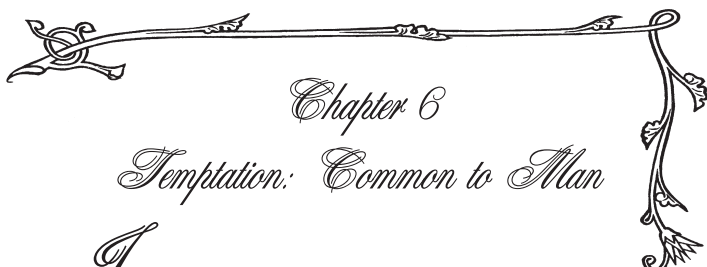
12. To know that you are not talking negatively about him to other women friends.

13. To know that he can trust you in every way.

At some time in life, probably everyone has failed in one or several of these areas. The important thing is to realize it and know how to try again.

Be open with your husband and your children. Ask them for prayer. It is not a disgrace to see your weakness and admit it. It is a disgrace to know your weaknesses and choose to avoid them or accept failure and live with them. Remember, however, that only a strong relationship with God can give you the grace to do what you know pleases Him.





## Chapter 6

### *Temptation: Common to Man*

James 1:12 “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation....” Temptation is a fact of life. Adam and Eve, in the garden, experienced it, and every human being since that time has had to learn how to deal with temptation. Jesus, in the beginning of His ministry, was led into the wilderness, and after 40 days of fasting, was tempted of the devil.

The question is not how to reach a level of spirituality where there would be no temptation, but how do you reach a level of victoriously handling temptation. There are obviously two results that are possible when experiencing temptation. One is to resist, and by doing so, defeat the enemy and gain strength in your spirit. The other is to yield to the temptation and subsequently deal with the consequences.

Most of these temptations are battles of the mind and unknown to those around you. Spiritual failures are the result of failing to bring these thoughts into captivity and conquer them as they enter the mind. The Scripture in James continues, “Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away and enticed.” If there is victory, you must learn how to deal with the enticements around you.

You can insulate yourself from some of these enticements by choosing your environment carefully. The kinds of people you choose to associate with, the places you go, and information to which you choose to expose yourself, all affect your enticement level.

Temptation is common to male and female. The focus of this chapter is the common temptations of men. Men are visually oriented. I John 2:16 speaks of “the lust of the eyes.” Because a man is visual, you must guard against things that can be seen. The covenant that Job made with his eyes (Job 31:1) affirms that this has been a common problem since Bible times. Modern technology has increased the opportunity and provides numerous channels for the enemy to use this avenue of attack. The visual entertainment industry, the largest area of danger to manhood, is an area where spiritual men must take strong stands. As you live among the world, it is very difficult to avoid every type of this kind of media . However, it is necessary to purpose to avoid or be careful of places where you know you may potentially be tempted. Some of these would include: magazine racks, unfiltered computers, televisions in motel rooms, radios, beaches, and newspapers. These all have content that have enticement within them. Some of you may feel you do not have temptation in these areas, or you might say that a close enough walk with God would eliminate the temptation. Note here, though, that all men are flesh, and the enemy of the soul designs temptation in a way that

at some point it could or will tempt you. You must be vigilant. "Wherefore, let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." I Corinthians 10:12. There have been many good men who have found themselves overcome with the lust of the eyes, the result being the destruction of a good marriage and family.

The eyes are the gateway to the soul. Failure to keep these gates guarded will lead to admittance of even further indulgences of the flesh. Lust will then enter the heart and the mind, thus leading to moral shipwreck. James 1:14 "Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." No one plans to be overcome by temptation. God's grace is sufficient for you to be able to be conquerors over temptation. The Holy Spirit was given to empower you to live victoriously, yet there are times when some men do fail. Failure begins when you fail to be as careful as you should be. Through pressures of a job, illness, or family problems, men become susceptible to failure. Every man has moments of weakness. In those times, your spiritual sensitivity to the reminders that usually send warning signals are dulled. You may find yourself crossing lines that, in normal situations, you would never cross. This gray area is a slippery slope. It is the beginnings of total failure. It is necessary to halt this process that will lead to spiritual death. Guilt feelings, when you have moved into this area, are God's warning signals to you. The sooner you heed the caution signs, the less likely you are to utterly fall.

Crossing into this area requires confession to the Lord, but His mercy was given for that purpose.

If you do sin, that doesn't signify that you have to throw up your hands. I John 2:1 "My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." God's plan is always one of restoration. Jesus told Peter before he failed, knowing that he would, that He would pray "that your faith fail not" (utterly fail.) Humble your heart and confess before the Lord, be willing to make necessary restitution, and you can be forgiven and restored, and continue your spiritual journey. If you choose not to do this, the sin conceived in temptation produces death.

One of the old songs, "My Soul Be on Thy Guard," is a challenge to ever be vigilant in these days where "ten thousand foes arise." You, as a man, must put on the whole armor of God and fight for your soul.

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## Chapter 7

### *Who Can Find A Virtuous Woman*

**P**roverbs 31:10 states, “Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.” In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the word “virtue” is nearly obsolete in reference to women. But it must have also been so in Bible days, for according to this passage of Scripture, she was rare even then. The worth of a virtuous woman was far above rubies.

To those of us who are women, the word virtuous tends to make us feel we have to be perfect. However, according to one definition, *virtue* simply means total volunteer obedience to truth. It also means noble, strong, capable, with convictions, not weak or passive. If you read Proverbs 31:10-31, you will see that this woman was truly given to truth. She was entrusted with the management of the home and its resources and was industrious, even to the point of supplementing the income in a way that she would not neglect her home. The virtuous woman didn't do right only if it profited her. Her character was steady. It seemed she did not settle for mediocrity. She sought out “merchant ships”, meaning that she was looking for quality for her household. This woman used her resources as well as

her mind. She rose early in order to run the household efficiently. Can't you imagine this lady being enthusiastic about life? She knew people depended upon her, so she faced her responsibilities energetically. She had learned to be skillful and industrious, developing her skills through education and diligent application of what she had learned. The coverings for her bed were purple, which signifies she had high standards for her home. This woman benefited daily from her diligence and wise decisions and also reaped the long term benefits.

This sounds like the impossible woman, but apparently God intended this to be a pattern, because this chapter in Proverbs was recited in each Jewish home every week, on the eve of the Sabbath, as a reminder.

You had no choice in being created a woman, but why not take on the job with enthusiasm and be a virtuous one? Your next question probably is: "How can I do this and still be in submission to my husband?" The husband of this virtuous woman apparently did not have to worry about the management of the home. He entrusted most of that to her. Remember that this Proverbs 31 woman couldn't phone her husband. She made decisions based upon what she thought her husband would want, and apparently he was pleased. He trusted her.

**There is a moral code portrayed in the Bible that can help us achieve this excellence of character.**

1. You must be a student of the Word. The Proverbs 31 woman, “riseth also while it is yet night.” Some of our time has to be devoted to Bible reading and prayer in order for us to be obedient to God’s plan. Verse 17, “She girdeth her loins with strength.” In Bible times the robes were girded up before a woman applied herself to work. We must gird ourselves with the Word of God and communicate with Him before we begin the duties of the day.

2. The eleventh verse in this passage states, “The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.” If, in the early morning, a woman will apply herself to praying for her husband and giving him special attention before he is sent out into the evil world, there is safety in this. There is much protection in a marriage and a home that comes only from a healthy, loving relationship between a man and a woman. The woman is the nurturer of this by the environment she sets for the home. With a well preserved household, her husband will be proud to speak of home and be anxious to return to its haven.

3. “She looketh well to the ways of her household.” Verse 27. “She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet,” Verse 21. It is the responsibility of the woman to clothe, feed and keep her household in order. It is necessary, even in this modern day, to know how to cook, sew and

to be creative and thrifty in the ways of her home. You can only create a true home by this kind of caring input. All of this must be supplemented by cleanliness, efficiency and diligence. A family is judged by the mother's management of the house.

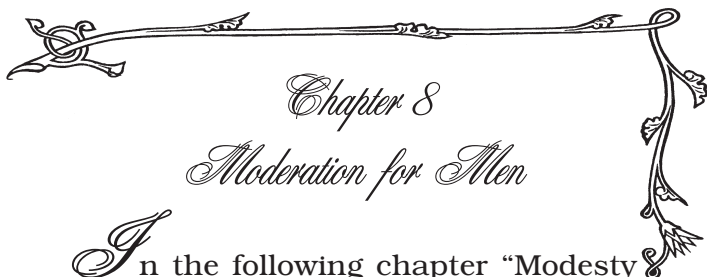
4. Another reference to women is found in Titus 2:5, where women are instructed to be "discreet, chaste, keepers at home." Discretion, chastity and virtue are words unknown in the vocabulary of most modern women. To keep your mind and your heart pure requires an effort, considering the vulgarity in the world around us. Women have always tended to be more sensitive and alert to the threats against virtue, but our modern society is desensitizing us to these things. This is undoubtedly why the Apostle Paul instructed the women to be "keepers at home." It is a full time job keeping the home pure and filtering what comes into the home. Though it is a joint effort with your husband to set up guidelines in your home, the woman will be the one at home responsible for their enforcement. Therefore it becomes her duty to be alert to anything that will be brought into the home that would threaten the family. Included in this are the filtering of music, reading material, computer and video exposure, as well as friends.

As chosen vessels of womanhood, apply yourself to virtue. It is a high calling. Resolve to do as the Old Testament women; read this passage often as



a reminder of your responsibility as a woman in the home which you have chosen to be a part of.

In conclusion, the “virtuous woman” is a very industrious woman. Proverbs 31:27 says “...she eateth not the bread of idleness.” Given to the application of truth to her life, she will have no time for a job or career outside the home once she becomes responsible for a family. In addition to meeting the needs of her family, verse 21 states, “She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.” What a woman! If she is successful in applying these things to her life, she has this promise, “Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.” (Verse 28.) What greater fulfillment can be achieved in this life?



*Chapter 8*  
*Moderation for Men*

*I*n the following chapter “Modesty for Women”, it is stated that the topic of modesty is generally addressed to women. But, the word “modesty” implies moderation. The Bible says, “Let your moderation be known unto all men.” Philippians 4:5.

There is a natural tendency for men to be aggressive and dominant. This is God-given. Men who have successfully served God and family have learned the value of moderation. Temperance in a person’s behavior is an indication that the man has learned to submit to the Holy Spirit. Excess, in any area, will hinder your walk with the Lord.

Though men do not have to deal with the same kinds of temptations and struggles as women, there are many areas in your life that need to be brought into control. Your aggressiveness and natural competitive nature, unless tempered, will mar your testimony to those closest to you.

Statistics say that there are many more men than women in prison. One of the contributing factors to this statistic is that men have a problem with controlling their temper. Some men “blow their stack”; some hold their anger within. Both kinds of anger can be volatile at some point.

Angry words can kill your family's spirit, just as a gun can take a life.

If you struggle with explosive anger, the only power strong enough to break it is God. The quieter, seething, inward anger can be just as deadly. It will manifest itself through irritability, coldness and moodiness, eventually erupting. "...Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Ephesians 4:26. Every human being will deal with the emotion of anger, particularly the anger ignited by injustice or disappointment. These are experienced often and mostly resolved daily. However, the deeper angers mentioned above, often require counseling and prayer for deliverance.

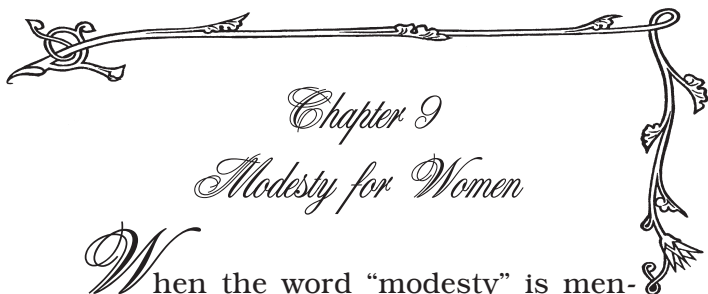
Man's competitive nature also needs moderation. God designed men to be warriors; to fight battles. The arena for that nature to find fulfillment has changed in recent years. Historically, men battled and subdued the land (Genesis 1:28). They fought wars and protected their homes. Today, men compete in sports or in their careers. Involvement in these areas may temporarily satisfy their desire for competition, but will eventually hinder the man's ability to be the husband and father he should be.

Sports are just games played by people and are not worthy of the value the world places upon them. And too much focus on your career will take away from the plan originated for the home. Both of these areas need to be moderated. A game of ball with family or friends is harmless, and a man's career is necessary, but the true fulfillment of

man's nature can only be found in engagement of the larger battle of good versus evil, especially for your family's welfare.

Modern media has caused women to begin to look upon men in a way that, in years past, was uncommon. It is your responsibility to dress and act in such a way that will not incite inappropriate feelings from a woman. Clothes that are too tight, a lot of flesh exposure, or any appearance of looseness are not conducive to a godly man. Men should also guard against being too comfortable or free in the presence of women. There should always be walls of reserve kept in place in your relationship with them.

The inability of men to control their own spirit has been the downfall of every past generation and is still the most common downfall today. The protection of your home revolves around your temperance in every area of your life.



Chapter 9  
*Modesty for Women*

When the word “modesty” is mentioned in the Bible, it is generally in reference to women. Have you wondered why? If you are a married woman, or know anything about men at all, you should understand. It seems, since Eve, women have had the nature of wanting to be noticed, desiring recognition in a unique way. Most women know that their femininity has power. They have great power of persuasion which affects men through their attitudes, expressions, behavior and dress. Men, as strong as they appear, are swayed by the power of women.

Women are directly affected by their emotions. They react to just about everything in life from their feelings. They want to be loved and accepted in a much different way than men. The women of today do not have God-centered training in these very important areas, so they must become educated in knowing where their responsibilities lie towards gaining the respect of the men around them. One of the things that women must realize is that men are very visually oriented. Because of this, they are directly affected by the way women dress and present themselves. Both parties have

been extremely warped by the looseness in the world around them.

The term “modest” comes from the Latin word meaning “moderate.” This word simply means avoiding extremes in behaviour or expression. The word “modest” implies being unpretentious, humble, chaste, neither bold nor self-assertive, tending to be diffident. The word “diffident” is described as being reserved or unassertive. When the subject of modesty is addressed, conclusions are drawn that it always means in outward appearance, but indeed it is so much more.

Other Bible references instruct women to be modest in apparel (I Timothy 2:9) and to be meek and quiet of spirit (I Peter 3:4.) Women are to be discreet (showing good judgment) in speech and conduct, and chaste—free from all hint of lewdness. (Titus 2:5.) What this implies is that women professing godliness should show it in conversation, actions and in outward appearance. This cannot be done if it doesn't come from within. God made the woman to be the fairer sex; soft, feminine and lovable. It is no wonder that men are attracted to them. Women who profess Christ never want that comfort level to go beyond what it should. Men need not be uncomfortable around you, but they should not feel threatened or physically attracted to you.

So how does one go about becoming that kind of person and teaching it to the young ladies that the older women are responsible for?

**There are some basic values that might help you to know how to keep your place.**

1. In reference to conversation, the Bible speaks about “brawling and contentious” women. To be loud in talk and conversation draws attention to oneself. The word “discreet” implies being softer spoken, not assuming or putting oneself on display. To speak loudly would definitely be in contrast with this.

2. Do not monopolize conversation. Learn to listen, and let your talk be uplifting and positive. Anyone who has a problem with talking too much will always say things they should not.

3. Never get involved in deep conversation with men alone or maintain long term eye contact with them. This can quickly become cozy and suggestive. If you must talk at length, make sure another woman or your husband is attendance. Do not become extremely comfortable in the presence of a group of men or any one man in particular.

4. The Bible also speaks of “women going from house to house”, which means gossiping. Women have been noted for this, obviously, since early times. Do not convince yourself that this is part of friendship. Interesting conversation is one thing; telling or accepting information that is tainted, slanted, or questionable becomes a problem.

5. Do not spend hours on the telephone. If you visit every day for long periods of time via the telephone, you probably are involved in gossip.

You are definitely gathering information that could be dangerous. You are setting an example for your daughters by how much time you contribute to this kind of endless talking. It is not wise.

6. Be careful about the way you walk. The shoes you wear have a lot to do with this. Do not wear heels so high or styles so outlandish that it would make you walk seductively or ridiculously.

7. Do not place yourself in places where you have to be on display before a lot of men on a daily basis. If you must be exposed to a public job, pick one that would keep you at a discreet distance from men, if at all possible.

8. Exercise caution concerning the fashions of the present day. Remember that the people who dictate them are doing so for the wrong reasons. We cannot be a part of that. Be careful about lower necklines, shorter sleeves and skirts, snug tops that reveal your figure, and slits in places to draw attention. Stand before a mirror before you leave the house, and check all of these areas and make sure that you are not revealing anything about yourself that would draw the wrong kind of attention.

9. Be careful about how much bare skin is exposed. It is easy to be directly affected by the very casual dress of the day and fall into a presentation that is less than what the Lord would ask of you. What you wear around the house is not necessarily acceptable in public. Even at home, if other



family members are present, there is a code of modesty that should be maintained before them.

10. Combinations of colors and designs of clothing can affect our presentation of modesty. All colors were designed by God, yet we should be discreet in the way we use them.

11. Hairstyles should fit well with the rest of your modest look. In Bible times, the women were warned by Paul against wearing “broided hair”, which was a look of weaving gold strings and jewels into their hair. Apply this principle in doing your hair. I Corinthians 11:14-15 says that long hair is a woman's glory and a covering for her. This doesn't detail a certain length, because each woman's hair grows to a different length. Be satisfied with the length the Lord has given you. Neither does the Bible dictate about how to wear your hair. Historically, smaller girls and young women wore their hair down. Girls looked forward to “putting their hair up,” implying that when women marry, for practical purposes, they generally graduate to wearing their hair up. This cannot be dictated as a doctrine, but it is a fact that there are some hairstyles that can be more suggestive, especially if it is left to fall around the eyes and the face. Because there are not many women who wear long hair, and it is so unusual today, your long hair will attract attention. Seek God about choosing hairstyles that would be becoming but not draw too much attention to yourself.

Even if a woman does all the above, that doesn't necessarily make her modest. A very strict appearing person can be inwardly warped and dangerous. She may even have a seductive approach with men, and this will be detected, despite the way she dresses. Again, it must be stressed that unless the modesty is from the heart, there will be no deterrent from wrong behavior.

Every woman who knows the worth of her calling wants to be looked upon in a way that doesn't threaten those around her or cause discomfort. She wants to affect people in a way that they will say, "She is a wonderful, beautiful woman" in the true sense of the word. However, you cannot make yourself into this kind of person. It is only portrayed from a deep sense of carefulness within your heart, given by the Holy Spirit, that will be expressed in your actions and dress.



## Chapter 10

### *Lo, Children Are an Heritage*

*P*

salm 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....”

One of God’s greatest gifts to man and to marriage is the gift of children. God is a great Creator and for Him to share some of that creative power with man was evidence of His love for man. The union between husband and wife has the potential to create a new soul that will live eternally. That represents a blessing, but also a responsibility.

The Psalmist writer referred to children as “an heritage from the Lord.” This word heritage means a gift; it also means an assignment. Aptly, this portrays the dual purpose of children and the effect that they have upon a marriage.

Marriage is like a school that you enroll in. When you submit to God, and to this plan, two people start the process of learning about each other, themselves and God. As in all learning processes, assignments are given in order to teach valuable lessons.

Our greatest assignment as parents is to prepare our children for life as adults. They are likened to

“arrows” that are first shaped and then sent out to hit a prescribed mark. Our number one goal for our children should be to do all that we can to see them make the eternal mark, Heaven. Everything else that we would project for our children is secondary.

If two people choose to marry and have children, they need to realize the awesomeness of this union. The first priority is to be there for your children. We live in a busy world and it is difficult to find time to give to our children. Raising children requires a sacrifice of our own time. If you don't have time to devote to them, reconsider bringing them into this world. There's a popular saying that quality is more important than quantity when it comes to time, but time is measured in minutes, hours and days. We have to cut out other things in order to devote time to our offspring.

Selfish pursuits that take us away from our family must be sacrificed. Time for hobbies, personal development, even careers for men and women, must be secondary to our first responsibility. You might say that you are pursuing your goals for the betterment of the family, in order to provide them with financial security. A comfortable home and insured future are all worthy goals—if the family is not sacrificed to gain them. Your choice to place them first, in their formative years, with love and security will be remembered much more than how nice a home you lived in or what kind of car you drove. Family time together, such as camping trips, picnics or vacations, builds an heritage and fond memories never to be forgotten. Things as simple

as playing games together on the floor or having discussions at the supper table are bonding times for children. And above all, never underestimate the power of the family that prays together around the family altar. These times will go a long way in shaping those “arrows” referred to as those that are placed in the hand of a “mighty man.”

The challenge is to “train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6. One translator of this scripture said that there was a phrase included in the original manuscript that said, “Train up a child in the way he should go, according to his individual bent, etc.” Though we desire to see all of our children reach the same goal, and believe the way to accomplish that is the same for all, each one of our children is an individual, with his own personality and make-up. To try to streamline all of our children into the same mold is a pattern doomed for failure. One of the first lessons that we, as parents, must learn about each one of our children is to recognize their personality. They each will have strengths that will need to be encouraged and weaknesses that need to be strengthened. They need to understand that God made them the way they are and learn to accept themselves in order to have a healthy outlook on life. As the quiver continues to be filled, then this becomes more important. It is never healthy to compare your children with one another, nor to play favorites or make one feel inferior to the other. Every one of these children will have strengths that

will allow them to make a contribution to their world. Our job is not to try to make them a replica of ourselves or to fulfill our own dreams and ambitions through them, but we are to encourage them be the person that God created them to be.

This responsibility will require us to understand God's methods of training, controlling and correcting our children. The individual bent of a child can go both ways. There is a desire within every child to know God. There is also a bent in every child to do evil, so our job will be twofold. Bending them toward God's righteousness and correcting the tendencies they have toward sin are the duties of the parents. In some of the following chapters we want to direct our attention to some specifics in training our children and providing a proper environment for this training to take place. We will also deal with the topic of correction and how God views this subject. We must all pray that God will give us wisdom to know how to apply His plan to our individual families. There probably has never been a perfect family, and surely all of us have felt that there has been failure at times in our lives. God only expects us to do our best, and we can trust Him to do the rest. You cannot raise saints, but you can give your children the tools that will enable them to be one someday.

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## Chapter 11

### *Training Our Children*

“*T*rain up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6. This verse offers parents hope in a world of evil and corruption. It is a promise from God that if we will fulfill our responsibility as parents, it will not be in vain. There are no guarantees that our children will be saved because, just as God gives us a choice to serve Him, we must let our children have that same privilege. But if we train them as they should be trained, it will follow them and will affect the choices they make. The challenge is to find the time to devote to this responsibility and to know how to impart truth in a way that is palatable.

“To train” means to create a taste for. Our role as a teacher requires us to not only impart information and instructions, but to do it in such a way that our children will be attracted to this information. We must first be a partaker of the fruit if we expect our children to have a taste for God. Just as a good cook uses creative ways to prepare foods in an interesting and tasteful way, we must seek to find interesting ways to teach our children about the truth of God’s Word. There are tools available

to present the stories in the Bible in a way that will captivate little children's minds so that they will never forget them.

The more time you spend in training, the less correction will be needed. The Bible says that under the Law system, parents were to teach them when they rose up and when they went to bed and all times in between. In order to train a child you have to have control of him. One of the first and most important lessons your child must learn is to respect your authority. God expects you to take charge in your child's life. If you don't, at an early age, you probably will never regain control later. We will always be under authority of some kind. We have parents when we're young, teachers when we go to school, bosses when we enter the work force, and all of us are or should be under the authority of God. Teaching our child that lesson starts very early in his infancy. We must lovingly let our little babies know that we are in charge and in control. They must learn that our "no, no's" are meant to be obeyed and that consequences will follow if they are not. Modern philosophy promotes letting a child find his own way without suppressing his individuality. This is a sure formula for delinquency later.

Another important part of training is establishing boundaries. Every good parent will put a fence around their yard to keep their children from straying out into the street or to keep danger from entering in. How much more should we build boundaries around our children's lives to protect them



from the evils of this world. Establishing boundaries begins very simply; such as, "Don't touch, it will burn," or "Don't go into the street, you may get run over." As our children mature, our job as a parent is to help them continue to establish boundaries in every area of their life. They must be taught to control their emotions such as anger, fears, etc. They should also learn to control their appetites and their mind. Ultimately our children will be required to establish their own boundaries, but in this intermediate state, we must do that for them. There is security in a child's life when he knows what the boundaries are and is forced to remain inside them.

Along with boundaries, there are also rules and regulations necessary to a home. The principles taught in the Bible are our guidelines for establishing rules in the home. The rights and wrongs taught in the Bible are our first authority for these rules. Some of the rules that should be implemented in our home are things such as teaching children to be constructive, not destructive. Examples of this might be in the upkeep of their rooms, their toys or their clothing. They should also be taught respect for the rights and property of others. This would include respecting older people, not interrupting conversations, never exploiting other's belongings or infringing on other's privacy. Teach them to respect closed doors and not to plunder in other's houses or property. Children should definitely be taught good manners, how to keep clean and to develop good habits.

Remember that in this training we are also training their emotions. This is a very delicate part of our children and can be mishandled so easily. It is true that in training we need to have strictness and consistency, but we must also, most importantly, communicate our unconditional love to our children. We are not punishing them; we are correcting them and pointing them in the right direction. Always use affection with your training. Do lots of hugging with your discipline. Listen to your child, as long as they respectfully present their thoughts. Do not let them argue with you or use disrespect or anger with you. Your child should feel your disappointment and disapproval of what they have done wrong, but the unconditional love should not be affected by this if it is handled in the right way.

Ephesians 6:4 tells us "...provoke not your children to wrath...." You very easily do this by harassing them with your mouth or abusing them with your correction. You do not accomplish anything with this kind of treatment, except build walls of fear, resentment and anger in your child. When correcting your children, make sure that you are not angry. If you are angry or embarrassed with the existing circumstance, wait until you have calmed down before disciplining the child. Be careful of inconsistency with correction. When you set rules, make sure they are enforced. Do not be unfair with your children; correcting one and then not correcting another for the same offense. One of the worst things you can do to your children is

to play favorites in any circumstance. Never push your child into behavior that is unrealistic for his ability or age. You must let them be children, adolescents and teenagers and be realistic in their abilities at those ages. For instance, do not discipline a child for spilling milk accidentally nor punish an adolescent for being clumsy or for a mood-swing now and then. These are all part of growing up.

Most importantly, don't hesitate to call on God to help. We do not have all the answers for every given situation. He has promised us that if we lack wisdom, we can ask Him and He will give it to us liberally. Take courage; it is possible to be good parents with the Lord's help. We would like to again say, we will not be perfect, but we can be effective.

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## Chapter 12

### *Control in Child Training*

**C**ontrol is providing right conditions for right actions. The environment where a child is trained has a great influence on the direction in which he will follow after he is grown. “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” Proverbs 22:6.

In our dealings with children we observe that the atmosphere will often make or break a child. This is not to discount the fact that God can take a child who has not been privileged and save him and use him, but we are here emphasizing the fact that it is very hard to override a negative influence, no matter what kind of positive influences are exerted in other settings for training.

Before getting into specifics, the issue of the “tone” of the home needs to be addressed. “Tone” would have to do with how a child feels as he enters the door of the home. It also implies “soft fences” in place to provide structure and restraints, yet not handling them with austerity or threats. Parents would do well to make this issue of “tone” a matter of prayer. It is of utmost importance, as you want your children to have fond memories and warm feelings of nostalgic traditions of their years at home.

Let's first discuss the establishment of structure in the home. It is very important to keep children busy. We have already discussed teaching small children chores and manners. All girls need to learn how to sew, cook and run a home. God is still calling women to be homemakers. Boys should be taught how to work with their hands doing repair work, vehicle maintenance, etc. A word of caution: Some children take more naturally to this type of training; be careful not to belittle those who learn slowly, but exhibit patience in your training and never compare one child to another.

Secondly, remember that youth have an abundance of energy. Our responsibility as parents is to know how to channel that energy into something constructive. If this is not done, children often will become destructive. Healthy, active recreation with the family, such as playing ball, hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, bike riding or walking are all positive energy burning activities. It is good for children to be tired at night. In present days we have what is considered to be "hyperactivity" in children. Much of this can be contributed to the failure of adults to give opportunity for some of these children to vent their energy.

Children need to know that they matter to us. This can only be evidenced by the amount of time and attention we give them. All successful parents know that true parenting requires time. Children need to be rewarded openly for their successes and encouraged when they fail. Be aware that parents can get so busy that this fact is unintentionally

overlooked, causing a great deal of insecurity in children. Some children will disobey just to get the attention of their parents.

Another area of control is supervision of your children's activities. Supervision implies that you can see what is happening and are controlling it. Children are not always in your vision, but it is your responsibility to make sure that they are in the care of a trustworthy person. A child left to himself will bring his mother to shame. (Proverbs 29:15.) Be careful about trusting children to take care of themselves at too young an age. They must prove that they are trustworthy. Always remember that peer pressure affects all children. There have been many regrettable behaviours acquired in a child because of this fact, affecting a child for the rest of his life. In many cases this happens at so-called innocent "bunk parties," camp outs, etc. where there is not enough supervision. When young children are simply playing, they should be within open vision of an adult at all times, or such that no hidden "closet" activities can occur. Listen to their conversations while they are playing.

A very important point in training children is teaching respect for others and their property. When your family visits in any setting, be careful that the adults do not become overly involved in socializing and leave the children and young people to find their own devices. This often happens at bigger gatherings such as camp meetings. Before you relax for the night, know where your offspring are, what they are doing, and that they are secure

in their places of rest. That place most often should be with the parents.

Children should also be taught not to explore other's personal belongings such as purses, drawers, closets, refrigerators, etc. They should be trained not to interrupt adult conversation. Never leave a home where you have visited without making sure your children help straighten the area where they have been playing. Teach your children to observe special rules that each home has set, such as eating only in the kitchen, etc. Children should not be permitted to whine or beg for things when in public. A child will naturally learn to do this type of thing. It is your responsibility to teach them it is not acceptable behavior.

Remember that all children are human with a sin nature. Therefore they will misbehave at times. If you have been applying yourself to training them, they will have guilt feelings when they do misbehave. Guilt feelings are not an indication of a lack of training, but God's way of helping them to learn about the merciful and forgiving power of God. When you become aware of a child's guilt feelings you can react in one of three ways: ignore it, blow up or deal with it rationally. Knowing how to deal rationally with these kinds of situations is a most important key to successful parenting. How your children view your response to *their* failures will teach them how God responds to *our* failures. It is not a time to overlook the problem but to bring the child to confession and repentance. Their willingness to do that will hinge on your response. If

you overreact, they will close up and learn deceit. If you give them opportunity to share their guilt and they feel your unconditional love, despite the correction and the circumstance, you will have opened a door of intimacy between your child and yourself that will never be forgotten. Do not use this type of situation to protect your child if open confession to others needs to be done. You must teach them that we reap what we sow.” If this is done correctly, this principle becomes one of your best training tools.

At times, we as parents fail in our response to our children. Hopefully this will not happen frequently. But when it does, children need to see us humble ourselves and take corrective measures for our own actions. By doing so, we are setting the example for them in their own failures. Once those children have been brought into the world, they are our responsibility. Consistently dealing with them in this area will reap great rewards. May the Lord help us to do our very best!



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## Chapter 13

### *Correction in Child Training*

*I*n previous chapters we have discussed the important subject of child rearing. We have dealt with the aspect of training your children and also creating a proper atmosphere in which to conduct this training. We believe that the more attention you give these two areas the less you will have to deal with the difficult, sometimes painful, and occasionally controversial subject of correction.

Correction, though not the most important part of child rearing, is a necessary part of the duties we have as a parent. Children are not perfect and therefore all the training you can do will not cause your children to always do what is right. Think of the correction part as the accountability aspect of child rearing. Your children need to be informed of what your expectations are and what the consequences of the failure to meet those expectations will be; and then must be convinced that you will carry out your promises to correct misbehavior.

There are many methods that can be used to provide correction for misbehavior, and a good parent will judge the severity level of the misconduct and correct accordingly. This will depend

on the age of the child, the ability of the child to comprehend his own actions, and the particular circumstance that is involved. You should start at a very early age to correct small infractions of guidelines you have established in the child's little mind. They should learn what "no-no" means and know what failure to respond will get them: a time out in the chair, spat on the hand, or maybe even a light swat on their backside. Be very careful in the use of your hands to do this. We are adults and they are very small and fragile. The purpose is not to hurt the child but to let him know his behavior is inappropriate. We must also realize that a child's comprehension level is not the same as ours and before we enact any kind of correction, we should assure that the child understands the limits and boundaries and knows what the consequences of misbehaving will be. Sometimes children don't know why they did a certain thing, and they need to know that you are more concerned with them knowing that you love them and are merciful than with making sure every little infraction is corrected. Be careful about having too general an approach to this area of dealing with your children. I knew a man that had several children, and his approach was to line all of them up every night and give them a whipping, believing that each one had probably misbehaved sometime during that day. It is an indication of lazy parenting when insufficient time is given to trying to understand, not only what the infractions were, but why the child has chosen to disobey.

Our approach to correction is affected by our own personality as well as our own experiences while growing up. Some people tend to look at life from a black and white perspective and will more than likely deal with their children from this position. Usually, God has put two people together whose personalities compliment each other and will balance each other out. If you have been raised in an authoritarian home, it will be easy for you to either repeat the process or react against that approach and become too permissive in your dealings with your children. The challenge is to find the balance somewhere between the two.

We have divided the way we handle our children into four approaches: authoritarian, authoritative, neglectful and permissive. Studies show that the authoritative approach is the most effective because it provides definite, clear guidelines and expectations but does not include a harsh approach to enforcement of these guidelines, which would be labeled as authoritarian. Neglect is probably the most common approach and indicates a laziness in dealing with this subject or reflects the busyness of our modern world that keeps parents from taking the time that proper child rearing demands. But our generation has also been labeled a permissive one, and that has definitely affected the attitude with which our society corrects it's children, claiming there are no rights and wrongs.

Probably the most controversial aspect of correction is corporal correction. The term *corporal*

*correction* is more appropriate than *corporal punishment*. The first reflects the idea that the ultimate purpose in using force is to correct, not just inflict pain. First of all, we would like to caution you to use this method of correction only when less severe methods have been exhausted. Secondly, be aware that this method is not accepted today by the greatest majority of our officials and in some places has been made illegal. We are to obey God rather than man, but if we know such behavior is going to invite repercussions, then we would be wise to not make public scenes that could be viewed as child abuse. Part of the reason there has been such a negative reaction to this manner of correction is because of its abuse. It is never to be done in anger nor because your child has embarrassed you; in either case, it is abuse and is not what God had in mind when He gave us instructions to use the rod. Proverbs 19:18 says "Chasten thy son while there is hope,..." implying that when a child is young is the time to chasten misbehavior; you must correct misbehavior before it becomes a habit that has to be broken. Proverbs 22:15 says, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; *but* the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." Thus, we do know that this type of correction is needed and at some ages more than others. The rod needs to be used early and consistently and must always be accompanied with words of instruction. Once this has been done, you will always find that the tension between the parent

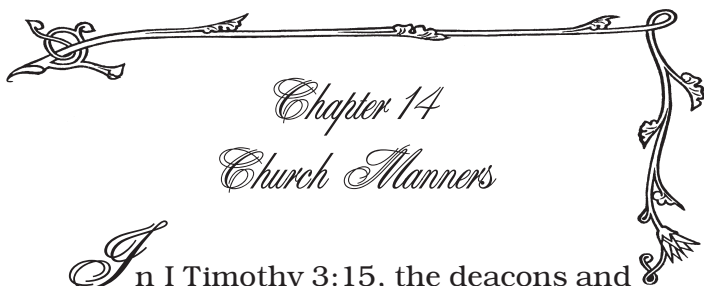
and child is relieved. In most cases, there is respect and better behavior immediately. It clears the air.

**Here are some guidelines for using corporal correction:**

1. Make sure that you are in control and not angry. Sometimes, this requires the parent involved to withdraw and pray and think through the situation before responding.
2. Deal with the child with Scripture, if possible, at least giving them a clear explanation of why you are dealing in this manner, using Biblical principles for the situation.
3. Do the correction in a private place.
4. Use the rod on the posterior.
5. Permit crying (not screaming) for a reasonable time.
6. Comfort the child, since the purpose is to restore.
7. The person doing the correcting should also be doing the consoling.
8. Use this type of correction for willful disobedience or wrong attitudes, not small transgressions or mistakes.

Alternative methods of correction often work well when the child has outgrown corporal correction, which happens at varying ages. When they are younger and a spanking is not in order, they can be sent to their room or required to sit down for a time out. When a child is older, you can always withhold privileges, which also seems to be effective.

What a challenge in today's world to have the time to do all of this effectively. But again we remind you that if you live close to the Lord, the Holy Spirit can lead you in this phase of life and give you strength and wisdom that do not come naturally. Spend a lot of time on your knees for the souls of your children. This kind of attention to prayer for your children will result in God's direction and wisdom in the part of child training outlined here. It will also surpass any other method of correction since our heavenly Father knows just what we and our children need and is waiting to assist us. God bless every home that is endeavoring to acknowledge the Lord in the training of their children.



*Chapter 14*  
*Church Manners*

*I*n I Timothy 3:15, the deacons and bishops were instructed by Paul to know how to “behave thyself in the house of God.” This included “ruling their children and their houses well.” Timothy’s responsibility to the body of Christ was referred to in this passage. The “body” is the Church of the living God. It can also be practically applied to our behavior when we come together to worship with the body of Christ. And anything that was given as instructions in the Bible was given to them so that they could set examples for the entire body of believers.

Most of us are aware of the need to treat our places of worship with respect and honor. We would naturally teach our children to behave respectfully when we come together in a place of worship. How our children esteem our place of worship is learned by the honor and respect that we parents give it.

We first of all must esteem worship service as a necessary part of our Christian life. The Bible teaches us to “forsake not the assembling of ourselves together.” (Hebrews 10:25.) It is very important for our children to see us being in church services regularly, arriving there on time. We are proving to them it is very important to us. They

must also see us as an active participant in the services: praying, singing, testifying, and taking part. We are also a model in the way we dress for church services. Traditionally people have worn their “best” to church. It is a way of showing we are giving God our best. We don't use this as a place of dress competition or showing off, but it's simply giving respect to God with a little more than daily requirements. This is something that many have lost sight of.

The “house of God” is a place we come to worship God, so naturally, we should always bring our Bible and use this time to do just that. *Worship* means: “adoration, confession, prayer and thanksgiving” according to the dictionary. We may want to reassess our true reason for being in church services. Adoration refers to praising God. Because it is a public worship service, this has to be a public observation. Confession means we are there to learn about ourselves, to humble ourselves and confess our needs to God and to others: as in prayer requests. Prayer is the actual public communication with God. We can, and should, pray privately, but when we are in a public service, we should be praying and agreeing in prayer in a public way. That is the reason we are there. Thanksgiving is public testimony to what God has done for you. These are necessary reasons to meet together to worship God, and our children need to be taught that these are the reasons for being in “church.” It is not just another way of spending time nor something simply to be endured.



People have different ways of approaching the behavior of children in church services, and we would be the last to say that there is a definite way set out in the Scriptures. But we would probably all agree that there are practical tips for teaching your children church behavior. First of all, babies learn early that attending church services is a regular part of their life. How often do we see very small children begin to fuss when they enter a church building? They know it is "quiet time." Bring little things to entertain them quietly at this age when they cannot listen to the services, and sit them down on the bench or floor. Our advice would be not to spend a lot of the time in the nursery (they quickly learn this is something they can fuss for) but only take them there for the necessary times of changing and feeding, then bring them right back to the services. However, there may be times when a child is not feeling well, etc, that this has to be adjusted. But the point is, even a baby quickly learns that they can fuss, and a parent will take them out or walk them. Do not always give them this satisfaction.

Neither should you let them cry for long periods of time in the service. If you will discipline a child and return with them, they will learn that sitting in church is a way of life and they must adjust to it. Learn to get their attention by other means and keep them right there in services.

As much as possible, children should be taught to sit in services. It is very disturbing to come to services and see children wandering from bench

to bench, and certainly we know that the noise level of young children can be very disruptive. We can begin at an early age to teach our children that this is a quiet time. Bring little Bible story books for them to look at, and it is good to have “church bags” for small children to keep them occupied and to help them sit still during church service. When a child learns to read, require him to bring his Bible and teach him to sing and follow along in the songbook and Bible. It is a wonderful thing to see their little minds reach out to this. They have a wonderful ability to memorize, and God designed this to be used in such a way as this. Memory verses in Sunday school are very important. These children will never forget those passages as they go through life. Teach them whole chapters. You will find it to be surprising what even a three and four year old child can memorize. Always reward your children for good behavior and memory work, certainly with praise, and some parents use a merit system to motivate good behavior. They need to know you are pleased with them.

Decide between the two of you as parents what is an acceptable age for your children to sit apart from you. This cannot be dictated. But even then it is wise to keep your children close to you where you can observe what is going on with them in church. It is not wise to turn your children loose to sit behind you in a church service, because then you are unable to observe what they are doing. Be aware that, though you don't, everyone else

does know when they are talking and passing notes! Until the day they leave home, we have a responsibility as parents to see that our children are behaving in church. Make sure they are sitting in a place where you can observe this. And make sure you set guidelines for the service so that they understand clearly what is acceptable to you and to the Lord for this special time. Continue to teach them that it is “God’s house” and their behavior must be very respectful to Him.

Teenagers are renowned to be the worst distractions in church services, because they are old enough to know better; they are no longer babies. Many times their behavior should not be contributed to being a teenager but to a lack of parental training or supervision while they are in church. Parents, God gave those children to you, and the responsibility for them belongs to *you*, not to others, or worse yet, to no one at all. Accept your responsibility, and do your duty with love and consistency.

We want our church services to be a blessed time for us all. If you are a parent, remember that you will not always get the full benefit of the church services because you have the duty of training and attending your children while there. But the Lord will bless you for taking your responsibilities seriously, and even though you may not be blessed with the response to a song or scripture, the Lord will bless you for doing your duty as a parent.

One last note: the more attention you give to your children in this training, while they are

young, the more time you will have later to give in your church services because of a duty well done. May the Lord bless all of us.

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*Chapter 15*  
*Adolescence*

*"From a child thou hast known the* holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Jesus Christ." II Timothy 3:15.

If in the early years of training our children we have pointed them to God and His plan of salvation, hopefully at the stage of adolescence they will realize this as their opportunity to accept the Lord and let Him work a miracle in their disturbed emotions and upheavals of life. This time of life is perhaps one of the most difficult for parent and child, because you are seeing changes in them that are not easily detected, as were the misbehaviors of early childhood. These are subtle changes in personality and emotions that are not easily defined and dealt with. The adolescent is having to deal with the adjustment of going from a stage of innocence and dependency to the deeper elements of life; namely, "growing up." It is not fun for them. And in today's world, they are also having to cope with the extreme exposure to sin on every street corner. This exposure increases the risk of the conscience being battered even before it is spiritually awakened. What an awesome responsibility for the parent to build that bridge to help them cross over.

It is one that too often is not built and the child is left to find his own way over the great chasm. And it is impossible for them to find their way alone.

But even under the influence of a godly home and good Bible based teaching, adolescents feel threatened because of the traumatic awareness thrust upon them at this age. It seems a tender age, those years of 11-14, when these youth are suddenly made aware of inner feelings and struggles they have never experienced before. They often react through moodiness, irritability and resistance to authority. Even more shocking to a parent is when they erupt at times and say hurtful things to you or others. Be aware that sin-awareness often accompanies self-awareness, so they are being tempted in areas they do not even understand. Do not be shocked, but try to understand that they are not deliberately trying to be defiant or rebellious but need to be tempered in the right way. Never make them feel that they are “terrible,” or even worse, “hopeless,” but always guide them right back to the Word and an understanding of this stage they are passing through. And remember it is a stage. This too shall pass but not without your help. Do not choose to overlook this time that is so real to them. Pray about wisdom to deal with it properly and with God’s approval. It is not always immediately successful but if you pursue these years with diligence they will reap rewards, be assured. If you can help them to come to a real experience with God, where they can experience the grace of God and the forgiveness of the

Lord, it will be such an enlightening experience for you both. We have seen it happen many times; a transformation takes place after so much struggle and fight. A new person emerges through a connection with God. Daily point them to it without nagging and shoving. So much heartache can be spared in a home by this awareness of the needs of the adolescent. Walk them through it gently.

It is not easy to protect your children in the evil society we live in today. Something as innocent as a walk through the mall can be very enlightening to someone whose heart and mind are opening up to new things. Exposure has to come to some degree, but be very cautious about how much is necessary and how much pressure can be spared for that struggling youth. The media, music, magazines and books are full of unhealthy input into your children's minds. Help them to avoid this kind of influence by setting strong guidelines for them and helping them to follow them. Do not put the responsibility on them entirely. They still need you. It is a perfect time to instruct them in the Biblical standards of purity in conduct and dress. Do not be afraid to be specific; the world is educating in the wrong way. Educate them in the right way. One teacher aptly stated that you should spend twice the time instructing youth from 11-14 years of age as in the other stages of life.

Boys do not talk about their changes as easily as girls. They have immense growth spurts in body and appetite. Deal with that part of it humorously if possible, but make them feel "normal" in these

changes. It is not so easy to deal with boys emotionally because they are not comfortable with it and generally neither are the fathers, who should be working with them. So sometimes it is avoided and regarded as an unnecessary part of their lives. What a shame, when this is such an important time for that adolescent boy. Fathers, deal directly with your sons so they will not have needless fears about themselves; counteract the education they are bound to receive from their peers through degraded and perverted stories and jokes. Encourage your son to talk openly and honestly about his feelings. He will only do this if you do not make him feel guilty about what he confides in you. Mothers, if a father is unavailable for a boy, seek out a godly male influence and ask for assistance in accountability for your son. It is so important. Mothers can help their sons up to a point, but male influence is very needful at this stage in their lives.

Girls deal with the physical changes with mixed emotions. They want to grow up and be attractive in a physical way but often cannot cope with the emotional upheaval it brings into their lives. Fits of crying and times of extreme moodiness make them feel that they are in a world of confusion that they cannot find a way out of. It is a must for mothers to gently teach and lead them to an understanding that their physical and emotional changes are very natural and acceptable. The assurance that they are normal will cause them to be at peace within themselves even though they feel disturbed. Again, educate them very thoroughly about the



stage they are passing through, and hopefully they will get through successfully.

Adolescents are not always predictable, so it is very important to love them unconditionally at this time. That is not an easy thing to do when it seems they are so unlovable. Often, because a parent will not take the time needed to give support, distance will develop between the youth and parent that cannot be regained later because of the bitterness and rejection that resulted from this most important time in their lives.

**Following are some important things to remember about the adolescent years:**

1. Most parents are too late, not too early, in giving instruction about sexual development.
2. A one time talk will not educate your child. It is a process involving time and attention.
3. All entertainment or education produced by the “world” will encourage the “sensuous” side of awareness. Be careful of even those things labeled “Christian.” Screen carefully.
4. The influence of friends and peers is the strongest influence on a child at this age. Learn how to encourage the right kind and discourage the wrong.
5. Avoid encouragement of boy/girl connection at this age without making them feel guilty for being attracted to the opposite sex.
6. Balance trust and accountability. Be direct with setting guidelines and open with communication without violating their privacy to the

point of total mistrust, unless they have proven otherwise.

7. Keep adolescents busy in mind and body. Concentration will help to keep unhealthy thoughts away and cause the body to channel unruly urges to the task at hand.

8. Be aware of modern trends and fads in dress that subconsciously promote impure thoughts in a boy or girl. Patiently explain the “WHY” to them. They often really do not understand.

9. Children need different kinds of affection at different stages of their lives. Even though an adolescent appears to be ashamed of the show of affection, they really want it. Use discretion in giving affection to them, because we live in a perverted world, but do give them the affection that comforts and assures them you love them. It is a must.

10. Be alert to the adolescent’s cry for help. Many times exposure to, or involvement in violations of acceptable practices will become evident. Pray for much wisdom in how to deal with it.

In conclusion, the success of riding out the adolescent years lies within the desire of the parent to really “walk the walk” and not just “talk the talk.” Live a life of purity in everything you do, every day of your life, and let the child see it. Colossians 3:17: “And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” May we lift up His name through our lives!

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*Chapter 16*  
*"Dating"*

*T*here is presently a lot of discussion in the church world around us about whether "dating" is acceptable or even a word that should be used by Christians. We are not prepared to say that it is or is not. What we would like to stress in this discussion is the fact that whatever your definition of "dating" is, it should be markedly different from that of the world. We would like to suggest several points for your consideration on this subject.

The primary goal of every young person should be to become spiritually mature enough to make decisions in life that will be solid and godly. When a person has become mature enough to do this, then he should be better equipped to choose a life-mate for himself. Common sense would tell us, then, that in this area of dating, it certainly should not begin at an immature age when young people are most vulnerable to making bad choices.

The Bible does not mention the word "dating;" in fact, we all know that in those days a child's mate was chosen by the parents. The only guidelines we have biblically are those of basic scripture

saying: “And the LORD God said, *It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*” Genesis 2:18. “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. So we know that God intended marriage, but from I Thessalonians 4:3-5 we read, “...That ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence,...” The man-woman relationship of today is so far removed from what God intended that, as followers of Christ, we should be sure to set safe guidelines for our children and help them to pursue this relationship in a way that pleases God and will help them to have a happy home when they do marry.

Marriage should be the only motivation for dating, should you choose this term to refer to a male and female getting to know each other by spending some time together. First of all, we would like to encourage you to let your “getting acquainted” be done in a group until you have definitely been impressed by the behavior of one person so much that you would like to pursue it further. And again, you can only do this if you are old enough and prepared to consider the idea of marriage. Mostly, the dating game is played because youngsters think that someone is “cute” or they want to have fun, or worse yet, the boy or girl is looking for some physical excitement with the opposite sex.

No serious consideration is given to what the Lord requires or where this relationship will lead in the future. The entire dating game can lead to frustration and heartache because you are playing with emotions that are very volatile and changeable.

The person who thinks they are ready to deal with this subject should have a proper perception of love. We have only to look at the story of Samson to see what infatuation can do. The kind of love he thought he experienced only weakened and ruined him. Love is so much more than this and needs to be understood before pursuing it. It is about giving, and not about receiving. It involves sacrifice and giving so completely of oneself that there is no backing out. It is not something that we helplessly fall into. Love has its wonderful feelings, but it is not only on those feelings that a lasting relationship can be established. It requires commitment to one another and to the Lord to carry you through the times when the feelings are not so strongly felt. It is most certainly not all physical or even a strong emotion. It is again a sense of responsibility to one person for the rest of your life. It is not easily comprehended and should be prayerfully and reverently considered.

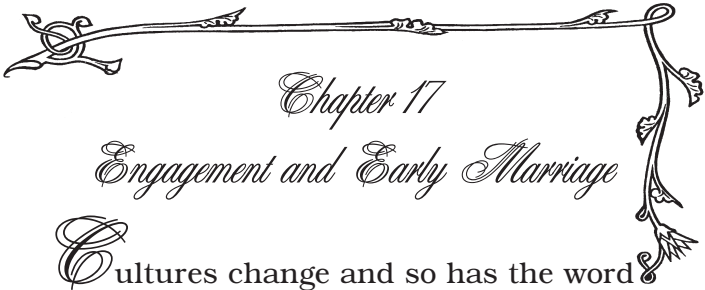
If you have godly parents, they should certainly be considered in your choice of someone to be interested in. God always intended this to be, for you and your future companion will be living around those parents in the future and it

is important that there is a solid and respectful relationship to work with. Traditionally, a young man would not pursue and interest himself in a young lady unless he first consulted the father. This has basically been discarded today, but is still a healthy way to do things. Parents who feel that their children wish to honor them will often choose to trust them and help them. Much frustration and tension can be avoided if a healthy parent-couple relationship is built early on. Note: If you want to impress a future partner and his parents, keep your reputation clean, your personality approachable, and your experience with God real.

**Once some of these problems have been worked through and you feel that a relationship is ready to be pursued, here are some suggested guidelines:**

1. Do not do late-night dating.
2. Never spend time in a car parked in a dark or isolated area. Always get out into the light where you can be seen and others are not far away.
3. Do not do a lot of aimless driving. You are asking for trouble.
4. Visit mostly in a home where other family members are present. It is necessary that the two of you get acquainted, but do not spend all your time with just each other. Include others and use the interaction of games, etc., to keep your relationship healthy and pure.

5. Engaging in physical interaction with each other distorts your relationship and undermines your trust of one another. Physical contact is always progressive once it is started. Purpose to get to know each other on a spiritual and emotional plane that can enhance your relationship, not hinder it.

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*Chapter 17*  
*Engagement and Early Marriage*

Cultures change and so has the word “espousal,” which today’s church has often compared to our present day “engagement.” However in most cultures, when a couple determines they are in love, there has always been a time set aside to declare it publicly and begin making plans for their future together. This wonderful feeling of love and new awakening causes this to be an intimate time in the sense of truly getting to know one another. However, it is not a time for a couple to let down barriers in physical behavior toward each other. It is a very vulnerable time because of the love that is pointing and progressing to physical union, and it can be very easy to cross lines that hopefully you have previously established. Often, relationships that are beautiful and pure are damaged before they have a chance to blossom. Respect that has been gained can be lost very easily during engagement, and resentments often begin here and become building blocks for a problem marriage. Because physical attractions are so strong during this period of time, lengthy engagements are not advisable.

As has been advised in the previous chapter, do your very best to establish a good relationship



with both sets of parents. If the couple has proven themselves trustworthy throughout courtship, and they have gained the confidence of the parents, then the next step of seeking the father's consent for his daughter's hand in marriage should not be difficult. If, for any reason, there is a problem or some instability in the relationship, it should be a warning signal to draw back and try to work through it before you pursue engagement. "In-law" problems can be a real threat to young marriages. It is true that it is not always possible to have a working relationship with all involved, and this doesn't necessarily prove that the couple's union is not ordained of God. But a couple should do everything possible to gain the approval and respect of prospective in-laws. This respect is needful because you will be directly connected with these people for the rest of your lives. If you are endeavoring to seek God's blessing on your marriage, you must also seek and pray for a good relationship with the family.

Once permission has been granted and the young man's proposal is accepted, then marriage should be on the not-too-distant horizon. The engagement period should be a time of working together to understand your individual priorities and goals. By this time, hopefully, you have established a solid enough financial plan (job, home and means of transportation) that you can support the marriage and home. If not, you should never have gone this far! This is not to say a couple should have everything that their parents have; they should

not be burdened down with large debt but should be willing to accumulate like all other couples must do at the beginning of marriage. However, a young man should be financially capable of supporting a wife and home, and the wife should be capable of helping to plan the budget as well as being trained in spending money wisely, cooking, and running a household efficiently within a budget. Statistics show that a large percentage of marriages dissolve within the first five years because of financial instability.

Your engagement is also a time to ask any questions that you may still have about one another. You should discuss your views on financial issues, planning for and training of children, and doctrinal or social issues that might potentially cause disagreement in the future. The time of engagement should take your relationship to a higher level of understanding of each other. Instead of exploring each other physically, use your engagement as a time of enlightenment, of learning to communicate and pray together about issues you need to work through.

A word of caution—many couples will burden themselves with debt from an outlandish wedding. Remember that the wedding is a celebration of your union, and while it will require extra planning and cost, according to Scripture, it should be done to the glory of God. “Whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus...” Colossians 3:17. Your wedding should be kept within these limits and reflect simplicity

and spirituality, not social status or show. Your first step together can be a source of much stress, or it can be blessed and sacred. Let it be kept simple and not a disgrace.

Consider the scripture: “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. There will always be a place for loving, close family relationships; but the ties that are never severed when you marry can become one of the major causes of stress on a new marriage. The allegiance and devotion given to one's family is transferred to the spouse. Young men, the food your wife cooks is what you should be eating and complimenting. Your new home is where you should spend your time. Young lady, make your husband glad to come home by being there to greet him, with appetizing meals prepared for him to eat. Don't be running to Mama's frequently with every little problem. Work devotedly together, excluding the input of family that has had so much to say before the marriage. The first two years are always the hardest in this capacity. It is a re-training period, and you will sometimes feel like strangers. You should give up the idealistic notion of “no-problems in a marriage when you love one another” and be prepared to work hard to make it a success. It requires a lot of give and take. A word to the parents of newlyweds: let your babies grow up; leave them alone; cut the apron strings; allow them to make adult decisions. Don't give advice unless asked and maybe not even then.

Do not allow your children to come home to get sympathy when disagreements arise in their new home. Never stand between a couple, but always point them back to each other.

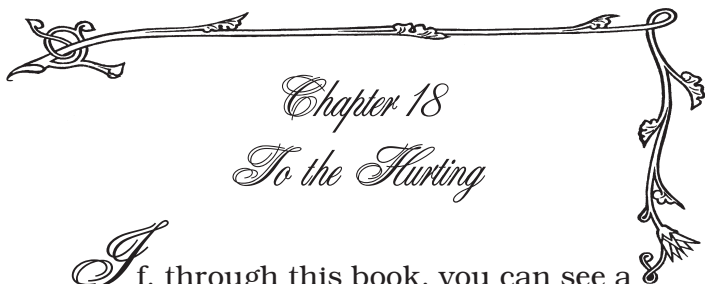
**Newlyweds, here are some points to remember:**

1. God has to be the central part of your marriage. Include Him by praying together often.
2. Remember there are no "outs." You are in this for life. It's worth your best efforts.
3. Remember you are in this loving relationship to give, not receive. If you both do this, what more can you ask?
4. Always resolve conflict. Do not bury it or it will result in resentment. Learn quickly to say, "I'm sorry."

In closing, marriage and family are ordained of God. It is God's plan, but unless it is achieved in God's way, it can also be the most destructive element in society. Because the emotions are so deeply involved, so deeply affirmed, and therefore so deeply hurt, we are greatly affected by it. A marriage that is blessed by God can be a wonderful union that makes life worth living, but a love lost or trampled upon can be the most devastating experience a person can have.

A stable, God centered marriage is the environment God intended for children to be born into. Children who are well trained, grow up respectful, and have the fear of God upon them will bless you more than you can imagine. But children who go astray will cause heartache that

cannot be expressed. A marriage and a home that is blessed of God is worth more than any other thing in this life that could be achieved. It is certainly worth all you have to give.



*Chapter 18*  
*To the Hurting*

*I*f, through this book, you can see a ray of hope for your hurting, suffering family, our prayers will be answered. Another book should be written to those who are suffering on a larger scale, such as those with a failed marriage or children who have gone astray. We do not feel the burden to address those issues in this book, though we know that there is a great need for information to help you through your distress. There are those who would be much more qualified than we are to counsel and help you. However, there are a few things that we want to say to those of you in dysfunctional homes or extremely strained relationships.

We want you to know that God is always offering hope and that it is the evidence of “things not seen.” Do not lose faith and hope that God can work miracles in your home. Many abused, hurting and rejected ones who are suffering in these kinds of homes yield to the temptation to give in to hopelessness and even worse, bitterness. Their hearts become hard. Remember, though, that as long as there is life, there is hope.

The Bible has only one answer to all of this: His redeeming power which will offer forgiveness and

love in an impossible situation. Do not underestimate the power of forgiveness and unconditional love for those who have wronged you. God wants reconciliation and plans it for you. He will never quit working with the people He has created. He will always love them, even when it appears that they have rejected everything He has offered to them.

When your spouse rejects you, abuses you, betrays you or neglects you, remember that you are bound to each other for life, no matter what happens to either of you. The vows that you took on your wedding day are recorded eternally in Heaven, and you will never get away from the responsibility you have toward your spouse. Although your respect for them has been seriously affected, you must pray for them, offer them hope, and love them with God's love. Always remember that God's way is a ministry of reconciliation and always will be. God is in the business of saving and changing people who are willing to be saved or changed. There will always be hope for that change.

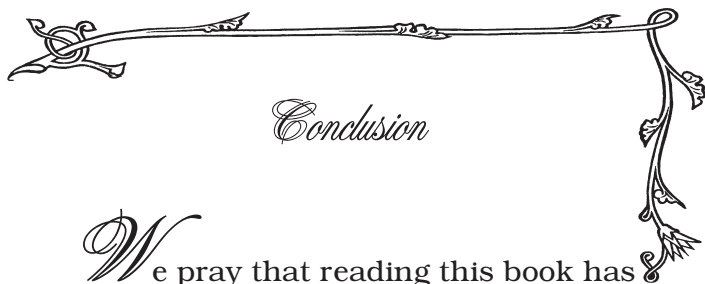
If you have suffered so much that you are bitter, the first step is to admit your bitterness to Jesus. The Scripture says "take heed, lest a root of bitterness spring up within you, defiling many." Please remember that your bitterness not only destroys you and any hope that God can offer you, but it will directly affect the attitudes of your children and your spouse. Bitterness will only drive wedges and further destroy anything left to survive in a

relationship. It is the worst thing that can happen to you, but it often slips into a hurting person's life unexpectedly and begins bearing fruit.

We do not underestimate the pain and strong emotions you are experiencing as a result of a very negative past. And healing doesn't happen overnight. It is a process, often entailing working your way through many emotions. There is still hope in all situations. Counseling is good and often is needed, but do not close yourself off from the power of God, which offers more hope and healing than any other source.

As the Church, we should be challenged to take upon us the burden of the hurting by helping others, with much prayer and love, as they work their way through these difficult times. None of us are exempt from similar circumstances, and at some point will probably need the support of our friends and brothers and sisters in Christ. Until we have suffered adversity personally, we often don't realize the importance of showing love and care by calling, giving a hug, sending a card, or simply saying, "I care." Take time to ask God for direction in helping those who you know are hurting. It will be a blessing to you and certainly is needful to the one receiving it.





## Conclusion

We pray that reading this book has been a blessing in some way and has given you insight as you deal with your family. This has been the result of lessons we have learned and information we have accumulated through research. Several years ago, we compiled some of this information into a series of family studies. We then revised and printed some of those thoughts in a monthly column in the *Faith and Victory* paper. Through all of this, we are still learning that life is a process that continues to require adjustments and revisions as we go along. We suppose every parent, reflecting on the past, can see the mistakes they have made and wishes that they had done some things differently. However, we only have one chance, and just as we have tried to learn and share from our past, we hope that you can take these lessons, add them to your own experiences, and then pass them on to others. Our last child will soon be entering the adult world, and now we find ourselves passing into another phase of our lives. As we do this, we are finding that we never quit learning. We are making the transition from parenting to grand-parenting and are watching the children we have trained face the same

challenges we have faced. Our prayers are with them and with all of you. We solicit your prayers as we continue our journey.

It is our hope that others will have been benefited by our burden and that you will find hope in prayer and enlightenment from the Word. May God bless you.



